

South Sound Project Endorsement Criteria and Process

Revised November 2017

AHSS encourages and welcomes the opportunity to endorse and advocate for projects that are consistent with the South Sound Strategy. We are particularly interested in projects that accomplish habitat protection and restoration, protection and restoration of shellfish beds, and stormwater reduction and control.

All actions proposed for AHSS endorsement should demonstrate a sound scientific and technical basis. Nearshore projects that are located outside the catchments identified as a priority for protection and restoration in the South Sound Strategy should document that they are (1) in priority nearshore salmon habitat and/or (2) describe how the project considers the condition of its catchment and the surrounding catchments and why it is anticipated to be successful over time. In general, the Alliance believes that, especially for smaller projects, the focus should be in catchments identified as a priority for protection and restoration and/or priority nearshore salmon habitat.

AHSS uses a 3-factor review process to make decisions about which projects to endorse. Each factor counts for a third of the total project score. Factors are scored individually as described below, and then individual factor scores are aggregated to place a project into one of four “bins.” Bin one (highest scoring projects) are automatically endorsed. For bins two and three (moderately scoring projects) endorsement decisions will be made by the AHSS Executive Committee considering recommendations from the Technical Team and input from the AHSS Council on a case by case basis. Projects in bin four (lowest scoring projects) will not be endorsed.

Project review is available at any time; project proponents can initiate review by completing a project information sheet through the AHSS website and requesting endorsement.

Individual Factor Scoring

Factor 1. Benefit review – The action will be evaluated considering the geographic scale (size of area affected by the action) and intensity (degree or strength of the effect of the action), with projects that restore (or halt a threat to) part of the ecosystem over a larger area (geographic scale) to a greater extent (intensity) ranking higher. The following scoring criteria will be used:

- Scale:
 - 4 = action addresses multiple watersheds and/or inlet island groups
 - 3 = action addresses a watershed/inlet/island
 - 2 = action addresses a subwatershed/subinlet/shoreline reach
 - 1 = action is small, e.g., less than 10-acre, pocket estuary
- Intensity:
 - 4 = effect of action is widespread throughout the geographic scale and will completely restore or halt threats/ stressors
 - 3 = effect of action is widespread throughout the geographic scale and will significantly restore ecosystem function or retard threats/stressors

- 2 = effect of action is localized throughout the geographic scale and will moderately restore ecosystem function or retard threats/stressors
- 1 = effect of action is very localized in a portion of the geographic scale and will slightly restore or retard threats/stressors

Criteria ratings will be entered in the following matrix to provide a benefit score for Factor 1.

Benefit Score		Geographic Scale			
		4	3	2	1
Impact	4	4	4	3	2
	3	4	3	2	1
	2	3	2	1	1
	1	2	1	1	1

Factor 2: Likelihood of Success Review – likelihood of success evaluates project feasibility and community support using the following considerations.

- Feasibility & Readiness (4 points possible)
 - Is the project ready to go as evidenced by pre-project planning such as workplans and schedules, designs, permits underway, etc.? (Yes = 1 point, no = 0)
 - Does the project use a well understood / proven technology, an approach documented as appropriate to the geographic location, or an innovative technology with sound justification? (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)
 - Does the project proponent have the technical, administrative, and financial management capacity to manage / accomplish the action? (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)
 - Would the project be a sound investment of public dollars as evidenced by the proposed budget being appropriate to the work? (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)
- Stakeholder and Partnership Support & Readiness (4 points possible)
 - Are landowner, interjurisdictional, and/or other necessary partnerships in place? (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)
 - Is there stakeholder interest and/or support? (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)
 - Would no action mean the loss of opportunity through, for example, property development, or loss of matching funds, or is this a subsequent phase of a multiple phase project (Yes = 1; no = 0) ,
 - Is this a significant new effort in a new, priority geographic area or bringing in new partners (Yes = 1 point; no = 0)

Criteria ratings will be entered into the following matrix to provide a likelihood of success score for factor 2. Points from each category are earned an aggregated based on answers to the questions under each of the criteria (Feasibility & Readiness, and Stakeholder and Partnership Support & Readiness).

