



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
for
The South Okanagan Conservation Fund Program Administrator

April 2022

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

THE SOUTH OKANAGAN CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
APRIL 20, 2022

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REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
The South Okanagan Conservation Fund – Program Administrator

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) is seeking expressions of interest from qualified Respondents to be responsible for aspects of program administration of the established South Okanagan Conservation Fund (SOCF). This administration includes updating Fund design documents, preparing and advertising the annual request for proposals, responding to enquiries, vetting Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) applicants, coordinating the administrative and technical review of proposals, providing recommendations and Fund program summary to the Board, communications with project proponents, project evaluation and overall program evaluation, and promoting of the SOCF to engage potential applicants. The Program Administrator may organize an annual field trip for the RDOS Board of Directors.

The RDOS will be the approving authority for all documents relating to the Fund. The RDOS appoints a Technical Advisory Committee to provide expertise in the review and selection of recommended projects and/or recipients of funds. The Program Administrator will organize the TAC and present all recommendations coming from the Committee to the RDOS Board for funding decisions.

1.2. BACKGROUND

The South Okanagan Similkameen is a biologically unique area of Canada. The RDOS has the second highest number of species at risk of any other Regional District in BC as well as the highest proportion of sensitive ecosystems.

Natural lands in both rural and urban areas filter water, supply open spaces for wildlife and people, and provide quality of life to communities. Unfortunately, these systems are under stress.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide local financial support for projects that will contribute to the conservation of our valuable natural areas, taking steps towards restoring and preserving a healthy environment. The intent is to provide funding for conservation projects that are not the existing responsibility of the federal, provincial or local governments.

The Fund is guided by a detailed Terms of Reference (Appendix C) which outlines the Fund purpose, themes and goals, governance, design, proponent and project eligibility, Conflict of Interest and other important details. More information can be found at www.soconservationfund.ca

2. INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

2.1. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES

Responses may be submitted by email and/or hardcopy until the Closing Time specified and addressed to the following:

**Christy Malden
Manager of Legislative Services
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
101 Martin Street
Penticton, B.C. V2A 5J9**

AND/OR

Christy Malden – cmalden@rdos.bc.ca

Responses must be received on or before the **Closing Time** of:

TIME: 4:30 PM local time

DATE: Tuesday, May 3, 2022

Responses will not be opened publicly. The Respondent bears all risk associated with delivering its Response by electronic submission, including but not limited to delays in transmission between the Respondent's computer and the Regional District's email system.

Respondents wishing to make changes to their Responses after submission but prior to the Closing Time may do so by submitting the revisions by email or hard copy to the address above.

It also is the Respondent's sole responsibility to ensure their revisions were received, at the email or address set out above, prior to the Closing Time.

Responses received after the Closing Time will not be considered or evaluated.

2.2. ENQUIRIES

All enquiries related to this RFQ-EOI are to be directed, in writing, to Christy Malden, Manager of Legislative Services. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon. Enquiries and responses will be recorded and may be distributed through an addendum at the Regional District's option.

Any questions regarding this RFQ-EOI must be submitted at least five (5) working days prior to the Closing Date. Any questions submitted after this date may not be answered.

3. GENERAL RESPONSE CONTENT

3.1. RESPONDENT INFORMATION

- **REFERENCES:** The Response shall provide no less than two (2) references that are relevant to the proposed Work. The references should be from a third party who can provide information about the performance of the Respondent in delivering the works or services for the experience cited.
- **EXPERIENCE:** The Response should include details on only the most recent three (3) or four (4) projects of related work for the Program Administrator. It is the Respondent's responsibility to demonstrate that they possess the required knowledge, understanding and capacity to carry out the Work as outlined in this RFQ-EOI within the project schedule and budget.

4. PROJECT WORK

While the Regional District has used considerable effort to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFQ-EOI, the information contained herein is given solely as a guideline for Respondents. The information is not guaranteed to be accurate, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive.

The intent of the project is – Program Administration for the South Okanagan Conservation Fund and management of all aspects of the Fund other than the direct financial management. This contracted position reports to the Manager of Legislative Services.

