



FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 2021-2023
**COLLABORATIVE PUGET SOUND
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**
(RFP 2021-155)

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Overview and Principles

The Science Panel and Puget Sound Partnership are pleased to announce the availability of funding to support research that will inform and improve efforts to enhance the resilience of the Puget Sound ecosystem. Total funding for all eligible projects is anticipated to be up to \$1.7M. Funds will be awarded as early as possible (summer 2021) and with a project end date no later than June 30, 2023. Funds will be roughly allocated as between two project types:

1. Integrated Social Ecological Systems Awards—1-2 awards anticipated for a total of \$600,000 to \$1,200,000 awarded towards the project type
2. Targeted Research Awards—8-12 awards anticipated for a total of \$500,000 to \$1,100,000 awarded towards the project type

The Partnership encourages management-relevant proposals for science projects that integrate socio-ecological processes to support resilience of the human and biophysical elements of the Puget Sound ecosystem. This solicitation invites proposals for science that is immediately relevant to managers and or decision-makers. We strongly encourage applicants to consult with managers or decision-makers as they develop (or co-develop) their proposals. As part of its collaboration in these efforts, the Partnership will be available to help project proponents to make these connections after the Letter of Intent. The Partnership is committed to helping project proponents to (1) engage with managers and policy makers who might co-develop the research effort or who might be engaged to use the findings of the research effort and (2) create a communication plan.

The [Puget Sound Science Work Plan for 2020-2024](#) (SWP) defines the subject areas around which proposals are invited. This plan identifies 15 Priority Science Work Actions that the Panel believes best address its objectives of supporting innovation, filling gaps, supporting continuity, linking socio-ecological resilience, and changing the policy landscape. The Priority Science Work Actions originate from sources at the science-policy interface. The 15 topics are introduced below in the section on Subject Areas.

The Puget Sound Partnership and Science Panel are committed to advancing the following principles in this announcement and in the resulting awards:

1. Integrating biophysical and social sciences.
2. Advancing management-relevant science through collaborations among scientists and with managers or decision-makers or explicitly engaging managers or decision-makers in discussions about putting research findings to use.
3. Advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Schedule

Solicitation Released	Not later than April 13
Information session (webinar will be recorded) Register here	April 29, 9:30-10:30am, 2021
Letter of Intent Due	May 14, 2021, 11:59pm
Response to Letter of Intent sent to Principal Investigators	June 15, 2021
Full Proposal Due	August 6, 2021, 11:59pm
Full Proposal Evaluation and Selection	Aug 9 – Sep 10, 2021
Project Scoping and Contract Negotiation	Sep 13 – Oct 15, 2021
Debrief Conference Requests to be received by 3:00pm PST	September 15, 2021
Debrief Conferences to be held	September 17, 2021
Protest notification to be received by 3:00pm PST	September 24, 2021
Project Start Date	No later than Oct 18, 2021
Project End Date	No later than June 30, 2023

Project Lead Eligibility, Roles, and Responsibilities

Project leads must be affiliated with an organization, agency, or tribal government that is able to do business in the state of Washington. There is a maximum of one proposal per project lead. Collaborative proposals are encouraged, and any given collaborator could be involved with multiple proposals. (See additional information under Proposal Requirements below.)

The Partnership seeks proposals from those leads and team members who encompass a range of backgrounds, disciplines, and career stages. The Partnership is committed to building an inclusive program that serves all people including those with unique needs, circumstances, perspectives, and ways of knowing. Eligible applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, job classifications, veteran status types, and socioeconomic statuses are encouraged to apply.

Proposal Categories

Total funding for all eligible projects is anticipated to be up to \$1.7M for an approximate two-year period and will be roughly allocated as follows:

- Funds will be allocated as between two project types:
 1. Integrated Social Ecological Systems Awards—1-2 awards anticipated for a total of \$600,000 to \$1,200,000 awarded towards the project type
 2. Targeted Research Awards—8-12 awards anticipated for a total of \$500,000 to \$1,100,000 awarded towards the project type
- Funds will be awarded as early as possible (summer 2021) and with a project end date no later than June 30, 2023.

