



CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT, USE, AND MEASUREMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This chapter describes the development of the *Implementation Plan*, how it will be used, how success will be measured, and how new information and lessons learned from past Action Agendas informed the *Implementation Plan*.

HOW WAS THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVELOPED?

The *Implementation Plan* was developed over approximately 1 year through a structured approach integrating science in decisionmaking. The intent of the development process was to ensure the Action Agenda is science-informed; focuses on the Stormwater, Habitat, and Shellfish Strategic Initiatives; represents the actions needed at the regional and local level, and is prioritized using predefined criteria in a manner that is highly transparent.

The Puget Sound Partnership convened interdisciplinary teams for each of the Strategic Initiatives. These teams defined regional priorities, and developed criteria for scoring Near Term Actions. Regional and local implementers proposed Near Term Actions responsive to the regional priorities and the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams scored and ranked the Near Term Actions (Tables 1-1 to 1-3). More description of the process can be found in the [Process Summary](#) posted with Supporting Materials.

Cross-cutting sub-strategies affect multiple aspects of Puget Sound recovery and have regional implications, so they support all three Strategic Initiatives. They provide an opportunity to develop new Near Term Actions and programs in a way that produces multiple benefits from the same investments. Planning for the 2016 *Implementation Plan* included the seven cross-cutting sub-strategies described in Appendix B, *Cross-Cutting Sub-Strategies*. These cross-cutting sub-strategies are summarized below.

Climate change impacts. An important component in addressing recovery is to consider and address the impacts of climate change in all implementing actions proposed for the Action Agenda. Sea level rise, increased frequency and severity of flooding, erosion, and temperature changes—all will increase risks to vulnerable communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems.

Riparian corridor management.

Protection and restoration of riparian corridors is an important cross-cutting strategy that protects freshwater streams from increased water temperatures, protects water quality, and retains or enhances habitat.

Regulation and enforcement. The Ecosystem Coordination Board proposed that increasing regulatory compliance is also a cross-cutting sub-strategy that supports each of the three Strategic Initiatives.

HOW ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADDRESSED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN?

Tribal Treaty Rights: There is close agreement between the tribal habitat priorities and all three Strategic Initiatives. Clean water and habitat are essential to fish and shellfish harvests.

Climate Change: Near Term Actions were required to address climate change impacts.

Ocean Acidification: Near Term Actions related to this issue were directed to Marine Resource Advisory Committee for review and feedback.

Recovery of Endangered Salmonids: The Habitat and Stormwater Strategic Initiatives are both aligned with this issue by focusing efforts on physical and chemical habitat loss and degradation.

Science. Sound science provides the continued basis for decisions of partners and policy-makers on how best to protect and restore Puget Sound. Although the Puget Sound Partnership is charged with assessing the region's overall progress toward recovery targets and describing the status of recovery efforts, there are numerous gaps in our collective understanding that scientific study can address with shared efforts and resources.

Monitoring. The Action Agenda includes strategies and sub-strategies that coordinate and integrate science assessments and monitoring to help determine the status and trends of the health of Puget Sound. There may be opportunities to coordinate implementation across the three Strategic Initiatives.

Behavior change. Behavior change is considered important to many of the sub-strategies as a means to incentivize human actions that are beneficial to recovery or to deter human actions that are harmful to or further degrade Puget Sound. Sub-strategies that include communication and behavior change strategies support programs and actions that cut across the three Strategic Initiatives.

Awareness and education. Awareness and education, along with behavior change, cut across all three Strategic Initiatives. The sub-strategies that support these issues include increasing awareness and understanding of Puget Sound's health, status, and threats, as well as engaging the public in educational and technical training efforts.

Partners were asked to address these issues and sub-strategies during development of the Near Term Actions. The Strategic Initiative Transition Teams considered the alignment of Near Term Actions with cross-cutting issues in scoring to ensure that these important cross-cutting issues were adequately addressed.

HOW WILL THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BE USED?

The *Implementation Plan* directs investment to the actions most needed over the next 2 to 4 years to advance Puget Sound recovery. The ranked list helps the region use resources efficiently and effectively to make progress on indicator targets. A sortable list of the Near Term Actions is available in the *Action Agenda Report Card* and can be used to identify actions that meet specific criteria for certain funding opportunities. Additionally, the *Implementation Plan* can be used to identify and address emerging issues, inform future planning, and influence legislation.

DIRECTING INVESTMENT

The ranked list of Near Term Actions informs funders looking to invest in actions that best address the regional priorities and have a high probability of success. Regardless of the scale of implementation, funders can identify the relative contribution of an action to regional priorities. The key ongoing programs identified in the *Implementation Plan* signify to funders that partners collectively recognize the importance of maintaining these programs and support their full implementation.

The Management Conference would like funders, such as the National Estuary Program,² state grants, and others to allocate funding for the Action Agenda using the information provided by Near Term Action scores, ongoing programs, and regional priorities,

² While the National Estuary Program is important to funding the Action Agenda, it is neither the only nor the major source of funds.

and actions that address gaps and barriers. The Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams will develop a funding package recommendation for each of the Strategic Initiatives, documenting the rationale for their choices, particularly for any deviations from the ranked lists. As more Implementation Strategies are developed, they will inform the recommendations for the funding package. These recommendations will be presented to the Strategic Initiative Leads who will develop the final funding package. They, too, are expected to document the basis for their decisions and provide the rationale for any deviations from the Strategic Initiative Advisory Team recommendations. In addition, the list of Near Term Actions and ongoing programs can be used to pursue state and local government funding during budget cycles, as well as nonprofit and private funding.

