

Additional Information and Responses to FAQ's For FY07-09 Solicitation Participants

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) recently solicited proposals to implement the region's *Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program* (Program) during fiscal years 2007 through 2009. Through this solicitation, BPA and the Council are seeking to build upon the record of accomplishment from previous Program investment, while continuing to refine and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing implementation of a unified and collaborative plan for fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery.

Throughout the past several weeks since the start of the solicitation process, BPA has received numerous questions of clarification. As a result we have developed this supplemental information which may be useful in helping to respond to further inquiries from potential project proponents. In addition, this information reflects some of the interests BPA would like to see addressed by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council during the project review process. Finally, this information reflects factors BPA will take into account when developing its comments to the Council as part of the project review process. As such, this Supplemental Information may be useful now to project proponents, for consideration in developing proposals.

1) Proposals Should Align With BPA Responsibilities.

Through the project selection process, BPA wishes to continue the comprehensive approach to Program implementation we have described as "integrated," thereby incorporating the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) biological opinions with the broad fish and wildlife protection, mitigation and enhancement objectives of the Council Program consistent with the Northwest Power Act. Integration of these efforts is critically important to our collective success and remains uniquely a BPA responsibility, but we need the assistance of both the Council and project sponsors. In particular, since implementation of BPA-funded projects helps BPA meet its various fish and wildlife obligations, we wish to see, in project proposals, a clear articulate of the project's relationship to BPA's responsibilities.

BPA seeks to fund a suite of projects that:

- address the impacts of construction and operation of the (federal) hydropower system to affected populations – particularly via off-site efforts where mitigation cannot be accomplished through hydrosystem operational measures alone, and
- are consistent with the Program vision of protecting, mitigating and enhancing the natural ecological functions, habitats, and biological diversity of the Columbia River basin fish and wildlife populations.

Because many of the actions identified in the FCRPS biological opinions and the Council's program overlap, a single project may meet multiple objectives, particularly in

the areas of offsite habitat, hatchery, and harvest mitigation and research/monitoring measures.

2) ESA-Related Proposals Should Link To ESA Strategies and Recovery Planning.

Given that BPA continues to implement the [2004 NOAA Fisheries and 2000 USFWS FCRPS Biological Opinions \(BiOps\)](#), proponents of ESA-related work should identify how their projects would advance ESA survival and recovery goals. BPA will also look to the performance targets identified in the Action Agencies 2005 Updated Proposed Action (UPA) for the FCRPS BiOp Remand and the 2005 to 2007 Implementation Plan (IP) for the UPA when assessing whether a proposed project would address BPA’s ESA obligations, as nested within the broad purposes of Council Program implementation.

UPA, IP and other Program performance metrics have been incorporated into the online proposal form, where proponents can choose from a list of standardized measurements to describe their project objectives. (See item 4, below.)

BPA recognizes that there is uncertainty about measures that may be called for in the future, especially in light of current ESA litigation. Because of this uncertainty, project proponents are encouraged to identify the ESUs and the individual populations, if known, that would be benefited by the proposed action(s).

The potential outcome of current ESA litigation may necessitate the need to make directional shifts in the integrated Program focus during the next several months/years. While it would be premature to speculate on the nature of potential shifts, this litigation may have an effect on the project review process, and ultimately, on the types of projects BPA chooses to contract for in the future.

3) Subbasin-Specific Proposals Should Align With Subbasin Plans.

A subbasin-focused implementation strategy, adopted by the Council in the 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program amendments, is an essential structural feature of this project solicitation process. A programmatic emphasis on subbasin planning priorities in the selection of projects, implemented under the Council’s guidance, provides a critical opportunity to integrate federal and non-federal agency programs that affect fish and wildlife resources – listed or otherwise – with Council Program initiatives, the requirements of the FCRPS biological opinions, and the BPA program investments to implement them, at a subbasin, provincial, and regional scale.