Two project types:

1. Integrated Socio-Ecological Systems

Integrated Socio-Ecological Systems Projects are larger in scope, may involve a larger number of co-investigators, and should meaningfully integrate at least one social science discipline (e.g., social psychology, anthropology, economics; see the National Science Foundation's [DISES](#) for additional examples) with at least one biophysical science discipline (e.g., biology, hydrology, ecology) to address trans-disciplinary research needs identified in the SWP.

Successful proposals will address one or more of the subject areas described below and will demonstrate co-development of theories and methods across disciplines (e.g., inter- or transdisciplinary), fields or sectors (e.g. water management and public health), or actors in the system (e.g. knowledge providers and knowledge users). For collaborative projects, a single proposal should be submitted, with multiple Project Leads and all key personnel identified in the proposal. Investigators at all stages in their career are welcome, with early-career scientists especially encouraged to apply.

2. Targeted Research

Targeted research projects should be designed to address critical gaps in knowledge or advance innovative approaches. Research project teams may consist of social science or biophysical disciplines or both.

Compared to Integrated Socio-Ecological Systems projects, projects aimed at Targeted Research may have fewer study sites or personnel, may study systems with fewer key processes, may not necessarily (but could be) interdisciplinary, or may be of limited scope. The research should still be collaborative in nature, both within the research team and between researchers and managers, decision-makers, or endusers.

Successful proposals will implement near-term research projects that address one or more of the SWP subject areas mentioned below. Small budget projects that leverage other funding sources or have low resource requirements are encouraged to apply in this category.

Subject Areas

This solicitation prioritizes the funding of projects that implement the priority actions identified in the [Science Work Plan for 2020-2024](#). Each proposal must contribute toward one or more Priority Science Work Actions in the 2020-2024 SWP. The Priority Science Work Actions fit into four potentially overlapping categories: human-biophysical interactions, effectiveness of recovery interventions, ecological conditions and effects, and science-based decision support.

The following are the priority science actions of the SWP:

Human-biophysical Interactions

1. Evaluate how current and future social, economic, and political factors, such as population growth and urban development, will affect habitat quality and quantity, both negatively and positively as gauged by salmon viability.
2. Identify and adopt appropriate frameworks connecting human wellbeing to ecosystem health to evaluate climate change impacts to holistic health, considering and appropriately addressing issues of scale, psychological shifting baselines and perceptions of environmental governance, sense of place, and psychological wellbeing.
3. Assess the degree, and how, access to marine and coastal resources (e.g. fisheries, open space, native foods) is changing among different communities in the Salish Sea.

Effectiveness of Recovery Interventions

4. Assess what factors contribute to effective co-governance and/or co-management between jurisdictions (including Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments).
5. Determine what incentives, human wellbeing factors, market drivers, tax systems, and characteristics influence residents', developers', and purchasers' choices that contribute to or prevent habitat conversion.
6. Assess the effectiveness of incentive approaches in Puget Sound recovery efforts.

Ecological Conditions and Effects

7. Characterize human health and environmental risks from chemicals of emerging concern.
8. Assess toxic contaminant sources, (both historic and ongoing) and prioritize their clean-up or replacement based on environmental and human health impacts.
9. Determine benefits to viability of Southern Resident Killer Whales from improved prey availability, and reduced disturbance and toxic chemical exposure; assess benefits individually and cumulatively through monitoring and modeling. Consider benefits in context with potential risks associated with reduced Southern Resident Killer Whale and salmonid genetic diversity.
10. Identify and address gaps in current efforts to assess water use in Puget Sound with a focus on groundwater quality and quantity discharged to Puget Sound.
11. Build upon recommendations of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project to further define bottom-up and top-down food web effects on juvenile salmonid mortality in Puget Sound.

Science-Based Decision Support

12. Refine risk assessment tools and scenario development and analyses to improve our understanding of highly uncertain, complex, and inter-related challenges and solutions to provide information that can be used to identify actions to achieve a more resilient Puget Sound ecosystem.
13. Develop a framework of recommended approaches for including risk analyses, including extreme events and uncertainty, into planning and decision-making.
14. Better define tipping points for cumulative impact of multiple individual human activities on habitat quantity and quality, water quality, and species recovery.
15. Explore and advance the use of methods to integrate human dimensions with biophysical targets and goals by decision-makers.

