



Coast Region FRPA Implementation Team

June 15, 2012

Professional Rationale Workshop January 25, 2012 Chilliwack District Response to Parking Lot Issues

Objective

Provide response to Chilliwack District (DCK) professional rationale parking lot issues/questions identified during professional rationale workshop.

Background

On January 25, 2012, a Coast FRPA Implementation Team (CRIT) working group¹ delivered the Chilliwack District Professional Rationale Workshop as requested by the local Forest Management Leadership Team (FMLT). During the workshop, a number of parking lot issues and questions were recorded for follow up.

Below is listing of parking lot issues and questions and corresponding response and suggestions provided by the working group. Refer to the *Professional Rationale Workshop Sponsored by the Coast FRPA Implementation Team (CRIT)* PowerPoint presentation for additional information².

- 1) *Clarification concerning what is considered a “must” in a written rationale and what can be considered a “may”; that is what must a rationale contain and what could a rationale contain? This is a question of mandatory verses non mandatory content.*

Response

For the purpose of identifying content, a framework for a written rationale is provided as guidance in the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP) *Guidance for Professional Quality Rationales and Commitment, September 2008*³ document. The document provides advice on what a rationale should consider and achieve.

When developing a rationale, the amount and type of content should be commensurate with the requirement to achieve the stated objective(s) of the professional decision or action. Not all written rationales will require the same amount and type of content. The speaking note at bottom of slide #9 or the PowerPoint presentation reminds us of this and warns against using a checklist.

Note; as with any other professional document, it is always advisable to include basic content items such as date, contact person and other information, etc. to ensure the written rationale can be tracked to the associated professional plan, decision or action as appropriate.

No action required.

¹ Working group members include Joe LeBlanc, Chuck Rowan, Guy Fried, Jack Sweeten, and Brian Taylor.

² http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/rco/stewardship/CRIT/CRIT_publications.htm

³ http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating_the_profession/documents/Pro_Quality_Rationales.pdf



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- 2) *There should be a clarification that rationales are not “justifications” for what you want to do rather they are an explanation of how you got to the decision you did.*

Response

A professional rationale represents the thought process that supports a resultant plan, decision or action. While the thought process may be documented after the fact, it is a process that occurs prior to the plan, decision or action taking place. After a plan, decision or action occurs, the rationale may also be used to review and understand any discrepancy between anticipated and actual outcomes. However, a rationale is not a tool for building a case supporting a desired outcome after the fact.

Action: include additional speaking notes under slide #11 of the PowerPoint presentation.

- 3) *What is meant by statement that rationale doesn’t have to guarantee success on slide #11?*

Response

Rationales are often used to manage risk to an acceptable level, i.e. the higher the level of risk associated with a plan, decision or action, the more important a rationale becomes. But, while as important as the rationale is in supporting a plan, decision or action commitment, it is not to be confused with the commitment itself. If the commitment results in zero or near zero risk, it is likely that there is no need to develop written rationale.

Action: include additional speaking notes under slide #11 of the PowerPoint presentation.

- 4) *What is the scope and scale of rationale requests and how are professionals in the Chilliwack doing in terms of;*
- a. Preparing rationales when required*
 - b. Preparing quality rationales when they have been done?*

Response

There are two avenues available to address this question.

- 1) The Association of BC Forest Professionals conducts practice review of selected members. The focus of the current practice review is on member compliance with professional practices of which professional rationales fall under.
Recommendation: DCK FMLT consider follow up with Brian Robinson of the ABCFP to determine if this question can be addressed through results of current ABCFP practice review reporting.
- 2) Utilize local FMLT group to canvas/survey participants on their understanding and use of professional rationales.
Recommendation: DCK FMLT group consider conducting professional rationale survey/questionnaire of participants and determine next steps (if any) based on results.
- 5) *Would like to understand how rationales are used throughout the different phases of forest management, i.e. strategic planning (MP), operational planning (FSP), tactical planning (site plan), CP/RP issuance, implementation, etc.*



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Response

Why and how a rationale is used to support a plan, decision or action is not significantly different regardless of the scope or scale, however, the scope and scale may influence the structure and content of a professional rationale. As an example, because board scale plans, decision or actions typically include more uncertainty and less detail, the rationale is more likely to include process to bridge information gaps and require more information/content.

Conversely, a plan, decision or action within a very specific and/or narrow scope and scale is more likely to rely on specified results and less likely to require extensive information/content, i.e. result is self evident.

Recommendation: DCK FMLT consider conducting a review of plans, decisions and actions common to the district as an exercise in determining why and how rationales would be used.

- 6) *How does a new professional deal with lack of practice and experience, i.e. it would be highly beneficial if the ABCFP could provide examples of good and bad rationales, as well as, rationales that link from the strategic (FSP) to the operational(SP) to the “on-the-ground” operations?*

Response

There are two avenues available to address this question.

- 1) The ABCFP complaint resolution process culminates with documentation and posting of a discipline case digest⁴. Many of these include examples of professional rationales concerns.

