

Alberta Water Council - Shared Governance & Watershed Planning Framework Project Team Terms of Reference

Prepared by the Shared Governance Working Group

Starting Definition of Shared Governance (to be finalized by the Project Team)

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where both government and external parties share responsibility for development and delivery of policy, planning, and programs or services, but where government retains accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication. Shared governance requires a clear accountability framework with clear roles, responsibilities and relationships.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

During the development of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*, Albertans stated that they wanted to be involved in watershed management decisions. The Government of Alberta agreed with this desire and provided clear direction in *Water for Life* that watershed management is a shared responsibility with all Albertans to be carried out in partnerships with Albertans.

To enable involvement of Albertans at the provincial, regional and local level three types of partnerships were created, the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups. Each of these partnerships involves a cross-section of sector groups developing and working towards common watershed management outcomes.

Many questions have arisen regarding the relationship of these partnerships to each other, their relationships to existing decision-making authorities (including all orders of government) and the relationship of watershed planning to other resource and development planning. To address these questions the Alberta Water Council identified in their 2006-07 Operational Plan the need to develop a shared governance framework and a watershed management planning framework. Early on in these two tasks the Alberta Water Council recognized their strong connection and directed that a single Project Team manage them.

These terms of reference describe how these two tasks will be managed so that the shared governance framework and the watershed management planning framework are fully integrated as one project, managed by one team.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Shared Governance Project Team will adopt the guiding principles of the Alberta Water Council. The Alberta Water Council, individually and collectively, is guided in its activities by a desire to be: collaborative, fair, innovative, respectful, timely, transparent, and trustworthy.

Meetings and meeting management: Members will exercise good meeting etiquette: good listening, open, honest communications, and members will 'be there' for each other. Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and provide relevant, timely and accurate information for the team's consideration. Sound meeting management will be followed; the Secretariat will record minutes and distribute them in a timely manner.

Working within the Sector: The Project Team will ensure those who need to be included are at the table. Team members should consult with their Sectors to ensure the Team discusses issues relevant to the Sector. The discussions and decisions of the Team should be relayed in a timely manner back to the Sectors to ensure accountability and transparency.

Issue identification and resolution: Members will ensure relevant issues are brought to the table for discussion, and that issues are resolved by consensus. Successful consensus decision-making often leads to more innovative solutions, but it requires a high level of trust and collaboration. Failure to reach consensus on an issue will be referred to the AWC for discussion, with a summary of the issue and differing views.

Participants in Council activities are also expected to be familiar with Council's media policy, which includes a protocol for responding to media requests.

TEAM GOALS/ RESULTS / EXPECTATIONS

Outputs

There are two outputs:

1. Shared Governance Framework – a document that describes the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and relationships involved in shared governance and the process by which shared governance can be established and maintained.
2. Watershed Management Planning Framework – a guideline document that describes the contents of and how to develop watershed management plans, who is involved, the relationships to other planning, approval and implementation of plans, and the integration with shared governance.

Outcomes

There are two outcomes:

1. Ownership and Commitment to Shared Governance by All Sectors – the description and process for achieving shared governance is embraced by all shareholders. The creation of the document is only a small portion of the desired outcome. The desired outcome of this task is that all sectors buy in to and work within the shared governance framework.
2. Ownership and Commitment to the Watershed Management Planning Framework – the essential elements and processes identified in the framework document are found to be necessary and sufficient for successful development and implementation of watershed plans. Again, the creation of the document is only a small portion of the desired outcome. For watershed management planning to be successful, all sectors must participate in the development of plans as described in the framework and all sectors must follow through with implementation of agreed-to actions in a timely manner.

KEY ACTIONS / DELIVERABLES:

Scope

The following statements describe the scope of the shared governance and the watershed management planning framework projects.

1. The project will define what it means to be a partner in shared governance and what authority, responsibility and accountability comes with being a partner. In a consensus based decision-making process a method for indicating agreement and commitment to action may be required.