Proposal Requirements

The Partnership will be holding one solicitation information session for prospective project leads and teams. The information session will include a short presentation about the solicitation and an opportunity for participants to ask questions. The information session will be held virtually on Zoom on April 29 and registration is required. The information session will include closed captioning, and it will be recorded and made available the following day. Please register for the information session [here](#).

Letter of Intent, due May 14, 2021 by 11:59 pm PST

Applicants may submit more than one Letter of Intent, but a maximum of one award will be made to an individual Project Lead. However, a project lead may be listed as co-leads on other awarded projects if the total combined effort of every individual does not exceed 12 months in any 12-month period. Letters of Intent are nonbinding documents that will allow the Puget Sound Partnership and Science Panel to understand the most promising proposed approaches to collaborative research and to plan for the number and topical expertise of reviewers of full proposals. Letters of intent are evaluated without regard to institutional affiliation. Full proposals are encouraged for those projects that demonstrate contribution to the field and technical merit (as described below in #5, focal topic area and approach) considering the funding level that is likely to be available.

Letters of Intent are limited to five (5) pages, including header, footer, labeling, and address information (Times New Roman, 12-point or greater, 1-inch margins, single-spaced). Information in excess of five pages will not be considered.

In the Letter of Intent, please provide the following information:

- 1. Project Title:** Title of project with intended project initiation and completion dates. The proposed end date may not extend past June 30, 2023.
- 2. Project Lead:** Name of project lead (Principal Investigator, PI) and, if applicable, co-PIs, with affiliation and contact information.
- 3. Project Team:** List of additional possible project collaborators, if any, with affiliation(s), including an indication of which of the collaborators would receive at least \$50K or 25 percent of the total budget
- 4. Project Type:** Indication of project type (Integrated Socio-Ecological Systems Award or Targeted Research Award)
- 5. Project Overview:** Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach (~3 pages)
 - a. Background and discussion of how the proposed work would fill gaps or advance innovation relative to previously or currently funded work
 - b. Alignment of the project with the 2020-2024 Science Work Plan Priority Science Actions, indicating the Science Work Action most directly advanced by the proposed work
 - c. Summary of project approach and methods
 - d. Identification of expected outcomes and articulated use of project outputs by managers or decision-makers

e. General approach to engaging with affected communities and end users, and to communicating project results to others. Depending on the needs of the particular project being proposed, this element could include a statement about how the Partnership could assist in planning engagement and communication efforts during the proposal development process or during the period of the award.

6. DEI statement: Statement of how the proposal will engage underserved and underrepresented communities and individuals, and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion

7. Budget: Proposed total budget allocated to salary and benefits, subcontracts, travel, supplies and equipment, and other for each state fiscal year (date of execution through June 30, 2022, and July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023).

Letters of Intent should be submitted as PDF attachments and emailed to LOI_202.xauf4w4i1vd6t794@u.box.com, sent no later than 11:59pm on Friday, May 14, 2021. Please label the attachment as LastName_FirstName_LOI.PDF, for example Smith_Jane_LOI.PDF

Letters of Intent will be evaluated by a review team; Partnership staff will send an e-mail to the proposed project lead no later than June 15, 2021 to let them know that their proposed project in the letter of intent falls within the subject areas of the Science Work Plan (SWP) as described in solicitation and discuss any further enhancements to prepare in their full proposal. For those proposals that do not fall within the subject areas of the SWP, notice will be sent via email to the Project Lead with recommendation on how they can improve their project proposal if they intend to submit a full proposal for their project.

Full Proposal, Due August 6, 2021 by 11:59 pm PST

Only lead principle investigators who submit a Letter of Intent are eligible to submit full proposals.

Applicants may submit only one proposal for each individual identified as a project lead (PI). However, project leads (PI) may be listed as co-leads or contributors for other proposed projects if the total combined effort of every individual does not exceed 12 months in any 12-month period.

