

Alberta Water Council - Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team Terms of Reference

Prepared by Policy Identification Working Group

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

The Alberta Water Council has identified four challenges to the advancement of water management in Alberta. One of the challenges is aligning policy, legislation and resources in order to implement the *Water for Life Strategy*. The Alberta Water Council has committed to ensuring that comprehensive and integrated policies are in place to support effective management of water in Alberta.

The Alberta Water Council supports a systems approach to managing water in Alberta and has adopted an Alberta Water Management System Model (attached Figure 1). Policy alignment has been identified as a critical component of this system model.

The Water Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team will:

- Identify the existing water management system in Alberta
- Define a process for identifying policy and legislative issues in water management systems in Alberta
- Define criteria and a process for prioritizing identified policy and legislative issues in the water management system
- Identify policy and legislation issues in water management system
- Prioritize policy and legislation issues in water management system
- Recommend approaches (e.g., policy or legislative amendments, guidelines, codes of practice or procedures) to address priority policy and legislative issues

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The Alberta Water Council has committed to ensuring that comprehensive and integrated policies are in place at the provincial and municipal levels of government to support effective water management systems in Alberta. The Project Team is an advisory body created to provide certain deliverables to the Alberta Water Council, and operates under the Guiding principles of the Alberta Water Council and the Council's "Guidelines for Participating in Council Work", attached to these terms of reference as Schedule "A".

Team members will make every effort to achieve consensus on their recommendations. 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.

KEY ACTIONS:

The team will:

Phase 1 (completed by Sep 2006)

1. Develop an inventory of existing policies and legislation that affects water management, and develop an inventory of policy and legislation issues from a variety of sources (e.g. Bow River Basin Council Guide book to water management).
2. Develop a process for identifying policy and legislation issues (gaps, overlaps, inconsistencies, and opportunities) related to water management systems. Process to include outreach and engagement of knowledgeable experts and stakeholders.
3. Undertake an initial assessment of issues related to policies and legislation for water management systems (including assessing the possibilities of conflicting jurisdictional policies and legislation).
4. Develop criteria for assessing priority items.
5. Implement an outreach process to experts and issue a report on their feedback to the AWC. The process will be related to the initial assessment and the criteria to be used for assessing the priority items.
6. Prepare and present a report to the AWC of:
 - the initial assessment of policy and legislation issues based on outreach and Project Team discussions,
 - criteria and process for assessing priority items, including an example of where the criteria was applied.

Phase 2 (completed by Spring 2007)

7. Apply criteria against policy and legislation issues to develop priorities.
8. Prepare a report outlining priorities, recommendations and plan to address priority issues for AWC.
9. Present report to AWC for approval.

Water management means: “all water in Alberta, including all watersheds, and all surface and groundwater, and all policies and legislation affecting water in Alberta”.

Policy means: “a written governing principle, position, plan or course of action that directs, guide or influences decision making and the action of the agency and others”. It includes some codes of practice, standards, guidelines, directives, information letters, MOUs, agreements and other instruments.

Legislation means: “acts, regulations, and some codes of practice”.

SCHEDULE OF KEY DELIVERABLES:

Fall 2006: A written report to Alberta Water Council that includes:

- (a) An initial assessment of policy and legislation issues based on outreach and Project Team discussions,
- (b) Criteria and process for assessing priority items, including an example of where the criteria were applied.
- (c) Preliminary recommendations for critical policy and legislation amendments, guidelines, codes of practice or procedures to address identified priority policy and legislation issues.

Fall 2006: A power point presentation of the written report to Alberta Water Council

Spring 2007: A written report to Alberta Water Council of recommendations for critical policy and legislation amendments, to address identified priority policy and legislation issues.

Spring 2007: A power point presentation of the written report to Alberta Water Council

BUDGET:

A budget in 2006 of \$50,000 to facilitate the development of an initial assessment of policy and legislation issues to create a baseline, develop a process and criteria, recommend priorities and a path forward to address priority issues including support for outreach and engagement of stakeholders.

Secretariat Support

Administrative support will be supplied by the Alberta Water Council (e.g. equipment, materials, rooms, funds available to the committee). Background and policy documents will be provided.

TEAM STRUCTURE / MEMBERSHIP:

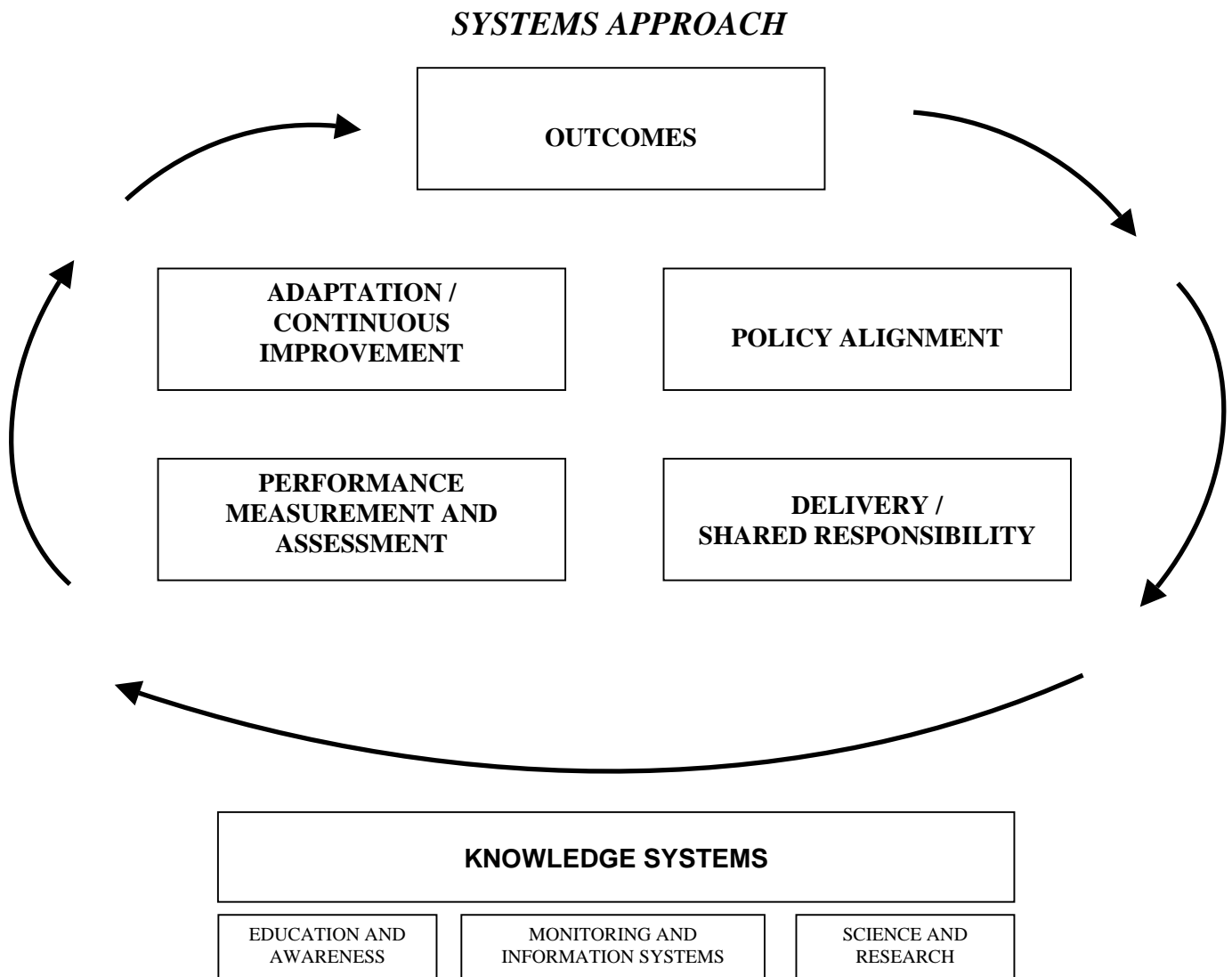
Members of the project team will represent the interests of their broad category. Members will be expected to caucus with their stakeholders to bring forward sector knowledge on these issues. It is recommended that the following groups be represented on the team:

- Industry representative (2 members)
Name: Contact Information-role/responsibilities
- NGO representative (2-4 members) (conservation groups, watersheds, etc.)
Name: Contact Information-role/responsibilities
- Government representative (2 members)
Name: Contact Information-role/responsibilities
- Government (non-provincial (e.g. Federal, Municipal, aboriginal communities, etc. who make decisions affecting water shed management) (2-4 members)
Name: Contact Information-role/responsibilities
- Possibly others: The committee should be made up of a team, which brings a complete set of skills and understanding to the table.

There is an expectation that this project team will be required to meet several times to complete the tasks that have been identified.

The team's chair will be from the Alberta Water Council. The committee members will select the team's co-chair. The team's chair will ensure reporting back to the Alberta Water Council.

Figure 1. Alberta Water Management System Model



Appendix A - Alberta Water Council – Guidelines for Participating in Council Work

The Alberta Water Council uses consensus as the basis for its decisions and for those of its project teams, working groups and sub-committees. Successful consensus decision-making is a powerful tool that almost always leads to more innovative solutions, but it requires a high level of trust and collaboration on the part of all participants. The Water Council's guidelines, listed below, describe the behaviour expected of all participants in Council meetings. All individuals participating in the business of Council are expected to support and promote these guidelines by leadership and example, and to hold each other accountable for similar behaviour:

- Listen generously
- Speak straight
- Be “for” each other
- Honour commitments
- Acknowledge & appreciate others and their views
- Ensure those who need to be included are at the table
- Ensure alignment with the task, and that the views of stakeholders and sectors are reflected

Occasionally, issues may arise due to a participant's lack of understanding or familiarity with consensus processes. In these situations, the Chair(s) and secretariat will remind the group and, if appropriate, the individual about the importance of adhering to the ground rules and the ongoing need for trust and collaboration.

Outside of meetings, participants are expected to respect confidentiality and not attribute specific comments to other members in any discussions they may have, although the respective positions on issues may be discussed.

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