

DRAFT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL
MEM Communications

Day-to-Day Media Relations:

The Minister is the primary spokesperson for this Ministry and its Agencies, Boards and Commissions. The Minister has the right of first refusal for all media requests, but will often delegate responses back to a board, commission or agency representatives or subject matter experts.

To avoid overlaps, both parties agree to coordinate all media requests with GCPE-MEM using the following process when a reporter calls.

1. Thank the reporter for the call, and write down their name, contact information, the time of call, the deadline, and the nature of the call and ask what prompted them to call.
2. Tell the reporter you will look into it and that someone will give them a call back before their deadline.
3. Send an email adhering to the following template and include any background information you think would be helpful to Jake.Jacobs@gov.bc.ca with a cc to Paul.Woolley@gov.bc.ca. If you need to call Jake, his number is 250- 250 952-0628

TEMPLATE

SUBJECT LINE: Media Request: followed by the media outlet's name and the topic or issue.

<u>Date/Time:</u>	(Give date and time of call – when rec'd)
<u>Deadline:</u>	(When does reporter need information/ interview?)
<u>Media:</u>	(Media outlet's name)
<u>Reporter/Contact #:</u>	(First and last name, telephone number and email address)
<u>Topic:</u>	(What does the reporter wish to discuss – i.e. housing announcement or report issued by third party organization)
<u>Questions:</u>	(Ask the reporter for specifics – i.e. the reporter wants statistics or they want reaction to a report calling for more social housing)
<u>Suggested Response:</u>	(Please provide, if possible, up to six key messages or pertinent facts – i.e. there are XX,XXX provincially subsidized housing units in B.C. as of April 2011)
<u>Background information:</u>	(If there is any further information relevant to the request, please provide it here)

By providing all necessary response points, background and key messages when submitting a media request, you are ensuring quick turn around.

When asked to respond back to a reporter on background, on behalf of the Minister, unless agreed upon prior to responding, please impress upon the reporter that this information can be attributed to a spokesperson from your organization, but not to you personally.

Exceptions can be made for going on the record such as when it is agreed a CEO of Crown should respond publicly, or any similar senior leader within the Ministry or Crown, but there should be agreement on the approach up front before the reporter receives a response.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATIONS BRANCH CONTACT LIST:

			Office	Cell
Corinna Fillion	(1 st Contact)	Director, Communications	250 356-2007	250 812-7977
Shae Greenfield	(2 nd Contact)	Manager, Media/Issues	250 356-1639	250 508-8403

1. OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) values an open, positive relationship with the print and electronic media in British Columbia and across Canada. The ministry is proud of its accomplishments and the work of our staff. The media can be our most important community partner in getting this information to the public. Government Communications and Public Engagement (GCPE) is the arm of government that co-ordinates communications activities for all ministries. GCPE is the ministry's focal point for media contacts and responses. However, every ministry employee plays a part in making the media policy work.

To tell our story well, to protect the privacy of ministry clients and children in the ministry's care and to help the media do their job, we must take an organized approach to media relations. Effective internal communication is critical in presenting a professional and accountable face to the media and public.

While many British Columbians receive their impressions of this ministry through direct contact with staff, most know us only through television, radio, newspaper and magazine reports. It is in the best interests of all staff to contribute to a ministry-wide communications policy that provides the media with accurate, timely and consistent information about our mandate and work.

MCFD is a large, decentralized organization that serves the complex personal needs of thousands of families and children, often during a vulnerable time in their lives. This makes it a challenge to be consistently accurate and responsive to the public and the media, particularly when we have the additional need to maintain the privacy of our clients and the children in our care.

The factor that often keeps a communications issue from becoming a crisis is the speed with which accurate information is provided to the reporter pursuing the story. GCPE works with the Minister's office, the deputy minister's office, the executive and staff throughout the ministry to ensure reporters receive accurate and timely information on stories about the delivery of programs.

It is important to note that, when providing information to the media, **the Minister has the right of first refusal on all interviews**. If the Minister and/or deputy minister chooses, he or she may delegate (through the communications director) a ministry staff person to speak to the reporter and relay program information. This could be someone from GCPE; or communications staff may arrange for a spokesperson within ministry headquarters or from field staff.

GCPE oversees the release of all information to media by the ministry to ensure that:

- 2. The message is current, accurate and consistent;**
- 3. The message is expressed succinctly in the context of the question being asked by the reporter.**

2. POLICY

Good media relations are part of everyone's job, and are critically important in the age of electronic communications. A local story can become a provincial or national story in the time it takes a reporter to make a telephone call. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities save time and confusion.

