Washington Salmon Recovery Lean Study

Benchmarking Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the benchmarking exercise was to assist in identifying best practices for Washington to incorporate into their Future State project development and prioritization process while, at the same time, providing an opportunity for other participating grant programs to do the same.

Scope

Provide questions for each participating grant program to answer and provide an opportunity for programs to share responses with each other. Hold benchmarking visits with each participating grant program and representatives from Washington Salmon Recovery to review processes and discuss the pros and cons of various approaches.

Participants

Participants in this study include members of the Washington Salmon Recovery Lean Study and two other grant programs: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and Flood Plains by Design (FbD), a grant program within the Washington Department of Ecology.

WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Kaleen Cottingham, RCO Director Lisa Spurrier, Lead Entity Coordinator (Pierce County) Jeff Breckel, SRFB member (attended OWEB meeting only) Tara Galuska RCO Salmon Section Manager (attended OWEB meeting only) Judy Wells (MC^2 Consulting)	Liz Redon, Lead Regional Program Rep. Eric Hartstein, Senior Policy Coordinator (and Focused Investments Program Manager) Sue Greer, Regional Program Rep. Audrey Hatch, Conservation Outcomes Coordinator	Scott McKinney, Flood Plains Policy Supervisor Adam Sant, Project Manager

Budget, Funding Sources, Scale of Program

The table below summarizes information on each grant program on a biannual basis.

	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Biennial Grant Budget for project funding	$100M	$85M	$35M
Annual Cost to Run the Process	Approximately 10% (includes Lead Entity Capacity Costs versus Project Funding and 3-4.12% agency admin costs)	The percentage of annual funding used for agency operations for 2018 was 10.3 % (from the OWEB annual performance progress report)	3% administration, plus unquantified Nature Conservancy Costs

	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Funding Sources	Federal (NOAA -PCSRF) State	Federal (PCSRF) State (Lottery and License Plates)	State
Match Required	15%	25%	20%
Grant Programs	Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)	Open Solicitation (in 6 regions, done every 6 months). This is their largest program, distributing 60% of project funds. Focused Investment Program (to address larger projects of significance to the State). This program distributes 20% of their funds. Other funding includes operating capacity for sponsors and Watershed Councils.	One program for Floodplains
Funding Distribution	Allocation to geographies, competitive within geographies	Competitive across the State	Competitive across the State
Number of applications	Average of 171 per year	276 for Open Solicitation in 2017 (More applications in fall cycle)	25-40
Average size of award	$320,736	$100-$150K	

Summary:

- Cost to run program as a percentage of project funding is similar for Washington Salmon Recovery and OWEB (approximately 10%). These numbers are not an exact match but provide an indication that there is not a wide disparity in the cost of operations.
- Oregon compares their operations costs with private foundations through the Foundation Center. Their comparison benchmark group of private foundations with 19-129 employees is 21.7%.
- Further effort could allow more accurate reporting and comparison of operations costs to drive improvement.
- OWEB's Focused Investment Program (FIP) is of interest to Washington because it is a way to address larger projects that are not currently addressed through the regular annual process. The program selects larger projects that occur over a six-year period with funding of approximately

$2M per biennium. The selected projects must address one of the seven OWEB priorities. FIP represents 20% of OWEB's grant funding.

- In the Washington Salmon Recovery and FbD session, a point of emphasis was the difficulty of getting planning work done when capital funds cannot be used.

Organization and Stakeholders

Each grant program has a different organizational model. The table below describes the organizational models of each program and identifies the entities that perform the various functions within the process.

Role	WA	OR	FbD
Facilitate Evaluation	Lead Entities	OWEB Project Managers, includes 6 regional representatives & program specific staff (e.g. FIP)	FbD Management Team (Dept of Ecology staff)
Technical Review	Local technical and citizen committees, State Technical Review Panel	Local technical committees facilitated by staff (project managers)	Technical Review Team (includes members from Dept. of Ecology and other agencies)
Ranking	Lead Entities	Local technical committees facilitated by staff	FbD Management Team (Ecology, TNC, PSAR)
Final Funding Decisions	Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)	OWEB Board or Director	Dept. of Ecology Director
Outreach	Lead Entities Applicants	Applicants	The Nature Conservancy Applicants
Applicants	Cities, Counties, Conservation Districts, Land Trusts, Tribes, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups, Non-Profits, Landowners	Watershed Councils, Tribes, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Non-profit Institution Schools, Community Colleges, State Institution of Higher Education, Independent Non-profit Institution of Higher Education, or Political Subdivision of the State (not a state agency)	Counties, Cities, Towns, Special Purpose Districts, Federally Recognized Tribes, Conservation Districts, Municipal or Quasi-Municipal Corporations, Non-profits

Summary:

- Both Washington and Oregon have decentralized models that include different entities performing the various roles of technical evaluation.

- Oregon facilitates a standard project evaluation process across the state with agency employees collocated in the regions.
- Washington facilitates evaluation through Lead Entities in geographical areas that have contracts with RCO.
- While both models are effective, the Oregon model results in a more standard process of evaluation across the regions.
- The Oregon model includes Watershed Councils which are non- government entities that have been organized to conduct Watershed planning and outreach. They are grantees and are therefore not part of the evaluation process.
- For OWEB's FIP program, multiple Watershed Councils participate in various initiatives.

- FbD has a centralized team administer the process and a centralized evaluation team for all projects. The Nature Conservancy participates in the FbD Management Team and provides significant funding for outreach.

Metrics

The table below describes results from each agency on lean study metrics and also identifies other metrics utilized.