In these ways, the list of technically reviewed and scored Near Term Actions and the ongoing programs facilitate more direct funding of implementation, thus reducing competitive funding cycles and allowing partners to focus on recovery implementation.

TRACKING EMERGING ISSUES

In addition to directing funding, the *Implementation Plan* identifies emerging issues, often gaps where regional priorities are not being addressed. Identifying these issues can catalyze further monitoring and scientific evaluation and set the stage for the competitive funding process to encourage proposals that address specific issues.

INFORMING FUTURE PLANNING

The *Implementation Plan* informs future planning for, learning about, and understanding of recovery priorities. Identifying scientific and monitoring projects can help resolve uncertainty in practices and approaches for addressing barriers to recovery. Results of these investigations and of additional science work actions identified in the [Biennial Science Work Plan](#) can be used to improve development

of future actions or to modify approaches to solicitation and plan development.

Progress on this *Implementation Plan*, as well as emerging issues and new scientific information, will inform future *Implementation Plans*, a process described in the adaptive management cycle. The [Action Agenda Report Card](#) is an online resource that tracks implementation of the Near Term Actions. As additional quantitative measures that track progress become available, that information will be made accessible to the public through the [Action Agenda Report Card](#) and future [State of the Sound](#) reports.

INFLUENCING LEGISLATION

The *Implementation Plan* can influence legislation by identifying key ongoing programs seeking legislative action (such as removing legal barriers to implementation) or by supporting increased funding to maintain or stimulate important state or local governmental work (such as enforcing existing regulations).

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

A roadmap is of little value if we do not know where we are or track progress toward our destination. This Action Agenda’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) and its biennial *Implementation Plan* provide the region’s shared roadmap for Puget Sound recovery. The *Implementation Plan* charts the course toward recovery over the next 2 years and provides useful points of reference for tracking progress.

The Puget Sound Partnership’s monitoring systems provide the opportunity to learn continuously about recovery and protection efforts. Progress reports and science-based evaluation provide the information necessary to adjust management actions to achieve the greatest beneficial outcomes for the resources expended.

We measure success around three issues: tracking implementation, tracking results, and assessing effectiveness. These are tracked using multiple tools and reporting documents, as described in Table 2-1. For more detailed information on performance measurement, see [Chapter 2, Framework for Recovery](#), of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

TABLE 2-1. PUGET SOUND RECOVERY MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

MEASUREMENT SYSTEM	DESCRIPTION	LINK
Action Agenda Report Card	Tool for implementation tracking. Includes all Near Term Actions, their performance measures, and current implementation status.	Report Card
State of the Sound	The biennial report that assesses implementation and progress toward the 2020 targets for Puget Sound recovery. The 2017 <i>State of the Sound</i> will report on implementation of the 2014 Action Agenda and this 2016 <i>Implementation Plan</i> .	State of the Sound
Vital Signs	The suite of 25 Vital Signs that gauge the health and recovery of the Puget Sound ecosystem.	Vital Signs
Assessing effectiveness	The Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program staff and the Strategic Initiative Leads are proposing to monitor, together, the effectiveness of recovery efforts in each of the three Strategic Initiatives.	Evaluating Actions to Recover Puget Sound

HOW IS THE 2016 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN IMPROVED?

As prescribed by the adaptive management process, the 2016 *Implementation Plan* applies lessons from the 2012 and 2014 Action Agendas to build on successes, remedy challenges, and improve strategic planning. The development of the plan and solicitation for Near Term Actions is more focused on critical issues, resulting in actions that are better designed and qualified to address near-term recovery needs. Additionally, each iteration of the Action Agenda, and particularly the 2016 *Implementation Plan*, more fully integrates science into the planning and decisionmaking processes. The enhanced clarity regarding priorities and intended outcomes in the 2016 *Implementation Plan* will accelerate the pace of recovery in Puget Sound.

LEARNING THROUGH ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management is the cyclical process of planning, implementing, evaluating, and applying new information to subsequent planning activities. Development of the 2016 *Implementation Plan* was informed by new data and analysis resulting from implementing the 2012 and 2014 Action Agendas. With each iteration of the *Implementation Plan*, we improve our understanding of the status and trends of Vital Sign indicators and the pressures on Puget Sound's freshwater, marine-nearshore, and terrestrial resources.

- **Lessons learned.** In preparation for the 2015 [State of the Sound](#), the Puget Sound Partnership closely studied Near Term Actions types, implementation status, funding, and the relationships that these factors might have to the overall outcome of the Vital Signs. This study revealed two important points.

- Near Term Actions associated with Strategic Initiatives were more likely to be *complete* or *on plan* than actions not associated with the Strategic Initiatives.
- Lack of sufficient funding is a major barrier to implementation of Near Term Actions, and thus of the Action Agenda and Puget Sound recovery.

Based on these analyses, the Strategic Initiatives are the focus of the 2016 *Implementation Plan*, and actions associated with each Strategic Initiative are prioritized to optimize limited resources.

- **Status of Vital Sign indicators.** Many Vital Sign indicators have not changed or have deteriorated in the last 2 years. The need to accelerate the pace of recovery has focused the development of Implementation Strategies for each Vital Sign. The Implementation Strategies for shellfish and estuaries help to identify and prioritize actions associated with the Shellfish Strategic Initiative and the Habitat Strategic Initiative.
- **Better understanding of pressures.** The [2014 Puget Sound Pressures Assessment](#) identified critical ecosystem vulnerabilities. This informed updates to the sub-strategies associated with each Strategic Initiative and led to development of regional priorities for the Strategic Initiatives. Partners were encouraged to consider regional priorities and particularly those associated with sub-strategies that affect all three Strategic Initiatives when developing and ranking Near Term Actions. These priorities also informed the assessment of gaps and development of other recommended actions.