DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Funding Guidelines
Fiscal Years 2019-2023

National Estuary Program (NEP)
Stormwater Strategic Initiative Grants

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Publication and Contact Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at;
https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/2010012.html

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Water Quality Program Washington State
Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington 98504-7710

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Background

The Puget Sound Action Agenda serves as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) required for each Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Estuary Program (NEP). A new EPA Puget Sound funding model, initiated in 2015 to better align investments made under the Strategic Initiatives with priority Vital Signs in the Puget Sound Action Agenda to address various interests of stakeholders, and to improve on the Lead Organization model used to administer EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds in previous years. State Fiscal Year 2020 is the fourth year implementing this funding model.

As part of the new model, EPA held a competition to select the organizations that would serve as Strategic Initiative (SI) Leads. The SI Leads are:

- Stormwater Strategic Initiative: Washington State Department of Ecology, with the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Washington State University Stormwater Center
- Shellfish Strategic Initiative: Washington State Department of Health, with the Washington State Department of Agriculture and Ecology
- Habitat Strategic Initiative: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources

SI Leads have convened Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams (SIATs) to provide input to the SI Leads that informs Puget Sound Geographic Funds funding decisions. The SI Leads make final decisions for funding projects based primarily upon the SIATs' recommendations and in accordance with the availability of funds. EPA provides the three SI Leads with annual funding guidance. EPA's funding guidance is subject to change, and Ecology's NEP funding guidance, and it's implementation of this guidance, may change based on EPA direction.

Ultimately, based on the direction of the 2018 Action Agenda, it is EPA's goal that all SI Leads focus most closely on identifying priority Puget Sound Geographic Funding pathways using Implementation Strategies as a structured decision-making tool.

Funding Process Decision

The 2018 **Action Agenda** (https://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php) was finalized and adopted by The Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council at its December 2018 meeting. EPA approved the Agenda in February 2019 as the Puget Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). This funding guidance reflects the unprecedented level of effort and participation throughout Puget Sound in the development of the 2018 regional priorities and approaches based upon a set of developed Implementation Strategies, in addition to the associated solicitation for Near Term Actions (NTAs) that comprise the Implementation Plan portion of the Action Agenda.
The following framework describes the approach for SI Leads to develop subaward packages to be funded with SFY2020 EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds with these important notes: a) the list of NTAs in the Action Agenda is not developed with the sole intent of being a final funding list, b) the list of NTAs is not intended to be solely funded by EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds, and c) many NTAs are more appropriately funded using sources external to the EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds.

SI Leads and SIATs should justify their SFY20 funding recommendations based on the criteria in this EPA funding guidance.
Each SI Lead has some flexibility to adapt the funding framework to the individual Strategic Initiatives as necessary to achieve the best possible outcomes.
Subaward Package Development Framework

The subaward package
The Stormwater SIAT members serve rolling two-year terms. Rosters for each team can be found **at Stormwater SIAT team roster** - http://www.psp.wa.gov/strategic-initiatives-leads.php. SIAT members a selected to represent the diverse geography and topical areas, and not to represent the agencies or organizations they are affiliated with.

The SIATs and SI Leads review the 2018-2022 Action Agenda adopted by the Leadership Council (LC) and approved by EPA under the authority of the National Estuary Program. A complete visual of this process is on page 9, Figure 1.

The SIATs and SI Leads review the additional factors in Section III of this document to guide and inform the selection of investments from the 2018-2022 Action Agenda for potential funding with EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds. The SIATs and SI Leads approach assigned work with the goal of identifying the activities and sequence that can contribute most strategically to achieving the Puget Sound recovery goals in the Action Agenda.

The SIATs and SI Leads perform a gap analysis based upon Implementation Strategies to determine if there are significant gaps that need attention to approach Puget Sound recovery more strategically and effectively. SIATs and SI Leads may fund gaps with their FY19 allocation **only** in very special cases and with concurrence from the EPA Project Officer. This would include the issuance of new RFPs for sub-awards.

