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**July 11, 2022**

**RDI's Brief List and Discussion of Selected Changes / Distinctions / Clarifications:  
VIA Handbook 2022 vs VIA Guidebook 2001**

**Forward**

Pi Forest Professionals with sufficient knowledge, skill, and ability, who practice only in areas where their training and ability ensure competence, are required to ensure VQOs are met.

Indigenous people to be consulted and engaged (e.g. viewpoint selection, design).

**1.0 Introduction and Purpose**

VIA: a set of procedures and criteria applied to a proposed landscape alteration to estimate the level of visual impact and determine consistency with VQOs.

**2.0 VIA in Context of FRPA**

p. 6 Under FRPA, the requirements for managing visual quality are specified in regulation. FRPA is a results-based framework and FSP holders are required to specify results or strategies that are consistent with established VQOs in order to comply with Due Diligence obligations. The Standard of Care will vary with visual sensitivity, VQO, and visual vulnerability.

**3.0 VIA Procedures**

P. 9 VIA is a 5-step process. Best practices are presented for each step.

P. 14 Human eye equivalent to 57mm lens (or a 38mm DSLR Nikon with a 1.5 crop factor - closest to a 35mm lens with that crop factor – see VIA handbook p. 47 or see <https://camlense.com/which-lens-is-closest-to-human-eye/>. Also note discussion on making panoramas on p. 33. No mention is made of a prior Ministry argument that the eye can only take in a single frame at one time and therefore no greater landform should be assessed. However, RDI has always argued the freedom of the human eye to rapidly move, and the head and body can turn to sort out and understand the landscape in its entirety while each landform prevails in the VIA.

P. 18 Landforms with multiple VSUs/VQO on same landform has no mention of merging for rationalization with the most restrictive VQO prevailing overall as has been RDI's understanding and frequent application in its VIAs. This approach should be discussed with the Regional VRM Specialist. As well, RDI quite frequently finds visible portions of landforms in its detailed simulations that were missed during the course VLI process. RDI usually adds the previously NVS area to the landform, assigning the prevailing VQO to the extended landform. This refinement procedure is not mentioned in the handbook.

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P. 23-24 Ocular estimate using FPPR Sec. 1.1 definitions is the most important measure. Descriptors “Ease of Seeing”, “Scale”, and “Shape” have been added to VIA Summary Table.

P. 26 Landform unit includes permanent human alterations such as gravel pits, mines, transmission corridors, but are not entered into the percent alteration of the landform. Similarly, alterations on private land are not entered into alteration calculations. Only bare ground is measured, not exposed tree trunks.

P. 29 adjusted VQC rating in response to design (see Summary Table, App. 1). The adjustment factors have the capacity to increase or decrease percent alteration calculations and final combined ocular and numerical assessment rating (p. 37).

### **Appendix 1. VIA Summary Table**

Though previously taught in training courses such as “Introduction to VRM 101” put on by the Ministry, the VIA itself now includes numerical adjustment factors to initial VQC category of alteration as per FPPR Sec 1.1 Categories of Altered Forest to determine if “Well met, Met, Inconclusive, Not Met, or Clearly Not Met”. The same numerical adjustment is also used in the FREP Visual Quality Effectiveness Rating procedure. RDI has been applying the FPPR/FREP approach in many of its VIAs since 2015 and is pleased to see this addition to the formal VIA process. RDI will be utilizing the new Summary Table in all future VIAs.

The table on page 45 (Appendix 1) placed the numerical ranges of the 2001 VIA Guidebook alongside FPPR Scale definitions “to help put parameters around the notion of scale”. They are described on page 23 as “a reasonable predictor” but subordinate to the ocular estimate, and “Most Probable Percent Landform Alteration in Table 2, p. 25. The heading is called: “% Altered (Policy)”. There is no discussion of what that policy is.

**7.0 Abbreviations** – presented on p. 42.

P. 44 **Categories of Visually Altered Forest** are defined.

P. 45 **Visiblness, Scale, and Design** categories defined.



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