

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10
Puget Sound Action Agenda — Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads

Request for Applications

September 9, 2020

COVID-19 Update: EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19 clause in Section IV of <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

Federal Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 10

Funding Opportunity Title: Puget Sound Action Agenda – Implementation Strategies and Actions for Vital Sign Recovery Assistance Program

Action: Request for Applications (RFA)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R10-PS-2020-001

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 66.123

Statutory Authority: The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is §320(g) of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1330, Pub. L. No. 114-162, 130 Stat. 409).

Dates: The Request for Applications (RFA) opens on September 9, 2020 and the closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is November 9, 2020, by 11:59 P.M., Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) no later than the closing date and time.

Summary: This RFA announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible applicants that are interested in acting as Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads, referred to from hereon as “Strategic Initiative Leads” (SILs), in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), EPA, and other relevant parties. The primary roles of the SILs are to:

- 1) Award and manage subawards to support the implementation of the Action Agenda with a focus on Implementation Strategies, and maintain Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams (SIATs) to advise in investment-related decision-making;
- 2) Serve as Implementation Strategy Leads for Vital Signs related to the Strategic Initiative and form technical (e.g., Interdisciplinary Teams) and/or policy workgroups to develop, refine, adaptively manage, and operationalize Implementation Strategies; and
- 3) Participate in PSP and National Estuary Program (NEP) Management Conference processes and work groups. Proactively coordinate with Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) and tribal partners in order to accomplish SIL work.

SILs will also provide technical recommendations to the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference, develop and refine the technical criteria for selecting priority actions through deliberation with the SIATs, and select and manage subawards to implement the work endorsed by the NEP Management Conference. This work will be consistent with the 2018-2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound and any future Action Agenda adopted by the PSP Leadership Council and approved by EPA during the project period of this award. The 2018-2022 Action

Agenda can be found at https://psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php.

Funding Awards: EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for each of the three Strategic Initiative areas of focus described below for a total of three awards from this RFA subject to the availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. Funding for each award is expected to be provided incrementally over a five-year budget period with an initial total of awards of approximately \$15,000,000 (combined for all awards) for the three Strategic Initiative areas of emphasis for the first year and subsequent incremental funding through year five. Initial award amounts could vary among the three Strategic Initiatives based on the scope of each application and work plan and funding available from appropriations in year one. Each award could include up to five years of funding and an overall project period of up to seven years. Incremental funding after the initial period of the award is subject to future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, adequate and timely expenditure of grant funds, EPA approval of SIL workplans, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated federal funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$100,000,000 for the seven-year project period for all awards, subject to the availability of funding, the quality of applications, and other applicable considerations.

Initial funding will be awarded under federal fiscal year 2021 appropriations and, if applicable, subsequent appropriations, and the Clean Water Act, Title III, §320, (as amended). Successful applicants will be required to provide a non-federal match equal to the amount of federal financial assistance that would be provided in the assistance award, as described in Section III of this RFA.

Important Dates:

- **September 9, 2020:** RFA expected to be released and posted at: <https://www.grants.gov/> and at: <https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound>;
- **September 30, 2020:** EPA Region 10 hosts a solicitation webinar to address questions about the RFA;
- **October 9, 2020:** Applicants should have a current registration or have applied for registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) as well as having or applied for a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) registration. The process for obtaining both could take a month or more and both are required for applying to this funding opportunity. Applicants must also be registered in [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/) (<https://www.grants.gov/>);
- **November 9, 2020:** Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) by November 9, 2020 by 11:59 PM (EST). See section IV of this RFA for more details;
- **December 7, 2020:** Selected successful applicants are notified and negotiate a final work plan and budget for the application;
- **January 29, 2020:** Final work plan, staffing plan and budget negotiated and approved by EPA; and
- **March 1, 2021:** Award(s) made, subject to federal FY2021 appropriation and other applicable considerations.

The above dates are subject to change. EPA reserves the right to amend this solicitation. Amendments could be administrative (change of dates or location), technical (change in requirements), or affected

by the anticipated funding. EPA will post amendments on the web page for this solicitation which may be found at: [Grants.gov \(https://www.grants.gov/\)](https://www.grants.gov/) and [EPA Puget Sound NEP-Grants and Funding \(https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound\)](https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound). Please check the web site periodically for changes.

Cost Sharing/Match Requirement: Matching funds of 50% of the total project cost are required under this competition based on the requirements of Section 320 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §1330. Accordingly, EPA is requiring applicants to identify the non-federal match of 50% on Form 424(A). A 50% match means EPA will fund a maximum of 50% of the total project cost, which is essentially an equal cost share of the total project cost with the applicant. Matching funds can come in the form of cash and in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, etc., consistent with the regulations governing matching fund requirements (2 CFR §200.306) from your own organization and/or your project partners. Federal funds may not be used to meet the match requirement for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing their use.

The §320 assistance agreement recipient is responsible for ensuring that this match requirement is met. If a recipient's cooperative agreement structure includes multiple organizations which each receive a portion of funding, the combined match provided by those organizations must meet the §320 - 50% match requirement. Recipients of §320 assistance agreement funds are required to show how they will match those funds over the project period (i.e., the match must be verifiable and well documented and identified in the assistance agreement approved budget). At the end of the full project period, the total match provided by the NEP grantee is required to equal the total amount of §320 funds received during that period.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background Information and Program Summary

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Listing number 66.123 (Puget Sound Action Agenda: Technical Investigations and Implementation Assistance Program) to act as SILs for the Puget Sound Action Agenda ‘Strategic Initiatives’ in coordination with PSP, EPA, and other relevant parties. PSP is the lead entity of the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference and works closely with the EPA Puget Sound Program. Under the awards expected to be made under this RFA, and as further described below, in close coordination with Puget Sound tribes and LIOs, applicants would be expected under each Strategic Initiative area described below to identify, assess, prioritize, and refine the investment activities proposed by stakeholders through the Management Conference, and recommend to the Management Conference other actions needed to address the Strategic Initiative sub strategies in the 2018 Action Agenda and anticipated shared priorities identified by the Management Conference in the 2022 Action Agenda for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound.

Additionally, under the awards expected to be made under this RFA, applicants would be expected to make and manage subawards and implement Strategic Initiative work approved through Management Conference processes such as the Action Agenda and Implementation Strategies. Applicants would also be expected to serve as Implementation Strategy Leads and build on the efforts of the work to-date by turning from development to communicating, adapting, and operationalizing the Implementation Strategies while increasingly working across the collective body of work and employing systems-thinking.

EPA, Washington State, tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations have partnered for over 30 years to protect and restore Puget Sound through the Clean Water Act (CWA) NEP. The Puget Sound NEP Management Conference includes the program administrator, representatives of state and nations including tribes, regional agencies, appropriate federal agencies, local governments, affected industries, academic institutions, and the public. PSP has been designated by the EPA and Washington State as the lead State agency for the Management Conference for the Puget Sound NEP under §320. PSP is defined in State legislation to include the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel, and Executive Director with staff.

In 2008, PSP published the first *Puget Sound Action Agenda*, a strategy to clean up, restore, and protect Puget Sound. On July 15, 2009, EPA approved the Action Agenda as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Puget Sound under §320. Since then, there have been four updates to the original Action Agenda, including 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018. These Action Agendas can be viewed at: http://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php.

As described in NEP guidance and policies, the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)* for each NEP is intended to be a living document. As such, EPA has requested that each NEP review and update its CCMP every three to five years to keep the CCMP current and most relevant. The Puget Sound Action Agenda, the CCMP for Puget Sound, underwent a major revision that was approved by EPA in 2018.

As part of the 2012 update of the Action Agenda, three areas of focus were identified in the Action Agenda that would deliver the most progress toward ecosystem recovery for the funds and effort invested. Termed “Strategic Initiatives”, these three priority topic areas are expected to provide the foundation of the Action Agenda through at least 2022.

This RFA focuses on work to implement priority actions developed from the 2018 Action Agenda and to recommend and refine additional investment activities to advance environmental outcomes under the three Strategic Initiatives.

The next update to the Action Agenda and its work plan is scheduled for 2022. EPA's Puget Sound program will review the 2022 Action Agenda update as part of the required CCMP Approval process and ensure that Action Agenda work plan updates remain consistent with the three Strategic Initiatives.

The Action Agenda addresses each Strategic Initiative by setting targets for recovery- termed Vital Signs in the Action Agenda- that are based on scientific understandings of the ecosystem. A complete description of the Puget Sound Action Agenda Vital Signs can be found at: <http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/index.php>. The recovery targets are used to guide refinement and content revisions to the Action Agenda, recommend allocations of funding and other resources to specific strategies and actions, and evaluate Action Agenda implementation progress.

This RFA solicits applications from eligible applicants that are interested in acting, in coordination with the PSP, EPA, Puget Sound tribes, LIOs, and other relevant parties, as SILs for each of the following three Strategic Initiatives. These initiatives are summarized below:

This RFA solicits applications from eligible applicants that are interested in acting, in coordination with the PSP, EPA, Puget Sound tribes, and Local Integrating Organizations, and other relevant parties, as SILs for each of the following three Strategic Initiatives summarized below and that are discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this RFA. Applicants may submit applications for more than one Strategic Initiative area but may only submit one application to be a SIL per area. Each application must address only one Strategic Initiative.

- **Protect and Restore Habitat**

The overarching objective of the Habitat Strategic Initiative is to identify, protect, and restore the lands, waters, and ecological processes essential to Puget Sound communities, tribal treaty rights, and resources. Protecting and restoring damaged shorelines and salmon habitats along the rivers and streams that flow into Puget Sound is necessary to sustain the many beneficial uses of Puget Sound. A priority beneficial use is the protection and recovery of local salmon runs and the commercial, recreational, and tribal treaty rights associated with these valuable fisheries and their respective roles in supporting larger food-webs in the ecosystem, including Orca.

The 2018 Action Agenda and the 2020 Vital Signs update identifies four primary Vital Signs for protecting and restoring aquatic habitats under this Strategic Initiative including: estuaries, beaches, marine vegetation, streams, floodplains (including riparian areas and changes in hydrology), forests, and wetlands.

Associated actions under this lead area are likely to include: protecting habitats through regulations, protecting and restoring habitats through incentives, removing barriers to broader habitat protection and restoration efforts, more effectively managing land development from further degrading local aquatic ecosystems and contributing habitat types, and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign Implementation Strategies.

- **Prevent pollution from stormwater runoff from developed lands**

Many streams that drain into Puget Sound are threatened from stormwater runoff due to pollution

from impervious surfaces, altered flow regimes, and resulting habitat degradation. These stressors result in the alteration of the quality and quantity of water flowing in a stream channel such that organisms are exposed to more rapid and severe changes in water flows, elevated levels of contaminants, nutrients, altered channel stability, and morphology. In short, polluted runoff from roads, roofs, parking lots, other paved areas, and from working lands, is considered one of the biggest threats to the water quality of Puget Sound and its contributing streams and rivers. Although we have many tools, technologies, and practices for reducing stormwater pollution, we need to use them much more widely across the many local jurisdictions within the Puget Sound Basin.