EPA recommends that the SIATs and SI Leads consider additional information such as:

- Lessons learned from the Lead Organizations involved in the previous EPA funding model, and the first three years of implementing the current funding model (SFY16, SFY17 and SFY18).
- Information available on previously funded work that is similar or related to current NTAs.
- This could include the success of the activity in contributing to recovery goals, and evaluation of the activity sponsor's ability to meet stated objectives.
- An NTA owner's past performance on previous NTAs funded through the Lead Organization or Strategic Initiative Leads, including award spend-down and project outputs/outcomes, or an NTA owner's ability to carry out the NTA based on current staffing and capacity.
- Information about the history of an activity (e.g., other phases).
- Crosscutting issues, which have potential benefit or may impact multiple Vital Signs.
- Activities with more appropriate funding through other sources.
- Combining similar activities.
- Sequencing of activities to achieve better outcomes.
- Climate impacts, effectiveness monitoring, and status and trends monitoring. (EPA Project Officers serve as primary points of contact from EPA with SI Leads with respect to all the above in #5.)

1. The SIATs make formal funding package recommendations to their respective SI Leads. This includes justifications for investments based on the factors in the funding guidance. The details of this process may differ across the SI Leads. For example, an SI Lead may opt for a highly collaborative process between the SIATs and the SI Lead that culminates in a draft-funding list owned by both groups. Another SI Lead may choose to take a more hands-off approach and allow their SIATs to work more independently to produce a recommendation. (EPA Project Officers serve as primary points of contact from EPA with SI Leads with respect to all the above in #6.)

2. The SI Leads review the SIAT recommendations, and confer with others as necessary (e.g., SIAT members, subject matter experts, agency management, etc.) to make a final determination on the recommendations. (EPA Project Officers serve as primary points of contact from EPA with SI Leads with respect to all the above in #7.)

3. The SI Leads share these recommendations with the Leadership Council (LC) and the Tribal Management Conference (TMC). Once this has occurred, the LC and the TMC have three weeks to provide feedback to the SI Leads on the funding package recommendations. SI Leads are under no obligation to respond prior to making a final decision on the funding package for the current federal fiscal year.

4. After receiving feedback from the LC and TMC, the SI Leads have 2-3 weeks to produce final funding decisions.

5. EPA SI Lead Project Officers will observe and provide feedback on the process used by each SI Lead to develop the funding package to ensure that the SI outputs from this process are consistent with the work plan and applicable grant terms and conditions.
   It is the SI Lead's responsibility to ensure that potential subaward content, if selected for Puget Sound Geographic Funding, will comply with all applicable EPA grant terms and conditions (For example, the SI Lead must ensure that policies related to anti-lobbying and meeting the collaborative nature of the NEP program are adhered to by their subawardees.)

6. SI Leads transmit funding packages and supporting information to EPA Project Officers, the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference and the Tribal Management Conference.

7. SI Leads begin to negotiate subawards. EPA Project Officers may review the statements of work and provide input, but the SI Leads are responsible for ensuring that subaward work plans comply with all applicable EPA grant terms and conditions. EPA will provide oversight of primary award recipients to ensure that subawards are adequately monitored and managed.

