



FIA Band System

The [Forest Inventory and Analysis](#) (FIA) program of the USDA Forest Service is committed to increasing and improving the level of consistency in all stages of its [national core inventory system](#)—planning, data collection, photo and image interpretation, information management, compilation, analysis and reporting. This can only be accomplished by close communication and cooperation among all internal regional FIA personnel and external partners. This communication is achieved through FIA’s “Band System.”

FIA Band System

The Band system is comprised of a set of technical committees. The term “Band” is synonymous with “Team” or “Group,” and is used to uniquely identify these special FIA committees. The Band system was formed by FIA leadership to provide a forum whereby technical experts in FIA, the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, and State agencies across the U.S. work together to produce one nationally consistent, efficient, and complete FIA program. As a secondary benefit, the Band system allows colleagues with similar interests and abilities to share information about their experiences in conducting regional FIA surveys.

Each Band is tasked to apply its technical skills to identify weaknesses and inconsistencies in the FIA program, and to develop strategies to resolve problems. Bands review each other’s work and ideas for system improvements and provide feedback with respect to their area of expertise.

Band-to-Band (inter-band) and within-Band (intra-band) interaction is essential to the process. Band members communicate regularly via e-mail, virtual meetings, and periodic in-person meetings. Weekly meetings are held for Band Leaders (also known as the Band Leader Group) to discuss and resolve inter-band issues. Bands also maintain their own cloud-based filesharing platform to ensure effective and efficient communication. Some examples of file-sharing and information sharing include documentation on meetings, current issues, completed work and projected workplans. A Band Conductor/Coordinator oversees and orchestrates the entire Band system, facilitating Band harmony and ensuring that their work is collaborative successfully progresses.

Chartered Bands

At present, there are four chartered Bands which are supported by FIA Leadership. Each Band has an established Core Group within each Band, comprised of FIA regional group leads. Each Band periodically revises their charters to ensure updated function and direction of the Band. FIA Leadership supports each Band by providing a “sponsor” to facilitate communication with FIA Leadership and ensure Band work is consistent with strategic direction.

[Analysis and Reporting Band](#)—is charged with identifying FIA data needs and then converting the data into information for issue- and client-based analyses that address the extent, condition, health, and sustainability of the Nation’s forested ecosystems. This includes developing and designing reporting templates for the early years of annual inventories and the completion of periodic inventories. This Band is also responsible for developing comprehensive 5-year analytical reports that address the longer-term needs of state, regional, national, and international users.

[Data Acquisition Band](#)—is charged with taking FIA data needs identified by the Analysis Band and developing, testing, and documenting the most efficient and consistent standard approaches to collecting the data in the field for [Phases 2 and 3](#) of the inventory. This includes developing and maintaining the National Core Field Guide, training and safety programs, and quality assurance techniques.

[Information Management Band](#)—is charged with developing and maintaining a UNIMS for core FIA and regional data. The Universal National Information Management System (UNIMS) includes standard procedures for data collection, editing, validation, compilation, and reporting of internal and external databases. They also develop web applications for data distribution to outside users.

[Techniques Research Band](#)—is charged with improving the efficiency, timeliness, and quality of the FIA program by addressing appropriate problem areas. The Band focuses on expanding the existing methodologies and product lines by identifying and testing new technologies and techniques in a nationally coordinated fashion.

Band Membership

In addition to the Core membership of group leads from each of the FIA work units (Anchorage, AK; Knoxville, TN; Ogden, UT; St. Paul, MN; and Portland, OR), other regional FIA staff participate in the Bands. A state representative is appointed by each of the three National Association of State Foresters (NASF) regions—North, South, and West. State and Private Forestry, and National Forest System each appoint one or more

FIA BANDS

Analysis

Data Acquisition

Information Management

Techniques Research

FIA REGIONAL PROGRAMS

National

National FIA Program Manager
USDA Forest Service
National Office
Inventory, Monitoring, &
Assessment Research
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Northern (NRS FIA)

1992 Folwell Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108

Southern (SRS FIA)

4700 Old Kingston Pike
Knoxville, TN 37919

Rocky Mountain (RMRS FIA)

507 25th St.
Ogden, UT 84401

Pacific Northwest (PNW FIA)

620 SW Main, Suite 502
Portland, OR 97205

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members. Each Band also has a representative from the FIA Management Team and may also add extra members, as needed. A Band Leader (regional group leads rotate this position), provides direction and guidance on Band business and serves as the Band's liaison to the FIA Management Team and to the Band Leader Group, composed of Band Leaders from each Band.

Current Band Priorities

Analysis:

- Create national standards for volume, biomass and carbon estimations. Continue refinement of core reporting format and guidelines.
- Develop standards and procedures for nationally consistent quality assurance analyses.
- Identify other critical tasks that will influence completion of above products or ability of analysts to complete standard analysis and reports.
- Serve as FIA focal point for addition of new attributes and development of new indicators.

Data Acquisition:

- Update and maintain FIA National Core Field Guides.
- Develop a Quality Assurance (QA) software program in conjunction with the Information Management Band, with the capability of producing an FIA QA plot score. This scoring system will help identify training needs as well as provide a way to compare QA standards nationally.
- Continue work to refine a comprehensive national training program and quality assurance field methodology.
- Work with other bands to continuously identify consistency issues that affect quality and update/change as necessary.

Information Management:

- Support the Data Acquisition Band (DAB) in the planning, prefield, collection and quality checks of data by providing IM systems to support these activities.
- Support the Analysis Band (AB) and Techniques Research Band (TRB) by providing IM systems to facilitate the preparation of the data for reporting and analytical studies.
- Update and maintain UNIMS compilation system and public FIA databases to accommodate changes.
- Continue development and enhancement of data tools available to the public and make available on the [FIA National Website](#).

Techniques Research:

- Improve FIA estimations and product lines by incorporating new remote-sensing and statistical techniques
- Develop tools and products to address questions outlined in the [2014 Farm Bill](#) including enhanced timber product output monitoring, improved carbon/biomass estimates, enhanced forest and woodland owner studies, enhanced land use/land cover research
- Provide a forum for sharing knowledge, skills and tools which will help scientists advance both individually and collectively.