



Assessing Effectiveness

2004 Fifth Round State Salmon Recovery Funding Process

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Overview

To help improve the quality of its service, the Office of the Interagency Committee (OIAC) has completed an assessment of the 2004 Fifth Round Salmon Recovery Grant Process. At the conclusion of this process, staff asked lead entity participants to assess success by completing a one page form (Attachment 1) covering the period from initial contact through the December 3, 2004 funding decisions.

Salmon Recovery Scorecard indicator K3 calls for an assessment of grant programs supporting salmon recovery. As part of the assessment, in 2000, state natural resource agencies developed a questionnaire to measure the:

“percentage of grant applicants who strongly agree that the funding process is helpful, fair, simple, effective, and informative.”

The questionnaire was slightly updated in 2004 and emailed to lead entities for response. Lead entities are voluntary organizations under contract with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to assist in developing strategies and prioritization projects for funding. The lead entity citizen committee is responsible for submitting the final prioritized project list to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for funding consideration.

Although the questionnaire targeted the 26 lead entity representatives and the additional members of the Lead Entity Advisory Group, there is evidence that perhaps half of the forms were completed and returned by program applicants and others. In one sense, the lead entities serve as liaisons between the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB – the funding entity) and program applicants and as such are the SRFB’s most direct “customers”. This is why the lead entities were the original survey targets. The subsequent return of the questionnaire by several applicants, however, does not present insurmountable problems in analyzing survey results. Most responses, regardless of source, are fairly uniform, as will be seen in the remainder of this report.

To date, we have received 22 responses (the response deadline was December 31, 2004). Since it appears control was not maintained in the number of forms distributed (some lead entities probably forwarded the questionnaire to applicants), we will probably not be able to determine the exact overall response rate. In the following analysis, we have used our best judgment in dividing the responses into two groups: A - lead entities and the Lead Entity Advisory Group and B – applicants and other respondents.

Question 1 uses a checkbox format while the remaining questions request narrative responses. Figures 1 and 2 shows how persons rated the process in question 1.

Results Summary ~ Lead Entity Personnel

In our best judgment, 13 of the 22 returned questionnaires were from lead entity personnel. Of the 90 boxes checked by these people in question 1, (13 questionnaires [x] 7 questions [-] blank ^[1]), 45.6% (41÷90) are in the “strongly agree” and “agree” categories. In comparison with similar surveys conducted by this Office for other programs in recent years, this is a rather low rating for the funding process.

Figure 1. Q1. Rate the process from initial contact through the 12/3/04 funding decision by checking the boxes.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>a. State program staff were helpful.</i>	8	5	0	0	0	0
<i>b. State program printed materials were helpful.</i>	3	5	3	1	0	1
<i>c. The process was fair - honest.</i>	1	7	1	2	1	0
<i>d. The process was easy to understand.</i>	0	3	1	4	5	0
<i>e. The process was easy to complete.</i>	0	3	2	3	3	2
<i>f. The process was effective -- suitable for the intended result.</i>	0	5	2	4	0	2
<i>g. The process was informative – instructive about state priorities.</i>	0	1	5	3	1	3
TOTALS (90)	12	29	14	17	10	8

In the narrative portion of the questionnaire, lead entity personnel provided a tremendous amount of feedback, many writing several paragraphs in response to the one-page questionnaire. From this, the most frequent comments are summarized in the following bullets.

Respondents explain why they dislike the process:

- Process did not adhere to state priorities, or the priorities and decision process were not made clear (7 of 13 said this).
- Process was complex/cumbersome, tedious, too long (6 of 13 said this).
- Project input-management software, PRISM (Project Information System) can be slow, frustrating, doesn't always work (3 of 13 said this).

Respondents explain what they like most about the process:

- The people: SRFB and its staff, lead entities, etc. (7 of 13 said this).

^[1] One box was left unchecked.

