

TO: Science and Information Sub-committee (SIS)
From: SIS co-chairs Allan and Rose
RE: Next steps on Charge Questions 01212016 (longevity/duration project evaluation)
CC: Cam Davis, Dave Ullrich, Patty Birkholz, Taylor Fiscus, Rita Cestarc
DATE: April 25, 2016

Dear SIS committee members:

The purpose of this memo is to seek your help in defining and starting on next steps to address the charge questions concerning how project duration and longevity of project effects might be evaluated in project selection (See Action Item at the end of the memo, respond by May 6). . The attached memo (which you've already received) is a first draft of what we believe were the main ideas put forward during and following that meeting. At our March 9, 2016 meeting, we discussed several steps forward, including: (1) forming two or more sub-groups to each examine a specific project from the perspective of the charge questions; (2) forming a sub-group to work through the table pp 4-5 of Action Plan II (attached) and to consider, for each objective and measure of progress, how to add an output vs. outcome perspective and a time duration; (3) the construction of a scoring rubric to evaluate project effect longevity/duration within the project selection process. As we suggested in a previous email, addressing the scoring rubric may be easier after completing tasks 1 and 2.

Breaking this into a series of steps (and assuming agreement with the above approach), we need to sort our members into three sub-groups. Two will develop case studies and the other will work on extending the Action Plan II table. We attach a report from another GLAB sub-committee that evaluated three GLRI projects in the context of defining project success. We believe these will help inform the SIS work, but suspect these particular projects are not best choices from the longevity/duration perspective. Instead, we suggest we work with Cam and EPA staff to identify one project (or possibly a family of several similar projects) that addresses reduction in nutrient loads from agricultural watersheds, and another project or set of projects that aims to remediate, restore and delist areas of concern. While the details still need to be worked out, this plan should help SIS members decide if they are more interested in a nutrient reduction case study or an AOC delisting¹ case study. We selected these topics because they seem likely to be ones where restoration may require extended effort beyond an individual project timeline or possibly an action plan timeline. However, we are open to other ideas regarding case study topics.

Those of you interested in evaluating the logic chain of the Action Plan II table (Focus area > Objectives > Commitments > Measures of progress) have the task of adding two, possibly more, columns to the table. We believe this sub-group will evolve the approach as they begin work. However, beginning steps might look like this: (a) evaluate each measure of progress as output or outcome (yes/no or 1 to 5), and include a few sentences of explanation. This may become rather philosophical; e.g., delisting an AOC might not be considered an outcome by some, but given the objective, what else would you want to see demonstrated? (b) If the measure of progress is clearly an output, suggest what would be the desirable outcome. Again, a few sentences may be helpful explaining the choice, which should be measurable. (c) evaluate the timeline for the output or outcome. This might include commenting on whether the

¹ Cam notes: There's an argument to be made that an AOC evaluation may not be useful. The agencies have obligations under the GLWQA that require the government to remove Beneficial Use Impairments and delist AOCs. There is also a finite number of AOCs (once they're all done being cleaned up, they're all done). So evaluating the longevity of AOC cleanups might be interesting, but won't necessarily be as useful as evaluating other activities.

measure of progress is meaningful in terms of actual ecological benefits and thus whether the timeline of reporting is relevant to the duration/longevity question. Most importantly, provide your assessment of whether the objective is likely to be achievable within a five-year cycle.

ACTION ITEM: We ask you to respond (please copy all) to this memo with any comments or suggestions you have to refine the tasks. We also ask you to let us know a first and second choice amongst the three subgroups (nutrient case study, AOC case study, measures of progress tabulation). Once we have this sorted out, we will charge each sub-group with its task. Please keep in mind our near-term schedule (May 11 conference call, July 20-21 joint meeting with GLAB – we will want to discuss the above steps on our May 11 call, and then begin work so that we can report out in the July 20-21 meeting.

Thank you.

Dave Allan and Joan Rose

SIS co-chairs

Attachments: Duration/longevity draft response
Action Plan II table pp 4-5
GLAB GLRI Project Evaluations report