4.1. SCOPE OF PROJECT WORK

Administrative tasks to complete annually January 1 to December 31

January – March

- Receive decision from RDOS Board regarding projects recommended for funding from previous autumn intake.
- Assist RDOS and liaise with successful proponents to communicate RDOS/TAC comments/concerns or conditions, and adjustments required to workplans and budgets in preparation for Contribution Agreements.
- Assist RDOS with contacting successful proponents, developing letters, confirming eligibility and finalizing Contribution Agreements.
- Update final report forms annually including for final single and multi-year project reporting due mid-February.
- Review and approve final reports – provide review with TAC if needed, prepare recommendations to RDOS about any issues and release of final payment.

March – August

- Organize (when appropriate) RDOS tour of select projects, project field visits.
- Design and support RDOS to circulate advertisements for new Technical Advisory Committee members.

- Work with RDOS senior management/staff to evaluate TAC applicant criteria, contact successful Technical Advisory Committee members, and provide background documentation and orientation to new members.
- Update interim report forms for current year.

September – December

- Receive and review interim reports due September – provide review with TAC if needed; prepare recommendations to RDOS about any issues.
- Update fund application and guidance forms to post on www.soconservationfund.ca site.
- Update advertisements for Fund Call for Proposals (applications). Develop and work with RDOS to place communications and advertisements/call for proposals.
- Answer enquiries and communicate with proponents (pre-application).
- Update/amend evaluation criteria/score sheet for Technical Advisory Committee.
- Lead and support the Technical Advisory Committee project application review process.
- Receive funding proposals and package for Senior Management Team (RDOS) and TAC review.
- Prepare and support first round vetting of proposals (RDOS Administrative Review).
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting preparation and package development.
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting facilitation and documentation.
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting follow up and packaging of recommendations for Board.
- Work with RDOS staff to develop and deliver report with recommendations to RDOS Board for decision-making.

Ongoing

- Update/ amend Terms of Reference for the Fund with RDOS Manager of Legislative Services.
- Establish annual budget and confirm administration agreement annually, maintain website and communications updates.
- Work with IT support consultant to update and manage website with news, announcements, forms, project information and other at www.soconservationfund.ca
- Work with RDOS to develop and disseminate communications, earned and paid media to profile the Fund, successfully funded projects, proponents, and benefits to environment.

4.2. COMMUNICATIONS

Project communications will be a key component in the success of the complete project and will carry through all project phases. At minimum, the Regional District expects the following:

- Meet with the Regional District Manager of Legislative Services and other staff as required in a timely manner to review project objectives and to gather information at project milestones.
- Propose enhanced communication methods to increase awareness of project.
- Promote program and successes.
- Work with webpage developer to maximize website traffic.

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Before the conclusion of the project all documents, including but not limited to memos, reports, photographs, video, shop drawings, manuals, spreadsheets, project management information and tracking, assessments and other documents created for the purpose of this project, will be provided on a memory stick to the Regional District. Some specific reporting requirements are detailed in the following sections.

5.1. DOCUMENTS

The Program Administrator is responsible to provide to RDOS all of the supporting documentation as part of the program including final and interim reports, proponent applications, TAC evaluation scores, Board reports/funding recommendations and a tracking spreadsheet of annual project/proponent/funding and deliverables.

Biweekly written status updates to the Regional District project manager will be required throughout the entire project through email or memo. At critical points in the project, the updates may be required weekly.

The Regional District will require fully editable electronic copies of the draft and final packages in formats that are compatible with the software available at the Regional District (i.e. Microsoft Word and Excel, PDF files). The files will not be password protected.

All finalized reports must be submitted in two hard copies as well as provided electronically. Draft reports can be reviewed electronically and do not require hard copies.

5.2. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Program Administrator is required to track all fossil fuel consumption for each calendar year throughout the entire project. The Program Administrator shall provide a fossil fuel report to the Regional District by February 1 of each year detailing the previous year's usage. The consumption shall be tracked by vehicle type and type of fuel used and should include all subcontractor usages. Upon request, the Regional District will supply a sample template for reporting fuel use.