Individual selected comments:

- Staff was misinformed.
- The process does not adequately allow for recovery in areas where salmon stocks are not threatened but where other imperatives are at work.
- Need more time for lead entities to address problems.
- The process resulted in a funding allocation that is defensible.
- The tone of the process was more collaborative than in past years.
- The fixit loops seemed to work.
- Adopt NOAA’s TRT questions to avoid repetition, double review.
- Do not link projects within individual WRIAs with regional projects.
- More clearly articulate your position on projects of concern.
- Include areas without listed species.
- Change reference from Anadromous Salmon to Migratory Salmonids.
- Set priorities on a statewide basis analogous to how the lead entities are asked to develop priorities on a watershed level.

Results Summary ~ Applicants and Others

In our best judgment, 9 of the 22 returned questionnaires were from program applicants and non-lead entity personnel. Of the 50 boxes checked by these people in question 1 (Figure 2), (9 questionnaires [x] 7 questions [-] blanks ^[2]), 34% [17÷50] are in the “strongly agree” and “agree” categories. In comparison with similar surveys conducted by this Office for other programs in recent years, this is a rather low rating for the funding process.

Figure 2. Q1. Rate the process from initial contact through the 12/3/04 funding decision by checking the boxes.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>a. State program staff were helpful.</i>	5	3	1	0	0	0
<i>b. State program printed materials were helpful.</i>	3	3	2	0	0	0
<i>c. The process was fair - honest.</i>	1	4	1	1	1	0
<i>d. The process was easy to understand.</i>	1	1	2	5	0	0
<i>e. The process was easy to complete.</i>	1		2	2	2	2
<i>f. The process was effective -- suitable for the intended result.</i>	1	2	3	3	0	0
<i>g. The process was informative – instructive about state priorities.</i>	1	2	3	1	2	0
Total (50)	13	4	14	12	5	2

^[2] Some respondents left boxes unchecked.

As in the previous section, applicants and other non-lead entity participants provided a tremendous amount of narrative feedback in response to the one-page questionnaire. From this, the most frequent comments are summarized in the following bullets.

Respondents explain why they dislike the process:

- Process was very convoluted, lengthy, cumbersome (4 of 9 said this).
- Have no clue what state priorities are, difficult to keep up with changing priorities, (3 of 9 said this).
- PRISM (Project Information System) can be slow, frustrating, doesn't always work (2 of 9 said this).

Respondents explain what they like most about the process:

- All parties involved were helpful and reasonable, lead entity coordinator is doing an excellent job, want to complement SRFB grants staff (4 of 9 said this).

Individual selected comments:

- Staff was misinformed.
- The process tended to promote sensible salmon recovery.
- It seems to work.
- Remove the subjectivity and the "behind closed-doors" lobbying.
- I would be disappointed if in future years you continued to rank lead entities for awards based on the quality of their strategies.
- A perceived bias against women project sponsors was clearly perceived.

~Confidential~
Results will help guide improvement at the program level ~ will not be linked to any one proposal.

Attachment 1



Lead Entities ~ Rate the Process

How Are We Doing?

Your ideas are important to our goal of improving our service. We read every questionnaire and compile the results into a report shared widely ~ your feedback can make a difference, so use this form to share your view of the state salmon recovery funding process, from the date you first spoke with us about submitting a grant application, through the funding decision on December 3, 2004.

≈**Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Program**≈

≈**December 2004**≈

1. Rate the process from initial contact through the 12/3/04 funding decision by checking the appropriate boxes.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>a. State program staff were helpful.</i>						
<i>b. State program printed materials were helpful.</i>						
<i>c. The process was fair - honest.</i>						
<i>d. The process was easy to understand.</i>						
<i>e. The process was easy to complete.</i>						
<i>f. The process was effective -- suitable for the intended result.</i>						
<i>g. The process was informative -- instructive about state priorities.</i>						

2. If you disagree ("strongly", "moderately", etc.) with any of the statements in 1, above, please explain.

3. What did you like most about this process?

4. How should we improve the process?

Check if you would like a summary of survey results (add email or postal address or send request to GregL@iac.wa.gov).



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