The 2018 Puget Sound Action Agenda identified four primary Vital Signs associated with improving stormwater management, reducing impacts to receiving waters, and beneficial uses: improving overall water quality in fresh water, improving water quality in marine waters, improving the quality of associated bottom sediments, and reducing the levels of toxics in fish and aquatic food-webs.

Associated actions under this lead area are likely to include: taking a watershed or catchment-scale approach to managing stormwater by guiding changes in land uses and practices; preventing new runoff problems; fixing existing problems in a prioritized way; continuing to control sources of pollution; continuing to educate local communities, public utilities, and land managers; supporting the critical toxics and stormwater research necessary to effectively target policy interventions; and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign Implementation Strategies.

- **Protect, Restore, and Re-open shellfish beds**

Shellfish harvesting is a major economic sector in Puget Sound supporting over 3,200 local jobs and bringing in an estimated \$180 million dollars to the region each year. It is also a tribal treaty right and a treasured tradition for countless Northwest families.

But harvests are threatened by bacterial pollution that has closed more than 100,000 acres of Puget Sound beaches from commercial, recreational, and tribal harvest. The health of our local shellfish beds begins on the land, through reduction of pollution from contaminated runoff, failing on-site sewage systems, and emerging threats to shellfish beds such as microplastics and ocean acidification.

Supporting actions under this lead area are likely to include: preventing bacterial pollution through existing monitoring and regulatory programs; including Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) and with agricultural landowners; preventing pollution through local planning, incentives, and implementation of improved management practices; encouraging the recognition of the important beneficial use of shellfish; and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign Implementation Strategies.

EPA is seeking applications from eligible applicants and applicant coalitions to serve as leads for each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis described above. Applicants should clearly identify which Strategic Initiative area of emphasis they are applying for in their application submittal. EPA intends to select a *Strategic Initiative Lead* for each of the SIL areas described above. The selected Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads will have a common set of activities applicable to all three areas and each Lead will also have work activities and projects that may be unique because of the different technical requirements of specific Strategic Initiative sub strategies as identified in the 2018 Action Agenda, as well as future shared

priorities identified in the 2022 Action Agenda.

SILs will be expected to engage in Puget Sound Management Conference processes and to award and manage subawards providing financial assistance for activities implementing priority actions for Strategic Initiative Implementation Strategies and sub strategies identified or referenced in the 2018 Action Agenda, and shared objectives identified in the 2022 Action Agenda. SILs will be expected to work and coordinate together on a variety of tasks to ensure consistency, timely communication, and transparency on behalf of all three Initiatives.

While applicants may submit applications for more than one Strategic Initiative area, they can only submit one application to be a SIL per area (for example, they can submit separate applications for all three areas but they cannot submit two applications to be a lead for one area). A complete separate application must be submitted for each Strategic Initiative for which an applicant wants to submit an application. Each application must address only one Strategic Initiative and applications that address more than one Strategic Initiative will be rejected and determined ineligible for award under this RFA. If EPA receives more than one submission per area from the same applicant, they will be contacted prior to the review process to determine which one to withdraw. Each eligible application will be evaluated based on the process and criteria in Section V of this RFA and EPA intends to select the highest ranked application for each Strategic Initiative topic area for award.

Eligible applicants may be selected for more than one award. Managing more than one Strategic Initiative topic area would require a significantly higher level of diverse technical expertise, program administration experience, and increased subaward management and monitoring capacity.

Groups of two or more eligible applicants are encouraged to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA. Please note that even though only one entity can be responsible for administering the Cooperative Agreement and is held accountable to EPA per its EPA approved workplan, the applications are evaluated on the basis of the coalition and there is a strong expectation that the primary recipient will work with all co-applicants in a collaborative and not directive manner. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the primary recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be sub-awardees of the primary recipient from a financial standpoint. For SIL applicant coalitions, please describe how the coalition plans to collaborate and to bring out the best that each of the coalition partners has to offer.

Implementation Strategies

A key role of the SILs is to serve as Implementation Strategy Leads for Vital Signs related to the Strategic Initiative and form technical (e.g., Interdisciplinary Teams) and/or policy workgroups to develop, refine, adaptively manage, and operationalize Implementation Strategies. Implementation Strategies are plans for addressing pressures so that specific ecosystem targets for the Puget Sound Vital Sign indicators, which are adopted by the Leadership Council and the NEP Management Conference, may be achieved. They describe the sequence of steps, activities, intermediate progress measures, and the interim results needed to move closer to a recovery goal. Implementation Strategies are developed by Interdisciplinary Teams which include broad expertise, including ongoing programs, and serve as a collective vision of the roadmap to recovery. They are meant to serve as hubs where other plans (e.g., Science Work Plan, LIO plans, Orca Task Force recommendations, the Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan, etc.) are incorporated so that issues can be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Implementation Strategies assist in decisions about what to prioritize in the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and they help the Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams to hone those priorities and recommend and select specific investments to fund that will make the greatest difference in Puget Sound with EPA Geographic Funds. Aligning all work and ongoing programs with the strategies helps the entire Puget Sound community work toward common ecosystem goals.

To-date, EPA has funded collaborative processes to develop Implementation Strategies for a set of priority Vital Signs recommended by the Leadership Council. These include:

- Shellfish Beds (*Shellfish Strategic Initiative*);
- Estuaries (*Habitat Strategic Initiative*);
- Land Development and Land Cover (*Habitat Strategic Initiative*);
- Floodplains (*Habitat Strategic Initiative*);
- Shoreline Armoring (*Habitat Strategic Initiative*);
- Chinook (*PSP*);
- Freshwater Quality, B-IBI indicator (*Stormwater Strategic Initiative*);
- Toxics in Fish (*Stormwater Strategic Initiative*); and
- Marine Water Quality (*Department of Ecology*).

A tenth Vital Sign included in the Leadership Council's priority set is *Summer Stream Flows*. Lack of clarity about how best to proceed has prevented initiation of strategy design. Work is underway that is expected to inform this process, in the form of a Study Panel tasked to recommend how instream flows can be made sufficient for biological needs, given potential stresses expected such as human population growth. Finally, an Eelgrass Implementation Strategy was started as a proof of concept and currently exists as a recovery strategy.

B. Objective and Vision Statement

This RFA is aimed at supporting activities, broadened collaborations and communications to increase the Puget Sound Management Conference's capacity to successfully implement the current 2018 Action Agenda and to inform future modifications to that plan. The overarching goal of the Action Agenda is to restore and protect the Puget Sound ecosystem.

This RFA also emphasizes a greater level of effort to build upon the development and use of the Implementation Strategies assigned to the SILs throughout the 2016-2021 EPA Puget Sound NEP Funding Model in ways that will achieve the vision of Implementation Strategies as hubs for collaboration and collective thinking by all partners around the various sources and types of information for achieving specific Vital Sign targets and objectives. This, in turn, can be used to identify priority pressures, strategies, uncertainties, and barriers related to a specific Vital Sign.

Ultimately, this will provide a system where individual SIL teams have created Implementation Strategies that address one, or possibly more than one, Vital Sign objective and establish mechanisms for adapting, refining, communicating, operationalizing, and implementing the resulting strategies.

It will be essential to work with broad partner networks to identify ongoing programs, as well as propose new activities and programs, that can support the work identified in the strategies to address priority

pressures, and make connections across individual Implementation Strategies so as to identify common strategies and activities that will provide multiple benefits.

This approach will support a shift away from investing in Near Term Actions towards collective investment portfolios with greater synergy among activities, and where the outcomes are greater than the sum of each output. As part of this role, each SIL would be required to work with PSP to keep the information in the Miradi Share database system (<https://www.miradishare.org>) up to date. Utilizing the Miradi Share project management software will continue to be an essential work process for tracking and coordinating the collaboration among SILs and respective Implementation Strategy teams and the specific progress in implementing those strategies.

The 2018 Action Agenda contains sub strategies under the three main priority Strategic Initiatives discussed in this RFA. Related actions from the Action Agenda are prioritized to make the greatest progress toward ecosystem recovery targets for the time and resources spent, and balancing ecological, economic, and human well-being factors. The Strategic Initiatives help direct investments and resources and, along with Puget Sound tribes, LIOs, and other partners, help guide PSP's work with other partners to increase engagement, pursue implementation funding, seek policy changes, report successes, and challenges, and engage in the recovery effort. As identified above, the three Strategic Initiatives for which EPA is seeking "leads" for under this RFA are:

1. Preventing pollution from stormwater runoff by developing and implementing plans and practices emphasizing *Green Infrastructure and Low-Impact Development*. Strategies and actions are organized into six themes which should be addressed in each application:
 - a) Take a watershed approach to stormwater management by encouraging cross jurisdictional coordination and guiding land use changes and practices;
 - b) Preventing new problems, particularly in areas where there are strong development pressures in currently rural working lands;
 - c) Fixing existing problems in key watersheds;
 - d) Generally controlling sources of pollution associated with urbanization and road systems;
 - e) Collaborating with local stormwater managers both within and outside of NPDES permitted communities to educate individuals and communities about ways they can become part of the solution and reduce polluted stormwater runoff; and
 - f) Identify opportunities to influence Growth Management policies as they relate to stormwater management and downstream beneficial uses.
2. Protecting and restoring habitat by *focusing on systems of habitats such as re-connecting floodplains, re-establishing riparian corridors, approaching shoreline protection/restoration from a drift cell scale, and considering land-use patterns and controls*. Strategies and actions are organized into three themes which should be addressed in each application:
 - a) Protecting habitats through regulations;
 - b) Protecting and restoring habitats through incentives (including acquisition);
 - c) Removing barriers to restoration of key habitats such as shorelines (e.g. prevent and respond to invasive species and update goals for in-stream flow rates); and

- d) Identify opportunities to influence Growth Management policies as they relate to habitat and species protection and recovery.¹
3. Protecting, restoring, and re-opening shellfish beds. Strategies and actions are organized into four themes which should be addressed in each application:
- a) Preventing bacterial pollution of shellfish beds through existing regulations and programs;
 - b) Preventing bacterial pollution of shellfish beds through incentives, education, and outreach;
 - c) Supporting monitoring and diagnostic efforts such as PIC, onsite sewage systems, and livestock programs in shellfish watersheds; and
 - d) Considering the long-term implications of Growth Management policies in watersheds upstream of shellfish growing waters and areas.

The Action Agenda addresses each Strategic Initiative by setting targets for recovery (termed Vital Signs in the Action Agenda) that are based on scientific understandings of the ecosystem. These recovery targets are used to focus and guide development of strategies, policies, and actions needed to achieve the respective environmental outcomes as well as to inform needed revisions to the Action Agenda through adaptive management.

For each Strategic Initiative, SILs will lead the collaborative effort to identify and fund actions to be implemented in the near term, lead development of longer term sequences of actions identified through Implementation Strategies with an emphasis on working with partners to identify sustainable support through ongoing programs, recommend allocations of funding, and other resources to implement the specific strategies and actions and the evaluation of progress toward identified targets. SILs should play a convening role to bring together specific communities of practitioners to share best practices, lessons learned, and create space for developing specific networks of professionals who are critical to Puget Sound recovery.

It is important to note that seventeen of the 19 federally recognized Puget Sound tribes have formal natural resource co-manager status with State agencies in Washington. The ongoing programs mentioned above include tribal natural resource and environmental departments and all other programs that support the co-manager role. Leads will be expected to use appropriate mechanisms for reflecting tribal co-management status and ongoing programs in its efforts. In addition, and in every aspect of its Puget Sound recovery work, EPA recognizes tribal sovereignty and strives to uphold tribal treaty obligations and its trust responsibility to tribes.