Metric	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Capacity as a percentage of Project Funding	Calculated as part of the lean study to be an average of 7% across all lead entities.	Not calculated, but they do calculate % of annual funding used for agency operations which was 10.3% in 2018	Not calculated
Cost of Project Outcomes	Calculated cost per mile of stream restored or protected as part of lean study	Calculated annually for Key Performance Measures using data from the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory. Relevant measures include: • Streamside Habitat: The number of riparian streammiles restored or enhanced as a result of OWEB funded grants • Upland Habitat: Acres of upland habitat restored or enhanced as a result of OWEB funded grants Native Fish Habitat Quantity: Miles of fish habitat opened as a result of completed fish passage projects funded through OWEB grants	Not calculated
Other Funds Leveraged	Calculated as part of the lean study at an average of 28%, however data unreliable due to inconsistent reporting	Reported at 66.8% in annual performance progress report	Identifies Leveraged funds versus Required Match as part of the evaluation

Metric	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Other Metrics	Project outcomes	See annual performance progress report https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/Documents/APPR-2018.pdf which includes percentage of funding used in agency operations, funding from other sources and outcome related metrics	Project outcomes

Summary:

- Each agency is required to report on project outcome metrics which are unique by type of project.
- Process efficiency metrics have not been established for any of the programs to use on an ongoing basis. OWEB does report on percentage of annual funding used for agency operations which is an indicator of efficiency.
- There may be benefit in developing efficiency metrics and comparing across grant programs.
- In order to compare across the grant programs there would need to be analysis to ensure that the comparison is "apples to apples."

High Level Process

Each grant program has a slightly different process. The below table provides a high-level description of the frequency and nature of each grant program's process.

Aspect of Process	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Approach	• Iterative process with back and forth between applicants and review teams	• Goal is to get best application/projectspossible • Process is responsive and competitive	• Competitive centralized approach • Streamlined process with minimal staff
Award Frequency	Annual	• Open Solicitation is biannual for restoration projects and annual for monitoring projects • Focused Investment Program (Entry for program biennial)	Biennial
Award Method	Allocation to each Lead Entity, competitive within Lead Entities	Competitive	Competitive
Cycle Time	12 months	6 months (Open Solicitation Restoration project)	14 months
Timing	• Jan-Dec every year • Board sets policy in advance every year	Fall and Spring (Open Solicitation Restoration Projects)	• Projects identified and ranked in advance of budget submittal

Aspect of Process	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
	• Site visits are completed Feb-June with pre-applications due two weeks in advance • Final applications are due in August		• Final list in by November 1 • Scoring and Ranking occurs in September • Applications are due in June • Start outreach for projects in fall of previous year
Iterations	• Three iterations of project applications • There is a lot of back and forth between local technical and state technical review panel	One complete application with revisions	One application

Summary:

- Washington's process is very iterative with lots of back and forth to improve projects. It is the most thorough process and results in significant improvements to projects, but it is also expensive. Both OWEB and FbD have processes that are more streamlined.
- Frequency of awards was discussed but it was not determined to be a significant differentiating factor. The more frequent the process, the more dynamic it is to support project needs. FbD is biennial, Washington is annual, and OWEB is biannual for their Open Solicitation program.
- Washington Salmon Recovery's approach is unique in that the funding is distributed by allocation to geographies and awarded competitively within geographies rather than awarded competitively. OWEB and FbD both award funding competitively at the State level.
- Washington's current approach for awarding grant funds through allocation to geographies does not support funding of the larger, more impactful projects. It may be beneficial to set aside a portion of funding to be awarded competitively across the state.
- For OWEB to grant funding every 6 months, the process needs to be more streamlined. This can be accomplished by reducing complexity in the organization model.
- FbD's selection of projects in advance of budget submittal results in significant delay between project selection and funding. FbD also sees opportunities for improvement in how long participants spend on each task in the process.

Sub Processes

Sub Process	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Pre-application	• Formal pre-applications are required • There is work done in advance of the formal pre-applications to prepare the applicants and, in some cases, to screen out projects; but it is highly individualized across lead entities	• OWEB is available to work with applicants in advance of the application due date upon request • No formal pre-application is required • Have discussed adding formal pre-application step but OWEB staff cannot say no to a project at pre-application because it would be a funding decision that only the Board or Director can make	• A two-page pre-application form is required • Projects are screened out based on the application form
Application	• Online applications are completed by applicants in the PRISM database. All required documents can be attached. • Applicants think that they application is too long and requires too many resources to complete.	• Just went online with their applications • Some rural areas have had issues because no broadband • Feedback function allows people to provide comments on what is working/not working for them • Application requires detailed description of project purpose and planning process. Questions are designed to help applicants determine if a project is ready to submit, and this has led to a reduction in the total number of applications. Number of questions depends on type of grant	• Still have paper process, waiting for IT to automate • 13 questions in application
Review	• Both local and state technical review • Includes on-site visit with local and state officials together • Site visits provide great value	• For Open Solicitation, review performed by local technical review teams • Focused Investment projects have their own technical review teams	• One central technical review team reviews and scores projects • There are sub-teams within the technical review team that score each specific area

Sub Process	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
Scoring and Ranking	• Completed by lead entities in each geographical area • Varies across lead entities • Statute requires lead entities utilize Citizen Committees for ranking and that projects are tied to regional recovery plans • Fit to plan is an eligibility requirement • Technical committee evaluates the "bang for buck" and certainty of success • Citizen committees evaluate socioeconomic, fit to strategy, cultural benefits • Questions are weighted	• Don't score, projects are ranked using criteria in rules • Use same evaluation criteria across all regions • Venn diagram with 5 bubbles (cost effectiveness, applicant capacity, proposal clarity, technical soundness and watershed context • Meeting/facilitation tools are used to help review teams recommend and rank projects, includes clickers for anonymous voting, ranking worksheets, etc. • Scoring is done by technical review teams in each region • Evaluation criteria includes if project fits into watershed restoration plan • Facilitation is a high priority for regional project managers • Two project managers work together to facilitate the process	• Scoring is completed using a point system broken out into categories. Projects must have minimum of 50% of the points for the top 3 categories which are flood related. • Scoring is done by technical review teams and ranking is done by the FbD Management Team. • A goal is to minimize overrides from the Management Team and stick with results from the scoring process.
Match reporting	• Inconsistent reporting of match, some projects report only required and others more • 15% of match is required but most projects have more (lead study showed 28%, but the accuracy of reporting on match above required was questioned)	• Only require reporting of required match, but many projects report more • 25% of match is required but most projects have more (annual performance progress report shows 66.8 % for 2018)	• 20% match is required • Applicants identify both required match and "leveraged match", which is beyond the required match, during evaluation process • Track to ensure required match is collected
Community Engagement	• Citizen and technical committees are a key component of	• Technical review teams represent the content experts in the community	• TNC spends significant time on outreach with the