2. The project will define the relationship of the *Water for Life* partnerships, the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups, to each other.
3. The project will define who has authority, who has responsibility, who has accountability for watershed management, and the interrelationship of these three roles. The starting point will be to understand the authority, responsibility and accountability in the current governance model.
4. The project will define how to harmonize the goals and actions of shareholders that impact management and development in a watershed. The integration of watershed management planning with other mandated air, land, and natural resource management planning is required.
5. Given the current development of the Land Use Framework, an explicit and timely connection must be made between the land use framework and the frameworks for shared governance and watershed management planning.
6. The project will address the balance between the expectations for various groups to be fully involved all the time, and the capacity for those groups to be involved. There may be a variety of ways to engage groups. The project will outline potential options.
7. The project will be guided, but not constrained, by current legislation. New legislation or legislative amendments may be required to facilitate the implementation of shared governance and watershed management planning.
8. The project will provide guidance for appropriate timing of approval and implementation of plans and recommendations coming from the partnerships. Clarification of the authority of a watershed management plan (as mandatory vs. advisory) and its relationship to other plans should be explored. Success and credibility of a governance model requires recommendations developed in plans to be implemented in a timely manner.
9. The project will define the process and provide guidance on re-engaging parties who choose not to participate. The project will develop a process to resolve differences when they arise and a dispute resolution mechanism. Success and credibility of shared governance requires all shareholders to participate in the process.
10. The project will create a new framework for watershed management planning that expands the current water management framework to incorporate all elements of watershed management, and embodies shared governance.
11. Success and credibility of watershed management planning requires appropriate and sustained funding. The project will define funding responsibility and an order of magnitude of the funding requirement.
12. The scope defined for these projects is meant to be enabling, not constraining. As the Project Team proceeds, it may encounter issues of scope that were not thought of by the Working Group in preparation of this terms of reference.
13. The project will stay connected with other Alberta Water Council projects and other Government of Alberta policy and strategy initiatives. This connection will ensure appropriate linkages are developed between initiatives.

Communication and Consultation

Three stages are recommended to develop the shared governance and watershed management planning documents.

1. Gain Initial Understanding and Ideas - The project team must hold informal discussions with a cross section of potentially affected groups to obtain ideas and an understanding of shared governance and watershed management planning. This would logically focus on the AWC, WPACs and WSGs, as they are structured to include a cross section of groups. Any important groups that may not be included in the WPACs and WSGs should be contacted directly. The purpose of the contact is to gather initial thoughts and ideas and to let these groups know that the project is underway. This is not extensive consultation but rather contact with a sample of representative groups. It is anticipated that 15 to 20 contacts will be made at this early stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.

2. Develop Essential Elements - The project team will develop the essential elements of the shared governance and watershed management planning framework documents. These essential elements will include the main messages that the documents will contain. These essential elements will be tested with the AWC and with interested sector groups, which could include WPACs, WSGs, their component groups, or interested groups not represented on WPACs and WSGs. A list of interested sector groups should be prepared during the initial stage and added to as appropriate. This will involve more groups than the representative sample of groups used in the first stage. It is anticipated that 25 to 35 contacts will be made during this stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.

3. Prepare Draft Documents - The project team will prepare draft documents after receiving comments on the essential elements. The draft documents will be tested with the interested sector groups. Consultation consultants may be involved. It is expected that this consultation will involve several dozens of sector groups. It is anticipated that 60 to 80 contacts will be made during this stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.

Note: The project team will determine a more inclusive method of final consultation. This consultation will likely include WPACs, WSGs, municipalities, industries and environmental groups, to achieve acceptance of the project. General public consultation is not necessary for this project that is designed to outline frameworks for shared governance and watershed management planning. The public should be involved on projects that address environmental issues or develop watershed management plans that use these two frameworks.

Note: It is recommended that direct consultation and communication support be provided to this project. It is assumed that government staff could undertake the first two stages if capacity is available. However, it is recommended that a consultant handle the final stage.

Knowledge Required

To be successful in fulfilling the stated outputs, the following knowledge requirements are needed:

1. A shared understanding and acceptance of what shared governance means and how it should be practiced in the context of the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and Watershed Stewardship Groups.
2. What are the current planning systems and governance models for water, land, and natural resources in Alberta? The project team may also consider reviewing current watershed management planning and governance systems in other jurisdictions that are recognized as successful models of relevance to Alberta.

3. What are the current barriers and opportunities in the development and implementation of watershed management plans? Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils should be surveyed for the opportunities and barriers that currently exist and could be addressed through the Framework for Watershed Management Planning.

SCHEDULE OF KEY ACTIONS / DELIVERABLES

The two key outputs of the Shared Governance Project Team (SGPT) are the shared governance framework and the watershed management planning framework. Following approval of this terms of reference in early 2007 and the formation of the project team, the project team will report on and review the key deliverables with the AWC according to the schedule below. This staged approach will ensure that proper review, feedback and approval are obtained from the AWC prior to commencement of successive stages of the project, and that AWC leadership and engagement is maintained throughout the project.