In addition, SILs will work together to both broaden their scope to address issues that don't fit neatly into the three defined Strategic Initiative domains, including efforts to improve resiliency, Marine Water Quality and to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of land use change and habitat destruction. Efforts to address these broader indicators of ecosystem health will require collaboration and will result in cumulative positive effects across the Strategic Initiatives.

¹ Specific elements of habitat protection include guiding land use changes or practices to protect critical areas, building connectivities across habitats, preventing oil spills, and controlling invasive species.

Bold and creative systems thinking, innovation, structured decision making, and a focus on increasing the resilience of Puget Sound will all be required to accomplish the primary objective and achieve the vision of this RFA.

C. Eligible Activities: Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads and Scope of Assistance Program

This RFA is focused on supporting the functions that will enable efficient and timely implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda and builds the foundation for development of future updates to the Action Agenda.

There are common sets of activities applicable to all three of the Strategic Initiatives described in this RFA and there will also be activities and projects that are unique to each Strategic Initiative, as identified in the Action Agenda. These commonalities and differences are described below.

In general, the common set of activities include:

- Engaging in Puget Sound Management Conference processes and work groups;
- Serving as Implementation Strategy Leads;
- Working directly with tribes, LIOs, and other key partners to collaboratively develop processes related to prioritization and funding recommendations, coordinating amongst each other on communication, timelines, and transparency;
- The administrative activities and technical expertise associated with managing a subaward program to implement actions funded under each Strategic Initiative area; and
- Reporting on progress, outputs, and outcomes.

The unique components for each area or topics of emphasis will be the specific projects and activities that selected SILs will award and manage through subawards for implementing priority actions identified in the Action Agenda. The characteristics of these subawards will vary because of the different technical and programmatic requirements inherent in each of the three Strategic Initiative topics and areas of emphasis.

The organizing themes of work and examples of strategies and actions for each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis are listed in Sections I A and B above.

Applicants should describe in their application how they will address and/or perform the following:

- Activities common to all three SIL areas:
 - Manage the EPA Cooperative Agreement awarded under this RFA to accomplish Puget Sound Action Agenda objectives;
 - Work cooperatively and continually within and across SIL partnerships, with the EPA Puget Sound program, with PSP, the NEP Management Conference, the Tribal Implementation Lead, respective tribes, the Puget Sound Federal Task Force, and LIOs. Demonstrate how prospective SIL applicants would plan on working efficiently and effectively with Puget Sound tribes and stakeholders supporting the Strategic Initiatives to implement and refine the FY2021 Puget Sound funding model as released by EPA in February 2020. Additional information on this funding model can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound>;

- Work cooperatively and continually within and across SIL partnerships, with the EPA Puget Sound program, with PSP, the NEP Management Conference, the Tribal Implementation Lead, respective tribes, the Puget Sound Federal Task Force, and LIOs. Demonstrate how prospective SIL applicants would plan on working efficiently and effectively with Puget Sound tribes and stakeholders supporting the Strategic Initiatives to implement and refine the FY2021 Puget Sound funding model as released by EPA in February 2020. Additional information on this funding model can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound>;
- Work with the PSP and NEP Management Conference boards to provide expert opinion and recommendations to inform future modifications to the Action Agenda. Utilize technical expertise at a variety of scales and scopes to analyze results of related scientific investigations, ecosystem and project monitoring data, effectiveness monitoring, and other relevant sources of information, drawing upon feasibility, partnerships, and political savvy wherever possible. Support the PSP in its role as NEP Management Conference Lead by delivering time critical decisions and recommendations for Action Agenda refinements and updates;
- Lead the oversight of longstanding Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams that form the foundation of the SIL's assessment, technical review and advisory roles;
- Collaborate among the other SILs, PSP, tribes, tribal consortia, and LIOs to make technically supported recommendations of prioritization and sequencing of activities and investments in support of the operationalization and implementation of Implementation Strategies, in support of Action Agenda goals and objectives. Using analytical and Structured Decision Making (SDM) approaches, to help inform decision-making and directing allocation and sequencing of resources among basin-wide projects and to geographically specific actions;
- Regularly update necessary information in all of the required reporting networks, including PSP's Miradi Share system, Puget Sound Info, NEP Atlas, and national reporting of restored/permanently protected habitat acres and annual net change in shellfish conditions;
- Efficiently and effectively implement and manage a subaward program based on resource allocation decisions to support the Strategic Initiative that the award addresses and other related projects and actions described in this RFA. Subawards should be competitively awarded based on relevant criteria for achieving program objectives. Fair and impartial processes must be used to evaluate applications, using appropriate evaluation criteria, to make subawards. The subaward program should provide accountability, transparency, predictability, appropriately rigorous technical standards, and utilize federal funding efficiently by making subawards as soon as possible after federal appropriations are awarded;
- Work with the PSP, the NEP Management Conference, and with EPA to develop ways to synchronize, consolidate, and/or streamline the Action Agenda subaward processes so that an efficient subaward funding system and a consistent funding cycle is achieved for funding implementation of Action Agenda actions and projects;
- Monitor subaward performance to ensure that the subawards are achieving the objectives of the program and expected outputs and outcomes and are being produced in efficient and

- effective ways. Appropriately work with subaward recipients to ensure timely and expeditious use of funds to minimize the extent of unliquidated obligations (ULOs). Track and share progress towards meeting outputs and outcomes, utilizing the Puget Sound Fiscal Ecosystem Accountability Tracking System (FEATS) or other reporting mechanism as directed by EPA;
- Work with the PSP, the Puget Sound Management Conference boards and stakeholders, using the data and results obtained by the monitoring of previous subawards to adaptively manage the implementation and future updates of specific Implementation Strategies and the overall Action Agenda; and
 - Involve all partners early on in decision-making processes through strategic and priority-driven communication efforts (meetings, discussions, workshops, listening sessions, briefings, etc.).
- Activities common to all three SILs but which will be tailored to the technical and/or programmatic requirements of each Strategic Initiative’s area of emphasis and related subaward priorities:
 - As described in the Implementation Strategy guidance and additional protocols, lead the formation and oversight of technical workgroups as needed to develop or refine Implementation Strategies to achieve Action Agenda Vital Sign targets within the area of emphasis for each Strategic Initiative;
 - Work closely with the recipients of the Implementation Strategies-Science cooperative agreement on refinements to and analyses of the Implementation Strategies, and on innovative approaches for continuous improvement of both content and processes with the goals being: a) to connect across Implementation Strategies; b) to implement priority strategies; c) to broaden engagement with the recovery community, and d) to inform and influence Action Agenda development and implementation;
 - Work with PSP to develop and implement targeted and innovative communication, education, and outreach strategies to reach out to people and groups that are critical to the success of Implementation Strategies;
 - Fund and advance the priorities identified in the Action Agenda, Implementation Strategies, and the Science Work Plan to refine approaches, monitor progress toward and help achieve identified Vital Sign targets. Provide the level of technical guidance needed to ensure that subaward workplans are scoped to meet targeted environmental outcomes. This includes sequencing and targeting of analytical, planning and implementation activities that support Implementation Strategies for achieving respective prioritized goals. Provide evidence to the Management Conference that subawards are reflecting a multi-year or geographic sequencing planning process;
 - For sub-awards within each Strategic Initiative, incorporate processes to guide and solicit actions that study, evaluate, model, plan, and increase socio-ecological resiliency in Puget Sound ecosystem protection and restoration activities. SILs should apply their technical expertise where applicable to help sub-awardees to integrate resiliency adaptation into project design and implementation. These actions will be used to help and inform PSP’s Puget Sound program work to meet the Agency-wide requirement that all NEPs conduct a

- broad, risk-based assessment, and integrate resiliency considerations into their revised or updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans; and
- Work with EPA and PSP to develop and implement a shared communications strategy for NEP/Geographic Program investments that includes website(s), fact sheets, events, press releases, social media, and similar activities to share information, lessons learned and the value of the projects and programs supported by the SILs.

D. Strategic Plan Linkages, Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures

Pursuant to paragraph 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7A1, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to EPA’s strategic goals (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements](https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements)). EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs, environmental outcomes, and performance measurements to be achieved under assistance agreements. These linkages, outputs, outcomes, and performance measures are described below.

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA’s FY2018-22 Strategic Plan. Assistance agreements to be awarded under this RFA will be linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan Goal 1 Core Mission: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water and ensure chemical safety. Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water — Ensure that waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence activities.

Please read EPA’s FY2018-2022 Strategic Plan (www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan) for more information.

The priority of the assistance agreements is to ensure successful implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda as the approved CCMP under CWA §320.

Outputs

The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of expected outputs from the activities and project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Outputs that could be common across all three SIL areas:
 - Provide funding for projects that seek to support Implementation Strategies or NTAs identified in the 2018 CCMP/Action Agenda. The number of activities funded would be reported as a quantifiable output;
 - Provide subaward monitoring and performance reports and analysis to inform annual or biennial adaptive management processes; collaborate with PSP to implement adaptive management;
 - Enter information on a regular (e.g., weekly) basis into Miradi Share and other

- requested reporting formats;
- Staff facilitate and maintain long-standing Strategic Initiative technical and advisory teams including the SIATs;
 - Identify and recommend appropriate Vital Sign Implementation Strategies for development or refinement in Action Agenda planning cycle;
 - Form technical workgroups to adaptively manage Implementation Strategies for Management Conference adopted Vital Signs, and to communicate and operationalize the Implementation Strategies;
 - Identify and recommend to the Management Conference boards the appropriate Science and Monitoring activities critical to current implementation strategies and Near-Term Actions;
 - Manage the EPA Puget Sound assistance agreement to meet all required terms and conditions, including quality assurance and financial reporting and project performance monitoring;
 - Create and maintain SIL shared website "Partners in Puget Sound Recovery" with timelines, funding processes, funding recommendations, and up to date technical team lists. Also, project, program fact sheets, annual press releases, social media plans, etc;
 - Identify and recommend a set of initiatives and priorities for the Management Conference to work on operationalizing the Implementation Strategies, including tribes, LIOs, partner agencies, and the PSP Boards with a focus on engaging and working with ongoing programs; and
 - Ensure, through appropriate training, that staff teams are aware of and reflect an understanding of tribal sovereignty, trust, treaty, and co-management status and rights in Washington. Such training could include NWIFC's 2020 training offered to PSP.
- Outputs and activities that ***could be specific to a particular Strategic Initiative*** and associated subawards include but are not limited to:
 - Stormwater Strategic Initiative
 - County comprehensive plans revised, with a focus on protecting rural lands and preventing urban sprawl and land conversion that creates more impervious surfaces and generates greater stormwater loadings;
 - Cross jurisdictional planning and coordination to protect watershed-scale processes and conditions;
 - Emphasize Green Infrastructure design and Low Impact Development practices (LID) in planning, project design, and construction to reduce downstream impacts;
 - Workshops and trainings held for Puget Sound jurisdictions to improve stormwater management practices;
 - Resiliency planning or project construction to address stormwater impacts;
 - Toxics and nutrient reduction programs to reduce pollutant loading to

receiving waters through stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution;
and

- Address, in a comprehensive way, contaminants that have been proven harmful to Puget Sound aquatic life.
- Habitat Strategic Initiative
 - Number of volunteer stewards who are trained in oil spill response. The number of volunteers would be reported as a quantifiable output;
 - Broad coordination with other ongoing programs to target and support riparian protection and restoration at stream-reach and watershed scales;
 - Incentive programs to achieve net reduction in shoreline armoring;
 - Coordinated investment strategies developed/ implemented to maximize cross agency effectiveness for habitat restoration and protection, particularly floodplains and estuaries;
 - Invasive species control programs to preserve/restore native vegetation in important habitat areas; and
 - Implementation of Orca Task Force recommendations.
- Shellfish Strategic Initiative
 - Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) programs supported in Puget Sound watersheds;
 - Number of counties with onsite sewage system fees or sustainable (non-grant) PIC funding;
 - On-site septic inspections and repair programs or specific infrastructure upgrades;
 - Agricultural best management practices designed or installed to protect shellfish growing areas;
 - Public outreach and education activities conducted to help reduce unregulated pathogen pollution; and
 - Inspection and/or enforcement activities for pathogen pollution control.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI (C) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirements.”