Sub Process	WA Salmon Recovery	OWEB	FbD
	community engagement • Collaborative effort with lead entities and sponsors to educate community and identify projects	• Watershed Council's are a key component of community engagement	community across the state • Sponsors do outreach • Fund stakeholder support for projects (advisory group for funded projects)

Summary:

- Washington has the most extensive pre-application process which results in weeding out applications for projects that are not ready or that are not tied to strategy.
- On-line applications result in significant improvements. Washington may benefit from including a feedback function as Oregon has or from evaluating their guiding questions to help screen out applicants that aren't ready.
- The robustness and consistency of Washington Salmon Recovery's scoring and ranking process could be improved. Might be worthwhile to have a point system requiring a minimum number of points for the most important categories for a project to be considered. Provide training to lead entities on evaluation process.
- Facilitation skills are a key ingredient of the success of OWEB's program. Consider adding facilitation training for lead entities in Washington.
- Washington's use of Citizen Committees in the process could be clarified i.e. when is it appropriate for a Citizen Committee to say no to a project.

Overall Summary

There were many insights and learnings developed in the sessions with OWEB and FbD. The most significant takeaways for Washington include:

- The decentralized model of identification and prioritization of projects is effective for salmon recovery funding. There are multiple organizational models that can accomplish this.
- OWEBs process is more streamlined as it does not include as many players and only requires one application.
- Although cost of the process is not measured accurately by OWEB or Washington it appears that the costs are similar as a percentage of project funding.
- To assist with supporting funding of the larger, more impactful projects Washington current budget proposal includes a request, to implement a program similar to Oregon's Focused Investment Program. It will be useful to understand OWEB's lessons learned from implementing this program.
- Metrics for efficiency are a common challenge across all three grant programs, but all agree they would be beneficial.
- Match reporting is a challenge for both OWEB and Washington.

- Washington's project development and prioritization process is the most thorough of all three programs with the multiple iterations of an application. The multiple iterations, however, require more time on the part of the applicants. OWEB and FbD have much simpler processes with only one application. Perhaps there is a middle ground?
- The robustness and consistency of Washington's scoring process could potentially be improved, adding more rigor and standardization as with OWEB and FbD.
- The process was valuable to all three grant programs and it is recommended to complete a similar exercise on a periodic basis.

Question Responses

The questionnaires completed in advance of the study are included below.


FbD Benchmarking Responses.docx


WA Salmon Recovery Responses.docx


OWEB Benchmarking Responses.docx

FbD Benchmarking Responses

Salmon Recovery Lean Study Benchmarking Questionnaire

Please enter responses in the text box to the right of each question.

Part 1: Budget, Project Size, and Program Results	
Do you budget on an annual or biannual basis?	Biannual
What is the total cost of your process on an annual or biannual basis (most recent annual or biannual amount)?	We charge 3% for administration. The award by the legislature varies, so the total funds available for the grant program administration vary as well. To date we've received 35-50M per biennium.
How much money do you distribute for projects on an annual or biennial basis (most recent annual or biennial amount)?	We distributed $35M in awards in the 2017-19 biennium
Are you selecting the best projects to meet your strategic goals? How do you know?	We created and routinely refine our Funding Guidelines (FG) and scoring system to get the best projects that meet our strategic goals

Part 2: Organization and Stakeholders	
Describe your program's organization structure, including the various roles involved in your process and whether they are in-house staff, contractors or volunteers.	We have a 0.5 Program Manager, 2.5 Project Managers, and 1 Financial Manager. We've been without 2 PMs and 1 FM for quite a while and had to borrow help from other areas.
Who makes final decisions regarding funding? Who sets policy?	The FbD Management Team (MT) creates the final ranked list. Then the legislature makes the decision on how much total funding and may cut projects at will. The MT sets policy for the FbD program.
Are roles clearly defined? Where could they be clearer?	Ecology is responsible for running the grant program, and The Nature Conservancy and Puget Sound Partnership are the other key players on the MT.
How do you ensure participants adequately perform their roles?	For the MT it's up to each organization to perform their respective roles. Although Ecology's role is more defined since we run the grant program, the roles of TNC and PSP are largely dictated by those organizations.
Do you conduct regular surveys with your stakeholders to identify potential improvements to the process? (If so, please share results of a recent survey.)	Yes, we've conducted several surveys since our inception in 2013. We also collect feedback from our yearly workshops with stakeholders.
Part 3: Process Performance Metrics	
Do you track the Cost of your Project Development and Prioritization	Much of the project development work is assisted by TNC, they could answer questions about how much their

Process vs. Project Funding? If so, describe how you calculate the metric.	participation costs. We have not done a comparison of costs injected compared to project funding.
Do you track the cost of Project Outcomes (Dollars Spent per Miles of Stream Protected or Restored)? If so describe which outcomes you track cost for.	No
Do you attract additional Funding Leveraged? (Dollars of match reported versus program funding). If so, describe how you track the data on match.	Leveraged funds are those funds brought to the project by other funding sources. We score that as part of our process. Match funds are required, 20% of total project cost. Match is tracked through the grant agreement and invoicing process.
What other metrics do you track?	See the attached table
What metrics do you find the most useful to measure the value your process is delivering and the efficiency of it?	We just created the metrics table and are applying it for the first time this round. Although we collect metrics for past projects we haven't assessed their relative value to date.
Are the metrics useful in driving improvements?	Yes, we've heard from numerous stakeholders, especially elected officials, that having solid metrics to point at are extremely valuable in promoting the program.
Do you compare with any external organizations?	We will in the future but have not to date. Much of our work has been limited by our staff shortages.
How do you share the metrics with your process participants and stakeholders?	The metrics are required for each project and publically available. They are listed in our Funding Guidelines and discussed during our surveys and workshops.

