Project Name	**Ecological Baseline – Current condition**

Program Area	Ecological Integrity
Element	Baseline
Project No.	EI03a

Related Projects	DS01 – Data Access & Management
	DS04 – Subregional and Landscape scale analysis scenarios;
	Spatial Co-location Project
	EI01 – 2nd Old Growth Workshop
	EI02 – Focal/fine filter species risk threshold refinement
	EI04 – Focal/fine filter species habitat supply
	AM04 – Implementation monitoring etc.

Start Date	February, 2008
Completion Date	November, 2008

Overview

Preliminary work has been undertaken to identify the present status of a series of ecological indicators in the Central and North Coast plan areas (see for example, coarse filter risk assessments for the CC and NC undertaken for G2G decisions; updated current condition associated with JSP risk allocation scenarios). The purpose of this project is to provide a formal, peer reviewed status report on the current condition of key ecological indicators, using best available information.

Specific objectives of the project are to:
- To create a final, formally approved, up to date (and updateable) peer-reviewed /analysis of conservation status, current condition and alteration potential (i.e. threats) for key ecological indicators
- To provide subregional context related to distribution and condition of key ecological indicators for individual DSPs

Specifically, the project will assess the conservation status, condition and future alteration potential (i.e. threats) for the following indicators:
- Ecosystem types (site series surrogates)
- Focal/fine filter species habitats (e.g. grizzly bear, mountain goat, marbled murrelet, northern goshawk, Tailed Frog)
- Landform features (e.g. wetlands, estuaries etc.)

The assessment will build on existing data analysis but with a particular emphasis on seeking consensus from the contracting parties in capturing the most up-to-date and accurate information layers and data sets.

Data Sources

Ecosystem Types: The short timeline for this project requires that existing and available data sources will be used. An updated Forest Cover product is under development, and will be used if available by Feb 22nd. If this data source is unavailable at this time, the ecosystem analysis will be undertaken using the next most complete dataset. We expect it would then be updated where necessary based on data changes, once the revised dataset becomes available.

Focal Species: focal species habitat mapping is available for a limited number of species. These data will be used to compile information on extent of expected protection for these species, and information gaps identified. Where more detailed habitat suitability models exist and are available, results from this work will be incorporated into the assessments.

Landform features: existing and available mapping for these features will be included in the analysis as appropriate.

Products:

- The key findings of the analysis will be provided in a written, peer reviewed report.
- Where outputs are too detailed to be provided in report format, a user-friendly database will be provided.

Utility

The project is intended to provide subregional scale context on distribution and current condition of key ecosystem indicators. These would inform at a strategic scale:

- the further development of detailed strategic plans (DSPs) by each First Nation,
- PIMC discussions on implementation,
- spatial deployment of EBM reserves on-the-ground, and
- G2G discussions between First Nations and the Province related to the harmonization of DSPs and the full implementation of EBM.

Expected Use/User/Benefits

- Input to implementation monitoring via adaptive management framework
- Inform First Nation DSP planning activities
- Inform PIMC implementation discussions
- Inform First Nation and Provincial discussions related to harmonization of DSPs and full implementation of EBM.
- Provide strategic scale context for discussions re: co-location of focal/fine filter species reserves and landscape-level EBM reserves such as OGMAs

Key Tasks

- Compile focal species datasets and all other datasets required for the following projects: EI 02, EI03a and DS04
- Define detailed workplan that list all tasks to be completed by the contractor
- Undertake three streams of analysis and reporting, including:

i. Gap analysis – strategic level analysis (spatial) how much of the region's ecosystems and habitats are captured in the protected areas and reserve areas compared to any available identified risk thresholds (e.g. low and high risk thresholds for coarse filter biodiversity). Available habitat mapping will be assessed for its utility for use in providing this information.

ii. Condition/"Risk" analysis – taking into account what has been protected, what is the overall ecological condition of the region, and what risks remain to the long-term viability of systems and focal/fine filter species habitats (relative to identified risk thresholds).

iii. Threats analysis - where might short term anticipated activities increase threat to ecological systems and habitats relative to identified risk thresholds i.e. what proportion of habitats remain under threat or at risk of alteration? Existing timber supply analysis for the coast will be used to augment this analysis. Data differences between base information for timber supply and the final forest cover dataset provided for this project will be assessed to determine the applicability of the timber supply results. Gaps and uncertainties will be identified.

- Use database and analytical tools to create a final report on the current ecological condition of and potential future risks to ecosystems and habitats
- Submit report and analysis tools for peer review
- Submit final report

Responsibilities
- EBM WG Project Lead(s): Jody Holmes (RSP) and Glen Dunsworth (CFCI)
- Major partners = First Nation DSP Technical representative (e.g. Dan Cardinal, Grant Scott, Wally Eamer etc.)

Linkages to other EBM Projects or Initiatives
- Data Management Tool (DS01) needs to be completed and populated with key datasets required for this project and/or data needs to be shared from DSP datasets in order to undertake current condition analysis
- Subregional SELES scenario modelling and the spatial reserve collocation project (DS04) will use GIS inputs from this project as available and may provide baseline information.
- The outputs from this project will provide the baseline against which to undertake implementation and effectiveness monitoring (AM04)
- EI01 – 2nd Oldgrowth workshop will utilize current old growth condition outputs as a starting place to consider whether current land use objectives affect the ability to achieve low risk over time
- EI02– Domain expert reviewed focal/fine filter species habitat supply mapping and on the ground identified critical habitat will provide the final version of focal/fine filter species baseline information (and consequently, the project may deliver results in phases).

Peer Review Requirements
Peer review will need to occur throughout this project (methods, results, final report) and is likely to engage local experts who have high familiarity with the information and datasets. Potential reviewers could include:

Del Medinger – MoFR Research Branch (old growth)
Melissa Todd, Andy McKinnon
Louise Waterhouse – MOFR (MAMU)
Tony Hamilton (MOE Carnivore specialist) grizzly bears
Frank Doyle – northern goshawks
Rachel Holt?
Others?

Method of Implementation

     [X] Contract: GIS, Access Database, User Interface contractor(s)

     [X] Peer Review

     [X] Internal EBMWG Task

     [   ] Other: _____

Budget:
See detailed workplan.