

To: Lead Organizations for EPA RFP  
From: Ken Currens, Puget Sound Partnership Science Director  
Date: October 5, 2010  
Re: Guidance for addressing science and monitoring needs in the proposals.

Thank you for submitting a proposal in response to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Request for Proposals on Restoration and Protection of Puget Sound. The purpose of this memo is to offer general guidance for addressing science and monitoring as part of that process.

As you proceed with developing your applications, please remember that these EPA funds must support the science and monitoring actions necessary for strategic and effective projects to recover the Puget Sound ecosystem. Science and monitoring actions are part of the priority actions in the Action Agenda. A limited number of high priority science projects received one-time funding through EPA's 2010 Science and Technical Investigations Assistance Grants. However, EPA did not fund the Puget Sound Partnership to support science and monitoring activities through Science and Technical Investigations Assistance Grants or through EPA's Implementing the Action Agenda Grant. Consequently, to be consistent with a science-based approach to Puget Sound ecosystem recovery it is incumbent on those applying for grants to show a strong role and process for incorporating science and monitoring.

### **Science and Monitoring in EPA's Request for Proposals**

Science and monitoring activities are specifically listed in EPA's Request for Proposals under "General Activities" (p. 7-8) and in each area of emphasis (p.10-15), including:

Under "General Activities":

- Consider "guiding principles for ecosystem management in Puget Sound" to develop and strengthen programs. One of the guiding principles is the use of scientific input in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies. Another is that actions should be designed so they can be measured, monitored, and adapted.
- Consider the Puget Sound Partnership Strategic Science Plan and future biennial science work plans.
- Coordinate with the Partnership and other Lead Organizations to develop and implement monitoring systems that measure ecosystem status and trends, program and project effectiveness, and cause-and-effect relationships.
- Develop data management systems.
- Work with the Science Panel and others to identify and address science gaps.

More specific science and monitoring activities are listed under each area of emphasis but this was not intended to be a complete list. The award process should address high priority science and monitoring needs identified in the Strategic Science Plan, the Puget Sound Science Update and future revisions of the Action Agenda and Biennial Science Work Plan. The process needs to allow for other needs that were not described in the RFP to be identified and evaluated based on their scientific and strategic merits.

## Guidance

Demonstrating strong and effective support for science and monitoring will ensure that we can meaningfully inform the implementation of the Action Agenda and enhance our performance in independent reviews of Puget Sound restoration, which we expect to occur in the future.

To this end, we ask that you consider the following in your applications, in addition to EPA's guidance on general and specific science and monitoring activities:

- Monitoring of implementation and effectiveness of actions and the status and trends of key threats and ecosystem components. The Action Agenda recognizes the importance of monitoring to evaluate progress toward ecosystem recovery goals and to track the effectiveness of management actions. As a start the Puget Sound Partnership has adopted high-level Dashboard Indicators ([http://www.psp.wa.gov/pm\\_dashboard.php](http://www.psp.wa.gov/pm_dashboard.php)).

Relevant near-term actions from the Action Agenda include:

E.1.1.4: Align monitoring and effectiveness studies to measure outcomes of key strategies, actions or groups of actions in the Action Agenda

E.3.2 Implement transition to a coordinated regional program for monitoring ecosystem status and trends, program and project effectiveness, and cause-and-effect relationships

- Identifying knowledge gaps and anticipating better measures of ecosystem components, human health and human well-being, and threats based on the development and use of logic models or results chains that link strategies, threats, and focal ecosystem components of the recovery program.
- Supporting scientific studies that address key uncertainties in reducing threats, setting targets, and improving restoration and protection actions.
- Designing and implementing an overall strategy for allocating funds for science and monitoring that incorporates competitive solicitation and technical review processes. Potential approaches include but are not necessarily limited to one or more of the following approaches:
  - Allocating a percentage of the total award as a *minimum* amount to be spent on science and monitoring with the Lead Organization coordinating and managing competitive solicitation and review of awards
  - Allocating a percentage of the total award to the Puget Sound Scientific Research Account. The enacting legislature that created the Puget Sound Partnership set up this account for this purpose and calls for the Science Panel to coordinate the awards (RCW 90.71.110)
  - Supporting key studies by the new Puget Sound Institute. The Science Panel is the technical advisory board for guiding the work of the Institute.

- Requiring that percentage of each sub-award be spent on science and monitoring
- Awarding science and monitoring projects that address high priority needs identified as part of a request for proposals for subawards in each topic area through a competitive process.

The amount allocated to science and monitoring will need to be decided by the Lead Organizations and be consistent with the needs for that topic area and the Action Agenda. By way of example, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, which was created in 1999 by the Washington State Legislature to provide grants to protect and restore salmon habitat and which does not have direct responsibilities to support scientific activities, has allocated approximately 17% of their funds to assessment and monitoring.

Again, thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this important. The Science Program at the Puget Sound Partnership is available to provide more specific guidance about focal ecosystem components, threats, indicators, and logic models as you begin designing your process for sub-awards. If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact me.