Part 4: High level Process Review	
Describe your process at a high-level. Attach a flow diagram if you have one.	We solicit for new project proposals every 2 years. We do a simple pre-application form to screen out unsuitable projects, then advance those passing to full application, scoring and ranking. Then wait for the budget to come out. Once we know which projects are funded we draft grant agreements and execute them over a 2-3 year timeframe.
What works well with your process?	Project sponsors like the pre-app because it keeps things simple at first. Our managers and OFM like the rigor of the full scoring system. The grant agreement writing and execution of work are pretty standard.
What are the issues that occur in your process that have the most impact on the efficiency of your process and the ability to deliver value to your stakeholders?	Not knowing how much funding we'll get in any round complicates things. We also have no "wiggle room" in funding, so if things come up during grant execution there's no extra funding. Our primary issue has been lack of Ecology FbD staff as turnover has hit us hard. It's difficult to do process analysis and improvement while barely keeping the process itself happening.
What would you like to change about your process? Why have you not made those changes?	We've been changing rapidly over the last 4-5 years, and have made many changes to the program to improve. The scoring system is becoming complicated and could be

Part 4: High level Process Review	
	simplified in the future. And knowing how much funding to expect would help as well.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
Pre-Application	
How formal is your pre-application process? Do you have a formal call for projects? If so how does this work for you? How standardized is your process across geographical areas?	We make a formal announcement in the fall of odd numbered years for pre-apps. It has a deadline and we provide the form itself. We're very happy with how the pre-app works We apply the same process across the whole state.
Who identifies the projects?	The local sponsors (eligible entities) are responsible for identifying good projects.
Are the best projects being brought forward? If not, how could this be improved?	We see some very high quality projects. Our problem is having funding to support all of them. We continue to refine the FG and discuss how the program works with the MT and our stakeholders.
Application	
Is your application automated? If so what system is used?	The application is automated in the Ecology Grants and Loans system (EAGL).
How many applications do you receive per year?	It varies from 25-40 depending on the cycle. We try to invite slightly more projects in value then we ask for in our agency budget request.
How many questions do applicants need to fill out? (Please include list, if applicable.)	*1*3 questions which are listed in our FGs.
What is the average time it takes a sponsor to complete an application?	It varies a lot depending on the complexity of the project. We don't have actual statistics but the anecdotal info says 4 to 10 hours, usually spread over several weeks or months.
Do your stakeholders find the process to be efficient? Any complaints?	We work hard to keep the process as easy as possible and still get the information we need for a formal assessment and award of millions of dollars. Our experience is stakeholders would always like it to be easier, but we don't hear many formal complaints about the process.
Technical Review	
Who does your technical review of projects? Are they in-house staff or contractors?	We enlist the voluntary help of other agency staff such as DFW, WA EMD, USFW, FEMA, etc. Our in-house flood team is also part of the scoring process.
What are the criteria they use to review?	*They are listed in the Scoring Guidance in the FGs.*
Is the review improving projects?	We provide feedback to the applicants after the pre-app stage and after the full application scoring. It is intended to help out future projects but not change the project under consideration at the time. People have learned quickly over the last 2 grant

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
	cycles what makes a good project and we're seeing better projects with each round.
How could the review process be improved?	I think it could be simplified over time, and the amount of time allowed could be shortened. One complaint is we process the applications so far ahead of the funding becoming available.
Scoring and Ranking	
What criteria are used?	They are listed in the FG.
What roles assign the scores and do the ranking?	Each technical reviewer is responsible for sections of the scoring that is in their area of expertise. Each reviewer scores all projects. The final ranking beyond simple scores is done by the FbD MT.
Who approves the scores and ranking?	The FbD MT, with Ecology having the final say.
Do you feel the scoring and raking process is working effectively to select the best projects?	*Yes*
How do you show connection to strategy in the scoring and ranking of projects?	*The connection between strategy and scoring is provided in the FG and the guidance around the scoring system.*
Match	
What are your requirements for sponsor match?	*Most sponsors must provide 20% match for their project. There is a waiver for match for economically disadvantaged communities.*
How is match reported?	*Match must be shown during application and is tracked during invoicing.*
Is the reporting accurate?	*Yes, we only play for 805 of eligible project costs, and match must be shown at each invoicing.*
How do you ensure match is reported accurately?	*By tracking it through our fiscal system.*
Are there other funds being leveraged by projects that are not reported through match?	*Yes, we encourage pursuing leveraged funds and provide higher scores for those bringing in more leveraged funds. These funds are outside the match requirement.*
Community Involvement	
How do you involve your community in your project development and prioritization process?	*The local sponsors are responsible for community involvement and it is one of the most important elements of our program, what we term "Need and Support" in the FG scoring system.*
Do you have good buy-in for your program and the projects it funds in your community? What do you attribute that to?	*Yes, it's a highly important element of our project selection and scoring process. Developing stakeholder support and being consistent with area planning processes is required in advance.*
Have you had any conflict in your communities regarding projects?	*If we hear of conflicts prior to award ranking and/or award we instruct the local sponsor to address the concerns. If there is enough conflict we may alter the project or remove funding.*
How does your approach prevent conflict in your communities?	*By insisting on support in advance during the scoring process we avoid funding projects that cause community conflict as much as possible.*

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
Do you feel there are any ways you could improve your process to create better community support?	*I think the system is working very well. All conflict cannot be avoided when working with large projects and numerous stakeholders, but advance planning and engagement helps avoid that.*
How do you get landowners on board? Do you have any challenges gaining land owner support? If so, describe.	*Landowner engagement is often critical to project success, so it is evaluated in both the Need and Support section and the Readiness to Proceed sections of the scoring system. We also require landowner acknowledgement forms be submitted. Lack of landowner awareness or support, or even opposition, is considered a major red flag for the project. It would result in lower scores. It is up to the local sponsor to develop landowner support. Yes we often have challenges when doing acquisitions, especially in the red-hot real estate market in the greater Seattle area right now.*

Washington Salmon Recovery Responses

Salmon Recovery Lean Study Benchmarking Questionnaire

Please enter responses in the text box to the right of each question.