- Ultimate responsibility for ministry communication rests with the Minister and the deputy minister.
- The Minister is the only spokesperson.
- The Minister may delegate his/her authority as spokesperson to experts within the ministry. This authority is delegated through the deputy minister and the director of communications. Assistant deputy ministers, the provincial director of child welfare, program directors and senior regional staff may all be called upon to act as spokespersons for their areas of expertise and responsibility.
- Staff who are experts on their own programs and activities may be designated as spokespersons for their offices or areas, with the concurrence of their director, ADM and the director of communications.
- A primary responsibility of GCPE is the management of communications issues. Good internal communications are essential to effective issues management. Effective issue management also relies on:
 - predicting areas of media interest;
 - gathering the relevant information beforehand instead of scrambling for information to meet reporters' deadlines, or missing the chance to tell our story at all;

- identifying the appropriate spokesperson without compromising a program participant's right to privacy or expanding the story to areas not relevant to the original question; and
- good working relationships with communications branches in other ministries and agencies with whom MCFD co-operates in service delivery.

GCPE is responsible for helping everybody pull it all together.

3. COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

3.1 THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT

Often, major media will call GCPE directly. However, some reporters, and especially regional reporters often contact headquarter staff or regional staff directly. In these cases, staff has a vital role to play as the media's first point of contact with the ministry.

WHEN THE MEDIA CALL:

1. Be courteous, business-like and helpful. The ministry wants to reach the reporter's audience.
2. Find out and write down the reporter's:
 - name and phone number;
 - employer (radio or TV station? newspaper? freelance?);
 - question(s) or general area of inquiry; and
 - deadline (how quickly do they need the information?).

At this point, you may directly refer the reporter to Shae Greenfield at 356-1639.

3. Immediately provide the above information to your director. He or she will contact GCPE and the issue management team.

WHEN THE MEDIA ARRIVE UNEXPECTEDLY:

1. If the reporter arrives at an office serving ministry clients, and is carrying a camera or is accompanied by a video camera, politely explain that these are not allowed in ministry offices without prior permission, as we are legally obliged to protect the privacy of our clients.
2. Have someone escort the reporter to another area.
3. Contact your director. He or she will establish who the reporter represents and what information he/she wants, and then contact GCPE electronically or by telephone at 250 356-0233. GCPE will assist the director and his or her staff to deal with the reporter in the most appropriate manner, according to specific circumstances.

3.2 ALL STAFF: PROACTIVE PROCEDURES

If you notice a pertinent local news story, are questioned by a reporter, determine an issue that could be raised in Question Period in the Legislature, or know that a case is sensitive or controversial and likely to draw public attention, it is important to inform your immediate director. They are to contact GCPE.

The information needed by GCPE includes:

- The name of the issue, case, program, or situation
- The name of the reporter/media outlet
- The telephone number of the reporter
- A brief summary/background of the issue
- Ministry contact information

GCPE must be alerted so that there is sufficient time to compile the information needed for a comprehensive response.

Please either email the communications director Corinna Fillion and/or the communications issues manager Shae Greenfield or phone Corinna Fillion: 250 812-7977 and/or Shae Greenfield: 250 508-8403.

Ongoing positive news coverage is important to the ministry. GCPE appreciates all tips and information that could be used to generate good news stories. If you have any local good news, or any information you think the media should have, call or contact GCPE.

3.5 MINISTRY STAFF AND "EXTRA-CURRICULAR" MEDIA INTERVIEWS

In their private lives, ministry staff are often involved in community organizations or personal activities which have a public focus. Because their knowledge, skills and abilities often make them prominent in these activities, they may be asked to speak to the media on behalf of groups or organizations.

In general, no MCFD employee should serve as media spokesperson for any community organization dealing with issues relating to the ministry. Neither the public nor the media is likely to discern the difference between the roles of a person who serves simultaneously as an MCFD employee and a community spokesperson. Such activity is almost certain to place the employee in a perceived conflict of interest.

The British Columbia government's standards of conduct policy for public employees states:

"Employees are to avoid entering into public political debate or advocacy regarding their ministry's policies." It also states: "...particular caution is required when an employee makes any public comment under circumstances where his/her position could be seen to lend weight to the opinion expressed."

If you find yourself in a position where you must speak to the media about any matter outside your public service duties:

- notify your director;
- secure his or her permission; and
- ensure that GCPE is informed in advance about the nature and purpose of your interview.

