

FAQs #3



2016 Puget Sound Action Agenda Update - NTA Solicitation February 9, 2016

1. Q: What is the process for scoring NTAs?

A: NTA proposals that are adequate for scoring (all of those that were categorized as 1 or 2 on January 18 and category 3 NTAs that adequately addressed the proposal's deficiencies) will be scored by the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams using the five criteria outlined in the solicitation. Those criteria are:

1. Probability of success (scored on scale from 0 to 10)
2. Ecological and/or human wellbeing benefits (scored on scale from 0 to 10)
3. Addresses an identified regional priority (scored on scale from 0 to 10)
4. Scientifically/technically sound (scored on scale from 1 to 10)
5. Cost estimate (scored on scale from 1 to 10)

All NTAs will be scored by at least four Transition Team members. For NTAs that are cross-cutting, one of those four reviewers will be from another Transition Team and a fifth reviewer may be added, if needed, to ensure consideration under all three subject areas (habitat, stormwater, and shellfish).

Reviewers' scores will be averaged (note that outliers may be discarded) for each of the five criteria. The averaged scores will be weighted as published in the solicitation to create a final composite score. In early March, the Partnership will make the averaged scores available for each NTA and the final composite score. The NTAs will then be put in order based on their scores and this comprises the three ranked lists, one for each Strategic Initiative.

See the [NTA Review Process](#) page for more information and updates.

2. Q: What happens to category 3 NTAs?

A: Category 3 NTAs will first be reviewed by the same Lead Reviewer from the first round of review in most cases, but may be a different reviewer with a better alignment of expertise if a different main sub-strategy has been selected by the NTA owner. If the Lead Reviewer finds that the NTA is adequate for scoring, it goes on to the scoring process described in the previous answer. If the Lead Reviewer finds that the NTA remains inadequate for scoring, it will then be reviewed by three additional SITT members. If two or more of those reviewers find that the NTA is adequate for scoring, it moves onto the scoring process. If two or more of those reviewers also find the NTA inadequate for scoring, it will not be scored and the NTA owner will be notified by Tuesday, February 16.

See the [NTA Review Process](#) page for more information and updates.

<p>3.</p>	<p>Q: What is the petition process?</p> <p>A: As stated on page 41 of the solicitation, any NTA owner who feels their NTA proposal was not reviewed consistent with stated criteria by an LIO or the Transition Teams may petition to the Management Conference during the Action Agenda adoption process. Letters of petition must be received by the Puget Sound Partnership by March 30, 2016.</p> <p>The Partnership is discussing the process for how the Management Conference will evaluate those petitions with the Board Chairs group (Chair and Vice Chair of the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Salmon Recovery Council, Science Panel, and Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program).</p> <p>See the NTA Review Process page for more information and updates.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Q: When will the ranked list of NTAs be made public?</p> <p>A: After all of the Transition Team review is done at the end of February, the Partnership will compile all of the information, provide contextual analysis and information, and make the scores available by March 11.</p> <p>See the NTA Review Process page for more information and updates.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Q: What is the role of the Transition Teams for grouping/sequencing NTAs?</p> <p>A: In some instances, Transition Team reviewers identified opportunities for NTA owners to split proposals into phases or combine similar or complementary proposals, which some NTA owners did for final NTA submittal on Feb. 3. Additional consolidation may be recommended by the permanent Strategic Initiative Teams as they develop National Estuary Program funding recommendations in the late spring/summer. (E.g. bundling “like” NTAs into funding agreements that work out details for coordination among NTA proponents).</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Q: What will be done with NTAs that the LIOs flagged as conflicting with their local plans?</p> <p>A: There was a total of 3 NTAs flagged by LIOs as conflicting with their local plans. The proposers of those NTAs were notified and asked to address the concerns of the LIO. If those NTAs are submitted on February 3, Partnership staff will contact the LIO to determine whether or not the flag issues persist. If the issues have not been addressed, the SITTs will determine if the NTA proposal should move forward to scoring and inclusion in the draft Action Agenda.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Q: If a LIO did not flag an NTA, does that mean they support it?</p> <p>A: No, LIOs were only asked to review NTA proposals for potential conflict. The absence of a flag only signifies that no specific conflict with LIO plans was identified.</p>