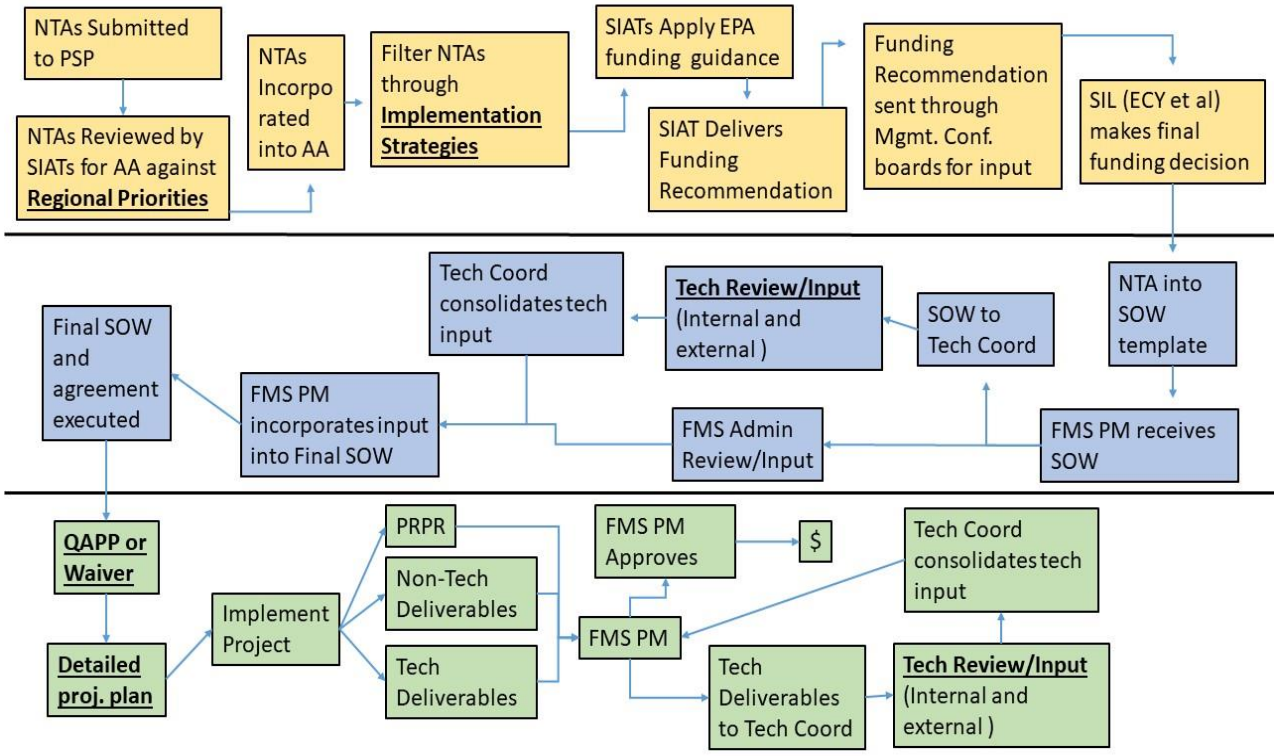

Figure 1. Decision process for NTAs submitted through Action Agenda, steps 1-8 above. Grant making process for selected NTAs, steps 8-16. Grant management process for funded NTAs, 16-28.

Considerations for Eligibility

SFY19 EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds must be used to implement activities or NTAs identified in the 2018 Action Agenda, activities in the 2016-2018 Biennial Science Work Plan, or critical gaps identified as important to environmental outcomes as expressed in the Action Agenda.
An important element of the current funding model is that EPA Puget Sound Geographic funds may be directly awarded to NTA owners in some situations without further competition. All NTAs vetted and tiered within the 2018 Action Agenda are considered to have met the competition requirements for EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds eligibility.

Given both the flexibility and limited amount of EPA Puget Sound Geographic Funds, other factors beyond Action Agenda tiers are considered to maximize the best use of these funds. As such, use of additional criteria to guide investment decisions is warranted. The following are factors to assist the Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams (SIAT) in such analyses with the first two factors considered the most important.

1. **Tiering:** NTA tier assignments are given serious consideration. As SIATs and SI Leads evaluate the tiered lists, additional factors are used as described below to work through funding decisions, and to identify NTAs in lower tiers that might be important or even critical, to fund over top-tier NTAs.

2. **Relationship to critical/priority path in Implementation Strategies**: All regional priorities for Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish are based on critical paths in existing Implementation Strategies. In addition, the SIAT consider needs identified to improve, manage, or operationalize Implementation Strategies. This factor may cover activities, such as science and monitoring, which are necessary to inform a body of work. Ultimately, Implementation Strategies provide a clear and credible justification for most funding decisions related to Puget Sound recovery.

3. **Priority science and monitoring needs such as those identified in the 2016-2018 Biennial Science Work Plan**: This will include the 2017 Addendum to the Blue Ribbon Report on Ocean Acidification, climate science needs, science supporting Southern Resident Orca recovery, and other similar technical resource assessment.