Likelihood of success score		Feasibility and Readiness			
		4	3	2	1
Community Support and Readiness	4	4	4	3	2
	3	4	3	2	1
	2	3	2	1	1
	1	2	1	1	1

Factor 3: Consistency with the South Sound Strategy. Projects that are consistent with the South Sound Strategy are preferred. Projects which are determined to be inconsistent with the strategy need specific action by the AHSS Executive Committee to be endorsed. Consistency will be evaluated on the following scale and given a factor score of 4, 2, or zero.

- Project is highly consistent with the South Sound Strategy as evidenced by project addressing a named ecosystem priority and taking place in a mapped priority area at an appropriate geographic scale for that area (yes = 4 pts; no = 0)¹
- Project is consistent with the Strategy but not “highly consistent” as described above, this is to capture projects that are appropriately taking place outside a mapped priority area (yes = 2 pts; no = 0)
- Project is not consistent with the South Sound Strategy (0 points)

Aggregating Factor Scores and Binning

Projects will be placed into one of four bins based on the combination of their individual factor scores. To create the bins, individual factor scores will be entered in the table below.

	4 (best) (green)	3 (yellow)	2 (orange)	1 (lowest) (red)
Benefit score				
Likelihood of success score				
Consistency w/ Strategy score				

Bins are as follows.

- Bin 4 (highest scoring projects): 2 or 3 factor scores of 4 (green); zero factor scores of 1 or 2 (no orange, no red)
- Bin 3 (moderately scoring projects): 1 or 2 factor scores of 4 (green); zero factor scores of 1 (red)
- Bin 2 (moderately scoring projects): 0 factor scores of 4 (green); no more than 1 factor score of 1 (red)
- Bin 1 (lowest scoring projects): 2 or 3 factor scores of 1 (red)

¹ Projects that address the entire South Puget Sound region will by definition include the mapped priority areas and generally should be scored high under this criterion provided they also address a named ecosystem priority.

The highest scoring projects (bin 4) will be automatically endorsed by the Alliance. Moderately scoring projects (bins 3 and 2) can be considered for endorsement on a case-by-case basis, based on project merit. The AHSS Executive Committee makes decisions about endorsement of moderately scoring projects, considering recommendations from the Technical Team and input from the Council. The lowest scoring projects (bin 1) will not be endorsed; however, the Alliance is happy to work with project sponsors to improve their proposals in an effort to achieve endorsement.

Process and Timing for Review

Project proponents seeking Alliance endorsement should submit a brief project information sheet along with any additional information that is needed to support evaluation based on the factors described above. A copy of the project grant/funding proposal (if available) also will suffice.

The Technical Team meets on an ad hoc basis and the Alliance Executive Committee meets approximately quarterly. (Executive Committee meeting dates are published in the [schedule] tab on the Alliance website.) To ensure there is adequate time for review please submit information at least 4 weeks before an endorsement decision is needed. Ideally materials will be submitted with timing that allows for scoring and then review at a regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting. However, if this is not possible given project application timelines the Alliance coordinator will make arrangements for special Executive Committee review, provided the 4-week time frame is met.

Puget Sound Action Agenda -- Review of Proposed NTAs

Approximately every four years, the Alliance participates in review of projects proposed as near-term actions for the Puget Sound Action Agenda. The Alliance uses the process described above to review NTA proposals and will provide input to Puget Sound-scale reviewers on the results of our South Sound-scale review on the timelines specified by PSP for the Action Agenda process.

In general, the solicitation for NTA proposals is carried out at the Puget Sound scale by the Puget Sound Partnership and sister state agencies. The Alliance will provide input into development of these solicitations when asked, and will use its regularly-scheduled Council and Executive Committee meetings, as well as the Alliance mailing list and website, to provide information about the process to potential project sponsors in South Sound.