Given the region’s considerable investment in subbasin planning, we ask that project sponsors be very specific about the anticipated objectives that the project is intended to meet and the timing of expected achievement of those objectives. In particular, proposals should emphasize discrete biological, environmental, or population performance measures that address key limiting factors identified in the Council-adopted subbasin plans. Proposals may be complementary to work already underway; “limiting” need not mean “unaddressed.” Project proponents should also describe how their proposals align with local priority strategies, if available, and cite documents where these priorities are described.

Finally, BPA proposes to work closely with Council, CBFWA and others to prioritize common requirements (ESA/Power Act) within the Basinwide (previously called Mainstem-Systemwide) category of projects.

4) Proposals Should Identify Work Elements and Associated Metrics.

In Section 7 of the [online proposal form](#), project proponents are asked to choose the work elements that best describe their proposal. Work elements are standard tasks used to build Statements of Work in the Fish and Wildlife program. The program uses work elements to achieve greater consistency across projects and contracts, to support the aggregation of similar information across projects or various geographic scales for reporting, and to the timely implementation of contracts following project selection. Proponents will have an opportunity to elaborate on their proposed biological objectives, work elements and methods in the Narrative portion of the form. Before submitting their proposals, project proponents should check the [work element “background pages”](#) on BPA’s website to ensure they have chosen the correct work elements to describe the tasks and outcomes that comprise the purpose of the project proposed. The *background pages* contain extensive descriptive information about each work element, including definitions, suggested deliverables, associated metrics, and environmental compliance documentation typically required.

Many work elements have associated metrics, which are used to report past project accomplishments and describe future objectives. Section 7 of the solicitation form requires project proponents to select metrics from a drop-down list; users will be prompted with a subset based on their chosen work elements. To view the complete list of work elements and metrics, please [click here](#).

NOTE: not all work elements have metrics.

5) Proposals Should Identify Cost-Sharing If Available, Especially In Areas Where There Are Shared Responsibilities.

In situations where mitigation or research/monitoring responsibilities are shared with others, BPA will look more favorably upon proposals that are accompanied by a clearly identified cost-share partnership with the appropriate entity/entities. For example, as described in the recently finalized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by BPA and the Forest Service, for projects the agencies implement together, the Forest Service will ensure on a programmatic average basis at least 30% cost share or match (dollars or in-kind). A match can come from other partners such as states, tribes, other federal agencies, private landowners and non-governmental organizations. Although this is a programmatic requirement, it will be important that each proposal submitted to the Council for work under this MOU try to attain this 30% goal.

While not required, BPA strongly encourages *all* project proponents to identify additional sources of funding that will be applied to their projects, as well as the amount of the cost-share contribution. Cost-sharing encourages broader, more diverse participation in program implementation. In some cases, leveraging alternative funding sources makes ratepayer funding available where otherwise it would not be (for example, where the Act could prohibit it if BPA funds were the sole source of funding support sought). Put simply, cost-sharing makes more funds available for a broader array and volume of projects. Expanding investment in actions that benefit the region’s fish and wildlife

resources is in everyone's interest. And, where the benefits of BPA action provide benefit to a subset of local entities (e.g., irrigation districts), a definitive cost-share will make proposals more supportable.

6) Geographic Considerations

We acknowledge that many of the projects proposed for funding through this solicitation will be characterized as “off-site” – targeted to impacts of the FCRPS that cannot be mitigated through changes in hydrosystem operations – as recognized in the Power Act and ESA Biological Opinions. We also recognize that because we have emphasized the priority of projects addressed specifically to BPA's fish and wildlife responsibilities, some project proponents may be concerned because of the inherent difficulty of precisely relating project objectives in some areas of the basin to actual impacts of the federal hydrosystem. Where the nexus between a project's proposed outcome and the hydrosystem's responsibility for mitigating an identified impact is geographically distant or is not an ESA priority, the inclusion of cost-sharing can elevate the consideration of a project amongst competing proposals for available funding.

BPA's ESA needs may require offsite mitigation projects that target certain geographic areas important to specific fish populations. If known, we strongly encourage project proponents to identify the ESUs and individual populations that would be benefited by the proposed action(s).