The Response shall describe how the Program Administrator will meet this requirement.

Electronic copies shall be provided in PDF format and/or MS Word and Excel.

APPENDIX “A”

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST EVALUATION FORM

Respondent's Name: _____			
Project Title: [PROJECT NAME]			
Evaluation Date: _____			
Evaluator: _____			
Step 1:		YES	NO
Mandatories	Response received prior to closing		
	Subconsultant list submitted		
	Project Manager identified		
	Proposed schedule included		
	Reference List		
	Complete response as requested		
Step 2:		Assigned Points	Points
Respondent (15-30 points)	Qualifications of the applicant / applicant team members	15	
	Experience of the project team members	25	
	Past Performance / References	10	
Response (30-50 points)	Communication / Promotion	25	
	Added value / Innovative	25	
Total Score	Respondent + Response + Price Scores	100	

1. Requests for Qualifications & Expressions of Interest (RFQ-EOI's) shall be reviewed by an Evaluation Team, which shall consist of at least two staff members.
2. Each Evaluation Team member shall complete the RFQ-EOI Evaluation Form for each Response.
3. Evaluation Team Members will use the following list of questions to complete the RFQ-EOI Evaluation Form:

Respondent Evaluation

(i) Qualifications:

Is the applicant specialized and qualified in the nature of the project work?

(ii) Experience:

Has completed similar projects during the last three years? Do the assigned project team members have experience with similar projects?

(iii) Past Performance:

Is the record of past performance sound? Do reference checks reveal weaknesses? Was abnormal level of monitoring required? Does the firm consistently complete assignments on time and within budget?

(iv) Communication:

Added value innovative.

Response Evaluation

(i) Scope

Do the objectives, scope, work plan, and prediction of results comply with the terms of reference and project objectives?

SAMPLE CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT TERMS

1 DEFINITIONS

“Funds” means the money paid by the RDOS to the Program Administrator for Program delivery and administration costs in accordance with this agreement.

“Program” means the delivery and administration of the South Okanagan Conservation Fund, as described in the Terms of Reference, attached hereto as Schedule A and forming part of this agreement.

“Terms of Reference” means the South Okanagan Conservation Fund Terms of Reference approved by the RDOS on June 1, 2017 and which may be amended from time to time without affecting the remainder of this agreement.

2 TERM

2.1 This agreement shall commence on _____.

3 PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ADMINISTRATION

3.1 The Program Administrator will deliver and administer the Program as described in this agreement, and in accordance with the Terms of Reference. Under this formal written agreement, the Program Administrator will be responsible for all aspects of Fund management, other than the direct financial management. This management includes drafting the Fund design documents, preparing and advertising the call for proposals, responding to enquiries, vetting TAC applicants, providing recommendations and Fund program summary to the Board, project evaluation and overall program evaluation

3.2 RDOS will be the approving authority for all documents relating to the Fund. The RDOS may appoint a Technical Advisory Committee to provide expertise in the review and selection of projects or recipients of funds. The program administrator will organize the Technical Advisory Committee and forward all recommendations coming from the Committee to the RDOS.

4 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

4.1 December 31 of each year, the Program Administrator will provide the RDOS an annual budget detailing the costs associated with the administration of the Program for the one-year period from January 1 to December 31 the next following year. In the first year of the agreement, the budget shall be submitted by June 30, XXXX for the partial year to December 31, XXXX.