The page limit for full proposals is twelve (12) pages including references, tables, and figures (Times New Roman, 12-point or greater, 1-inch margins, single-spaced). Budget and justification, resumes, current and pending support, and support letters (i.e. items 7-11 below) are not part of the page limit. All proposal components should be included and submitted as a single PDF.

Project Leads (PI) are to provide the following requirements for a full completed proposal:

1. Title page

- project titles – long title and suggested short title of up to 60 characters
- project initiation and completion dates
- names, affiliation, and contact information for senior personnel on the project
- project type as specified in this announcement

2. Project summary (250-word limit) to convey objectives, methodology, and rationale. This should provide a clear and concise description of the proposed work in terms that are understandable by individuals who are not experts in your field.

3. Project narrative

- Introduction and background, with an emphasis on relevance and how the proposed project will advance past or ongoing research
- List of clear hypotheses 
- Specific and achievable objectives, which represent the fundamental and measurable goals of the project
- Work plan including the conceptual or statistical model underlying any experimental work
- Experimental design and analytical approach including assumptions required, sample size, and other relevant information needed to evaluate the utility and technical feasibility of your proposed approach
- Timeline in table format, organized by calendar quarters, showing project milestones (accomplishments and deliverables) and demonstrating completion no later than June 30, 2023
- Products or results used to measure success and completion (report, submitted or accepted paper, user engagement)

4. Science Work Plan relevance and broader impacts

- Identify the specific Priority Science Work Action(s) from the SWP for 2022-2024 (see Subject Areas above) to which this proposed work primarily responds and describe how the proposal addresses this priority(ies).
- State what the project will accomplish in the way of broader impacts and why this is important.
 - » You may describe how the effort will advance efforts to enhance the social, institutional, and ecological resilience of the Puget Sound ecosystem.
 - » You may describe how the effort will engage underserved and underrepresented communities and individuals, and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

5. Engagement and Communication Plans

- Describe in detail the engagement and outreach components of your project.
- Express your approach to engaging end users in this project or in the use of its results. Explain the collaborations or exchanges that you have initiated, that you envision occurring during the project, and that may be sustained beyond the project period.
- Express your plan, or your intended approach to developing a plan, for communicating research results to non-scientific audiences. For more ideas, please refer to the social approaches section of the Puget Sound Partnership website and collaborate with Partnership staff in developing your proposal.

6. Project Management

- Describe the organization and management of the project
- Describe the experience and qualifications of the project lead and any co-investigators (i.e., others who accept responsibility to ensure that the project is properly managed and completed). If applying for a social-ecological systems project type, describe how the project team has co-developed the project and will continue to collaborate. If applicable, demonstrate how they will coordinate and collaborate with other projects and how the project will leverage support from other sources.
- Identify collaborators, i.e., those who obligate themselves to contribute to a project and complete specific tasks but who are not co-leads.

7. References – list all references used in the above elements

(end of 12-page limit)

8. Budget and budget justification

- Please use the budget template prepared by the Puget Sound Partnership fiscal program, available at [this link](#). Task numbers in the submitted budget worksheet should be consistent with the task numbers in the submitted Scope of Work.
- This template assumes a salary and benefits-based contract. In the case of deliverable-based contracts, there is no need to specify salaries and benefits and the template can be modified to show charges for each task, for each of the other line items.
- All private and non-profit firms will need to provide a statement, declaring that their employees working on the project, do not have a “base rate” of pay that exceeds \$661.20 per day or \$82.65 per hour. “Base rate” of pay does NOT include overhead cost, indirect cost, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, materials, etc.
- Budget justifications are required for proposals to be considered for evaluation. For each line item in the budget worksheet, include a brief statement justifying and explaining each identified cost and amount. Include enough detail such that it is clear how each expense relates to the tasks, deliverables, and roles of individuals described in the project narrative and the Scope of Work. It should also be clear how costs were calculated or estimated to arrive at the proposed amounts, including work hours for tasks as they translate to salary amounts.
- Explain why funding for this project is being requested through this opportunity and how the project will effectively leverage other programs and resources to achieve project objectives.