Part 1: Budget, Project Size, and Program Results	
Do you budget on an annual or biannual basis?	We have an annual grant round based on an annual NOAA PCSRF award and a biennial state budget.
What is the total cost of your process on an annual or biannual basis (most recent annual or biannual amount)?	We spend $300,000/year on technical Review Panel. Our admin rate for the PCSRF funding is 3% and our admin rate for PSAR is 4.12%. 2017-19 biennium capacity to regional organizations: $5,757,370 2017-19 biennium capacity to lead entities: $3,379,000 2017-19 biennium PSAR capacity to Puget Sound lead entities: $1,918,946
How much money do you distribute for projects on an annual or biennial basis (most recent annual or biennial amount)?	We have an $18 million SRFB grant round annually plus $30 million PSAR is added in every other year and PSAR large cap which varies by biennium – typically $10 million.
Are you selecting the best projects to meet your strategic goals? How do you know?	To address the ESA listings and uphold tribal treaty rights, Washington has developed eight NOAA-approved salmon recovery plans. The regional recovery plans are geographically broad, based on watershed and ecosystem science, and have a degree of local participation and commitment to recovery that is nationally recognized as exemplary. The plans identify habitat needs and limiting factors by evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) or distinct population segment (DPS). The state's recovery approaches have become increasingly sophisticated. Our existing salmon recovery efforts include on-site habitat projects, local and regional organizational structures, monitoring, and hatchery reform. Habitat improvement projects are prioritized to achieve lasting benefits through the restoration of self-sustaining natural ecosystem functions and processes. Projects that restore and protect riparian habitats in identified priority areas include re-establishing floodplain connection and function, restoring natural river-channel migration, and re-establishing ecologically functional riparian buffers. See Manual 18 for more details on our current process for selecting projects and the supporting organization. https://rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf

Part 2: Organization and Stakeholders	
Describe your program's organization structure, including the various roles involved in your process and whether they are in-house staff, contractors or volunteers.	RCO has a salmon section reporting to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The board approves our projects. We have grant managers in the section who do application review and manage contracts. A SRFB Technical Review Panel is a paid independent body of contractors who review every project being recommended for funding. Projects come up through a lead entity, and region and are submitted to the RCO for funding.
Who makes final decisions regarding funding? Who sets policy?	The Salmon Recovery Funding Board makes the final funding decisions based on the lead entity, region, Review Panel and staff recommendations. The SRFB sets major policy based on staff work and recommendations, and the RCO sets administrative policy.
Are roles clearly defined? Where could they be clearer?	Roles are defined in RCW, WAC, Manual 18 and Manual 19. The WACs could be clearer, as well as Manual 19 could provide more detail and standardization. Some lead entities have internal manuals on their local process and we could require that as a deliverable.
How do you ensure participants adequately perform their roles?	Through contract management and bills.
Do you conduct regular surveys with your stakeholders to identify potential improvements to the process? (If so, please share results of a recent survey.)	Yes, surveys are conducted every other year. All lead entities and project sponsors have an opportunity to participate. Results are shared with RCO staff, lead entities at a Washington Salmon Coalition meeting, and the Review Panel and SRFB. Changes are made to make improvements, if possible, based on survey responses.

Part 3: Process Performance Metrics	
Do you track the Cost of your Project Development and Prioritization Process vs. Project Funding? If so, describe how you calculate the metric.	We know the amount of grant round dollars available vs. the amount spent on capacity and administration. We have not had a metric to calculate this on an annual basis.
Do you track the cost of Project Outcomes (Dollars Spent per Miles of Stream Protected or Restored)? If so describe which outcomes you track cost for.	Yes, we have extensive NOAA metrics on project outcomes that we report to NOAA on a quarterly basis. They do an extensive review of the data and require corrections as needed. We track cost per mile restored or treated.
Do you attract additional Funding Leveraged? (Dollars of match reported versus program funding). If so, describe how you track the data on match.	Our SRFB and PSAR grants all require a minimum of 15% match with the exception of designs under $200,000. The match is put into the PRISM database and becomes part of the contract, and sponsors must bill for total project costs including match, so this data is accessible and easy to calculate in our database. It is more difficult to track match not within the contract, and we may think about adding a question in PRISM to track “other” match.
What other metrics do you track?	See attached NOAA metrics
What metrics do you find the most useful to measure the value your process is delivering and the efficiency of it?	The NOAA metrics can show value in terms of habitat improvements. We do not have a metric that shows efficiency.
Are the metrics useful in driving improvements?	The survey and metrics may be useful in driving improvements.
Do you compare with any external organizations?	Occasionally, but informally. We have had joint staff and board meetings with OWEB. The salmon section manager is part of a group of state and federal grant leads to work together on improvements, coordination and efficiencies.
How do you share the metrics with your process participants and stakeholders?	Our metrics are all available to the public in PRISM in an open data portal. We also share all of our capacity, activities, administration, and project data in the biannual State of the Salmon report. In addition, we report out metrics to NOAA quarterly, and they roll up metrics into a PCSRF Annual Report to Congress. They report out on habitat metrics and funding.