<p>8.</p>	<p>Q: How are the February 3rd salmon SRFB/PSAR NTAs going to be reviewed?</p> <p>A: The salmon recovery NTAs submitted for the first time on February 3 in accordance with the two modification to the solicitation will be scored and ranked in the same way as all other NTAs.</p> <p>See the NTA Review Process page for more information.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Q: How will cross-cutting NTAs be reviewed?</p> <p>A: NTAs that are cross-cutting will be scored by members of two or three of the Transition Teams to help ensure that the broader benefits of cross-cutting NTAs are considered in scoring.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Q: How strict will the process be with missing information in the NTA form?</p> <p>A: The Regional NTA solicitation, NTA submittal form instructions (and an annotated submittal form) were explicit on what information is needed and what scoring criteria apply to each piece of information. If that information is missing, and the scorers cannot apply one or more of the criteria, the NTA will be given a score of zero for those criteria as stated in the solicitation.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Q: Are there 3 separate lists or one single list in the ranking?</p> <p>A: As stated in the solicitation, the Action Agenda will include three ranked lists, one for each of the Strategic Initiatives.</p> <p>Based on statutory requirements, in the fall, the Partnership will submit a single ranked list to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Legislative staff, but that list will not be part of the Action Agenda. The Partnership will also submit the three ranked lists to OFM and Legislative staff for information purposes as they develop the 2017-19 biennial budget.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Q: Are the reviewers anonymous? Can we know who reviewed the proposal and is there any opportunity to contact those reviewers?</p> <p>A: A roster of Transition Team members is publicly available, but we will not be releasing scores with individual reviewer names. To ensure a fair, transparent, objective review process, there is not an opportunity for NTA owners to contact reviewers during the scoring process.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Q: What does the Partnership know about how the ranked list of NTAs will be used in National Estuary Program funding decisions?</p> <p>A: It is our understanding from informal discussions with EPA, that for National Estuary Program (NEP) funds, the permanent Strategic Initiative Teams will make a funding recommendation to the Strategic Initiative Leads and EPA. The funding recommendation will work from the ranked list of Near Term Actions (NTAs) but will not necessarily simply start at number one and work sequentially down the list until the funds are gone. Where the funding recommendation deviates from the ranked list, the Strategic Initiative Lead will document the justification.</p>

14.	<p>Q. Will an “after action review” analyze how many hours of staff time has been committed to this new process versus past NEP funding processes? Will there be an evaluation of cost/benefit?</p> <p>A. The Partnership, with the help of partners, will thoroughly review the process used to update the 2016 Action Agenda. There is not a specific cost/benefit analysis planned.</p>
15.	<p>Q: When is the next opportunity to have an NTA considered for the Action Agenda? Will there be an amendment process, or will folks have to wait until the 2018 Action Agenda update?</p> <p>A: There is no planned amendment to the 2016 Action Agenda, so the next planned NTA process would likely begin sometime in 2017 in preparation for the 2018 Action Agenda update. However, the Leadership Council adopted an Action Agenda amendment process in 2012 for instances where new information, implementation experience, or other unforeseen changes/opportunities warrant changes to the Action Agenda outside of the regular biennial process. The amendment process can be downloaded at: https://pspwa.app.box.com/s/gabtrcbzo9i5yybkeyi6lx6cez0bh10o/1/5383574177/43667490589/1</p>
16.	<p>Q. Will there be more strategic initiatives coming? Are the Strategic Initiatives going to change in the near term?</p> <p>A. We do not anticipate the Strategic Initiatives’ focus on stormwater, habitat, and shellfish changing in the next 4-6 years, unless additional or new information leads the Puget Sound Partnership’s boards and EPA to adjust them. However, the specific sub-strategies that define the emphasis of the Strategic Initiatives may be updated in the 2018 Action Agenda update based on adaptive management.</p>

For questions regarding the *2016 Puget Sound Action Agenda Update: Solicitation Requesting Near Term Action Proposals for the 2-year Implementation Plan Component of the 2016 Action Agenda*, please contact:

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