

**Extension and Communication for the Forest Genetics Council  
- Proposal for An Alternative Delivery Model -**

**Submitted to the FGC Strategic Plan Review Committee  
For Discussion**

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**Purpose and Summary**

In its second year of operation, there are indications that the Extension Technical Advisory Committee is not meeting expectations in the development and delivery of an effective extension and communications program for the Forest Genetics Council. Some of the issues and reasons, and a proposal for an alternative delivery mechanism are discussed.

In brief, the proposal is to restructure ETAC into a steering committee of representatives from Council and its subprograms. The committee would set the strategy and priorities for the Extension and Communication subprogram. The Manager, Extension Services would be assigned to act as an extension and communication co-ordinator, develop a business plan, and implement a program to meet those expectations. Extension Services (Tree Improvement Branch) would be engaged to act as a lead agency for delivery of the Extension and Communication Subprogram. Input to the planning process would come from Extension Services staff, technical specialists, liaison with other FGC subprograms, client requests, and other potential partners. This process would help avoid duplication of effort and provide a more co-ordinated approach for the FGC's program as a whole.

This model would leverage existing extension staff, potentially reduce costs to Council and its partners, provide more program co-ordination, focus and accountability, and provide an avenue for more integration with project specific extension and communication efforts in other FGC subprograms.

## **Background and issues**

The Extension Technical Advisory Committee (ETAC) formed in 2000 to develop a strategy and annual activity plan for the Extension and Communication (E&C) Subprogram of the Forest Genetics Council (FGC). To accomplish this, the committee developed a plan based on a series of goals, messages, audiences and delivery mechanisms. Implementation of the plan was through OTIP project proposals submitted by the tree improvement community (see attachments). Industry, government and academic committee members provided invaluable input to that process.

While initially successful, the implementation process has problems that hinder the program's success. In general, there are three broad issues: a disconnect from the other FGC subprograms, a lack of consistent co-ordination, and a lack of dedicated, accountable resources for the Extension and Communication Subprogram.

ETAC and Council need to explore an alternative delivery model.

Landgren (1998) presented a plan for a co-ordinated extension program for tree improvement and the model he proposed was basically sound:

- Provide co-ordination to ensure a cohesive tree improvement extension program;
- Provide a budget for that program that would allow flexibility in meeting identified client needs;
- Ensure that key staff groups can focus on important extension projects under their control.

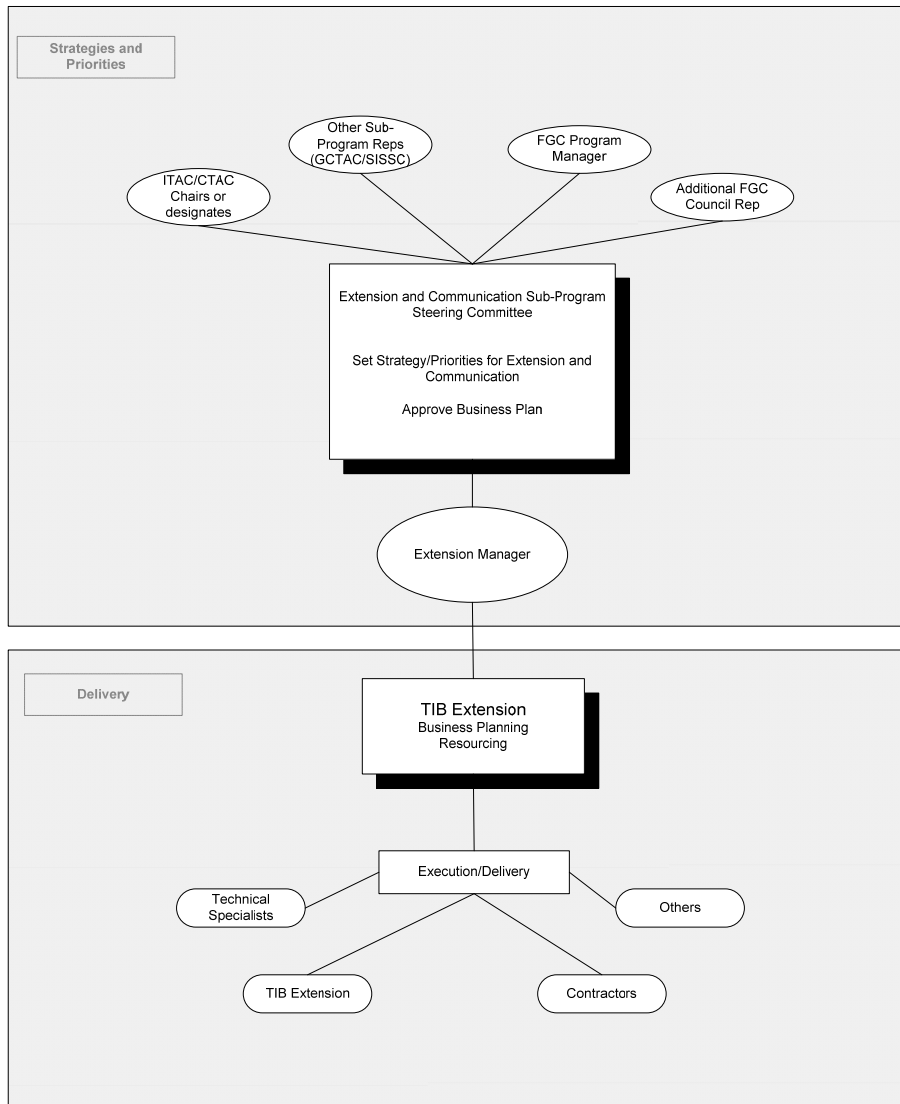
This model could be adapted to reduce gaps in the current operating model for FGC Extension and Communication Subprogram.