Outcomes

The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be entirely achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Activities and projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce programmatic and/or environmental outcomes including but not limited to:

- Stormwater Strategic Initiative
 - Reduce number of water bodies identified on Washington’s Impaired Waters CWA303 (d) listing;

- Comprehensive stormwater management programs are established, expanded, and functioning in an increasing number of Puget Sound jurisdictions and watersheds;
 - BIBI scores are improved in Puget Sound freshwater streams.
 - Marine water quality monitoring shows reduced contamination from stormwater pollution;
 - Toxicity levels in marine species are reduced, particularly salmon, and orca;
 - Reduced area of impervious and compacted surfaces throughout the Puget Sound basin; and
 - Identify and implement strategies to reduce the conversion of working lands (agricultural and forest) to higher intensity or residential uses.
- Habitat Strategic Initiative
 - More restored acres of native riparian vegetation are gained than lost;
 - Increases to the amount of forested canopy cover in the upper watersheds of Puget Sound, protecting mature forested areas wherever possible;
 - Improved ecosystem functioning in priority habitat areas, such as floodplains;
 - Habitats in rural areas are protected from sprawl and restored to the of benefit of the overall function of watershed and habitat systems; and
 - Identify and implement strategies to reduce the conversion of working lands (agricultural and forest) to higher intensity or residential uses.
- Shellfish Strategic Initiative
 - Net increase in acres of harvestable shellfish beds;
 - Sustained Pollution Identification and Correction programs are functioning in all Puget Sound counties and better able to respond to new and ongoing bacterial pollution sources;
 - PIC, on-site septic, and other critical programs have sustainable funding sources (outside of grant funding) to prevent bacterial pollution to Puget Sound;
 - Fewer conditional closures of shellfish beds impacted by pathogen or nutrient runoff;
 - Existing commercial, tribal, and recreational shellfish harvest areas are protected and preserved results in improved public health; and
 - Identify and implement strategies to reduce the conversion of working lands (agricultural and forest) to higher intensity or residential uses.

Performance Measures

The applicant must also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the main mechanism for tracking progress concerning successful management processes and strategies and associated outputs and outcomes and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will include defined benchmarks or change in status, either in programmatic function or environmental condition, and that the

performance measures be time constrained and/or quantifiable as exemplified by the following:

- Performance Measure Example 1: Sub-awardees complete projects within the stated timeframe and unliquidated obligations are minimized;
- Performance Measure Example 2: Length of shoreline armoring removed; and
- Performance Measure Example 3: Acres of habitat restored or permanently protected.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer-term results that the project or higher-level line of investment will achieve;
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently;
- How will pre-existing adaptively managed plans be used to build effectiveness and efficiencies? Can these connections be described or measured;
- How will strategies/procedures be used to work within the team of SI Leads to increase transparency, standards, and consistencies while minimizing and/or eliminating the amount of redundancy? Can process based progress measures be identified;
- How will the success of building and maintain relationships within the ecosystem recovery and protection community be measured; and
- How will the use of quantitative measures be expanded?

E. Logic Models

To ensure your application supports implementation of both the Puget Sound Action Agenda and EPA's national strategic plan objectives, applicants must include a logic model with your application to illustrate how the SIL applicant will achieve the programmatic outcomes identified in this RFA. A logic model summarizes the major elements of your SIL implementation program, and connects strategic objectives to your proposed resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straightforward implementation project, the logic model can be as simple as a clearly documented history and basis for a particular activity in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

With whatever logic model format chosen, please explain how the proposed work addresses the most significant challenges of the topic or area of emphasis. Applicants must identify ecosystem endpoints or indicators (the outcomes) that would be affected or supported by the products and information (the outputs) from the proposed scope of work. See Appendix A for information on logic models, results chains, and additional information sources.

F. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the assistance agreement(s) to be funded under this announcement is §320 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1330, Pub. L. No. 114-162, 130 Stat. 409).

The [National Estuary Program](#) (NEP) was established in 1987 by amendments to the §320 to identify, restore, and protect estuaries along the coasts of the U.S. Unlike traditional regulatory approaches to environmental protection, the NEP targets a broad range of issues and engages local communities in the process. The program focuses not just on improving water quality in an estuary, but on maintaining the integrity of the whole system — its chemical, physical, and biological properties, as well as its economic, recreational, and aesthetic values.

The NEP is designed to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing their own estuaries. Each NEP is advised by committees made up of representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies responsible for managing the estuary's resources, as well as members of the community citizens, business leaders, educators, and researchers. These stakeholders work together to identify problems in the estuary, develop specific actions to address those problems, and create a formal management plan to restore and protect the estuary.

For additional programmatic authorities and details please see:

- [40 C.F.R. Subpart P](#) — Financial Assistance for the NEP;
- [40 C.F.R. Part 9](#) — EPA Office of Management and Budget Approvals Under the Paperwork Reduction Act; and
- [40 C.F.R. Part 35](#) — EPA State and Local Assistance

II. Award Information

A. Number and Amount of Awards

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for each of the three Strategic Initiatives described in Section I, for a total of three awards from this RFA, subject to the availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. Funding for each award is expected to be provided incrementally over a five-year funding period with an initial total of awards of approximately \$15,000,000 in federal funding (combined for all awards) for the three Strategic Initiatives for the first year and subsequent incremental funding through year five. Each award could be for a project period of up to seven (7) years. Incremental funding after the initial award is subject to future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated federal funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$100,000,000 for the seven-year project period for all awards, and approximately \$33,300,000 for each award for the seven-year project period.

B. Start Date and Length of Project Period

Successful applicants should plan for SIL activities supported by this award to begin on or after January 29, 2021. EPA will accept applications for a seven-year project period to allow for potentially 5 years of incremental funding, and additional time to complete outstanding subaward projects and close out the award. The application must clearly demonstrate how the project will be sustained for the time frame proposed.

C. Funding Type

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of the agreement. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the work planning and award process. Beyond the customary grantee/Project Officer administrative, record-keeping, and financial requirements and communications, “substantial federal involvement” may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration with the SIL or collaborating partners during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.317 and 2 C.F.R. 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

In addition, under the awards to be made under this RFA, EPA involvement may include: (1) negotiating the initial Scope of Work for the cooperative agreement and annual amendments when incremental funding is applied for. EPA may re-negotiate work plans and budgets so long as it is done consistent with the scope of work of the agreement and the solicitation and EPA’s annual federal budget; (2) monitor project management and execution throughout the assistance agreement’s project and budget period; (3) provide technical assistance and coordination as requested or needed by the recipient or as EPA believes necessary; and (4) review and approve technical deliverables, such as Implementation Strategies.

D. Other Award Provisions

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than expected. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

Awards may be incrementally funded, as appropriate based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Entities

- Federal government agencies and Washington State government agencies;
- Public and private institutions of higher education located in the United States;
- Units of local government organized under Washington State law and located within the Greater Puget Sound basin;

- Special purpose districts, as defined by Washington State law at RCW 36.93.020, including but not limited to, irrigation districts, and water and sewer districts that are located in or govern land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin; and conservation districts located in or governing land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound Basin;
- Watershed planning units formed under RCW 90.82.040 and RCW 90.82.060, local management boards organized under RCW 90.88.030, salmon recovery lead entities organized pursuant to RCW 77.85, regional fisheries enhancement groups organized pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 and Marine Resource Committees organized pursuant to RCW 36.125.010 and RCW 36.125.020 if they are located within or their jurisdictions include waters and/or lands within the greater Puget Sound basin;
- Intrastate organizations such as associations of cities, counties or conservation districts in the greater Puget Sound basin;
- Nonprofit non-governmental entities, as defined by 2 C.F.R 200.70, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations; and
- Federally recognized tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin and any consortium of these eligible tribes.

An Intertribal consortium must have adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the member tribes to apply for and receive assistance. Documentation that demonstrates the existence of the partnership of Indian Tribal governments may consist of Tribal Council resolutions, Intertribal consortia resolutions in conjunction with a Tribal Council resolution from each member tribe, or other written certification from a duly authorized representative of each tribal government that clearly demonstrates that a partnership of tribal governments exists. An Intertribal consortium resolution is not adequate documentation of the member tribe's authorization of the consortium unless it includes a written certification from a duly authorized representative of each tribal government.

The greater Puget Sound basin is defined as all watersheds draining to the U.S. waters of Puget Sound, southern Georgia Basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA. However, one entity must be responsible for the Cooperative Agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the primary recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be sub-awardees of the primary recipient. Regardless of which organization receives the financial assistance award directly from EPA, the coalition of applicants will be regarded as equal partners and will be expected to communicate and collaborate with each other as such. Similarly, the coalition of applicant organizations will all be expected to communicate and collaborate directly with EPA. This coalition relationship is distinct from the relationship of the cooperative agreement holder with its implementing sub-awardees (that are not part of the application coalition for this RFA).

Sub-awards and sub-grants must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient must administer the cooperative agreement, will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2

C.F.R. Part 200, sub-recipients or sub-grantees are accountable to the primary recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for sub-awards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Please see EPA's definition of consultants in Section 2 C.F.R. Part 200, as applicable. For additional information, please review the following Federal Register announcement titled "*Interpretation of Regulations Related to Payments to Consultants Under Grants*":

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2004/04/07/04-7867/interpretation-of-regulations-related-to-payments-to-consultants-under-grants>

For-profit business entities, private individuals, and families are not eligible to apply.

B. Non-federal Match Requirements

The Clean Water Act, at §320(g)(3)(a)(II), provides that the federal share of a grant under this program for a fiscal year shall not exceed 50% of the aggregate costs of implementing the project. For this RFA, this means that applicants must be able to show in their applications that they and/or other members of the Management Conference will spend an equal amount of non-federal funds on implementing these projects during the budget period. Applicants should identify the source(s) of the anticipated non-federal match and describe the nature of the projects funded with the non-federal match. Applications must show that the projects providing the non-federal match are "committed" and that they have not been used to provide non-federal match for any other federal financial assistance. While the match can come from expenditures to implement the Action Agenda/CCMP in the aggregate, this RFA encourages the match to come specifically from allowable costs related to the applicable area of emphasis.

