

# ***Water for Life Partnerships – Moving from Words to Actions*** ***Project Team Terms of Reference***

Approved by the Alberta Water Council on June 24, 2010

## **CONTEXT:**

- Three types of partnerships were identified as part of the province's *Water for Life* strategy: Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs), Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs), and the Alberta Water Council (AWC). One of the renewed *Water for Life* strategy's key directions is that "*Water for Life* partners<sup>1</sup> are empowered, informed and fully engaged in watershed stewardship." There is a shared responsibility to ensure these partners work together effectively to advance the achievement of the *Water for Life* strategy's goals.
- One of the key functions of the Alberta Water Council is to provide a forum for sectors and *Water for Life* partners to come together and identify, discuss and find innovative solutions to water management issues. One of the areas of *Water for Life* that has proven challenging is the establishment of effective communication processes between and among *Water for Life* partnerships<sup>2</sup> to enable shared priority-setting and the coordination of actions.
- The Council's 2008 report, *Strengthening Partnerships*, elaborated on these challenges and recommended that "the Alberta Water Council work with WPACs and WSGs to produce a strategy for communications among the *Water for Life* partnerships" and "improve [the] information exchange and alignment of outcomes among partnerships."
- At the AWC's 2010 Business Planning workshop, the Council recognized the increasing importance of improving communication, coordination and priority-setting between and among partnerships and recommended a new project team be established to provide a forum to address these issues.
- The *Strengthening Partnerships* report provides the foundation and direction for this project team. The team will follow the principles (page 10) and definitions (page 22) found in that report and use its associated information as the basis for their work.
- The project team will operate in a manner that is consistent with the rules, policies and procedures adopted by the Alberta Water Council, including the use of consensus to make decisions in a multi-sectoral process.

## **STRATEGIC INTENT (GOAL):**

- Good communication processes are the foundation of information sharing, understanding and working together. Communication is fundamental to setting shared priorities and working together effectively. It is important to coordinate activities so work is aligned across and among partnerships and completed efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to improve coordination and communication between and among *Water for Life* partnerships so they can identify and more effectively address shared strategic priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Partner* is defined as "An individual or organization that shares the costs, risks, benefits, power and/or resources necessary to achieve a common objective." (*Strengthening Partnerships*) The term is broad and includes the AWC, WPACs, WSGs as well as the individuals and organizations that participate in their work.

<sup>2</sup> *Partnership* is defined as "A voluntary organization of provincial, watershed, community and/or individual stakeholders who agree to undertake common or complementary activities, enter into agreements, and work together for the orderly efficient and accountable achievement of results. These partnerships can make recommendations to improve watershed management to bodies with legislative authority." (*Strengthening Partnerships*). The term includes the AWC, WPACs and WSGs.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Identify how and when the various *Water for Life* partnerships' responsibilities can be supported or advanced through existing *Water for Life* partners or another type of partnership and recommend how these relationships can work most effectively.
- Understand the communication and coordination barriers among *Water for Life* partners currently impeding the development and implementation of shared strategic priorities.
- Recommend any processes, procedures, or tools that should be improved, maintained or established to help *Water for Life* partners identify, communicate and advance shared strategic priorities and generate consistency where agreed appropriate.
- Recommend actions to improve awareness and communication processes between *Water for Life* partners.
- Enable the transfer of knowledge and capacity between and among *Water for Life* partners.
- Ensure that all three *Water for Life* partnerships cooperate effectively to produce coordinated plans for their future work and programs.

## KEY TASKS:

1. Build a work plan and operate according to its tasks and timelines.
2. Identify key areas where the various *Water for Life* partnerships' core functions can be supported or influenced by other *Water for Life* partners (*i.e.* identify the areas of work where each partnership intersects and/or overlaps with others).
3. Collect input from broad cross-section of partners to inform the work of the project team via a workshop of *Water for Life* partnership representatives, an online survey, and the previous good works of *Water for Life* partners<sup>3</sup>. The project team should consider the capacity of partnership representatives in developing their survey and workshop timelines.
4. Recommend actions that *Water for Life* partnerships might use to identify and collaborate on key strategic priorities.
5. Recommend solutions to overcome communication and coordination barriers among *Water for Life* partners currently impeding the development and implementation of shared strategic priorities.
6. Provide regular status reports and updates to the Alberta Water Council and others.

## TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES:

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|--|---------------------|
| • Council review of survey & workshop process                  | <u>October 2010</u> |
| • Conduct <i>Water for Life</i> partnerships workshop & survey | <u>January 2010</u> |
| • Workshop and survey summary & directional update to Council  | <u>March 2011</u>   |
| • Final report and recommendations to Council                  | <u>June 2011</u>    |

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<sup>3</sup> The Working Group has provided an initial list of documents for the Project Team to consider, which is found in their minutes from May 27<sup>th</sup> 2010. These minutes will be provided to the Project Team.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

- AWC – board member
- AWC – staff member
- WPAC – board member (2)
- WPAC – staff member (2)
- WSG – board member
- WSG – staff member or coordinator
- Alberta Stewardship Network<sup>4</sup>
- Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities Broad Category<sup>4</sup>
- Alberta Environment<sup>4</sup>
- NGO Broad Category<sup>4</sup>
- Lake Management Sector<sup>4</sup>
- Government Broad Category<sup>4</sup>
- Rural Municipalities<sup>4</sup>
- Industry Broad Category<sup>4</sup> (2)

**BUDGET:**

The working group estimates a total budget of \$ 66,000 to complete the project, broken down as follows:

Core Funding Costs (covered by Alberta Water Council):

Stakeholder support	\$ 45,000
Hosting	\$ 6,000
Communications support	\$ 5,000

Project Funding Costs (covered by stakeholders):

Survey costs – done internally using “Zoomerang”	\$ 0
Workshop costs	\$ 15,000

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<sup>4</sup> All members of the project team should be current or former participants on a WPAC, WSG, or the AWC and have significant *Water for Life* partnership experience.