With regard to proposals in the Middle and Upper Snake provinces, BPA has stated in past funding decisions¹ that it may not be an FCRPS responsibility to mitigate for fish and wildlife losses above the Hells Canyon Complex, unless such losses result from the operation or construction of Black Canyon, Anderson Ranch, Boise Diversion, Minidoka or Palisades Reservoirs. Consequently BPA will decline funding new proposals in this solicitation that are not connected to the ongoing wildlife mitigation responsibilities for these five reservoirs. We will consider continued funding of ongoing resident fish projects that will potentially be recommended through this solicitation process. Resident fish losses due to the construction and operation of these reservoirs have yet to be quantified. Therefore, BPA will also consider new projects for the quantification and mitigation of these resident fish losses if recommended by the Council during this solicitation process.

¹ <http://www.cbfwa.org/FWProgram/ReviewCycle/reviews/BPA/5Province030430BPACFundLetter.pdf>
(Funding Decision Letter, April 30, 2003)
<http://www.cbfwa.org/FWProgram/ReviewCycle/reviews/BPA/MidSnake020723BPACComment.pdf>
(Middle Snake Province Funding Decision Table, April 30, 2003)
<http://www.cbfwa.org/FWProgram/ReviewCycle/reviews/BPA/UprSnake020723BPACComment.pdf>
(Upper Snake Province Funding Decision Table, April 30 2003)
FY04 and FY06 BPA Funding Decision Letters.

7) Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) Proposals Should Fit Within the RM&E Framework.

Of all the areas BPA has received inquiries about since the solicitation window opened, the breadth and depth of questions has been greatest in the area of RM&E. In cooperation with regional partners, BPA has developed a draft framework to assist RM&E project proponents in developing their proposals and that we propose the Council use as a framework in reviewing project proposals (see Supplemental Information for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Proposals, which is attached). This Supplemental Information also contains additional RM&E project solicitation guidance that we BPA will use in its review and comments, and ultimately in making BPA funding decisions about submitted proposals.

BPA encourages RM&E project proponents to:

- **Develop proposals within the attached common RM&E framework.** The framework consists of standard definitions for RM&E projects along with key management questions, information needs, and agencies with shared responsibilities.
- **Either submit RM&E proposals separately from other types of work being proposed or at a minimum, submit proposals with the RM&E components reflected as separate work elements.** This will allow for RM&E work elements to be evaluated separately by BPA for developing our comments to the Council and for project funding decisions.
- **Focus on areas of greatest need.** The Supplemental Information provided identifies high priority needs. Project proponents should clearly identify which of these priority management questions and information needs their proposal is intended to address. If their proposal addresses a need that is not within the priority matrix, they should provide RM&E framework information specific to their project along with a justification for why this management question and proposal merit priority consideration.
- **Identify their plans and commitments to use standard monitoring design, sampling and data management protocols where available.** Some standards are currently available for use in proposals (see Supplemental Information for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Proposals for examples). Others will be developed in the months to come by the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP), Program Pilot Projects, and the Collaborative Systemwide Monitoring and Evaluation Project, in collaboration with BPA and the Council.
- **Clearly explain the monitoring or experimental design approach and its purpose and value.** Describe monitoring or research designs, statistical tests or techniques that will be used or developed. Describe (in as specific a way as possible) how the outcomes of the project or data will be used to support management decisions; emphasis should be placed on those management decisions that are FCRPS responsibility.

Since the online proposal form does not provide a specific space for RM&E project proponents to complete the items above, please use Section 10 – the Narrative portion of the form – for this purpose.

The purpose of the above guidance is to provide for a BPA review of, and comment to the Council on, all RM&E proposals or work elements on a stand-alone basis. BPA's review criteria will include: a) consistency with the common RM&E framework reflected in the attached Supplemental Information for RM&E Proposals, and b) consistency with priority needs identified in the Supplemental Information. Consequently, proposals that address the latter criteria in a manner that is consistent with the attached Supplemental Information will be looked upon more favorably by BPA as we develop comments to the Council and in our funding decisions for FY07 RM&E projects.

Finally, as in other areas of program implementation emphasis, BPA may favor RM&E project proposals with clearly identified cost-sharing partners and funding amounts, where shared responsibilities exist.

