

# ***Alberta Water Council - Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team***

## ***Terms of Reference***

Prepared by Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Working Group

### **BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:**

*Water For Life* has established three outcomes; safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. Improvements in water conservation, efficiency and productivity by all water users are necessary in meeting these outcomes.

In support of achieving this objective, the Alberta Water Council (AWC) established a working group (WG) to develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) to establish a project team that would address three areas:

1. Provide, clear, understandable definitions, principles and expectations for the terms “conservation”, “efficiency” and “productivity”.
2. Determine baseline information and information gaps on water conservation, efficiency and productivity. It is acknowledged that the volume and/or quality of information available is not the same for all sectors.
3. Determine appropriate methodologies for reporting progress on conservation, efficiency and productivity.

The AWC believes that by addressing the three areas noted above, sectors, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the public will understand:

- What these terms mean to them and how they apply to their life and business;
- The type and level of detail of baseline information available (including gaps in information) on water conservation, efficiency and productivity for each sector;
- How information will be measured and reported to show progress towards achieving improvements in conservation, efficiency and productivity.

This work will be based on sound science and technical approaches already used or applied elsewhere. The project team will provide regular reports to the AWC.

This work is an important first step in setting the foundation for additional work to follow, including activities such as the development of water conservation, efficiency and productivity plans. It is anticipated each of the areas outlined above will require analysis and discussion to arrive at consensus-supported approaches. This work will include identifying the resources necessary to ensure sector implementation.

The Project Team will strive to ensure that the expectations and understanding surrounding these areas are consistent with the intent of the outcomes, and directions as described in *Water For Life* (environmental, economic and social objectives).

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

Team members will support the following shared principles:

- Members will work in accordance with the AWC document, “Guidelines for Participating in Council Work”.
- Teamwork relies on effective information sharing between project team members and their constituents. Team members will support this process by providing relevant, timely and accurate information for consideration from sectors and report decisions made by the project team back to sectors.
- Principles of sound management will be followed such that the Secretariat, under the guidance of the co-chairs, will prepare agendas that are followed with minutes recorded and distributed to team members in a timely manner.
- Team members will ensure that relevant issues are brought to the table for discussion, with emphasis on resolving those issues by means of consensus. The process for consensus will adhere to the definition provided in the AWC’s ToR.
- Failure to reach consensus on an issue by the project team will be referred to the AWC for discussion, with a summary of the issue and the differing viewpoints.

## **TEAM GOALS/ RESULTS / EXPECTATIONS:**

The AWC expects the team to **provide a written report and recommendations** to the AWC that provides clear definition and understanding of the principles and expectations for “conservation”, “efficiency” and “productivity” such that sectors, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and the public have clear understanding of what these terms mean to them and how they apply to their life and business; the type and level of detail of baseline information available, including information gaps, on water conservation, efficiency and productivity for each sector; how information will be measured and reported to show progress towards achieving improvements in conservation, efficiency and productivity. The report will provide an understanding of these terms in the context of the implementation of the Water for Life strategy as a whole.

## **KEY TASKS:**

The Team will:

1. Hold regular meetings to maintain involvement and momentum towards defining terms and providing context for conservation, efficiency and productivity to assist sectors.
2. Develop a work plan of key tasks/deliverables (including confirmation of the proposed budget), and the timeframes associated with completing the tasks. Project team will report regularly to the AWC.
3. Develop a set of principles governing performance measures and reporting.
4. Identify baseline information and information gaps related to conservation, efficiency and productivity.
5. Determine appropriate methodologies for reporting progress on conservation, efficiency and productivity. Sector targets will be established at a later time by another process.

6. Consult with sectors to ensure issues are identified for discussion, and a common understanding of decisions made by the project team are relayed back to sectors.
7. Reference all products derived from the work of the team as those of the AWC.
8. The team will ensure that the materials it develops use language that is appropriate and understandable to a broader public audience.