4. Other important funding considerations include:
    - Tribal Treaty Rights Priorities such as those listed in the Habitat Priorities document and other similar resources.
    - Cross-Cutting and Synergistic Opportunities (per recommendation from the Leadership Council): The funding of packages of activities that support one another, and activities that can leverage greater recovery impacts across multiple Vital Signs or part of the system is strongly encouraged.
    - Bang for the buck/cost effective for results: Cost effectiveness among investments should always be considered, wherever possible.
    - Pilot/Priming/Planning investments that can be replicated or expanded with other sources of funding, if successful: This would be especially important to consider if other sources of funding were identified that could be leveraged with the EPA investment. Some of the pre-work for expensive capital projects come to mind.
    - Agency directives from Congress/OMB/ EPA initiatives: These could include coordinated investment and EPA initiatives/priorities, such as riparian protection and restoration, and referred to when making funding decisions.
    - Significant gaps in necessary activities to move recovery forward (as documented in the 2018 Action Agenda): If included in funding recommendation but not part of the tiered NTA list or in the 2016-2018 Biennial Science Work Plan, the SIAT and SI Leads should prepare justification supporting the variance.
    - Non-capital projects (or elements of projects) that have fewer dedicated funding sources (per recommendation from the Leadership Council): Examples include science, monitoring, education, and behavior change.
    - Other sources of funding: In some cases, a project may not be funded with Puget Sound Geographic Funds because there is already dedicated or other sources of funding for that activity (e.g., stormwater capital projects).
    - Timeliness of Implementation: If an NTA owner is unresponsive during the contracting process and/or the SIL has reason to believe that the NTA owner will not be able to successfully implement the NTA in a timely manner, the SIL may (at its discretion and in consultation with the SIAT and EPA Project Officer) rescind the offer of funding and apply those funds towards a different NTA or to another entity who could carry out the work.

Additional Local Integrating Organization Subawards

The Strategic Initiative Leads coordinate on a process that gives LIOs the opportunity to identify their priority NTAs for direct funding within the constraints of the Puget Sound geographic funding allocated for this use. The proposed NTAs will have to meet all of the established criteria for funding NTAs, including the technical standards necessary to establish identifiable outputs and projected outcomes, and a clear connection to regional outcomes (i.e., Vital Signs). They must also be allowable under Clean Water Act Section 320 (CWA 320) and National Estuary Program funding authorities. Strategic Initiative Leads work with recipient of LIO picks to refine the proposed NTAs and develop a work plan, budget, and schedule. NTA final funding decisions are subject to SI lead discretion.

EPA anticipates that approximately $100,000 per LIO per year is available via this mechanism. EPA recommended that LIOs be limited to the funding of one NTA each per year, which is incrementally funded moving forward (i.e., phased funding of one activity over more than one year). However, EPA defers to the Strategic Initiative Leads on the funding of these subawards, and supports their decisions. Subsequent funding is dependent upon Puget Sound appropriation levels. If levels hold to the amount of the FY16 appropriation or more over the next four years, this could allow for a planning level for each LIO of approximately $100k per year toward LIO prioritized NTAs through FY2020.

At the time of the finalization of this guidance, the Strategic Initiative Leads were working with the Local Integrating Organization collaborating to develop a funding process for the pass-through funding to LIOs. Please refer to the final guidance provided by the Strategic Initiative Leads for details.

Program Schedule

Important Information

Visit http://psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php for more information on submitting your project to the Action Agenda

Eligibility

Eligible Entities, such as:

- State government
- Local government
- Non-governmental organizations
- Special purpose districts (e.g. conservation districts)
- Tribal governments
- Consortia of local and/or tribal governments
- Academic institutions
- Land trusts

If you are unsure of your organization's eligibility, please contact Ecology's Project Manager, Lola Flores at lola.flores@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 407-6549.

The intent of this grant opportunity is to fund stormwater related projects that are mostly ineligible through other federal and state funding sources. This grant program intends to achieve some degree of geographic spread throughout Puget Sound.