8) Where Applicable, Proposals Should Be Coordinated with Projects within Pilot RM&E Subbasins

The Fish and Wildlife Program has several ongoing RM&E pilot studies in the Upper Columbia (Wenatchee, Methow, Entiat), John Day, Upper Salmon, and the Estuary that may include the design and/or implementation of action effectiveness research. These studies require the management of control or reference areas and treatment areas. In order for this research to meet its objectives, BPA is asking that mitigation or additional RM&E projects proposed for these areas be integrated with these ongoing pilot study projects, which are expected to continue in FY07-09.

9) Projects that Generate Data Should Follow ISRP Recommendations.

The ISRP has set forth some specific guidelines for the sharing of data. See their [Review Criteria](#) and recently published [Retrospective Report](#). We have included additional clarification below.

- “Proposals must include explicit plans for how the information, technology, etc. from this project will be disseminated and used. The methods and procedures for collection of monitoring data (i.e., meta-data) must be adequately described. These plans must address release and long-term storage of data and meta-data” (ISRP) (the methods by which and the purposes for which the data were collected). (BPA)
- “Data from all projects obtained through public funds should be made available to the public via the program's database projects.” (ISRP)
- For example, individual projects may share data with one or more of the following P-TAGIS, RMIS, StreamNet, DART, FPC, IBIS, or with other appropriate agencies (such as a State DEQ / DOE for water quality data) where the data can be of use to multiple agencies and accessible via the internet. (BPA)
- “If there are restrictions on data use (e.g., locations of sensitive species or a restricted-use time period for preparation of reports and manuscripts), then the restrictions should be specified and justified.” (ISRP Exec Summary p.vi.)
- “Provide primary data, and their associated meta-data, in a standard machine-readable format to the databases of the region within a specified period of time.” (ISRP Retrospective pp. 31-32) PNAMP plans to recommend a standard template for data collection that includes documentation of monitoring protocols and meta-data for use prior to FY07 project implementation. (BPA)
- “Compliance with this policy should be a condition of continued funding.” (ISRP)

- During the solicitation period, contact the appropriate regional database project(s) managers for advice on formatting of data to be collected during the project. Establish adequate resources in the project budget to provide for common data management protocols for sharing or transfer or relevant data. (BPA)

10) Proposals should address any environmental compliance work that will be required for the proposed work.

In Section 7 of the [online proposal form](#), proponents should use work element 165: Produce Environmental Compliance Documentation to describe the potential environmental compliance work associated with their proposals. Proponents should also describe any permitting, ESA, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or cultural resource compliance work that they have either already completed or have in process. The work element budget should include costs associated with environmental compliance work that the contractor will perform or that will be obtained through a separate contract (e.g. a contract for cultural resource survey). Environmental compliance work that will be performed by BPA's internal environmental compliance staff (KEC) does not need to be accounted for as part of the proposal and should not be included as part of the work element 165 budget. The sponsor should consider the total duration of all environmental compliance work when determining the project timeline. For help in estimating timelines, please see the environmental compliance section of the background page for each work element. The work element background pages are located at: <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/contractors/statementsofwork.aspx>. For general information about BPA's NEPA obligations and requirements, including estimated timeframes for completion of NEPA documentation, please see our brochure: "Environmental Requirements for BPA-Funded Fish and Wildlife Projects" (http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/nepa_brochure05-2004.pdf)

Questions and Answers

Q. How do I know whether my project is eligible for capital funding? Is there a separate review and funding process for capital projects?

A. Proponents should concentrate their efforts on writing a strong proposal rather than placing a proposal in the correct budget category. BPA Financial Management will review all proposals submitted for capital funding and decide whether or not they are eligible for capitalization. These decisions will be made by March 2006, so projects that do not meet BPA's criteria for capitalization can still compete for funding from the expense budget. BPA's [capital policy](#) is available for review, and you may discuss your proposal with your BPA project manager, if you have one, or with Bob Austin (rjaustin@bpa.gov; 503-230-4748). If you believe your project may be eligible for capital funding, please indicate so in your proposal.

Q. My project has both capital (land purchase) and expense portions. Do I have to submit a separate proposal for each funding type?