Media Relations | GCPE – Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Objective: To ensure media requests are responded to quickly and accurately.

The Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is the primary spokesperson for the Ministry. However, GCPE staff or program staff may be asked to reply.

MEDIA CALLS

1. Receive media request.
2. Get the reporter's deadline and contact information, and ask what he/she needs. Collect as much detail as possible. The more context we have, the easier it is to accurately respond.
3. Compile the information on a media request template. Include recommended messages and background whenever possible (*A copy of the template is filed under Issues/MOF Procedures*).
4. Send the request to Vivian, with a cc to GCPE FLNR Media Requests (FLNRO.MediaRequests@gov.bc.ca). The subject line should include the media outlet and topic, i.e. Media Request, Value-added Strategy, Vancouver Sun.
5. After conferring with Vivian/Dave, line-up program expert to call reporter back, or provide responses back to reporter. On e-mail responses to reporter, bcc: FLNRO.MediaRequest@gov.bc.ca

Requests to speak to the Minister are usually forwarded to the Minister's Office by Vivian. She sends to Bruce.Strongitharm@gov.bc.ca, Carleen.Kerr@gov.bc.ca, and cc's you, Dave and GCPE FLNR Media Requests.

6. Minister will either respond or ask GCPE to:
 - Provide information on background;
 - Provide an attributable response; or
 - Organize a response from staff.
7. By 4 p.m. each day, compile a report of calls received and send it to the following: FOR HCO Staff list; Bruce.Strongitharm@gov.bc.ca; Carleen.Kerr@gov.bc.ca; Karen.Murry@gov.bc.ca; David.Karn@gov.bc.ca; Jennifer.Goad@gov.bc.ca; (*See Appendixes for sample reports*).
8. File a copy of the daily report to the drive under Media Reports/Daily Media Reports 2010.

GCPE FLNRO | Media Relations

C:\Users\dhayes\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet
Files\Content.Outlook\9E6BKDT2\Process_Media Relations 2012 doc.doc

TALK RADIO

1. Receive request for an interview.
2. Query the reporter on the subject and line of questioning. Find out who's hosting, when the interview will run and for how long. Confirm whether there will be guests speaking on the same subject before, after or during the Minister's interview. It's also a good idea to ask if a call-in segment is planned.

Note: Pre-tapes are an option if the Minister wants to do an interview, but is unavailable during the proposed time slot.

3. Send the details to the Minister's Office using the media request template. This email is essentially to see if the Minister is available/interested in doing the interview.
4. Once you hear from the Minister's Office, call the reporter to confirm the day-of call-in number, and whether the Minister should ask for someone specific. Forward those details to the Minister's Office along with final responses and supporting documents.
5. Advise GCPE Media Relations of the interview time and subject before 4 p.m. Send to Karren.Murry@gov.bc.ca and David.Karn@gov.bc.ca (See Appendixes for sample "heads up").

FIRE

The Wildfire Management Branch has its own communications team, but GCPE FLNRO is another point of contact, typically for issues that might arise, as opposed to situational fire updates.

A breakdown of roles/responsibilities between GCPE FLNR and the Wildfire Management Branch is updated in advance of each fire season.

RIVER FORECAST CENTRE

During spring freshet, the River Forecast Centre is popular with media. There are only three staff, so typically, during spring freshet, send Dave.Campbell@gov.bc.ca an e-mail in the morning asking about his availability for media that day. He will advise whether to send calls as they come in, or which hour he is free to return calls.

Take reporters name and number and advise what time Dave will be able to call back that day. Send one e-mail with all media requests to Dave. Cc: Wenda.Mason@gov.bc.ca on all media requests to Dave.

MEDIA REQUEST INBOX

GCPE FLNRO | Media Relations

C:\Users\dhayes\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet
Files\Content.Outlook\9E6BKDT2\Process_Media Relations 2012 doc.doc

Everyone in GCPE FLNRO has access to the Inbox. It helps track inquiries and is an excellent archive.

MONTHLY REPORTS

At the end of each month, submit an excel spreadsheet of all calls to Karen Murry at GCPE Media Relations. Copies are filed under Media Reports/Monthly Media Calls.

Note: The spreadsheet has a column for the time each call is received. Easiest thing is to keep a copy of the spreadsheet on your desktop and fill it in as you go.

