
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Sept. 11, 2015

Ministry of International Trade
Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.

B.C. invests \$2.2 million to promote new uses for wood

WHISTLER – The B.C. government is investing \$2.2 million in the Wood First program to promote the use of B.C. wood both locally and internationally, and help advance innovative wood-building systems and value-added wood products.

The funding is being awarded to six industry trade associations and institutions with proven records in research, development and marketing of wood products and skills training to carry out Wood First activities. They include:

- BC Wood Specialties Group – \$558,910
- Canadian Wood Council – \$770,109
- University of British Columbia – Centre for Advanced Wood Processing – \$359,166
- University of British Columbia – Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability – \$65,000
- FPIInnovations – \$428,928
- Design Build Research Institute – \$51,762

Funding from the Province will be supplemented with additional funds provided by industry.

Wood First is focused on advancing the use of wood in B.C. Since the program was launched in 2009, wood use in the mid-rise and non-residential construction sectors is increasing and recognition of wood as a preferred building material continues to grow. A recent survey of B.C. engineers, architects and builders confirmed that 40% are increasing the use of structural wood and 77% believe B.C. is well positioned to export its products and knowledge.

Building taller and larger with wood has also become more popular due to new innovative design and building methods. The Wood Innovation and Design Centre in Prince George, opened in October 2014, is now the largest contemporary wood structure in North America at 29.5 metres high.

The Wood First program is managed by Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd., the province's market development agency for forest products.

This announcement is another step toward fulfilling the BC Jobs Plan commitment to develop local and international markets for B.C. forest products to spur economic activity and job creation throughout the province.

To keep B.C.'s economy diverse, strong and growing, since September 2011 the BC Jobs Plan has been building on the strengths of our province's most competitive sectors utilizing our educated and skilled workforce.

Quotes:

Minister of International Trade Teresa Wat –

“B.C. is known around the world as a supplier of world-class, environmentally friendly forest products. We are proud to invest in the future of B.C.’s forestry industry by supporting organizations in their effort to develop wood product innovations for domestic and international markets. These innovations will be especially attractive for priority markets in Asia, the U.S. and emerging markets in Southeast Asia and India.”

Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson –

“Product innovation and value-added processing is generating more value for British Columbians from each tree harvested, ensuring that B.C.’s forest sector continues to be a leading contributor to the B.C. economy.”

Iain Macdonald, managing director, University of British Columbia Centre for Advanced Wood Processing –

“The Wood First Program is playing a key role in advancing B.C.’s wood products industry by building new business and technical capacities in companies, transferring leading-edge technologies and practices, and connecting partners along the supply chain to exploit new market opportunities. B.C.’s future as a leader in advanced timber construction has never looked brighter.”

John Gillis, chairman, BC Wood Specialties Group –

“The Wood First Program has been instrumental in positioning wood as preferred building material and British Columbia as a global leader in wood use and innovation. The capacity building programs, which are a part of Wood First, have made B.C.’s value-added wood products manufacturers stronger and better able to compete in global markets.”

Quick Facts:

- B.C.’s total forestry GDP reached \$7 billion in 2014 and the sector continue to represent one of the province’s top economic engines.
- Employment figures in the forestry sector have recovered from the low of 50,400 in 2009, with 60,700 direct jobs today.
- Forestry represents the largest export category in the province, accounting for 36% of commodities exports in 2014, up 5% since 2011.
- Wood has the smallest environmental footprint of all building products and is much less greenhouse gas intensive on a life-cycle basis than other building materials.
- B.C. has more forest certified by third-party organizations than any other region in the world, other than Canada as a whole.

Learn more:

www.BritishColumbia.ca connects B.C. companies and communities with international opportunities and promotes our competitive advantages to investors and decision makers around the globe.

Find out more about Forestry Innovation Investment at: www.bcfii.ca/

For more on the Wood First program, visit: <http://www.bcfii.ca/bc-forest-sector/wood-first/>

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contact:

Media Relations

Ministry of International Trade

250 356-7293

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND

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2015-16 Wood First funding recipients

Forestry Innovation Investment (FII) manages an annual competitive Call for Proposals process to fund activities aimed at advancing the use of wood in British Columbia. The following is a summary of the successful funding applicants (dollar amounts are based on recent estimates and are subject to change pending further review):

BC Wood Specialties Group - \$558,910

- Educate and train architects, engineers, interior designers and construction professionals on available B.C. wood products and their applications through lunch-and-learn sessions, group seminars, factory tours and a discussion forum.
- Promote building products and systems with value-added wood companies at trade events.
- Increase competitiveness, innovation and adaptability of individual value-added wood companies by improving their marketing and business development capability through assessments, site visits, workshops and conferences.
- Promote to municipalities the benefits of using wood in construction.

Canadian Wood Council - \$770,109

- Broaden wood design awareness through a wood awards program and participation in conferences and meetings of professional associations.
- Conveying practical wood design solutions through symposiums, seminars and design luncheons.
- Communicate sound wood construction practices.
- Provide technical support and advice to help convert non-residential projects to wood.
- Promote the sustainable attributes of wood.
- Support building and fire code changes that will facilitate the use of wood.
- Provide information to and supporting municipal staff and officials in developing wood-use policies.
- Conduct studies on issues and barriers facing several groups of stakeholders.

The University of British Columbia – Centre for Advanced Wood Processing - \$359,166

- Provide insights in wood construction and innovations to British Columbia's practitioners and manufacturers by bringing in international experts, organizing tours of facilities and projects to facilitate knowledge transfer, and by holding a dedicated workshop on emerging energy-efficiency requirements.
- Support value-added manufacturers in their development of new products through design, engineering, prototyping, testing and cost/benefit analyses.

- Foster collaboration between manufacturers and industrial designers in various sub-sectors of the value-added wood industry through organizing a series of networking meetings.
- Expand the application and provision of advanced timber processing technology through consultations, company-specific projects and workshops.

The University of British Columbia – Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability - \$65,000

- Study and document the processes for planning, design, construction bidding and procurement of a proposed innovative tall-wood building project.

FPIInnovations - \$428,928

- Improve entrepreneurial skills of small- to medium-size wood products manufacturers by improving their capacity to adopt new manufacturing technologies and develop new products through technology transfer projects, technical assessments, workshops, webinars and face-to-face outreach activities.
- Conduct fire tests to demonstrate the validity of wood-concrete composite floor systems and cross-laminated timber panels as practical alternatives to non-wood construction approaches.
- Strengthen the wood-building manufacturing sector by identifying opportunities for and barriers to the application of offsite manufacturing of wood buildings and components.

Design Build Research Institute - \$51,762

- Develop students into future users of wood by providing opportunities to translate design concepts into built objects and gain hands-on experience through design-build projects.

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