Part 4: High level Process Review	
Describe your process at a high-level. Attach a flow diagram if you have one.	See attached Workflows (from LEAN study)
What works well with your process?	Below are some of the items that are working well with our process, identified through our current Lean Study: • Decentralized model works well; fosters strong community buy-in • Flexibility in process allows local best model for collaboration • Stable iterative framework shapes and improves projects • RCO grant managers provide high level of involvement, knowledge, and support • SRFB Technical Review Panel input highly valued.
What are the issues that occur in your process that have the most impact on the efficiency of your process and the ability to deliver value to your stakeholders?	Below are some of the issues that have been raised in our current lean study: • Process contains too many iterations of the application and review cycles • Issues come up too late in process • System data-entry causes inefficiencies in the current process • While the input of the State Review Panel is highly valued, issues do arise with Review Panel availability, constructiveness of comments, and process for their involvement • Project applicants find the process too cumbersome for the amount of funding granted • Project applicants perceive that decisions are not always made objectively at the local level based on merits of the project • Current process conflicts with the field season See our Current State Summary from the Lean Study for more details regarding issues.
What would you like to change about your process? Why have you not made those changes?	We are currently working on an approach to streamline our process, taking out an iteration of our applications and shifting the timeline to avoid field season. See our Current State Analysis summary for more details on the opportunities we are exploring.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
Pre-Application	
How formal is your pre-application process? Do you have a formal call for projects? If so how does this work for you? How standardized is your process across geographical areas?	We have a formal grant round announcement and publishing of Manual 18 with a grant round timeline. We have a set deadline for pre-applications, which are required three weeks prior to project site visits, all defined in Manual 18. It works, but often information is complete. We are considering going straight to a Complete Application given the timing of our grant round. Manual 18 provides a very standardized process and timeline across the state, however, each of the 25 lead entities operates uniquely with their own set of timelines, criteria, and process.
Who identifies the projects?	Salmon recovery plans, regions, project sponsors and lead entities.
Are the best projects being brought forward? If not, how could this be improved?	The best projects should be brought forward due to a rigorous ranking process at the local level, and projects have to be identified in a recovery plan as well as vetted through the Region, the Review Panel and then approved by the SRFB.
Application	
Is your application automated? If so what system is used?	Yes, RCO has an excellent database called PRISM, and the application can be done in PRISM, including being able to attach all required documentation.
How many applications do you receive per year?	The average over the last 14 years is 171 per year with a range from 115 to 219.
How many questions do applicants need to fill out? (Please include list, if applicable.)	See PRISM to view an application, and Manual 18, Appendix Cs, page 90 to view the written proposal questions that must be attached to PRISM as a document. https://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf
What is the average time it takes a sponsor to complete an application?	We don't track this. This is a good question to add to our 2018 survey.
Do your stakeholders find the process to be efficient? Any complaints?	They think it is too long and takes too many resources to complete. They would like to see it shorter and have less iterations of the applications.
Technical Review	
Who does your technical review of projects? Are they in-house staff or contractors?	We have a team of 8 technical reviewers called the SRFB Review Panel. They are paid, $300,000 per year total, and are contractors. We run an RFQQ every 4 years to recruit panel members.
What are the criteria they use to review?	See Manual 18, Appendix K, page 143, SRFB Review Panel Evaluation Criteria https://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf
Is the review improving projects?	Yes, we have received feedback that the review helps to improve projects and is appreciated.
How could the review process be improved?	Potentially less review cycles. Complete application earlier on, with more comments earlier on rather than later in the process.
Scoring and Ranking	
What criteria are used?	Each lead entity has their own criteria developed based on guidance in Manual 18, Appendix L, page 145, Guide for Lead Entity Project Evaluation https://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
What roles assign the scores and do the ranking?	The lead entity Technical Advisory Group (volunteers usually), known as the TAG
Who approves the scores and ranking?	The lead entity technical advisory group and then the citizens advisory group, also volunteers.
Do you feel the scoring and raking process is working effectively to select the best projects?	In most cases. In regions with multiple lead entities, the scoring is done at the lead entity level, so the best projects may not be getting funded in those areas.
How do you show connection to strategy in the scoring and ranking of projects?	Typically, the criteria at the lead entity level is linked to the salmon recovery plans/strategies.
Match	
What are your requirements for sponsor match?	A minimum of 15% match is required for all projects except small designs under $200,000. However, match is typically higher overall. See lead entity chart on match in LEAN study.
How is match reported?	Match is required as part of the contract which is generated from the application in PRISM. It must be tracked and billed by the sponsor and approved by RCO.
Is the reporting accurate?	Not all match may be reported in PRISM, so project costs could actually be higher than what is reflected and tracked in PRISM.
How do you ensure match is reported accurately?	We require it is part of the contract and sponsors must bill for match and award.
Are there other funds being leveraged by projects that are not reported through match?	Yes, potentially, and we currently do not track those.
Community Involvement	
How do you involve your community in your project development and prioritization process?	Our community is involved through our Citizen Committees and Technical Advisory Committees in each lead entity.
Do you have good buy-in for your program and the projects it funds in your community? What do you attribute that to?	For many projects there is good buy in. This is attributed to our decentralized approach with dedicated local resources to stay engaged with the community and involving community members in committees.
Have you had any conflict in your communities regarding projects?	There have been projects with conflict and that has much improved over the years with the decentralized approach.
How does your approach prevent conflict in your communities?	Our local team engage the community, educating them on projects and sometimes taking them on site tours.
Do you feel there are any ways you could improve your process to create better community support?	We are currently working on an approach to streamline our process so that local staff have more time to do community outreach. Currently they only spend 10% of their time on outreach.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
How do you get landowners on board? Do you have any challenges gaining land owner support? If so, describe.	Our project sponsors have the primary interaction with the landowners. We do sometimes have challenges and are open to ideas on how to do a better job engaging land owners.

OWEB Benchmarking Responses

Salmon Recovery Lean Study Benchmarking Questionnaire

Please enter responses in the text box to the right of each question.