- 4.2 The Program Administrator agrees to receive these Funds from the RDOS in a manner consistent with the terms of this Agreement and to expend said Funds solely for the purposes of Program.
- 4.3 The Program Administrator will use the Funds to pay all costs for the delivery and administration of the Program on behalf of the RDOS, including but not limited to:
- a) Communications and Advertising costs;
 - b) Technical Advisory Committee expenses;
 - c) Program Administrators Program Management expenses related to the Program.
- 4.4 The Program Administrators will maintain the Funds in a separate coded account and ensure they are only used for the activities associated with the delivery and administration of the Program.
- 4.5 The Program Administrators will maintain accurate financial records and supporting receipts for the Program, and will provide same to the RDOS on demand.
- 4.6 Funds payable to the Program Administrators will be not exceed 7% of the amount requisitioned annually through the service by the RDOS.
- 4.7 The RDOS will pay the Funds to the Program Administrators in one annual payment on January 1st of each year of the Agreement. In the first year of the Agreement, payment will be made immediately following RDOS approval of the submitted 2017 Program budget as per Section 4.1 of this Agreement.
- 4.8 Payment of the Funds is subject to the submission of an annual Program budget as per Section 4.1 of the Agreement and RDOS approval of the annual budget and Funds.

5 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.1 The Program Administrators will keep any information about the RDOS and the Program which is not otherwise available to the public, including property negotiations, confidential unless Required by law to release such information.

6 INDEMNITY

- 6.1 The Program Administrators shall indemnify and save harmless the RDOS from and against all claims, demands, losses, costs, damages, actions, suits or other proceedings arising out of, related to, occasioned by or attributable to the Program under this Agreement, except to the extent the same is caused or contributed to by the negligence of the RDOS in which case the RDOS shall indemnify the Program Administrators in the same like manner and to the same extent as set out above.

7 TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION

- 7.1 The parties agree that either party may terminate this agreement for any reason. The program administrator or the RDOS must give 90 days written notice of its intention to do so.
- 7.2 Upon termination of this Agreement the Program Administrators will immediately return all unspent Funds to the RDOS.

- 7.3 If the Program Administrators fails to observe, perform or comply with any provision of the Agreement then the RDOS may terminate the Agreement and require the Program Administrators to repay all, or a portion, of the Funds received under this Agreement.

8 DIFFERENCES

- 8.1 All matters of difference arising between the RDOS and the Program Administrators in any matter connected with or arising out of this Agreement whether as to interpretation or otherwise, shall be determined by the RDOS but without prejudice to the Program Administrators to any recourse available under law.

9 ASSIGNMENT

- 9.1 This Agreement shall not be assigned by either party without the prior written approval of the other.

10 CHANGES TO AGREEMENT

- 10.1 The RDOS and the Program Administrators may, by reciprocal correspondence, agree to add to, delete, vary or amend any provision of this Agreement. Any changes that are mutually agreed upon by the RDOS and the Program Administrators shall be included in and form part of this Agreement.
- 10.2 The RDOS and the Program Administrators agree that changes may, from time to time, be made to the Terms of Reference by the RDOS attached to and forming part of this agreement and that such changes will not require a formal written amendment to this Agreement.

11 INTERPRETATION

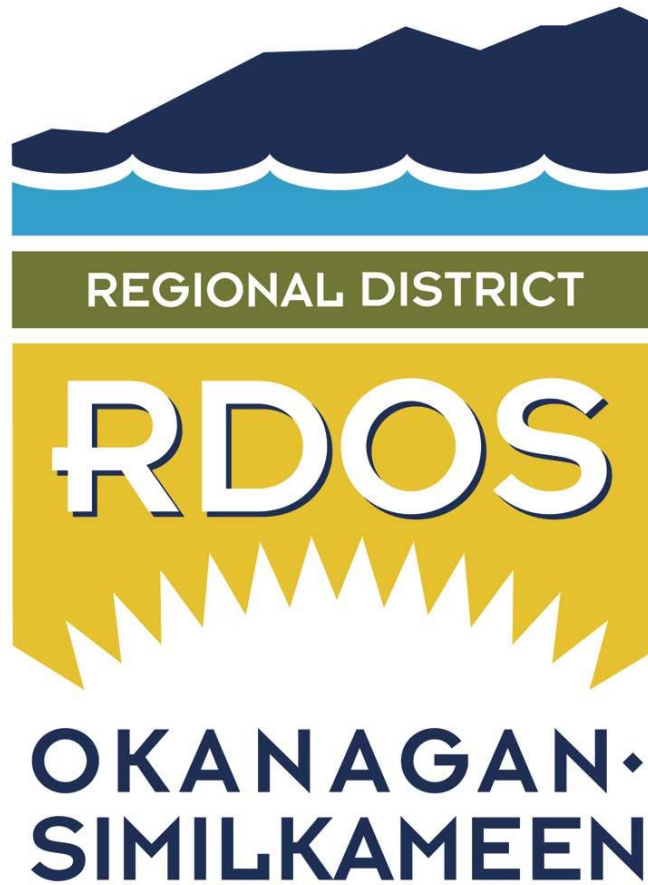
- 11.1 Headings are inserted in this Agreement for convenience only and shall not be construed as affecting the meaning of this Agreement.
- 11.2 This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement amongst the parties and there are no terms, conditions, representations, or warranties, expressed or implied, statutory otherwise, except for those expressly set forth herein.
- 11.3 Whenever the singular or masculine is used herein, the same shall be construed as meaning the plural of feminine or body politic or corporate where the context of the parties hereto so require.
- 11.4 This Agreement shall endure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties hereto and their permitted successors and assigns.
- 11.5 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of British Columbia.
- 11.6 If a portion of this Agreement is found invalid by a court, it will be severed and the remainder of the Agreement will remain in effect.

