

Request for Effectiveness Study Ideas

Request for Ideas/Topics/Questions for Effectiveness Studies

The Stormwater Work Group (SWG) is proposing a process and criteria for identifying what regional stormwater management effectiveness studies to conduct. The SWG will first evaluate and rank ideas/topics/questions for studies and then formally request proposals for specific study designs for the top-ranked ideas. Funding to conduct the highest priority studies will come from local governments that will be pooled through NPDES municipal stormwater permit requirements. The evaluation criteria are attached/available at <http://...>

In advance of selecting specific ideas/topics/questions for studies we wish to offer all interested parties an opportunity to submit their suggestions for consideration and ranking. Permittees are required to submit individual effectiveness study descriptions to Ecology in their annual reports due March 31, 2011. Those ideas will be included in this process, and the SWG is particularly interested in seeing which topics are of interest to a large number of permittees. Local governments may submit additional ideas through this process.

To submit an idea/study/question for a regional effectiveness study, please provide the following information. Please keep your description to less than one page. Submit your idea via email to Karen Dinicola at karen.dinicola@ecy.wa.gov before COB on March 31, 2011. In the subject line of your email, write "Idea for Effectiveness Study" and include only one proposal per email.

Title: One-line description of the idea/topic/question

1. Hypothesis statement of the idea/topic/question.
2. Brief description of the management practice the study would address, including:
 - a. Where/why/by whom the practice is required or voluntarily implemented.
 - b. Geographic area where the practice is currently, or could be, implemented.
3. Brief description of the intended outcome(s) of the practice that would be evaluated, including:
 - a. Expected improvements to sediment or water quality, habitat or biota.
4. Brief description of what is known about the practice from studies in Puget Sound and elsewhere.
5. Brief description of a proposed approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the practice.
6. Brief description of expected changes to management actions that would be expected to result from the findings.

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Process/Criteria for Selecting Topics for Effectiveness Studies

These recommendations are specifically for a process and criteria to select which regional effectiveness studies will be performed using local government pay-in contributions through NPDES permits, and only for the permit term expected to begin in 2012. We recommend a public, transparent process to apply the criteria below for evaluating and ranking topics/ideas/questions for effectiveness studies, prior to developing specific study designs. The SWG will evaluate the extent to which each topic/idea/question:

- 1) 10 points: Is outcome-based and focuses on evaluating one of the following permit-required programmatic stormwater management elements:
 - a. Public education and outreach;
 - b. Illicit discharge detection and elimination;
 - c. Controlling runoff from new and re-development;
 - d. Pollution prevention/operations and maintenance;
 - e. Structural stormwater controls (retrofits); or
 - f. Source control.
- 2) 20 points: Meets the criteria for a sufficiently defined working hypothesis (see sections 4.6 and 4.7 of the *2010 Stormwater Monitoring and Assessment Strategy for the Puget Sound Region*) and the practice either:
 - a. Has not been studied before, or
 - b. Provides important refinement, application to local situation, or otherwise builds on previous work.
- 3) 40 points: Is regional in nature, gets a large number of local governments involved, and generates results that are transferable to other locations with similar conditions.
 - a. 20 points: The practice could be, or is being, applied throughout the Puget Sound region.
 - b. 15 points: The resulting information will apply to a large proportion (area and/or population) of Puget Sound.
 - c. 5 points: The question is of interest to a large number of local jurisdictions.
- 4) 30 points: Tells us whether a Stormwater Management Program element effectively addresses an important stormwater-related threat or impact in a receiving water body, based on prior assessments.
 - a. 15 points: Findings can be applied to adaptive management of stormwater management programs; changes to specific management actions are expected to occur.
 - b. 10 points: The practice is likely to result in protection of or improvements to beneficial uses. The study quantifies improvements to program implementation, water quality, biota, or public awareness.
 - c. 5 points: Includes or will generate cost information (to inform cost-benefit analyses).

Studies may be longer than the 5-year permit term. Studies may address a variety of scales, each appropriate to the hypothesis being tested. Permittees and others are submitting topics/ideas/

Request for Effectiveness Study Ideas

questions by March 31, 2011. The SWG will categorize the ideas and do a preliminary evaluation according to the above criteria.

Process and timing for applying the above criteria:

- March 31, 2011 is the deadline for submitting topics/ideas/questions to be considered and ranked.
 - Permittees are required to submit ideas for effectiveness studies in their annual reports to Ecology due March 31, 2011. The SWG will get this set of permittees' ideas/topics/questions from Ecology (process and timing TBD). Permittees may submit additional ideas through their caucus.
 - All caucuses of the SWG (local/state/federal governments, tribes, environmental and business groups, and agriculture) are being asked to provide specific ideas for effectiveness studies. In January the SWG will officially request each caucus to submit their ideas to SWG staff Karen Dinicola at karen.dinicola@ecy.wa.gov by COB March 31, 2011.
- SWS Effectiveness Study Selection Subgroup work April-June 2011:
 - Minimum of 6 SWG members “lump and split” the topics/ideas/questions. The categories will likely be the 6 program elements listed in the first category of criteria above. At this stage, the subgroup will also identify whether each idea is for a short-, medium-, or long-term study. Review results before proceeding.
 - Each subgroup member will be assigned to one category. That person and at least 1-2 additional people (including non-SWG members) assign scores to each idea within the category. Report both average score and range to SWG.
 - Consider breadth and variety of questions that result from rankings. Recommend to SWG whether to select either the top-ranked idea from each program element or the highest-ranked ideas across the categories.
- Subgroup report and rankings are submitted to SWG one week in advance of June meeting for selecting topics/ideas/questions for RFP for study designs.
- SWG submits selections to Ecology by end of July.

The selection of topics for study will be followed by an RFP for study designs. The subgroup will develop a draft description of a more robust process for sending out RFP and selecting study designs (to be finalized after public comment). The SWG will submit the final proposal for the RFP process to Ecology sometime between the close of the public comment period on October formal draft permit language and before the final permit is issued.

We recommend that Ecology issue requests for proposals for conducting the effectiveness studies that have been selected based on this process, and that an open and transparent process be developed to evaluate the submitted proposals and select those for initial implementation. Ecology will determine the total number of studies to be conducted based on the total amount of funding that will be provided.

The SWG will re-evaluate the focus of effectiveness studies before the subsequent permit term.