Appendixes

FREQUENT REPORTERS

Gordon Hamilton (Vancouver Sun): 604-605-2160, ghamilton@vancouver.sun.com

Larry Pynn (Vancouver Sun): lpynn@vancouver.sun.com

Robert Barron (Nanaimo Daily News): 250-729-4234, rbarron@nanaimodailynews.com

Rod Link (Terrace Standard): 250-638-7283, newsroom@terracestandard.com

Cam Fortems (Kamloops Daily News): 250-371-6149, cfortems@kamloopsnews.ca

Judith Lavoie (Times Colonist): 250-380-5349, jlavoie@tc.canwest.com

Jim Harrison (Radio NL): 250-571-5222

SAMPLE DAILY REPORT

Complete

CBC Kamloops (Josh Page) – Requested interview with wildlife biologist about cross-breeding between mule deer and white-tailed deer. Done.

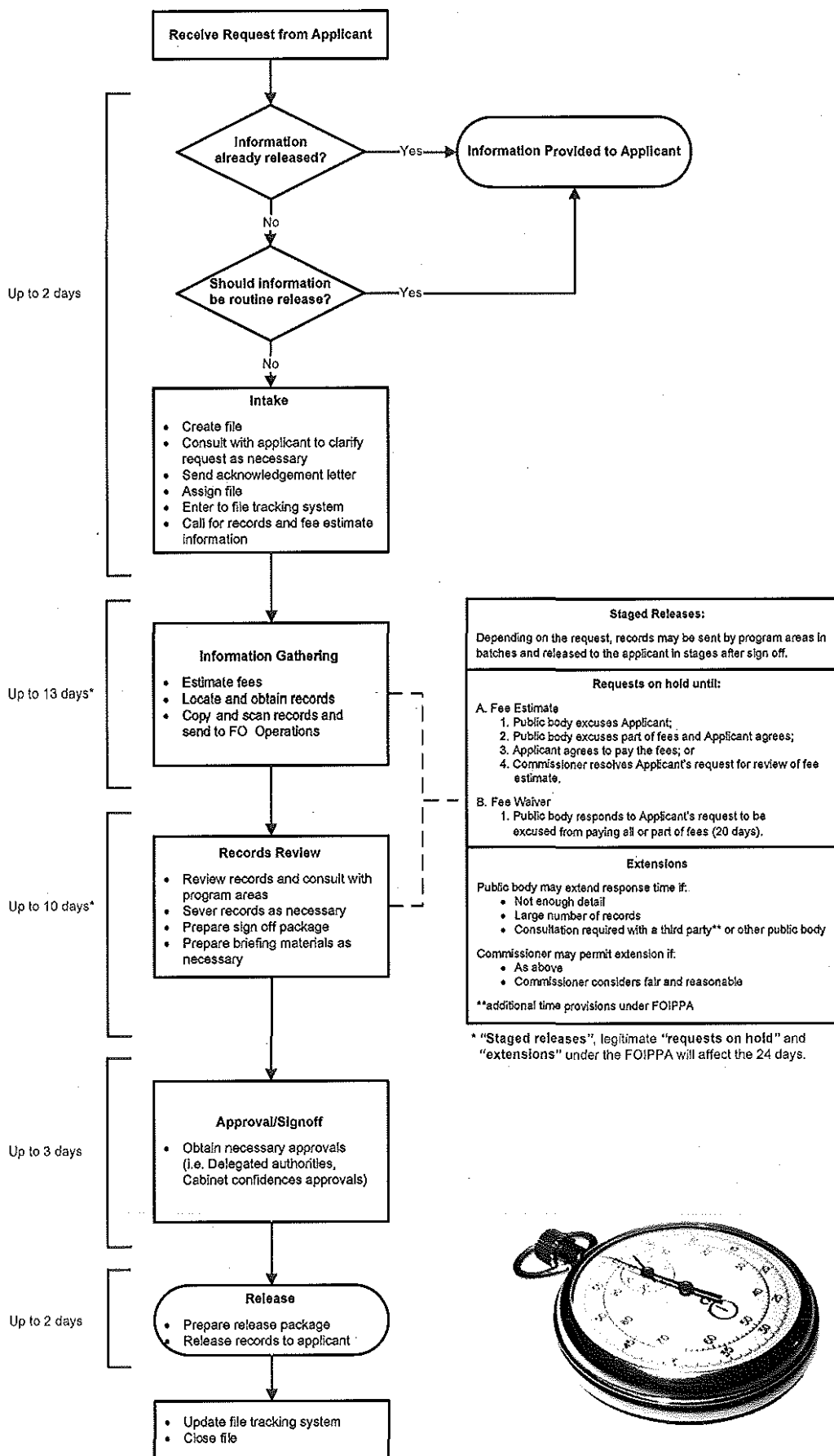
Requests in progress

Valley Voice (Jan McMurray) – Looking for update on NRRA, new public consult documents to be posted soon, following up Tuesday.