Applicants must check www.sam.gov to verify the applicant/entity is not suspended or debarred from contracting by the federal government. Any suspended or debarred parties are not eligible to receive a funding award.

Eligible Projects

Stormwater Activities Projects

A project will be eligible for NEP grant funds depending on the activity type and the jurisdiction where the activity takes place.

Some examples of these types of projects include:

- Land use/stormwater management planning
- Review of existing local stormwater regulations
- New BMP development and assessment through the Ecology TAPE program
- Conducting inventories and mapping of stormwater sources and infrastructure
- Education and outreach

Stormwater Facility Projects

Stormwater facility projects provide water quality benefits by treating and/or providing flow control for water generated from impervious surfaces such as roads and buildings prior to discharge to receiving waters. Grant funding is available for planning, design, and construction of stormwater facilities projects. Projects may be submitted as planning and design only; planning, design, and construction; or construction only.

Stormwater facility projects may include:

- Treatment or flow control best management practices.
- Low impact development techniques that treat stormwater and/or provide infiltration.
- Decant facilities that separate liquid waste from solid waste generated by stormwater maintenance activities such as street sweeping and the cleaning of catch basins.

Planning and Design

Costs of stormwater facility siting and design are eligible for NEP grant funding. These costs include preparing planning documents, cultural resource determinations, geotechnical work, engineering design reports, environmental review, value engineering studies, and rate studies.

Construction

Ecology may provide NEP grant funds to eligible applicants for construction of stormwater facility projects. Applicants must comply with Ecology-approved design standards as listed in Western Washington Stormwater Management Manuals or an equivalent Ecology-approved manual as listed in Appendix 10 of the Phase I Municipal NPDES Stormwater Permit in order to be eligible for financial assistance from Ecology. https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Stormwater-permittee-guidance-resources

Table 1 provides examples of stormwater activities that are potentially eligible for NEP funds. The list is not intended to be comprehensive; eligibility for NEP funds is ultimately a SIAT decision at the discretion of Department of Ecology and EPA.

Table 1: Stormwater Activity Projects and Components Eligibility Description

Basin modeling for BMP prioritization not required by a permit	Yes
Cost and effectiveness analysis to meet federal requirements	Yes
Equipment and/or tools pre-approved for a funded project	Yes
Establishment of stormwater utilities	Yes
Implementation of educational activities related to stormwater	Yes
Inspection programs for private parcel stormwater BMPs	Yes
Land acquisition for: wetland habitat preservation and protection; riparian area and watershed preservation; drinking water source protection	Yes
Landscaping for erosion control directly related to a project	Yes
Light refreshments for meetings if pre-approved	Yes
Stormwater outreach and education projects	Yes
Pet waste signs	Yes
Project Management Consultant	Yes
Purchase, rental, or use fees for high-efficiency vacuum sweepers	Yes
Stormwater infrastructure inventories	Yes
Stormwater related land use planning	Yes
Water quality monitoring	Yes

Nonpoint Source Activity Projects

Nonpoint source water pollution control activities include a wide variety of projects that do not involve constructing or preparing to construct a traditional water pollution control facility. These types of projects involve activities such as implementing best management practices (BMPs) and using outreach and education to help improve water quality by addressing nonpoint source pollution derived from stormwater runoff. Ecology may require specific review and approval for certain BMPs.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) Implementation Projects

Water quality best management practices (BMPs) are defined as structural or non-structural methods recommended through a planning process that have a demonstrated success for addressing or preventing water quality degradation. Implementation of BMPs refers to the use of established approaches or practices to address water quality problems. BMPs are physical, structural, and managerial practices that prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution.

All Nonpoint BMPs must meet the conditions of these funding guidelines and be reviewed by Ecology prior to installation. Ecology will require recipients to submit a BMP Approval form that describes the implementation plan for all BMPs with any supporting documents such as maps, designs, and maintenance plans, etc. to the regional Project Manager. A BMP Approval Form template is available at https://ecology.wa.gov/Asset-Collections/Doc-Assets/Water-quality/Grants-and-Loans/Gen-Resources/BMP-Approval-Form. Ecology's Project Manager or Project Engineer will review the proposed project and provide written notice to proceed with implementation. If the recipient installs un-approved BMPs, the recipient assumes the risk that Ecology may delay or deny part or all of the reimbursement for that activity.