Recommendation: DCK FMLT consider conducting a review of ABCFP discipline case digest reports to address this question.

- 2) Develop peer review to help professionals gain experience from feedback from other professionals

Recommendation: DCK FMLT consider implementing professional rationale peer review process and build inventory of example professional rationales.

- 7) *Who can request a rationale e.g., another professional, a politician, a member of the public, or, a member of a NGO*
- a) *does it affect how a rationale must be prepared*
 - b) *does it impact what information is provided in a rationale*
 - c) *can we refuse request if request is not being made in good faith?*

Response

The short answer is that anyone can request information related to professional practice and the associated ABCFP professional is obliged to respond to the question consistent with the association's bylaws, code of ethics and practice standards. However, the response, as it relates to providing a professional rationale, will vary depending on the circumstances, i.e. the objective of the request. A documented professional rationale may assist the responding

⁴ http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating_the_profession/complaints/complaint_records.asp



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professional in developing his/her response but there may be reasons it is only provided in part or not at all, e.g. proprietary rights, technical data too detailed to reasonably address the request, it does not address the objective of the request, etc. The rationale remains the property of the professional to be used at his/her discretion in meeting his/her professional obligations.

Action: edit slide #8 of the PowerPoint presentation to include response in speaking notes.

8) *Would like more detailed guidance on rationales?*

Response

As identified in parking lot issue/question #1 above, the ABCFP has guidance that can be referenced. In addition, the CRIT working group is available to support district professionals dealing with specific scenarios requiring additional guidance.

Recommendation: DCK FMLT consider challenging local professionals to extend the discussion beyond the workshop (topic at FMLT meeting?) to identify specific scenarios requiring guidance and forward to the working group for response as necessary.

No action

9) *What kind of format can be used for documenting rationales?*

Response

Because situations and circumstances vary, there is no recommended format for documenting rationales. The developing professional should consider communication objective related to the intended audience and his/her business needs in determining the format, e.g. the format for a note to file will likely be much different than a FSP results or strategy rationale intended to be communicated to a statutory decision maker. For repetitive business processes, e.g. when developing rationale for Forest Planning and Practices Regulation s. 97.1, *Declaration regarding free growing stand obligations met to the extent practicable*, one suggestion is to develop a format template. Other example formats include, formal rational reports, memos, notes to file, email chains, electronic reporting, practice diary, etc.

Action: edit PowerPoint slide #9 and associated speaking notes.

10) *Clarification of the term "opinion" and when opinion will suffice verses a supported rationale? and*

How does professional experience impact the type of rationale that must be prepared or even if one needs to be prepared if you are highly skilled in a specific 'scope of practice'?

Response

Professional opinion and experience are valid and important components of a professional rationale. However, regardless of the level of professional experience or how much weight your professional opinion carries, the thought process that goes into a plan, decision or action rationale should be the same. What may differ is the extent of documentation. A professional with less experience will likely need to research and reference more information as part of a rationale compared to a leading expert.



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Action: edit PowerPoint presentation slide #4 speaking notes.

11) *When does a professional's responsibility for his/her rationale end?*

Response

Professional rationales remain valid documents for as long as the associated plan, decision or action remains in effect. Similarly, the professional's responsibility for the rationale will remain in effect to the extent that the plan, decision or action relies on the originating professional rationale. If at such time, the plan, decision or action is modified, the professional's responsibility for the rationale will be modified accordingly, i.e. if modified by the originating professional, he/she remains fully responsible versus if modified by another professional who will become responsible to the extent of the modification. To help track history, it is helpful to build modifications of a rationale into the original rationale document rather than create new rationale (or at least reference and keep copy of original rationale). If the plan, decision, action is not implemented over an extended time such that conditions and assumption change, then the rationale needs to be revisited. It will be up to the implementing professional to determine need.

Note: the ABCFP bylaws, code of ethics, practice standards, etc. provides some direction regarding professional responsibilities, e.g. in some cases, former members can be held accountable.

Action: edit PowerPoint presentation slide #4 and #11 speaking notes.

12) *Clarification/definition around the term "monitoring". What does monitoring require when you are proposing something outside of the norm in forest practice? There are extremes in interpretation and so a "sliding scale" clarification would be a great benefit.*

Response

In the context of professional rationales, monitoring represents one tool available to the professional to support the rationale (other tools could include research results/papers, applied education/knowledge, professional opinion and experience, etc). The format may involve including completed monitoring results as part of a professional rationale or include a monitoring commitment as part of rationale. The level and extent of the monitoring will vary depending on the nature and level of risk associated with the plan, decision or action being taken. As the amount of untested assumptions increase in your rationale and risk increases, then the need for monitoring (post implementation assessment, collecting data, monitoring over a period of time) increases. In higher risk scenarios, it may be necessary to make monitoring an accountable commitment, e.g. include as part of FSP result or strategy, to satisfy operational plan approval test.

No action required.