## **Proposed new model for the FGC Extension and Communication Subprogram**

- Restructure ETAC into an Extension and Communication Steering Committee (ECSC), functioning in an advisory role and providing overall extension and communication priorities or goals through a high level strategic plan.
- The ECSC membership would be composed of the Subprogram chairs (or delegates), the FGC Program Manager, an additional FGC representative (current ETAC Chair?), and the TIB Extension Services Manager. They would meet annually, or as required for program guidance.
- Form a core extension and communication sub-program under the Extension Services Manager that would prepare annual business plans to implement, co-ordinate and administer ECSC priorities for FGC. Extension Services, Tree Improvement Branch would play a lead operating role, in co-operation with a focused group of technical specialists.
- ECSC & FGC would provide final review and approval of annual strategic & business plans and approve a budget.

Figure 1 illustrates the model.

Figure 1: Proposed model for FGC Extension and Communication Subprogram



FGC Extension and Communication Sub-Program

## Discussion

The model establishes a committee that clearly links extension and communication efforts to the FGC and its subprograms. This would result in more co-ordination and tie the extension and communication effort more closely to the program's goals. The concept is similar to the FGC/Breeder/Species Committee or the FGC/Seed Planning and Information Subprogram model currently in use with other programs.

This ECSC would identify the high level extension and communication strategic plan. The strategic plan would then be delivered through a business plan developed and administered by the Extension Manager as per the priorities and needs of the high level plan. Extension staff and technical specialists would assist in planning and project implementation. The ECSC and FGC would provide final approval of the annual plan and budget.

The proposed membership of the committee is crucial to better coordinate the delivery of tree improvement extension. Input from each of the Sub-programs, the FGC Manager and the FGC Representative allows the identification of extension components from other programs and their placement in a delivery matrix. With this matrix, the Extension Manager can create a central repository of all extension projects, identify gaps and develop solutions to resolve them. This will result in a better co-ordinated delivery system overall, with all extension activities, whether delivered through OTIP projects, other subprograms, or by the extension group, identified and assessed within a matrix of goals/target client group/vehicle.

## **Resources**

Secretariat activities for the FGC would remain a distinct function and maintain the 'corporate brand' for Council. This preserves past work and talents associated with that position.

Extension Services, Tree Improvement Branch would take a lead role in the implementation of extension and communication projects through direct involvement, or by contract to third parties. Past successes suit the group to that role. In addition to being heavily involved in ETAC planning, the group has over 20 years experience in extension and communication to all sectors of the forest management community.

With this plan, TIB would provide staff expertise and physical resources to guide the FGC Extension and Communication Subprogram. Interaction with other FGC programs and client groups is essential to this effort. It would be the responsibility of the Extension Manager and/or his delegate(s) to maintain that interaction through participation in, or liaison with those groups and of the ECSC to ensure input from their respective programs.

Project implementation would occur 'in-house' through Extension Services, through the co-operation of other members of the tree improvement community and/or through an Invitation to Quote on specific project outlines to others. A Request for Proposals would be required for larger projects or for projects where in-house' expertise was lacking.

The proposed extension matrix would provide a central reference for all FGC extension and communication activities. It does not replace or preclude work done by other subprograms or groups; it merely tracks activity and serves as a guide to where gaps may exist and where opportunities might arise for improvement or for co-ordinated extension and communication activity.

## Next steps

This is a concept document. If Council's Strategic Plan review committee decides to pursue it as an appropriate alternative to the existing model for ETAC, specific operational details for the model can be developed.

A proposed time-line for next steps is:

Concept approved in principle by review committee	July/August
Concept circulated to ETAC for comment	September/October
Document updated re reviews	October/November
Recommendation submitted to Council as part of the review committee's report	December
Initial ECSC meeting to set strategic plan	Following Council's recommendation
EWG meeting and creation of a business plan	Following Council's recommendation
Initial operations begin	Following Council's recommendation