Part 1: Budget, Project Size, and Program Results	
Do you budget on an annual or biannual basis?	Biennial
What is the total cost of your process on an annual or biannual basis (most recent annual or biannual amount)?	To be provided by manager.
How much money do you distribute for projects on an annual or biennial basis (most recent annual or biennial amount)?	See attachment A in the most recent spending plan report.
Are you selecting the best projects to meet your strategic goals? How do you know?	Yes. OWEB's suite of grant programs take a variety of approaches to ensure the state invests in high quality projects improving fish and wildlife habitat and water quality. OWEB has an Effectiveness Monitoring program (see https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/data-reporting/EM/Pages/EM.aspx) and the information OWEB learns provides a weight of evidence that OWEB investments are having an impact and/or provides us indicators where adaptive management is needed. OWEB's Focused Investment Partnerships address ecological priorities of significance to the state. The agency has invested in a Progress Monitoring Framework to track intermediate and longer-term ecological outcomes. OWEB's newly adopted Strategic Plan will establish processes to continually evaluate how the grant programs achieve conservation outcomes over time.

Part 2: Organization and Stakeholders	
Describe your program's organization structure, including the various roles involved in your process and whether they are in-house staff, contractors or volunteers.	See 17-19 organization chart from legislatively adopted budget. Grant selection process includes staff and technical experts working in other state and federal agencies, tribes, etc. as volunteers to OWEB (but sometimes as part of their agency job duties).

Part 2: Organization and Stakeholders	
Who makes final decisions regarding funding? Who sets policy?	There are two paths for final funding decisions: 1) Board Award- Based on staff recommendation created with technical review team input and presented to the Board. Examples include **Open Solicitation** Restoration, Technical Assistance, Stakeholder Engagement and Monitoring Grants. 2) Director Award- Board delegates authority to the Director to decide on a funding award. Staff makes a recommendation created with technical review team input. Examples include **Focused Investment Partnerships** and grants to meet specific needs or concerns, such as **Strategic Investment Areas** identified by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. See high elevation grant process map. Policies are set by the Executive Team and approved by the Director.
Are roles clearly defined? Where could they be clearer?	Administrative rules define review team roles, staff recommendation, and board/director award. Clarity is typically needed at the level of Standard Operating Procedures (for example, what are the staff steps for communicating budget category errors that need to be corrected in an application).
How do you ensure participants adequately perform their roles?	Primarily through facilitation by staff.
Do you conduct regular surveys with your stakeholders to identify potential improvements to the process? (If so, please share results of a recent survey.)	We have annual customer service surveys that cover the entire agency services (not just grant awarding processes). The 2018 Customer Service report is currently being compiled. Past reports are available here. OWEB also invites stakeholders to participate in cross teams with staff when designing new processes/policies or adapting existing processes/policies. For example, in 2018 staff worked with the Board Monitoring Sub-committee to improve the guidance OWEB can offer applicants to Open Solicitation Monitoring Grants. The process convened focus groups with OWEB's Regional Program Representatives; with review team and Oregon Plan Monitoring Team members; and with grantees and potential applicants. Results were used to produce improved online guidance and to inform discussions about implementation and tracking of OWEB's newly adopted Strategic Plan.

Part 3: Process Performance Metrics	
Do you track the Cost of your Project Development and Prioritization Process vs. Project Funding? If so, describe how you calculate the metric.	OWEB does not develop and prioritize projects. OWEB develops granting pathways that result in a diversity of grant offerings that fund Grantees to develop and prioritize projects. Grant offerings such as technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, and capacity fund these functions. These grant offerings can be found in the spending plan.
Do you track the cost of Project Outcomes (Dollars Spent per Miles of Stream Protected or Restored)? If so describe which outcomes you track cost for.	Outcomes are tracked in OWEB's Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI), and queries can be made on this database. Information on OWRI can be found at https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/data-reporting/Pages/owri.aspx. And the latest Oregon Plan Report provides information on the data that is housed in OWRI.
Do you attract additional Funding Leveraged? (Dollars of match reported versus program funding). If so, describe how you track the data on match.	Leveraged funds are also tracked in OWRI.
What other metrics do you track?	OWRI tracks completed projects including the number of miles of stream restoration; fish passage projects; and acres of upland restoration. In addition to the Oregon Plan and Key Performance Measures linked above, see information mapped online here.
What metrics do you find the most useful to measure the value your process is delivering and the efficiency of it?	OWEB is still moving the granting process from paper to online and has not fully developed measures for monitoring process in an electronic world. Also, OWEB has a new strategic plan and is developing measurements for tracking progress in implementing priorities in this plan.
Are the metrics useful in driving improvements?	Too early to tell.
Do you compare with any external organizations?	From Key Performance Measures summary: Because OWEB is largely a granting agency, it is most appropriate to compare operational cost ratios with private foundations and charitable organizations. For comparison, OWEB obtained data from the Foundation Center (www.foundationcenter.org) on the average operations cost for private foundations with 19-129 employees (n = 29) in their database. The average operations cost for these foundations was 21.7%, where operation cost was calculated as 1 - (total giving/total expenditures). This comparison suggests that OWEB's administrative costs are below average for comparable entities in the U.S.

How do you share the metrics with your process participants and stakeholders?	See Oregon Plan report. Customer Service Surveys are available online through Key Performance Measures.