Forms of Match: The match requirement may be met in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions include volunteer or donated time, equipment, expertise, salaries, other verifiable costs, etc. and are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The match must be for allowable project costs. Matching funds are considered assistance agreement funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All assistance agreement funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of assistance agreement funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Section III.D of this announcement) also apply to the use of matching funds. Other federal assistance agreements may not be used as match without specific statutory authority. If matching requirements for incremental funding awarded under this RFA change as a result of future legislation on restoration of Puget Sound or otherwise, EPA will make appropriate adjustments to match requirements in the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreements.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Applications must meet the threshold eligibility criteria listed below by the time of an application's submission or they will be eliminated from consideration for funding. Only applications meeting all of the criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V.A. Applicants whose applications are deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the

ineligibility determination. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities (e.g. paying to implement permit requirements), that portion of the application will be ineligible and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

1. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative application, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. Initial applications must be submitted through <https://www.grants.gov/> as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
3. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov/SAM/) (<https://sam.gov/SAM/>) issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through <https://www.grants.gov/> because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov/SAM/) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with the EPA Puget Sound Program contact, Melissa Whitaker, at Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
4. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section III.A above.
5. Applicants must demonstrate how they will meet the match requirements as described in Section III.B above.
6. While applicants may submit applications for more than one Strategic Initiative area, they can only submit one application to be a SIL per area (for example, they can submit separate applications for all three areas but they cannot submit two applications to be a lead for one area). A complete separate application must be submitted for each Strategic Initiative for which an applicant wants to submit an application. Each application must address only one Strategic Initiative and applications that address more than one Strategic Initiative will be rejected and determined ineligible for award under this RFA. If EPA receives more than one submission per area from the same applicant, they will be contacted prior to the review process to determine which one to withdraw.

Applications with international work plan elements must demonstrate that they directly and primarily benefit U.S. waters, resources, or policy interests to restore and protect the greater Puget Sound ecosystem.

D. Funding Restrictions

Actions required under NPDES Phase I and II stormwater permits existing at the time of this announcement

will generally not be funded. Applicants proposing stormwater-related activities in Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) areas must include a statement certifying that the work proposed for funding is either not required under a current stormwater discharge permit or it strategically supports Puget Sound targets and environmental outcomes that would otherwise not accrue. EPA may re-evaluate this restriction as future permit changes are made.

Award funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal assistance agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Award funding must be authorized by the statutory authority (e.g. §320) and may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. In accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with restrictions on using assistance funds for unauthorized lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). EPA reserves the right to make final decisions regarding actions or costs incurred that are contrary or damaging to the collaborative intent and purposes of the Puget Sound NEP, the Puget Sound Action Agenda and Management Conference, for which award funds may not be used. All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 C.F.R. 200, Subpart E.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Requirements to Submit through ‘Grants.gov’ and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically, through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>) under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement and Appendix B. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OMS-ARM-OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy or email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Room #512678

Washington, DC 20004

Applicants must include the following information in their requests:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON) – EPA – R10-PS-2020-001;
- Organization Name and DUNS;
- Organization’s Contact Information (email address and phone number); and
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through <https://www.grants.gov/>.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above. EPA will respond in a timely manner to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding application content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2020, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2020).

Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through <https://www.grants.gov/> for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on November 15, 2019 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2020, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2020.

Please note the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (See Appendix B)

Your organization’s authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through <https://www.grants.gov/> no later than November 9, 2020, 11:59 PM Eastern Time. See Appendix B for more instructions.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using Grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. It is recommended that you try to submit your application to

grants.gov at least three days prior to the deadline. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is properly submitted to grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) before the due date.

C. Content of Application Submission

The application package must include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**

- a. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include an organization phone number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by call the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. **Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information**

- a. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (e.g. a percentage), the base rate (e.g. personnel costs and fringe benefits), and their amounts should also be indicated on line 22.A.

3. **EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54**

4. **EPA Form 4700-4**

- a. Pre-award Compliance Review Report

5. **Narrative Application (including the summary information page and workplan as described below)**

The narrative application cannot exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced, typed pages and should use no less than 12-point font. Excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials such as resumes and letters of support can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the above noted 20-page limit. Ensure that your narrative application addresses all of the evaluation criteria in Section V.

a. Summary Information Page

We recommend that this page not exceed one page. It should include:

1. Application Title

Identify the Strategic Initiative area from Section I that the project addresses.

2. Applicant Information

Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, and e-mail address.

3. Project Period

Provide proposed beginning date and ending date; awards may be for up to a seven-year work period.

4. Funding Requested

Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA for the proposed work period. See

Summary paragraph on Page 1 for information on total estimated funding.

5. Total Project Cost

Specify total cost of the project. Identify amount of funding from other sources for required non-federal match.

6. Abstract

Provide an application abstract of no longer than 150 words. Include a statement of the proposed objective, the proposed approach affirming capacity to work with the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.

7. Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS number).

b. Workplan

The workplan should explicitly describe how the applicant proposes to meet the objectives and requirements in Section I of this RFA that apply to the Strategic Initiative area that the application addresses and how each of the eligible activities described in Section I.C will be accomplished. In the work plan the applicant should address each of the evaluation criteria listed in Section V and demonstrate that the applicant meets all elements of the threshold criteria in Section III.C including the non-federal match.

Note that all workplans will be negotiated with EPA prior to finalization and approval. Workplans that are incrementally funded will also require negotiations and EPA approval for each incremental funding action.

EPA is soliciting applications for SILs to be implemented over a five-year funding period and seven-year project period. It is important for applications to describe levels of effort. Workplans must be sustainable over the full seven-year project period, with the two final years of the project period dedicated to close-out of tasks and sub-awards. Because future funding levels are not guaranteed, applicants should present a proposed scope of work with well thought out sequencing and objectives described in the near term as well as objectives over the longer seven-year term expected for these assistance agreements. By noting tasks or components that are severable (fairly independent of other actions) or that could be funded at variable levels, applicants can submit applications that provide flexibility to incrementally award funds in later years of the project period.

The workplan must address the following information:

a. Project Summary/Approach

The summary shall contain the following components:

- **Partnering experience and approach:** Outline your organization’s experience and approach to collaborating, coordinating, and communicating within the context of large-scale ecosystem recovery and associated restoration and protection approaches and project(s). As applicable, specifically discuss how your organization would work with the other SILs on major issues as a matter of practice, PSP, the Puget Sound Management Conference Boards, the EPA Puget Sound Program, Puget Sound tribes, and the affected regional, local

and other stakeholders in the implementation of the activities and projects adopted by the NEP management Conference from the 2018 Action Agenda and subsequent Action Agenda updates for the Strategic Initiative for which your application is focused on. Describe your organization's strategies for structured decision-making and sequencing among competing priorities. Describe how your organization would work with PSP and Management Conference to allocate available funding resources towards implementation of the 2018 Action Agenda and the future 2022 Action Agenda. Describe your organization's approach to interacting with the federally recognized, sovereign tribes of the greater Puget Sound basin, including your organization's anticipated approach to interacting with tribes in connection with the work to be supported by this program. This should include both tribes with and without formal co-management authorities and roles. Include any relevant pre- and post-application and award engagement, partnering, and collaboration steps, mechanisms, and processes you will work with, or have already been in discussion with, tribes to explore for this purpose. Note any relevant training your organization provides for staff teams who interact with tribes. Examples of such training include 2020 training provided by NWIFC to PSP;

- **Non-federal match:** Discuss how you will provide the required match as described in Section III.B. This discussion should include how the applicant's organization will collaborate with the PSP and other state and local entities to identify and secure sources of non-federal match for subaward projects as well as the applicant's own use of award funds for direct costs requiring non-federal match; and
- **Subaward Projects:** As noted in Section I.C, implementation of local and basin wide actions prioritized under a Strategic Initiative or Implementation Strategy will be funded by the recipient through subawards. Briefly describe your organization's plan for the competitive selection of activities for funding and address the following:
 - How the Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams (SIATs) will be engaged and utilized in the process of selecting subawards that support implementation of the 2018 Action Agenda and the future 2022 Action Agenda;
 - How will structured decision-making be employed when selecting subawards competitively;
 - How will Implementation Strategies be used to select potential activities for funding;
 - How would activities support primary objectives of the respective SILs;
 - How will selections be made in a fair and impartial manner;
 - How, and under what basis, would the SIL approach development and issue of solicitations (RFPs) for competitive subawards;

- How will the SIL coordinate and monitor the work of the organizations receiving subawards under this program; and
- What is your organization’s willingness, flexibility, plan, and capacity to work to synchronize, consolidate and or streamline your subaward processes where possible with other Puget Sound NEP subaward programs so that a unified subaward funding process and funding cycle is achieved for funding local implementation of Action Agenda actions and projects?

To effectively manage and oversee subaward work, your organization will need a formal documented system for making, managing, and monitoring subawards. Your organization’s application should describe that system and how it functions (provide URLs or “hotlinks” to the documentation, rules and guidance for applicants or assistance recipients if they are available on the web or attaching these documents to your application).

If your organization’s application relies on a subrecipient or collaborating agency to make and manage subawards, that other organization’s formal documented system must be described in your organization’s application. The discussion of the subaward management system should also describe the internal controls that the organization has in place to ensure that the procedures in the subaward management system are being properly implemented. Alternatively, if there currently is no formal documented system, the application narrative must describe your organization’s plan and schedule for developing such a system in compliance with applicable State law.

Applicants acquiring professional or commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. 200.317 – 200.326 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism. For additional information on subawards and contracts see Section IV.G.

Applicants should also describe how they will draw upon the SIL organizations’ technical expertise to negotiate subaward workplans, review and approve deliverables, and monitor subaward performance and ensure that the subawards are made expeditiously, performed effectively, and that utilization/ draw down of subaward funds will be managed so as to minimize the time periods of unliquidated obligations. The applicant should describe any prior experience it has had in making and managing subawards and the degree to which that history has been successful.

- **Identifying Multi-Benefit Approaches:** The SILs will be expected to build upon efforts of the previous funding models and look across the set of Implementation Strategies for connections and leverage points where they might form a more systems-thinking informed collective investment strategy for supporting multi-benefit approaches.
- **Operationalize, Refine, Maintain, and Update Implementation Strategies:** Ongoing curation and leadership of Implementation Strategies (ISs) will require a range of activities to be considered and addressed in the proposed workplan including: completion of Implementation Strategies still under development, adaptive

management of existing Implementation Strategies including revisions and updates, dedicated capacity to move the IS priorities forward, proactive work on implementation with an emphasis on utilizing ongoing programs (and recognizing the status of Puget Sound tribes as co-managers of treaty resources in the State of Washington and the many ongoing programs that support this role), regular updates in Miradi Share and Puget Sound Info, and capacity for promoting outreach, communication, and collaboration. This will require close coordination and collaboration with the recipients of the Implementation Strategies-Science cooperative agreement (PSP and the Puget Sound Institute as of the publication of this RFA). Please describe the SIL applicant's vision of how to operationalize the Implementation Strategies, and how to make sure they reflect the entire recovery community, including how to coordinate funding parts of IS within the Management Conference and other SILs.