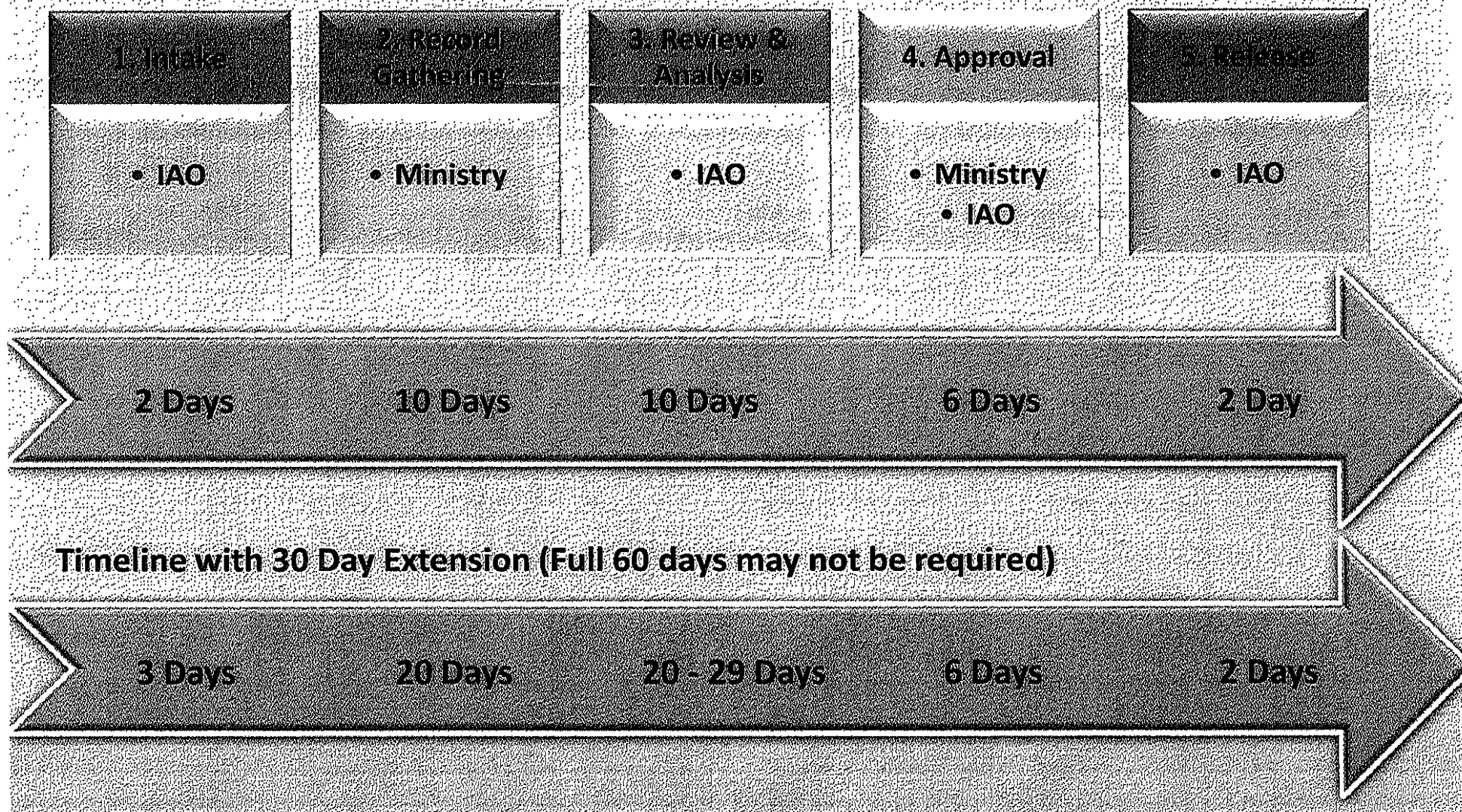
TALK RADIO/HEADS UP

Minister is booked for CFAX 1070 at 4:45 p.m. Ten-minute interview will cover: update on Asian markets, and follow-up on BC Forest Professionals' annual conference in Prince George Feb. 26.

Freedom of Information Request Process Steps and Timelines



Cross Government Requests



General Requests