Part 4: High level Process Review	
Describe your process at a high-level. Attach a flow diagram if you have one.	See high elevation grant process map.
What works well with your process?	Place-based process that relies on technical review teams with local expertise reflects the values from the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Support for this approach was reaffirmed when voters approved Measure 76 in 2010 to permanently allocate lottery funds to the program.
What are the issues that occur in your process that have the most impact on the efficiency of your process and the ability to deliver value to your stakeholders?	Parts of the granting process live in either paper or electronic worlds.
What would you like to change about your process? Why have you not made those changes?	Move all parts of the grant process (from application to final reporting) online where staff and grantees can go to one dashboard and manage the project portfolio. We are working in this direction but it takes time to design the online system and processes.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
Pre-Application	
How formal is your pre-application process? Do you have a formal call for projects? If so how does this work for you? How standardized is your process across geographical areas?	Depends on the grant offering. Some grants require a pre-application conference call, some have formal pre-application forms that are reviewed by a technical review team, and some OWEB Project Managers strongly encourage a pre-application conversation (but it is not required). All grant offerings start with a solicitation notice. The high elevation process map captures key process elements all grants must have (according to administrative rules). There is some geographical differences in that OWEB Project Managers might work with stakeholders differently, and is typically reflective of unique needs in that region.
Who identifies the projects?	Applicants identify the projects.
Are the best projects being brought forward? If not, how could this be improved?	The competitive nature of OWEB's granting process results in quality projects with measurable watershed improvements.
Application	
Is your application automated? If so what system is used?	OWEB just recently launched an online application. Not all grant offerings have migrated to the online system.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
How many applications do you receive per year?	An estimate of Open Solicitation applications received shows approximately 276 (2017) and 344 (2016). Additional details about other grant offerings will be discussed and/or provided at a later time.
How many questions do applicants need to fill out? (Please include list, if applicable.)	The number of questions depends on the grant type. For example, restoration project applications are longer than technical assistance or stakeholder engagement applications. See application templates.
What is the average time it takes a sponsor to complete an application?	Same as above, the time it takes for an applicant to fill out the application depends on the grant type, project complexity, and whether they are cloning a previous application or starting a new application.
Do your stakeholders find the process to be efficient? Any complaints?	OWEB's online applications has a feedback function that allows applicants to provide comments on what is working/not working, what they are frustrated with, and things they like. We generally maintain a balance of positive and negative feedback. OWEB has a process for reviewing and addressing these comments, and we do have regular comments that applicants/stakeholders appreciate OWEB's responsiveness in adaptively managing the online application.
Technical Review	
Who does your technical review of projects? Are they in-house staff or contractors?	Technical review teams can consist of OWEB staff, state and federal agency staff, staff from tribes, NGO staff, and/or staff from other organizations with relevant experience. Contractors are not used to review grant applications.
What are the criteria they use to review?	Each grant offering has review criteria specific to that program that are in administrative rules (and can be found at https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/displayChapterRules.action?selectedChapter=167.) OWEB is developing visual aids/tools to help review teams focus on the criteria during the discussion. We call these venn diagram-like figures the "bubble diagrams".
Is the review improving projects?	Each grant review results in an evaluation of the project that highlights project strengths and concerns identified by review teams. In certain grant programs (e.g., FIP), applicants participate in the review of their applications in order to address questions and engage in discussions that result in better projects. OWEB staff and review teams have anecdotally observed that project applications are addressing concerns and generally improving. See example evaluation.
How could the review process be improved?	OWEB staff is working to identify/update review team facilitating tools to further improve the effectiveness of review teams to evaluate applications and focus comments on criteria-specific content.

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
Scoring and Ranking	
What criteria are used?	Not all grant offerings rank projects. Administrative Rules for each offering describes when project ranking is required and what criteria should be required. These criteria are also on the "bubble diagrams".
What roles assign the scores and do the ranking?	Review teams rank projects (however, OWEB does not score projects). Some review teams use a prioritization grid (see Prioritization Grid- with instructions) as a tool to help prioritize projects.
Who approves the scores and ranking?	Review team rankings are part of the staff recommendation to the Board or Director, but there is no formal approval of the ranking. Rankings are a result of the review.
Do you feel the scoring and raking process is working effectively to select the best projects?	The ranking process, when required, seems to effectively sort projects.
How do you show connection to strategy in the scoring and ranking of projects?	Applicants describe how their projects meet strategies/action plans for their watersheds, this can include a locally derived action plan, statewide habitat conservation plan, water quality TMDL plans, ESA Species Recovery Plans, or other relevant documents. The extent to which a project satisfies a watershed priority is considered as part of the project's attributes indicating likelihood for success and is considered when prioritizing projects.
Match	
What are your requirements for sponsor match?	25% of the OWEB request on most grant offerings
How is match reported?	Match is documented as secured or pending in applications. At least 25% secured match must be demonstrated at first grant payment, when required. Grantees report all match/leverage as part of the Project Completion Report.
Is the reporting accurate?	Not always.
How do you ensure match is reported accurately?	To be "secured," applicant/grantee must have a signed document from the match source referencing the match amount.
Are there other funds being leveraged by projects that are not reported through match?	Yes, grantees regularly report only the required 25% and not the other leveraged funds.
Community Involvement	
How do you involve your community in your project development and prioritization process?	OWEB grantees, as envision by the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, engage their community in assessing their watershed, identifying priorities, and developing projects. OWEB provides grant funds for grantees to fulfill these functions.
Do you have good buy-in for your program and the projects it funds in	Yes, and it is attributed to the grassroots, ground-up approach to watershed restoration in Oregon. OWEB also provides tools, such as press release templates with each grant award,

Part 5: Sub-Process Drill-Down	
your community? What do you attribute that to?	to assist our grantees in getting the word out on their project accomplishments.
Have you had any conflict in your communities regarding projects?	Yes, usually on more complex projects, and in particular certain dam removal projects or land acquisition projects.
How does your approach prevent conflict in your communities?	The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the community-based approach to watershed restoration embodies the "Oregon Way". This includes community engagement starting with forming local voluntary organizations (i.e. watershed councils), who along with other organizations (soil and water conservation districts, land trusts, public, agencies, etc.) assess their local watersheds, identify project opportunities, prioritize projects, and work with landowners and stakeholders to develop and implement these projects. This process limits conflict in general.
Do you feel there are any ways you could improve your process to create better community support?	There is always need to report out and celebrate successful work by OWEB Grantees/stakeholders.
How do you get landowners on board? Do you have any challenges gaining land owner support? If so, describe.	OWEB grantees work with landowners to build support and develop projects.