- **Marine Water Quality:** Marine Water Quality (MWQ) is inherently related to all three Strategic Initiatives and is a core focal area for the program. How would your proposed SIL consider and coordinate on protecting different aspects of MWQ at both local and regional scales? For example:
 - Stormwater and non-point source pollutant loadings can impact marine vegetation and ecological productivity of nearshore areas; result in the loss of supporting nearshore habitat functions and associated beneficial uses; and introduce toxics into marine food webs;
 - Shellfish growers rely on high levels of marine water quality to ensure that shellfish are safe and sanitary to harvest. MWQ is also related to ocean acidification, which can be exacerbated by nutrient inputs, particularly in terminal inlets; and
 - Habitats, particularly shorelines, floodplains and estuaries can have substantial effects on – and can be affected by – MWQ.
- **Considering and Guiding Changes in Land Use:** With population growth comes more development – including the addition of new homes, businesses, and roads – that is causing the loss of ecologically important areas that support the Puget Sound ecosystem along with human health and well-being. Key stressors arising from these land use changes include altered hydrology, degraded habitats, and degraded water quality. While the effects of these stressors on both stream and marine ecosystems are fairly well understood, it is difficult to prevent these stressors in urbanizing areas and extremely difficult to mitigate for them. We would like each SIL applicant to consider and describe how to work with key partners to better direct development and population growth towards preferred growth areas and concurrently implement appropriate land use practices and designs to protect both rural working lands and ecologically important areas that in turn support aquatic ecosystems and associated beneficial uses. Please describe what the SIL applicant sees as opportunities for leverage with regard to preventing further land conversion in the Puget Sound basin,

potentially including considerations of “net ecological gain.”

- **Socio-Ecological Resiliency:** Provide a discussion of how the proposed work plan builds ecosystem resiliency (see Section I.). Applicants are encouraged to include in their work plan, policies and procedures to work proactively with their sub-awardee(s) to build adaptation and resiliency into subaward project design and implementation.
- **Adaptive Management:** Describe the system that you will use to monitor and measure the progress of both the Implementation Strategies and the projects funded with subawards. This discussion should address how your organization would provide monitoring information to the PSP and work with the Puget Sound Management Conference boards and stakeholders and how your organization’s monitoring of Implementation Strategies and subawards would be used to adaptively manage the implementation of the Action Agenda.
- **Innovation:** Provide examples of innovative approaches to Puget Sound protection and recovery that you will employ.
- **Education, Outreach and External Communications:** Consider and describe how your role as a SIL could provide additional outreach to help with recruiting resources and practitioners to support implementation and to amplify work funded by the SILs (making sure practitioners are aware of available SIL-funded subaward work products), and how you would work with PSP’s backbone organization communication roles around the importance of ISs as foundation of planning and successful implementation across key participants.
- **Local environmental justice issue(s):** Consider and describe how your project may relate to environmental justice issues. Consider and describe the communities that will be impacted by your project. Consider and describe whether and how your project will take into account information such as demographics, geographic location, and community history, and generally strive to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion. We encourage the use of EPA’s EJSCREEN tool to characterize and describe the communities impacted by your project.
- **Timeline:** Include a chart of milestones and timelines for accomplishing tasks, including estimates of timelines for proposed future tasks that may not yet be fully determined.

b. **Environmental Results — Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures**

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the overall program effort (see Section I.D) including what performance measurements, milestone timelines, or other means will be used to track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.D and how the results of the project will be evaluated.

c. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

d. **Detailed Budget Narrative (See Appendix C, Budget Sample) must include:**

- A description of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task;
- A description of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner; and
- Itemized costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. For those selected for awards, applicants will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. This is not a necessary document for application but is necessary for the selected applicants to provide prior to award. (**Note:** All matching funds are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.).

D. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for submission of applications is **November 9, 2020 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET)**. Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and application assistance and communications, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

F. Webinar on this Request for Applications

EPA will be offering a webinar **on September 30, 2020** for interested applicants for this solicitation. The purpose of the webinar will be to answer any questions interested applicants may have about this RFA. We plan to record the webinar and make the recording publicly available for interested applicants and or other interested parties who are not able to participate in the scheduled webinar.

We will post information about, and recordings from, this webinar on the following websites. Please monitor these websites for further detail on this webinar, including any date changes or additional dates that may be necessary:

[https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound;](https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound)

<http://www.psp.wa.gov/funding.php>

If you are interested in attending this webinar, please notify Melissa Whitaker at: Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov so that we can gauge the level of interest and possible need for more than one webinar.

V. Application Review Information

Only applications from eligible entities that meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application. Each application will be rated under a points system. A total of 100 points is possible. Eligible applications will be reviewed and ranked based on these criteria and EPA intends to select the highest-ranking application for each of the Strategic Initiative areas for award. There will be separate ranking lists developed for each area.

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Quality of Application – 25 points total:

Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the applicant

demonstrates that it will perform the activities described in Section I of the RFA for the Strategic Initiative that the application addresses and whether the application reflects the functions and objectives associated with performing as Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads as identified in this RFA. Reviewers will evaluate whether the proposed activities are logically presented, technically sound and supportive of the Puget Sound NEP management conference processes. Reviewers will focus on the following elements:

a. Clarity of the Application – 10 points:

The extent to which the applicant clearly demonstrates that it will efficiently and effectively perform the activities described in Section I of the RFA and the relevance of the application in developing recommendations for the prioritization of Puget Sound resources for funding and management of subawards for implementing the Action Agenda;

b. Technical Merit and Feasibility – 10 points:

The quality and extent to which the application demonstrates the ability to develop and apply Implementation Strategies and other technical criteria; to provide oversight and guidance for Action Agenda Sound Strategic Initiative subawards and actions; and to produce technically defensible recommendations for PSP NEP Management Conference Councils and Boards; and

c. NEP Management Conference support – 5 points:

The quality and extent to which the application demonstrates the applicant's ability to successfully partner with and collaborate with PSP as the NEP lead, with other SILs, Puget Sound tribes, local organizations, and with the management conference stakeholders and Action Agenda implementers.

2. Quality of Management Systems – 35 points total:

Applications will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed management system(s) based on the following factors:

a. Technical Workgroup/Program Management – 10 points:

The applicant's experience in working with the Management Conference and also creating and coordinating technical and policy workgroups and teams as evidenced by successful program management in areas of work encompassed by and related to the Strategic Initiative for which the applicant is submitting the application. The applicant's understanding of the technical basis for identifying, developing and facilitating the use of Implementation Strategies for ecosystem recovery, and the applicants experience in utilizing adaptive management processes to guide and improve outcomes of environmental resource protection and recovery programs will also be evaluated;

b. Subaward Management System -15 points:

The applicant's approach to making, managing, and monitoring subawards to ensure they are awarded and performed efficiently and effectively, including how the applicant will select subawards for funding in a fair manner; how they will award subawards competitively and what criteria will be used to ensure program effectiveness; how they will expeditiously make the subawards and oversee and

monitor the subawards; and how they will help ensure that the subawards achieve the expected outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.D. The thoroughness of the system in place or under development for making, monitoring, and managing subawards as well as the thoroughness of the internal controls and internal review processes in place to ensure that the subaward management system is working as designed will be evaluated, along with any past experience the applicant has in making and managing subawards. The ability of the applicant to make adjustments or modifications to their subaward procedures will be evaluated such that they can synchronize with or consolidate subaward procedures with other Puget Sound NEP funding including selected Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads awarded under this RFA and also the Tribal Implementation Lead which is competed independently; and

c. Outputs and Outcomes – 10 points:

This criterion will assess how the applicant proposes to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes including those described in Section I.D Eligible Activities., and the applicant’s approach for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving expected outcomes and outputs, including the tracking of outputs and outcomes from subawards as indicated in subaward work plans. The clarity and logic demonstrated in the applications linkage between technical outputs, subaward management and the expected environmental outcomes from implementation activities will also be considered.

3. Financial Integrity, Budget, and Non-federal Match – 10 points total: Applications will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the budget information and whether it is reasonable to accomplish the proposed objectives, activities and meet project timelines. The budget information should provide a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity presented and be supported by a thorough internal financial management system.

a. Budget Information – 5 points: Whether the application provides complete budget information such that amounts indicated for task areas described in the narrative application are clearly identifiable, sufficient, and reasonable to complete the proposed work and it provides justification and/or explanations sufficient to support costs included in different budget categories; and whether the application describes in the budget narrative how required non-federal match will accounted for; and

b. Internal financial management system– 5 points: Whether the narrative application describes the systems, policies and procedures by which the applicant will track expenditures funded by the EPA assistance agreement and how they will fiscally manage the proposed subaward program including procedures for working with subaward recipients to minimize the extent of unliquidated obligations. In addition, EPA will evaluate the applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

4. Past Performance and Programmatic Capability – 20 points total: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their:

a. Past Performance – 5 points: Successful completion and management of the

assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement;

- b. Reporting – 5 points:** History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately explains the reasons;
- c. Organizational Experience – 5 points:** Approach for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project and ability to problem-solve; and
- d. Staff – 5 points:** Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, collaboration with key partners, necessary resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under items a) and b) of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (items a and b) above; a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

5. Adaptive Program Management and Socio-Ecological Resiliency – 10 points.

- a. Adaptive Management – 5 points:** Applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s approach, practices and experience in applying adaptive management to programs and projects, and specifically including implementation strategies, for protecting and restoring ecosystem functions and environmental outcomes. Information in the applicant’s description of their program management experience as provided in response to criteria 2.a. – Technical Workgroup/Program Management – will be considered. The applicant’s ability to collaborate with PSP and other Management Conference stakeholders in applying adaptive management practices and innovations will be assessed; and
- b. Socio-ecological Resiliency – 5 points:** Applications will be evaluated for components or activities proposed that address the potential impacts to resiliency and how technical criteria for actions under the Strategic Initiatives or Implementation Strategies will include factors that could increase ecosystem resiliency. An applicant’s experience in applying adaptation and resiliency factors to other programmatic work will also be considered.

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA

evaluation team. Each eligible application will be given a numerical score and will be rank ordered according to the numerical score. While EPA intends to select the highest scoring application for each Strategic Initiative for award, in making the selection decision, the selection official may also consider programmatic priorities in addition to the rankings and scores.

VI Award Administration Information

A. Award Notice

Following the evaluation-of applications all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

1. EPA notification to successful applicants will be made via e-mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Regional Grants Management Official.

Applicants are cautioned that only a grants management official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

2. EPA notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via email. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants

C. Reporting Requirement

Semiannual reports and a detailed final technical report will be required. Semiannual reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities, or changes to approved workplan for the reporting period and a summary of expenditures are required. The final technical report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final technical report should include a summary of the project or activity, advances achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of semiannual reports will be established by EPA, as a term and condition of the award.

D. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) at EPA's Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures page (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures>). Copies of these procedures may also be requested from Melissa Whitaker, EPA Region 10 Puget Sound program at: Whitaker.melissa@epa.gov

NOTE: The Federal Register notice references regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 C.F.R. parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3639, 3630 (January 26, 2005), as indicated in in 2 C.F.R. Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII Other Information

A. Terms and Conditions

See EPA's Grant Terms and Conditions at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions>.