A. No. Submit your proposal once, and identify both the capital and expense components of your project budget. Again, you may contact BPA for further assistance (see above).

Q. My BPA contract expires September 30, 2006. Council recommendations to BPA will not be delivered until October 18, 2006. Assuming it takes 30 days for BPA to make a final funding decision, and 90 days to negotiate a new contract with BPA, what will I do for funding from October 2006 – February 2007?

A. Both BPA and the Council recognize that this will be a significant issue for ongoing projects, and we are preparing options for those contracts expiring between September 30, 2006, and February 28, 2007. There are at least three alternatives: no cost time extensions for those contracts with money left at the end of the contract year; interim funding for those contracts without money left at the end of the contract year; or phasing decisions based on contract end date, such that those projects with contracts expiring in calendar year 2006 would have adequate time to plan for FY07. Phasing decisions would also give those projects that do not receive funding recommendation sufficient time and opportunity to ramp down their efforts in preparation for project closeout. BPA intends to provide guidance to contractors in a timely fashion, months in advance of their contract end date.

Q. I'm a new sponsor, applying for funding for a brand new project. Assuming BPA decides to fund my project, when could I begin work?

A. After BPA receives project recommendations from Council in October 2006, we will within 30 days make our funding decisions. Some will have been made, of necessity, prior to a final Council recommendation. New projects will be assigned a BPA project manager and Contracting Officer, who will review the project and determine how best to contract for the work. All new projects undergo some level of environmental review to determine what kind of compliance documentation might be necessary under NEPA and other environmental laws that apply. Once a contractor has been selected (or contractors, when a project is split into multiple contracts), BPA will negotiate a Statement of Work, budget, and spending plan with the contractor, a process that can take from 90-120 days. We hope the latest a selected contractor – who may or may not be the original project sponsor – would begin work is March 1, 2007. A contractor may not begin work without an executed contract.

Q. If I have an ongoing project that was previously approved and has a current contract that ends after September 30, 2006, do I have to write a proposal for the FY07 portion of the ongoing (previously approved) work?

A. No. Unless your contract aligns with the federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30), some portion of work in your currently executed contract will take place in FY07. This solicitation is concerned with projects and contracts that begin or will be renewing in FY07. For example, if your current contract began January 1, 2006 and ends December 31, 2006, you do not need to submit a proposal for the work that will be performed October 1, 2006 - December 31, 2006. The Council has already recommended funding for and BPA has already authorized you to perform that work under contract. However, if you would like your project to be considered for funding to continue your project after January 1, 2007, you must apply for funding during the FY07-09 solicitation process. If you do not intend to continue your project beyond December 31, 2006, you need not submit a proposal.

Appendix A: Reference Documents

There are many “guidepost” documents available to help project proponents focus their proposals to address local and regional priorities. A sampling of these is listed below. See also the Council’s website: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2007/Default.asp>.

Subbasin Plans:

- <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/>

Biological Opinions:

- <http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/>

Action Agencies 2005 Updated Proposed Action (UPA) for the FCRPS BiOp Remand:

- <http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/about%5Fus/esa/biological%5Fopinions/>

2005 - 2007 Implementation Plan (IP):

- http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/reports_and_papers/biop_implementation/docs/2005_2007_IP_Final.pdf

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Council’s Draft Research Plan:
<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/2005/draftirme.htm>
- Independent Scientific Review Panel Retrospective Report 1997 – 2005:
<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/isrp/isrp2005-14.htm>

Cost-Sharing, In Lieu Policy

- BPA-Forest Service Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
http://www.efw.bpa.gov/Integrated_Fish_and_Wildlife_Program/policyframework.aspx

BPA’s Capital Policy

- http://www.efw.bpa.gov/Integrated_Fish_and_Wildlife_Program/Ltforcapitalbudgetingguidelines.doc

ISRP Review Criteria

- <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2007/proposaldevelopment.htm>

ISRP Retrospective Report

- <http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/isrp/isrp2005-14.htm>

Work Elements and Metrics:

- <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/contractors/statementsofwork.aspx>