9. Resumes of senior personnel

- Included in the singular PDF, maximum 2 pages per individual

10. Current and pending support (optional)

11. Support letters (optional)

Full proposals should be submitted as a single PDF e-mail attachment sent to FullPro.gggsgtykv2n43631@u.box.com, sent no later than 11:59pm on Friday, August 6, 2021. Please label the attachment as LastName_FirstName_FullProposal.PDF, for example Smith_Jane_FullProposal.PDF

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria for Project Proposals

All proposals that advance past administrative review (screening for proposal completeness) will go through independent scientific review by at least three technical experts. Individuals selected to serve as technical reviewers will be professionals in fields relevant to the proposed project and evaluated for any potential conflict of interest. Reviewers will evaluate each proposal in accordance with the below criteria. Resulting scores, available budget, and the breadth of proposals will be considered in the final decision of awards. Individual awards greater than \$250,000 will require approval by the Department of Enterprise Services (DES).

A multi-step process will be followed for evaluating and selecting project proposals submitted for funding:

1. Partnership staff screen submitted applications to ensure that threshold eligibility criteria specified throughout this solicitation are met:
 - a. Proposals must follow the proposal submission instructions and requirements outlined above to be considered for review.
 - b. Proposals must be submitted on or before the proposal submission deadline. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions to ensure that their proposal is received by the deadline. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to the Partnership mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Box.com.
2. An evaluation panel will evaluate proposals on the criteria below.
3. Awards will be made based on resulting scores, budget, and the breadth of proposals.

Proposal evaluation criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POINTS AVAILABLE
1. PROJECT CONTRIBUTION	25 (sum a-c)
a. Importance/relevance as related to the SWP for 2020-2024 and articulated need by managers, decisions-makers, or other information users	10
b. Connection to and advancement of past or ongoing research	5
c. Broader impacts in particular and how findings would be used to advance the restoration and protection of Puget Sound	10
2. TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC MERIT INCLUDING	25 (sum a-b)
a. Approach and feasibility	15
b. Schedule and deliverables	10
3. TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDING (24%)	24 (sum a-b)
a. Consultation with managers, decision-makers, or end users. For integrated socio-ecological systems, demonstrated capacity for co-development across disciplines (18%)	18
b. Diversity, equity, and inclusion of team	6
4. ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PLANS	16 (sum a-b)
a. Engagement plan	8
b. Communication Plan	8
5. Budget	10
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	100

Post-Award Process

Debrief Conference

Upon request, a debriefing conference will be scheduled with Project Leads of unsuccessful proposals. The request for a debriefing conference must be received by the Partnership within three (3) business days after the Notification of Unsuccessful Consultant letter is e-mailed to the Consultant. Instructions to sign up for debrief conferences will be included in the Notification of Unsuccessful Consultant letter. The debriefing will be held September 17, 2021.

Discussion will be limited to a critique of the requesting Project Lead's proposal. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be allowed. Debriefing conferences may be conducted in person or on the telephone and will be scheduled for a maximum of one hour.

Protest Process

This procedure is available to Project Leads who submitted a full proposal to this solicitation document and who have participated in a debriefing conference. Upon completing the debriefing conference, the Project Lead is allowed five (5) business days to file a protest of the acquisition with the RFP Coordinator at pspcontracts@psp.wa.gov.

Project Leads protesting this procurement shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Project Leads under this procurement.

All protests must be in writing and signed by the protesting party or an authorized Agent. The protest must state the grounds for the protest with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested. A description of the relief or corrective action being requested should also be included. All protests shall be addressed to the RFP Coordinator, Arjean Travis at pspcontracts@psp.wa.gov.

Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of the evaluator
- Errors in computing the score
- Non-compliance with procedures described in the procurement document or AGENCY policy

Protests not based on procedural matters will not be considered. Protests will be rejected as without merit if they address issues such as: 1) An evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal, or 2) AGENCY'S assessment of its own and/or other agencies' needs or requirements.

Contacts and Additional Information

Please direct any questions about this solicitation to Katherine Wyatt and Scott Redman (contact information below).

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