These are examples of terms and conditions specific to EPA's Puget Sound Program:

- Riparian Buffers

EPA Region 10 anticipates that all new awards made under this solicitation will have a programmatic condition relating to riparian buffer projects. EPA Region 10 established the condition to ensure that Puget Sound Program funded buffer projects adhere to standards developed by NOAA to achieve water quality and salmon and tribal treaty resource recovery goals. In 2013 Puget Sound Lead Organizations agreed to use the condition, then in 2014 the programmatic condition was formally added to those awards.

The programmatic condition establishes that riparian buffer restoration projects in agricultural areas shall be consistent with the interim riparian buffer recommendations provided to EPA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service by National Marine Fisheries Service letters of February 4, 2013 and April 9, 2013, or the October 28, 2013 guidance. Grantees shall confirm in writing projects' consistency with the recommendations referenced above. When developing project applications, grantees also should consider the extent to which applications include appropriate riparian buffers or otherwise address pollution sources on other water courses on the properties in the project area to support water quality and salmon recovery. Deviations can only be obtained through an

exception approved by EPA. In order for EPA to evaluate a request for an exception, the grantee must submit the scientific rationale demonstrating adequacy of buffers for supporting water quality and salmon recovery. The request must summarize tribal input on the scientific rationale or other relevant issues. The scientific rationale could be developed from sources such as site-specific assessment data, salmon recovery plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and the state nonpoint plan. EPA will confer with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Washington Department of Ecology and provide the opportunity for affected tribes to consult with EPA before making a final decision on a deviation request.

- Quality Assurance

The selected recipients for this cooperative agreement, along with all subaward projects collecting environmental data, will require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), as appropriate. The subawardees' QAPPs will need to meet the standards of the lead organization's QAPP. Approval of the recipient's Quality Management Plan (QMP) by the EPA Project Officer and the EPA Quality Assurance Manager, may allow delegation of the authority to review and approve QAPPs to the recipient based on procedures documented in the QMP. All projects collecting environmental data will require a QAPP. Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describes environmental processes, location, or condition, ecological or health effects and consequences, or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and obtained from other sources such as databases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 40 C.F.R. 31.45. Additional guidance can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html#noeparqt.

Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for development and approval of a QAPP for their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific QAPP must be submitted and approved by EPA, before sampling is scheduled to begin. Allow about one month for EPA approval in your timeline.

Region 10 Quality Assurance Team Contact: Donald M. Brown at (206) 553-0717 or email: brown.donaldm@epa.gov.

- Access and Information Release

The OMB Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations 40 C.F.R. Part 30.36(d)(1).

- Annual Grantee Conference

The recipient may attend one or more appropriate conferences each year, which may be within the Puget Sound region. The specific conferences will be determined in consultation with the EPA Project Officer. The purpose of this requirement is to provide recipients with opportunities to learn about and benefit from other relevant initiatives and programs that relate to the funded work, such

as to:

- Exchange information about their funded work with organizations that may benefit from their experience; and
- Raise awareness within the Puget Sound, Salish Sea, and large aquatic ecosystem protection and restoration communities of the funded work.

Examples of potentially relevant conferences include, but are not limited to:

- The [Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference](https://wp.wvu.edu/salishseaconference/) (<https://wp.wvu.edu/salishseaconference/>) and subsequent biennial conferences; and
- Local or regional meetings of tribal, professional, scientific, or other relevant associations.

Participating in specific conferences and meetings will depend on the nature of the work proposed. Recipients will be allowed to use award funds to pay for travel and lodging needs. Recipients should include anticipated costs for attending conferences in their proposed budgets.

- **WQX Requirement**

Recipients are required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and include such costs in their budgets. All water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan as a result of this assistance agreement, either directly or by subaward, will be required to be transmitted into the Water Quality Portal (WQP) using either WQX or WQX web. Water quality data appropriate for the Water Quality Portal (WQP) include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the Water Quality Portal structure. WQX web is a web- based tool to convert data into the WQX format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQX web, and the Water Quality Portal, including tutorials, can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx>.

If activities submitted as match for this federal assistance agreement involve the generation of water quality data, the resulting information must be publicly accessible (in the Water Quality Portal or some other database). Recipients are encouraged to develop a cross walk between any non-WQX database utilized for the storage of water quality data associated with match activities and EPA's Water Quality Exchange (WQX).

B. Agency Contacts

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Melissa Whitaker
Region 10, Puget Sound Program
1200 6th Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101
E-mail address: Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or email to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the [EPA Puget Sound NEP-Grants and Funding webpage \(https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound\)](https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound).

Appendix A: Measuring Environmental Results Logic Models, Outputs, and Outcomes

Beginning in 2005, EPA required that all assistance agreement recipients document outputs and "to the extent practicable" outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

Outputs

Outputs are the activities or deliverables that are to be accomplished as a result of an assistance agreement. Outputs are generally described as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. EPA Project Officers track the completion of outputs to monitor the progress of an assistance agreement. Outputs include items like the number of workshops held, number of volunteers trained, field work completed, studies completed, watershed management plan completed, etc.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the measurable impacts or results of the work of the assistance agreement. While outputs are accomplished during the life of the assistance agreement, outcomes generally occur after the completion of the assistance agreement. It is useful to categorize outcomes as short, medium, and long-term. Measuring environmental outcomes can be challenging, especially for small assistance agreements.

Tracking medium and long-term outcomes can be costly, especially if monitoring, sampling, and analysis are involved. In addition, it can take many years for the long-term impact of an assistance agreement to have a measurable effect on the environment. For small assistance agreements, we tend to focus on short and medium-term outcomes, however, the recipient should still attempt to state long term goals and objectives from the assistance agreement.

- *Short-term outcomes* may include changes such as increased knowledge or an active stewardship program.
- *Medium-term outcomes* may include documented widespread adoption of best management practices, documented reduction of pesticide use (E.g. 3 pounds of pesticides per acre no longer being used on 2000 acres).
- *Long-term outcomes* may include documented reduction of nutrients in a lake, documented reduction in number of children with asthma, documented improvement of indoor air quality, or meeting river water quality standards.

The following hypothetical examples include brief discussions of outputs and outcomes:

Example 1:

For a project aimed at protecting a salmon run, expected outputs may include an ecosystem services valuation; a formal public review process for the valuation; and a systematic, multifaceted outreach effort to educate decision-makers on the results of the valuation and its recommendations. Other outputs of the proposed work could include implementation and completion of specific habitat restoration projects previously identified in an established salmon recovery plan or other local implementation plan, leading to a specific number of acres of habitat restored, fish passage barriers removed, or the like. All of these products, or outputs, would be clearly identified as assistance agreement products and would be expected to be completed as part of the proposed work. The expected outcomes would include anticipated acres of key habitat protected or restored as a result of the valuation.

Other outcomes would include supporting a healthy salmon run, maintaining water quality standards, delisting a water-body segment listed as impaired under CWA §303(d), or attaining a milestone under a Total Maximum Daily Load.

Example 2:

A proposed project may be focused on protecting marine water quality and shellfish harvest areas. The anticipated outputs may be a local assessment program that systematically lists areas of known water quality and shellfish habitat problems, and systematically identifies appropriate/innovative technologies, development patterns, best management practices (BMPs), and other tools relevant to addressing these issues. The outputs would also include a report presenting the specific findings of the assessment. For example, such an assessment program could identify household-scale septic systems as a tool for addressing nitrogen inputs to impaired estuarine waters; or innovative procedures to connect decisions regarding the location and use of septic systems to land use decisions and water quality requirements in sensitive areas. The proposed work may also include a plan for obtaining and documenting a formal technical review of the assessment by regionally recognized experts; for presenting and publicizing the assessment and its results; for taking public comment and revising the assessment; and for formally presenting it to key decision-making bodies. All of the previous outputs would be delivered during the project's period. Outcomes of this work would include reduced pollutants in surface waters and an upgrade in shellfish harvest areas.

LOGIC MODELS

Logic models are intended to help identify the range and sequence of actions necessary to attain a particular project result or outcome. They help line up and organize sequences of actions to achieve results. This is particularly relevant today as projects and implementation programs become more complex and multi-faceted and yet need to be communicated to and understood by many people. Logic models also help both project implementers and evaluators to view the whole system of actions and eventually to assess if the system is working as expected, or if not, why. In these ways logic tracks and result chains can help design, communicate, evaluate, track, and adapt work programs.

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straightforward implementation project, perhaps the logic model is as simple as clearly documenting the history and basis for a particular project in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines, and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the largest uncertainties or tests key hypotheses identified or embedded in the logic models. We also encourage the identification of ecosystem endpoints or indicators that would be affected or supported by the products and information from the proposed investigation.

Two brief examples of logic models are provided on the following pages.

Logic Model Example 1: Generic Template

Application:	BLANK				
Link to EPA Strategic Plan	Resources/Input	Activities (and targets, if any)	Stated Outputs (with targets)	Anticipated Outcomes (with targets)	Baseline
<p>Goal 1= Cleaner, Healthy Environment – Deliver a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans and future generations by carrying out the Agency’s core mission; Objective 1.2 – Provide for Clean and Safe Water</p>	<p>Describe the resources needed, funding amounts from EPA and match, in-house and/or contractor expertise, property, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>← identify and describe sub-objectives that are relevant</i></p>	<p>Describe actions, not results; e.g. conducting technical assessments and reviews, developing plans for getting public input, purchasing information or equipment, developing ecosystem assessments or watershed characterizations</p>	<p>Describe actual products, reports, meetings, plans, for each activity. Include numbers and dates expected if known. These should be accomplishments <u>during</u> the grant period.</p>	<p>Examples: Broader results that <u>continue or occur after</u> the end of the assistance agreement project period. Include numbers and dates expected if known</p> <p>Short Term: (1) Volume of cleaner water discharged or supplied for X number of people (2) Increased infiltration, (3) Increased public support or scientific understanding of watershed or ecosystem capacities or recovery limitations.</p> <p>Interim: (1) Potential reduction of pollutant loadings. (2) Increased environmental awareness within community. (3) Protection of acres or functions of wetlands or local ecosystem. (4) Reduction of risk to watershed or ecosystem through proactive assessment or calibration.</p> <p>Long term: (1) Restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of targeted ecosystems, (2) Improved health of associated population</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These measures are supportive of the strategic sub-objectives in column 1</p>	<p>Source of and data on, for example, current conditions, discharge volumes, quality, high quality waters in need of protection, impervious cover; against which to measure change due to funded activity.</p>

Logic Model Example 2

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
<p><i>EPA funds \$148,768</i></p> <p><i>Logan County Planning Division Manager time in project management \$1748</i></p> <p><i>(other stated inputs)</i></p>	<p>ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>PARTICIPANTS</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>
	<p><i>Conduct an ecosystem valuation of a small watershed in Logan County to determine functional values and/or cost-benefit of protecting natural systems over engineered stormwater structures.</i></p> <p><i>Develop land use designations, development standards, or incentive programs to help guide development of implementation approaches.</i></p>	<p><i>Logan County staff and University staff conduct valuation.</i></p> <p><i>Logan County staff, with assistance from outside contract and local citizen committee, develop land use designations and development standards and incentive programs.</i></p>	<p><i>Ecosystem Valuation</i></p> <p><i>Develop land use designations and development standards and incentive programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase in acreage or ecosystems protected from development.</i> • <i>No net increase in effective impervious cover</i> • <i>Reduced risk of increased flooding in downstream floodplain.</i> • <i>Reduction of chemical loadings or risk of chemical exposure.</i> 	<p><i>Preservation of the naturally functioning ecosystem/watershed processes so that all species dependent on all the functions of that ecosystem are maintained in plentiful supply in the watershed.</i></p>
	<p>OUTCOME MEASURES</p>			<p><i>Final report with recommendations for implementation. Specific land use designations in subarea plans. Incentive program.</i></p>	<p><i># of wetland acres protected.</i></p> <p><i># of functioning riparian miles protected.</i></p> <p><i>Peak flow hydrology maintained or reduced with increased development.</i></p>

Appendix B: Grants.Gov Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for federal assistance. For more information, go to <https://www.grants.gov/> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. **Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a unique entity identifier (e.g., DUNS number) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). The process for obtaining both could take a month or more.** Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. **Registration on Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and obtaining a DUNS number assignment are FREE.**

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through grants.gov whose Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number) is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization’s SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <https://www.grants.gov/> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the drop down menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through Grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to <https://www.grants.gov/> then click on ‘**Search Grants**’ at the top of the page and enter the **Funding Opportunity Number EPA-R10-PS-2020-001**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.123), then click ‘**Search**’ button.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through <https://www.grants.gov/> no later than **November 9, 2020 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please Note: all application materials must be submitted through <https://www.grants.gov/> using the “Workspace” feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page. Please submit all of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions above.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement: Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424);
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A);

3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54;
4. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report; and
5. Narrative Application (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.C of this RFA.