Public Outreach and Education Projects

Projects with public outreach and education components are eligible for grant funding. Public outreach and education use effective methods and programs, guided by a detailed outreach strategy, to engage the public's interest in improving water quality. Applicants should consider that the public has different levels of background knowledge of both water quality management and its role in reducing water pollution. Therefore, applicants should consider a multi-pronged approach to outreach. Public outreach efforts should include:

- Generating basic awareness of water pollution.
- Educating at a more sophisticated level using more comprehensive content.
- Building on existing recognition of the issue to prompt behavior changes that reduce pollution or opportunities for pollution.

The strategy should specifically address combining public outreach to include the implementation of other water quality management measures. This aspect of outreach could involve more in-depth education, short training courses, live presentations and slideshows, handbooks, posters with educational content and captioned illustrations, and web-based training modules, or websites with photos of good and bad practices.

Technical Assistance

Ecology may reimburse the costs associated with project-specific planning and technical assistance for planning, design, and implementation of grant and loan eligible water quality BMPs or riparian restoration. Site-specific planning for resource and land management is an eligible activity if the resulting plan includes eligible water quality BMPs consistent with the criteria required under these guidelines.

Watershed Planning and Implementation

Watershed planning projects are eligible for NEP grants.

Riparian Buffer Requirements on Agricultural Lands

EPA established a new grant condition for FFY 2014 NEP funded projects that requires that NEP funded riparian buffer protection and restoration projects in agricultural areas be consistent with interim riparian buffer recommendations. These recommendations were provided to EPA by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) letters of February 4, 2013, and April 9, 2013, or the October 28, 2013 simplified version, also commonly called the "NOAA or NMFS buffer table". In this context, agricultural areas include lands that meet the definition of agricultural lands and activities in the Washington Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.065). Properties that are zoned as rural residential that include hobby farms or nonrevenue producing farms will also be considered as agricultural land for the purpose of implementing this term and condition.

Buffers for on-the-ground projects:

The riparian buffer width recommendations are intended to apply to on-the-ground projects in agricultural areas that are funded by NEP grants.

Exceptions:

Where implementing the NMFS buffer widths is prevented by physical constraints, such as transportation corridors or structures, the buffer implemented could be narrower at the location occupied by the transportation corridor or structure, but must otherwise meet the requirements of the NMFS buffer table. The recipient of funds for buffer implementation that request an exception based on physical constraints must fill out a form and receive approval from Ecology's Project Manager prior to implementing smaller than required buffer widths.
In addition, exceptions from the required NMFS buffers can be obtained through a request to Ecology and EPA and with a scientific rationale-demonstrating adequacy of buffers for supporting water quality and salmon recovery. 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. Exception requests will, at a minimum, be expected to address:

Project Site Background:

- Existing salmonid presence or use, habitat, and water quality conditions.
- Previous and anticipated habitat/water quality protection/improvement efforts in the watershed.
- Site conditions.
- Infrastructure issues.
- Project Design, Function, and Maintenance:
- Project design considerations
- Functions provided by proposed buffer.
- Long-term maintenance plan.

Further guidance on how to gain exceptions to the buffer width requirements and the scientific rationale process are considered on a case-by-case basis. The recipient will work with Ecology's Project Manager and the EPA to determine next steps for all exception requests.

The term and condition is included below:

12. Riparian Buffers

> 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 January 30, 2013 (stamp received date - February 4, 2013) and April 9, 2013 (stamp received date – April 16, 2013), or the October 28, 2013 guidance. Grantees shall confirm in writing projects' consistency with the recommendations referenced above. When developing project proposals, grantees also should consider the extent to which proposals 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.