On behalf of **REGIONAL DISTRICT
OF OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN:**

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

Bill Newell, CAO

On behalf of **The Program Administrators:**



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN

SOUTH OKANAGAN CONSERVATION FUND

Leaving a natural legacy for future generations...

APPENDIX "C" TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date

Approved on August 19, 2021

SOUTH OKANAGAN CONSERVATION FUND

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. BACKGROUND

In December 2016, the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (“RDOS”), with public assent, adopted Bylaw #2690 to establish an Environmental Conservation Service for the Electoral Areas “A”, “C”, “D”, “E”, “F”, and “I”, the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, and the Town of Oliver (collectively referred to as “the participating areas”). Under this Bylaw, the annual maximum amount to be requisitioned for the cost of the service was not to exceed the greater of \$450,000 or \$0.0292 per thousand dollars of net taxable value of land and improvements in the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen. These funds are in support of undertaking and administering activities, projects, and works that include, but are not limited to, water, environment, wildlife, land and habitat conservation efforts to protect natural areas within the participating areas of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

For the purposes of this Terms of Reference, the Environmental Conservation Service is also known as the “South Okanagan Conservation Fund” or “the Fund”.

2. FUND PURPOSE

The South Okanagan Similkameen is biologically, a unique area of Canada. The RDOS has the second highest number of species at risk of any other Regional District in BC as well as the highest proportion of sensitive ecosystems.

Natural lands in both rural and urban areas filter our water, supply open spaces for wildlife and people, and provide quality of life to communities. Unfortunately, these systems are under stress. The current generation must take action now to ensure a healthy physical environment for future generations.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide local financial support for projects that will contribute to the conservation of our valuable natural areas; one step towards restoring and preserving a healthy environment. The intent is to provide funding for conservation projects that are not the existing responsibility of the federal, provincial or local governments.

3. FUND ADMINISTRATION

3.1 RDOS Responsibility

The RDOS is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the Fund and retains the responsibility for approval of all matters related thereto, including projects, payments, and financial audits of the Fund.

3.2 Consultant Responsibility

The RDOS may enter into agreement with a third party to be responsible for aspects of administrative management of the Fund for a fee for service.

3.3 Technical Advisory Committee

The RDOS may also appoint a Technical Advisory Committee to provide expertise in the review and selection of projects or recipients of funds, as outlined in Appendix 2.

Some of the top-mentioned public environmental concerns from RDOS citizen and public opinion surveys include; water quality and quantity, air quality, wildfires, preserving lands and parks, the loss of natural areas due to land conversion and development, population growth and development, sprawl, and the loss or extinction of wildlife.

4. CONSERVATION THEMES AND GOALS

4.1 Themes

The themes for the Fund shall address top public environmental issues including: conservation of water quality and quantity stewardship, (aquatic ecosystems, surface and groundwater), protection, enhancement and restoration of sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, wildlife species (including those at risk), and habitat for native fish and wildlife.