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments, if applicable-See IV.C.

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.
2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to <https://www.grants.gov/> by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch, and a sign-in page will appear. **Note: *Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.*** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal Holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to <https://www.grants.gov/> by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to <https://www.grants.gov/> or relevant www.Sam.gov system

issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

- a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to <https://www.grants.gov/> it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119.
- b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Please note that successful submission through grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

Appendix C: Budget Information

Budget Detail

This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Additional guidance for developing an applicant's budget is available in <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02>- "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance."

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan.

- **Personnel — List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.**

This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization's negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

- **Fringe Benefits — Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included.**

Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans.

- **Travel — Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.**

Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g. inspections) or related to proposed project activities (e.g. attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category.

- **Equipment — Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.**

Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.

- **Supplies — “Supplies” means all tangible personal property other than “equipment”.**

The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.

- **Contractual — Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.**

Contractual/consultant services are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known.

- **Other — List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.**

This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported. EPA’s Subaward Policy and Supplemental Frequent Questions has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contracts and subawards — <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.**

Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final, or provisional), or must have submitted an application to the cognizant federal or State agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

- ✓ Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs);
- ✓ Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs);
- ✓ Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs); and
- ✓ Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs).

Additional indirect cost guidance is available in RAIN-2018-G02 “Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients for EPA Assistance Agreements - <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02>

Note on Management Fees

When formulating budgets for applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the work plan.

Appendix D: Workplan, Budget, and Staffing Plan Samples

Work Plan Sample:

Task One Budget Summary - All Years	
Federal	
Federal Indirect	
Federal Total	
Recipient	
Recipient Indirect	
Non-federal Match	
Recipient Total	
Task One Total	

Narrative Summary	<p>This task provides...</p> <p>Task Duration: Work under this task will be ongoing for the duration of the project period, and staff support will be generally consistent across years.</p> <p>Accomplishments by end of Project Period:</p> <p>Reporting:</p> <p>Staffing Leads:</p> <p>Staffing:</p> <p>Key contributions to the staffing of this task include the following:</p>
Description:	
Subtasks:	<p>Subtask 1.a.</p> <p>Subtask 1.b.</p> <p>Subtask 1.c.</p> <p>Subtask 1.d.</p> <p>Subtask 1.e.</p>
Specific Outputs	
Outcomes	
Puget Sound Action Agenda Links	<p><u>Strategic Initiatives:</u></p> <p><u>2018 Action Agenda Priority Vital Signs:</u></p> <p><u>2018 Action Agenda Institutional Strategies:</u></p> <p><u>2018 Action Agenda Regional Priorities:</u></p>
EPA Puget Sound Measures Links	

2020 Puget Sound Vital Signs and Indicators Links	To be added once finalized.
Lead staff	

Subtask 1.a	Title of Subtask
Subtask Description	
Subtask Outputs with delivery dates	
Subtask key milestones	
Potential challenges	
Subtask staff lead	

Budget Narrative and Budget Tables Templates:

1. Include a budget narrative with the categories shown in the template below;
2. Include an overview budget that includes all five years of funding; and
3. Include a budget for each task and each year. For example, for 3 tasks and a 5-year budget period (i.e., five years of funding), 15 detailed budgets should be submitted in addition to the summary budget that includes all years of funding. Use the same template as for the overview budget.

Budget Narrative Sample

Cooperative Agreement

This is a seven-year cooperative agreement between the EPA and (primary recipient). Budget and work plan status are monitored through weekly consultations between the EPA project officer and SIL staff. Given the uncertainty of funding in Year Two through Five, this agreement recognizes that budgets will be received in increments with corresponding adjustments in work plan tasks and budgets.

All Tasks All Years	
Federal	
Federal Indirect	
Federal Total	
Recipient	
Recipient Indirect	
Non-federal Match	
Recipient Total	
TOTAL	

Award

This is an award of \$5,000,000 in Year One with \$5,000,000 anticipated each year in Years Two through Five for a total of \$25,000,000 in federal funding. The (primary recipient) will provide the match at the required 50/50 rate for a total cooperative agreement of \$50,000,000. The budget of this agreement occurs across (insert number of tasks here) tasks as described below followed by explanations of non-federal match and the indirect cost rate:

Task One:	
Task Two:	
Task Three:	
Indirect Costs:	
Non-federal Match:	
TOTAL:	\$50,000,000

Non-Federal Match

The source of the (primary recipient's) non-federal match is the (fill in source(s) of match here).

Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect costs are based on (fill in Indirect Cost Rate)% of direct expenditures, less contracts, and subawards over \$25,000 and is assessed annually.

Task One Indirect Costs All Years: **\$X** (total) \$X (federal); \$X (non-federal)

Task Two Indirect Costs All Years: **\$X** (total) \$X (federal); \$X (non-federal)

Task Three Indirect Costs All Years: **\$X** (total) \$X (federal); \$X (non-federal)

Total Indirect Costs All Years: **\$X** (total) \$X (federal); \$X (non-federal)

Personnel

The staffing plan for the award federal funds supports X FTEs at the (primary recipient and large partner subawardees included in the application). Match for the grant includes approximately X state funded FTEs at the (primary recipient and large partner subawardees included in the application). Personnel costs include a modest X% increase in Years X, Y, and Z.

Fringe Benefits

Scaled to actual salaries and include the cost of Medicare, medical aid, retirement, employee insurance, and (include other programs included).

Travel

Travel is a required component of this application. The application assumes various advisory groups to engage partners in our work and to monitor subawards. Costs include agency vehicles, mileage, meals, ferry fees, parking, and occasional overnight lodging (\$X per FTE per year). Travel to conferences is also anticipated and estimated at \$X. International travel is also anticipated for the purpose of (fill in purpose here) and is estimated at \$X.

Supplies

They include basic office supplies used by all staff within the agency. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology (\$X per FTE per year).

Other

Includes communication and lease costs necessary to support agency staff. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology. Communication includes telephones, cellular service, postage, and data lines (\$X per FTE per year). Leases include building rent, utilities, and copier leases (\$X per FTE per year). The Year One **subawards** in this application include agreements with (partner recipient in application) for \$X (for all tasks) and (partner recipient in application) for \$X (Tasks One and Two), and (partner recipient in application) \$X (Tasks One and Two). **Provide additional narrative about funding of partners through subawards past Year One.**

Conference fees are also anticipated for several major conferences throughout the span of this award and those have been estimated at \$X.

Details on Non-federal Match Sources

Includes specific information on the amount and source of non-federal match (if not already included).

Budget Table Example

	EPA Funding	Non-federal Match
Personnel		
EPA Grant Coordinator 1.0 FTE @ \$80,000 a year		\$ 80,000
Regional Manager .4 FTE @ \$100,000 a year	\$ 40,000	
Monitoring Analyst .6 FTE @\$80,000 a year	\$ 48,000	
Adaptive Systems Manager .6 FTE @90,000 a year	\$ 54,000	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$ 142,000	\$ 80,000
Fringe Benefits (Break down for each employee)		
20% of Salary and Wages – Benefits include retirement, health benefits, FICA, etc.		
EPA Grant Manager – 20% x \$80,000		\$ 16,000
Regional Manager – 20% x \$40,000	\$ 8,000	
Monitoring Analyst – 20% x \$48,000	\$ 9,600	
Adaptive Systems Manager – 20% x \$54,000	\$ 10,800	
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	\$ 28,400	\$ 16,000
Travel		
Mileage: Travel for Regional Manager and 3 staff: 500 mi/month @\$0.55 /mi x 12 months	\$ 3,300	
Conferences: Travel to Vancouver, BC or Seattle, WA to attend the biennial Salish Sea Conference – hotel costs for regional manager and 3 staff – 4 nights @ \$200 a night = \$3,200 Per diem costs for the 4 staff – 4 days @ \$150 a day = \$2,400 Transportation by train from Seattle to Vancouver - \$500 round trip for 4 employees = \$2,000	\$ 7,600	
TOTAL TRAVEL	\$ 10,900	
Equipment		
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	\$ 0	
Supplies		
Include basic office supplies used by all staff within the agency. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology (\$200 per FTE per year x 5 years of grant x 4 staff)	\$ 4,000	
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$ 4,000	
Contractual		
Evaluation Contract	\$ 40,000	
Support Services Contract	\$ 20,000	
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	\$ 60,000	
Other		

	EPA Funding	Non-federal Match
Subawards to 3 organizations to help support the cooperative agreement (\$500,000 for each)	\$1,500,000	
State interagency agreement		\$1,653,300
Registration Fees for 4 staff to attend the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in 2022 (in Seattle) and 2024 (in Vancouver)- \$500 x 4 employees x 2 conferences = \$4,000	\$ 4,000	
TOTAL OTHER	\$1,504,000	\$1,653,300
Indirect Charges		
Negotiated Rate at 25% (agreement attached)	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
TOTAL INDIRECT	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
TOTAL FUNDING	\$1,784,300	\$1,784,300

Staffing Plan Sample

Annual Staffing Plan Overview - SAMPLE FORMAT				
Staff Name	Title	FTE supported by award	FTE supported by other funds	Total Level of Effort
		Level of Effort		
Task 1:				
Employee Name	Monitoring Analyst	0.600		0.600
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.040	0.040
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.074	0.300	0.374
Employee Name	Regional Manager	0.350		0.350
Task 2:				
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.030	0.030
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.198	0.100	0.298
Employee Name	Program Director	0.090		0.090
Task 3:				
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.030	0.030
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.328		0.328
Employee Name	Regional Manager	0.040	0.010	0.050
Employee Name	Program Director	0.070		0.070
Total FTE:		1.75	0.51	2.26