Ineligible Project Components

In general, projects or project components prohibited by statute, federal appropriation, or administrative rules are ineligible. Ineligible projects or project components include, but are not limited to:

- Table 2 below indicates which project and project components are ineligible.
- Any expense not previously approved by the ECOLOGY Project Manager.

Table 2: Ineligible Projects or Project Components Description

Acquisition/installation of side/cross fencing
Annual permit fees
Aquatic plant control for aesthetic reasons, navigational improvements, or other purposes unrelated to water quality
BMPs implementation that affect upland areas
BMPs implementation that are solely agricultural production oriented or for private gain
Bond costs for debt issuance
Bonus or acceleration payments to contractors to meet contractual completion dates for construction
Cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost contracts (also known as multiplier contracts), time and materials contracts, and percent-of-construction contracts; this does not apply to General Contractor/Construction Manager (GC/CM) contracts procured in accordance with Chapter 39.10 RCW
Facilities designed solely to provide primary treatment
Fees for failure to pay invoices on time, check overdrafts, etc.
Fines and penalties due to violations of or failures to comply with federal, state, or local laws
Installation of rip rap, boulders, and retaining walls/bulkheads intended for shoreline or streambank armoring
Land acquisition or property easements for sewer rights-of-way and costs associated with those activities, including any fees and administrative costs
Lobbying or expenses associated with lobbying
Monitoring equipment used by an industry for sampling and analyses of industrial discharges to municipal water pollution control facilities
Operating expenses of local government, such as the salaries and expenses of a mayor, city council member, city attorney, etc.
Previously funded objectives
Projects solely for flood control
Reclamation of abandoned mines
Removal of existing structures or demolition of structures that are not interfering with proposed construction
Scientific research unrelated to a specific activity or facility
Side-sewer laterals, pump stations, and other appurtenances on private property where the facilities are not owned and maintained by a public body or a public body does not have a property easement for at least the length of the loan/grant, the project does not address documented nonpoint pollution issues, and the project does not address documented infiltration and inflow issues
State and federal agency facilities and other duties and responsibilities
Terralift technology for repairing OSS

Grant Management

The following are important terms and conditions that play a role in the day-to-day decisions made on grant projects. A complete listing of the administrative requirements for all grants and loans administered by Ecology is contained in the Administrative Requirements for Recipients of Ecology Grants and Loans Managed in EAGL; see: https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Online-tools-publications/Publications-forms.

Administration

Near Term Actions (NTAs) or projects selected through the SIAT will submit their scopes of work through the Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system. The NEP financial manager will indicate where in EAGL to find your application. Once in the EAGL system, applicants can access the funding application (WQNEP) and an EAGL User Manual that provides instructions on accessing and using the system.

- Applicants will be contacted by the Stormwater Strategic Initiative (SI) Project Manager if a project is selected by the SIAT. Please do not apply to WQNEP opportunities through EAGL if you have not been previously contacted by Stormwater Strategic Initiative staff.
- New users must register for a Secure Access Washington (SAW) account prior to beginning the application process. New user account approval may take up to two weeks.

Agreement development

The funding agreement is the formal written contractual arrangement signed by authorized representatives of the recipient and Ecology. The agreement, at a minimum will include an approved scope of work, total project costs, a budget by task, a budget by item, performance schedule, and Ecology General Terms and Conditions. Ecology assigns a project management team to each funded project. The team consists of:

- A **project manager,** from the Lacey headquarters office (primary contact for technical assistance and day-to-day questions).
- A **financial manager** from the Lacey headquarters office.
- A **project engineer or technical advisor** from either Lacey headquarters or the regional office, as needed.

The **financial manager** reviews and approves payment requests and helps the project manager negotiate agreements and track performance. The **project manager** is the point of contact for all project related questions and works with the financial manager to resolve payment or eligibility issues if they arise.

Ecology will assign a **project engineer or technical advisor** to provide engineering or technical assistance, as necessary. Technical advice on project deliverables for NEP grants will include the Washington Stormwater Center (WSC) and Department of Commerce.