These themes are based on market research done in RDOS community surveys between 2010 and 2020, and regional conservation program opinion polling and focus group research in 2004, 2008, and 2016 to identify what residents value in the RDOS region. Themes are also consistent with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy *Keeping Nature in Our Future*.

A directive of the South Okanagan *Regional Growth Strategy*, the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy *Keeping Nature in Our Future* was developed in collaboration between the RDOS and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) partners. Accepted by the RDOS Board in 2013, it provides science-based information and strategies to protect important local biodiversity, including the establishment of a local conservation fund.

4.2 Targets

Projects that can demonstrate a reduction of a known threat to a biodiversity target will be given priority (see Appendix 1 for a list of ineligible projects). Projects on all land tenure types will be considered. The biodiversity targets are:

- Sensitive Ecosystems as defined by Provincial SEI classifications and predominantly occurring in the valley bottom <1200m in elevation*.
 - Riparian, foreshore and water bodies including gullies, creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes, marshes and swamps;
 - Wetlands both permanent and ephemeral including wet meadows, marshes, swamps and shallow open water areas including ponds
 - Grasslands and shrub-steppe
 - Sparsely Vegetated rock outcrops, talus, cliffs and slopes;
 - Broadleaf & coniferous woodlands and old forests;
 - Other important ecosystems such as mature forest and Seasonally Flooded Fields; and,

- *Exception is high elevation alpine areas. These are to be included.
- Watersheds at important source water protection areas.
- Connectivity for natural areas and wildlife corridors.
- Native fish and wildlife habitat including for species at risk.
- Urban and rural wild-land interface areas.

4.3 Classification Scheme

The aim is to “think globally; act locally.” The framework for Technical Review (see Appendix 2) will be based on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classification of direct threats. The value of this classification scheme is to provide nomenclature for practitioners world-wide to describe the common problems they are facing and solutions they are using in a mutually intelligible way. The issues outlined below are those that currently have the highest relevance to the area around RDOS. This is only a partial list and other IUCN threats will be considered in evaluating proposals:

(a) Residential and Commercial Development

Development activity continues to lead to conversion and fragmentation of important habitats and greater demands on water.

(b) Climate Change

Climate change will have a dramatic influence on Okanagan ecosystems over the next 20 years. Higher summer and winter temperatures, declining mountain snowpack, reduced snowfall, long dry summers, and sudden heavy rains are just some of the changes. These changes will have a dramatic impact on fire regimes, geo-hazards and flooding, river flow, water availability, plant distribution, and wildlife populations.

(c) Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species

When natural areas are disturbed there is often an opportunity for invasive species to flourish. Invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic, can disrupt natural ecological processes as there are often no natural agents present to keep these species in check. Invasive species can affect fish and wildlife habitat, range values, food security, and timberland.

(d) Natural System Modifications (Fire maintained ecosystems, Dams and Water Management and Use)

When natural systems are modified such as through fire suppression, or non-ecological fireproofing or hydrological flow regimes altered, the ecological degradation and loss of biological diversity can be widespread.

(e) Transportation and Service Corridors

Wildlife mortality and habitat fragmentation are direct consequences of road corridors. These corridors are concentrated in valley bottoms and traffic volumes are increasing over time thereby increasing the risk.

(f) Human Intrusions and Disturbance (Recreational Activity)

Recreational activity, particularly increasing off-road activity, can lead to a range of impacts including soil compaction, erosion, spread of invasive plants, and disturbance to wildlife.

(g) Agriculture and Aquaculture

Threats from farming and ranching as a result of agricultural expansion and intensification, can lead to loss of important ecosystem and wildlife habitat, soil compaction, spread of invasive plants, human health issues with surface and groundwater.