These tasks will assist the AWC, sectors, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the public in ensuring appropriate definition, information and guidance is provided for consistent, comprehensive planning, implementation and reporting of achievements that reflect improvements in conservation, efficiency and productivity. Project team members should rely on readily available definitions and other research in these areas to assist them.

The project team will be assisted by a Secretariat.

### ***Communications and Publicity:***

The co-chairs with support from the Secretariat will report to the AWC as indicated in the timeline below.

### ***Information Gathering:***

Information necessary for the team to complete its tasks may be obtained from any appropriate sources. In cases where critical information is not readily available, the team will explore options to fill these needs including contracting the services of consultants.

### **SCHEDULE OF KEY DELIVERABLES:**

The team will report to the AWC at the specified intervals below to give the Council an opportunity to provide feedback and approval at key direction points before the team proceeds to the next stage. This will ensure the AWC is fully engaged and takes a leadership role in the project as it moves forward.

- Project team will provide a detailed workplan with key tasks/deliverables (along with confirmation of the proposed budget) for the May 2006 meeting of the AWC.
- Project team will provide a target date for completion of the tasks.
- Project team will provide a draft report for presentation to the AWC at their last meeting of the 2006 calendar year.
- Project team co-chairs will report on team progress at each Council meeting.

## **BUDGET:**

It is the responsibility of the AWC to provide a budget to the team for items such as employing a professional minute taker, consultant costs for specific projects including information collection, workshop facilitation, and research to fill information gaps. Other costs may be incurred through team membership (e.g. travel costs, etc.).

A budget of \$50,000.00 is required for fiscal year 2006-07. There is an expectation of substantial in-kind sector participation.

## **TEAM STRUCTURE / MEMBERSHIP:**

### **Membership:**

Members of the project team will represent the interests of their broad sector.

- Industry - 2 representatives
- Government (non-provincial) – 3 representatives
- ENGO – 2 representatives
- Government – 2 representatives

There is an expectation that this small project team will be hard-working, demanding a significant amount of time on the part of sector representatives. Project team representatives must clearly identify the sectors they will be representing and consulting throughout the project.

Depending upon agenda items to be discussed at meetings, sectors may request an individual that is not a regular member of the team to attend the meeting. This is acceptable provided the sector makes the request to the co-chairs or the Secretariat and obtains their approval ahead of the planned meeting.

### **Role of Co-Chairs**

- Chair meetings.
- Clarify the AWC's expectations of the team;
- Ensure the team has adequate support to efficiently and effectively carry out its Terms of Reference;
- Inform the team of other programs and initiatives so the team can avoid duplicating work being addressed elsewhere;
- Serve as liaison to the AWC and Government;

### **Role of Team Members**

Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and provide relevant, timely and accurate information for the team's consideration. Team members should consult with sectors to ensure issues are identified for discussion by the Team, and decisions made by the Team are relayed back to sectors. Members missing more than 3 consecutive meetings without reasonable cause will be asked to be replaced through consultation with the respective agency/sector they represent.

## **Alternate Members**

Team members may send an alternate in their place if they are unable to attend a meeting. The team member named as the formal designate to the team is responsible to remain informed about current discussions.

## **Role of Secretariat**

Under the guidance of the co-chairs, the Secretariat will prepare agendas, coordinate meetings, record discussions and develop progress and final reports that reflect the teams' direction in a succinct and unbiased manner.

In co-operation with the Secretariat, a secretary will record meeting discussions and prepare a set of succinct written minutes, including Action Items to the team.

## **SIGNIFICANT PARAMETERS OR CONSTRAINTS:**

Water users in Alberta are many and varied. This variability is coupled with the fact that the water supply is also variable (in time and space) across the province. Water conservation, efficiency, and productivity are multi-faceted complex concepts that require definition, understanding (on the part of sectors and the public), context, information, implementation, measurement and reporting. All of these aspects must be brought together in order to understand how improvements in water use can be achieved and progress is being made towards meeting the three outcomes of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*; safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

This common understanding is essential to ensure Albertans are confident that the approaches taken by water users are the correct ones, and to ensure the successful achievement of the outcomes of *Water For Life*.