The Ecology project management team will use information contained in the funding proposal as the basis for developing the funding agreement. It will take less time to develop a funding agreement if you have a clearly defined project proposal that includes measurable objectives and an accurate budget. Ecology may withdraw or reduce project funding if a task is determined to be ineligible during the agreement negotiation process.

Agreement Scope

All NEP recipients will create their scope of work (SOW) using a template that will be provided via email by the ECOLOGY Financial and Project Manager during the negotiation process.

The SOW template will include the following (non-negotiable) tasks:

- **Task 1.** Project Development
    - Subtask 1.1. Detailed Project Plan (DPP)
    - Subtask 1.2. Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Development
    - Subtask 1.3. Effectiveness Consultation
- **Task 2.** Project Administration/Management
    - Subtask 2.1. Project Factsheet
    - Subtask 2.2. Quarterly Progress Report and Payment Requests (PRPR)
        - 2.2.1. EPA FEATS Reporting
        - 2.2.2. Puget Sound Partnership NTA Reporting
        - 2.2.3. Storage and Retrieval and Water Quality Exchange (WQX) Data Reporting
    - Subtask 2.3. Final Project Report
- **Task 3**. Broader Impacts and Communication

Particular Deliverables for NEP grants:

A. **Detailed Project Plan (DPP) -** The RECIPIENT will prepare a detailed project outline and timeline to describe project expectations and outcomes. The detailed project plan will also identify how the objectives of the project will be evaluated, including quantifiable performance measures and targets. As part of developing the detailed project plan, [RECIPIENT organization] staff will meet with their Stormwater SI Grant Program Representative to discuss the project goals, tasks, timeline, and shared workload. Stormwater SI staff will have the opportunity to provide input on the plan and establish mutual expectations.

B. **Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) -** The recipient must submit a QAPP or QAPP waiver to the Washington State Department of Ecology's NEP Quality Assurance Coordinator (NEP QC) using EPA's NEP guidance for QAPPs. See http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/qa/docs/NEPQAPP/index.html. If a QAPP is required, the RECIPIENT will work with the NEP Quality Coordinator to develop and approve the QAPP.

C. **Project Factsheet -** The RECIPIENT will create a project factsheet (using provided template) and submit it in MS Word with the first quarterly progress report which will be made publically available.

D. **EPA FEATS Reporting** - Complete semi-annual FEATS (*Financial and Ecosystem Accounting Tracking System*) progress reports, as well as a final FEATS report. The final FEATS report, reflecting the final project billing, will be provided by the RECIPIENT during project closeout, within 60 days of the expiration of the grant, and will describe the entire project, highlighting project outcomes and discussing lessons learned.

E. Environmental Information Management System (EIM) and Water Quality eXchange (WQX) Data Reporting (if needed) - EIM and WQX refers to an electronic data system for water quality monitoring data. If the RECIPIENT collects any physical, chemical or environmental data (e.g. dissolved oxygen, water temperature, salinity, turbidity, pH, phosphorous, total nitrogen, E. coli or Enterococci, and other biological and habitat data), then EIM reporting will be required. Data for an entire calendar year (Jan 1 – Dec. 31) is to be submitted annually. To assist in tracking in EIM, name your project as follows: NEP_202X(*insert organization name*); the unique project ID needs to be 35 characters or less. More information about EIM can be found at https://ecology.wa.gov/Research-Data/Data-resources/Environmental-Information-Management-database.

F. **Final Project Report -** A final report is required by the RECIPIENT that describes the methods, results, lessons learned and recommendations for future work. The final report will include analyses of [insert description here]. The final report will evaluate the success of achieving the performance measures identified in the detailed project plan. Included with the final project report will be an updated Project Factsheet (see 2.1).

Agreement Budget

Recipients may include an overhead charge of up to 29.35 percent of salaries and benefits for employees for time spent specifically on the project. Documentation on approved overhead will need to be provided by grant recipient to the ECOLOGY Financial Manager.

To Ask Questions

For more information on this funding opportunity, please email questions to Lola Flores at lola.flores@ecy.wa.gov, or check out the Puget Sound Partnership's website at https://psp.wa.gov/NEP-solicitation-and-grants.php.