Deliverable	Proposed Timeline	Responsibility
Finalize TOR	December 2006	SG Working Group
Approve TOR	January 2007	AWC
Form Shared Governance Project Team	February 2007	AWC
Develop Detailed Work Plan, Consultation Plan & Budget	February 2007	SGPT
Initial Consultation (Gain Initial Understanding and Ideas)	March/April 2007	SGPT & Consultation Support
Develop Essential Elements	May 2007	SGPT
Review Themes with AWC	June 2007	SGPT
Review Themes with Sector Groups	June/July 2007	SGPT & Consultation Support
Prepare Draft Documents	July/August 2007	SGPT
Consult on Draft Documents	Sept./Oct. 2007	SGPT & Consultant
Obtain Final Approval of Draft Documents by AWC	November 2007	SGPT
Prepare Final Documents	December 2007	SGPT
Adoption and Implementation of process outlined in documents	2008	SGPT/AWC/All Partners

BUDGET

Estimated costs for the project:

Gather New Information	\$20,000
- Literature review, initial contact of participants	
- AENV + 2-3 members	
Communication and Consultation	\$80,000
Gain Initial Understanding and Ideas (15-20 contacts)	\$20,000
- Workshop in each location (perhaps 6 communities) + lunch + travel	
- 2-3 Project Team members	
- AENV facilitation	
Develop Elements (25-35 contacts)	\$20,000
- Member travel expenses (20 member trips @ \$1000/each)	
Prepare Draft Documents (60-80 contacts)	\$40,000
- Workshop in each location + individual meetings	
- Contracted facilitation	
Document Compilation & Printing	\$20,000
- \$10,000 (each document) X 2 documents	
TOTAL estimate	\$120,000

PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE / MEMBERSHIP

Although the project has two distinct components, it could be managed as one project by one team having two subcommittees that keep in regular communication. This has advantages and disadvantages. The project team will make the final decision about team management structure.

Membership

Members of the project team will represent the broad cross section of interests on the Alberta Water Council. Members are expected to be in contact with their Sector throughout the project to bring forward Sector knowledge.

It is recommended the project team be drawn from the following Sectors (listed by Category):

- Industry (3 Sector representatives) –
 - Forestry, Agriculture, Oil and Gas
- Non-Government Organizations (3 Sector representatives) –
 - Environmental, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, Watershed Stewardship Groups
- Government (4 Sector representatives) –
 - First Nations-Métis Settlements (combined); Rural; Large-Small Urban; Federal
- Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities (2 Sector representatives) –
 - Municipal Affairs, Sustainable Resource Development

It is believed that this project will demand a significant amount of time of its members. Project team members should anticipate a commitment of about one year, comprised of one meeting per month (one day duration, plus ½ day (average) preparation), and work assignment equivalent of up to 10 working days. This totals 28 person-days for the year.

Role of Chairperson (or co-chairs, if team desires)

The project team's chairperson should be an Alberta Water Council member and will ensure reporting back to the Alberta Water Council as required. Project team members will select the team's chairperson or two co-chairs, as appropriate. Roles include:

- Chair meetings
- Include member agenda items
- Ensure the AWC's expectations of the team is clear
- Ensure the team has adequate support and necessary information to efficiently and effectively carry out its Terms of Reference
- Inform the team of other programs and initiatives to avoid duplicating work being addressed elsewhere
- Serve as liaison to the AWC and Government of Alberta

Role of Project 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 their Sectors and others within their Category, to ensure issues are identified for discussion by the Team, and to ensure decisions made by the Team are relayed back to Sectors.

Members missing more than three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause will be asked to be replaced through consultation with the respective agency/Sector they represent.

Role of Secretariat

Under the guidance of the Chair, the Secretariat will prepare agendas, coordinate meetings, record discussions and develop progress and final reports that reflect the team's direction.

In co-operation with the Secretariat, a secretary will record meeting discussions and prepare a summary of meeting outcomes to the team, including action items. Minutes will be prepared in a succinct and unbiased manner.

SIGNIFICANT PARAMETERS OR CONSTRAINTS

The following could be barriers to successful project completion.

- The project team must build awareness and understanding of shared governance with project shareholders, to have meaningful and effective collaboration with them.
- The degree of collaboration with shareholders will influence their commitment to and ownership of the process, and of project outcomes.
- The development and implementation of a collaboratively-produced shared governance framework and a framework for watershed management planning is significant to the success of the *Water for Life* strategy.
- While timelines are ambitious, there is urgency to completing the project; lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities represents a risk to watershed planning.