(h) Biological Resource Use

Harvesting trees and other woody vegetation for timber, fibre, or fuel can have an impact on ecosystems, wildlife habitat, surface and groundwater, including soil compaction, erosion, spread of invasive plants and disturbance to wildlife.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To best support the most effective projects, the guiding principles of the *Conservation Framework for British Columbia* will be followed:

- **Acting sooner** – before species and ecosystems are at risk.
- **Acting smarter** – priority setting is science-based; the results move us from reactive conservation to prevention using appropriate management actions.
- **Acting together** – coordinated and inclusive action.
- **Investing more wisely** – align conservation investments, priorities, and actions among conservation partners and stakeholders.

Guiding Principles of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy- *Keeping Nature in Our Future*

- Protect core habitat areas.
- Connect habitat areas.
- Protect a matrix of lands outside core areas and corridors.
- Maintain diversity of ecosystems, species and genetics.
- Think regionally and share responsibility.
- Practice the precautionary principle.

The following guiding principles will also be used with respect to the Fund:

- Projects that fall into the **existing responsibilities of federal, provincial or local governments will not be eligible** for funding.
- The review process will be as **simple** as possible, particularly for cost effective administration.
- Projects will be ranked on **technical soundness, technical effectiveness, and value for money**. Project evaluation ranking and recommendations will be considered in-camera and reported publicly after Board decision.
- Projects will initially be ranked based on technical merit, regardless of where they occur within the participating area. Subsequently, regional equity may be considered in decision-making.
- Only **highly ranked projects** will be funded. If there are not enough high-quality projects in any given year, funds will be carried forward to future years.
- **Changes to program design** will be considered as more is learned about the needs of the areas, provided always that the goals of the Fund are still met.

6. TIMELINES

6.1 General Projects

- Call for proposals – August -September
- RDOS administrative review– October
- Technical review – October - November

- RDOS final approval –December
- Successful applicants advised and informed – January
- Contribution Agreements between the RDOS and applicants are finalized – February – March
- Interim Report Due – September
- Final Report Due – February

6.2 Land Securement Projects

Land acquisition or covenant proposals may be submitted at any time during the year provided there is sufficient time for the Technical Advisory Committee and RDOS to review the proposals. All securement proposals will be treated as confidential unless other specific arrangements have been approved by all parties.

7. GOVERNANCE

The governance model is based on three guiding principles:

1. This is a tax-based fund; therefore, in the decision-making process, taxpayers will be represented through their elected officials.
2. The Fund was created to provide a conservation service. Technical merit is of utmost importance to determine which projects are supported.
3. It is important to maintain a simple, cost effective decision-making structure.

The governance model may be modified as necessary to accommodate the goals of the Fund. A two-tiered process may be employed, with a Technical Advisory Committee (see Appendix 2) making recommendations to the RDOS.

The RDOS may appoint a Technical Advisory Committee based on nominations or applications received in response to an open call to fill a vacancy. Five to seven committee members may be selected with a maximum term of three years. Some members may be asked to serve for only one- or two-year terms to ensure membership continuity in each year. The RDOS will base any appointment of members to a Technical Advisory Committee on qualification criteria found in Appendix 2. The Technical Advisory Committee shall follow the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines defined in the *Local Government Act*.

8. FUND DESIGN

- (1) A call for project proposals will be issued annually (August - September).
- (2) Funds will be dispersed based on responses to calls for proposals. Any funds not dispersed shall be carried forward, through an established reserve to the next fiscal year or until the Board authorizes the expenditure for a land securement application, which may occur any time throughout the year.
- (3) Projects are eligible to be delivered on any land tenure but must be in the Fund participating areas.
- (4) Multi-year projects are acceptable to a maximum of three years. Multi-year projects will require annual funding approval and will be subject to oversight by the Technical Advisory Committee to ensure they are on track.
- (5) This fund is intended to support projects, not programs. Proponents that have completed the final year of a multi – year project and submit a new application, that

application will be evaluated and considered against additional criteria to determine eligibility at the discretion of the RDOS. This may include, but not be limited to:

- a. The new application meets the definition of a project, not a program (see definitions).
 - b. The new application is substantively different from previous multi-year project (s).
 - c. Whether the application seeks to generate broad organizational or technical benefits to the proponent or includes elements of on-going operational work.
 - d. The history of previous funding provided to the organization, project delivery performance and standing, proposed conservation delivery theme and/or geographic service area.
- (5) Projects must address IUCN threats to biodiversity targets and fall into at least one theme area (see Section 4).
 - (6) Proponents must be an incorporated non-profit society in good standing, or a Qualified Donee as defined by Canada Revenue Agency or must partner with an organization that has registered society status.
 - (7) Project evaluation by the Technical Advisory Committee includes consideration of conservation value for money.
 - (8) Proposals should reflect continuity with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy *Keeping Nature in Our Future*.
 - (9) If invited, proponents must be prepared to make a 10-minute presentation to the Technical Advisory Committee or the RDOS on the outcomes of their projects on an annual basis, in addition to submitting written interim and final reports.
 - (10) Project proponents will receive 70% of the grant upon signing a contribution agreement and 30% upon completion of the approved final report. Land securement proponents will receive 100% of the grant upon signing a contribution agreement.
 - (11) All significant changes to a workplan and more than 10% reallocation of budget must be approved by the RDOS, upon recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Minor workplan adjustments, and changes under 10% may be approved administratively.
 - (12) Fund recognition. Proponents are required to acknowledge in all communications products including publications, public information releases, advertising, promotional announcements, activities, speeches, lectures, interviews, ceremonies and website materials related to the project, including on permanent signage. The RDOS and SOCF logos must appear on all communications and promotional materials.

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APPENDIX 1 INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following types of projects will not be considered for funding:

- (a) Existing federal, provincial or local government responsibilities;
- (b) Capacity building or operating only expenses for organizations;
- (c) Projects with recreational benefits only;
- (d) Community infrastructure services;
- (e) Lobbying or advocacy initiatives;
- (f) Wildlife feeding programs;
- (g) Non-applied research (research not related to a conservation action goal);
- (h) Training costs for contractors;
- (i) Enforcement activities;
- (j) Fish rearing, farming, stocking or hatchery projects;
- (k) *Rehabilitation, captive breeding or control of wildlife species;
- (l) *Mapping only projects;
- (m) *Inventory only projects;
- (n) *Planning only projects;
- (o) Fishing and hunting tour or curriculum guides;
- (p) Information projects on regulations or stocking;
- (q) Production or sponsorship of commercial programs;
- (r) *Creation or management of electronic databases, websites or file systems.

*These activities will be considered if they are part of an eligible project that will lead to 'on-the-ground' implementation or if they provide knowledge which is vital to achieving the overall objectives of the Fund.

*RDOS and member municipalities will not release personal information or contravene the *Personal Information Protection Act*. Proponents are encouraged to access the BC Assessment and Land Title and Survey Authority system for ownership information and any costs associated should be built into the project budget.

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APPENDIX 2

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) is to ensure that:

- (a) All proposals to the Fund receive a sound technical review based on a fair assessment of merit and project effectiveness.
- (b) There is a high level of accountability in the review process.
- (c) Recommended lists of technically appropriate proposals are provided to the RDOS.

2. COMPOSITION

The Committee will be comprised of five to seven members with relevant education and expertise in each theme area of hydrology, ecology, conservation biology, ecosystems (sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, management, enhancement and restoration), restoration and enhancement of habitat, fish and wildlife conservation including species at risk. To ensure consistency and continuity, some members may be asked to serve on the Committee in consecutive years. Quorum for the Technical Advisory Committee shall be 3.

3. PROPOSAL RANKING GUIDELINES

- (a) Each proposal will be independently reviewed by each Committee member and be rated on what is submitted by the proponent.
- (b) The Committee will only review proposals on their technical merit, feasibility, and effectiveness.
- (c) Experts in fields related to the activities within proposals may be consulted as necessary.
- (d) Each proposal will be discussed collectively, and Committee members will have an opportunity to change their scores based on input from other members.
- (e) Scores from each Committee member will be used to determine the final evaluation score for the proposal. The proposals will be ranked from highest to lowest score.
- (f) New funding proposals will be rated on whether they meet the Fund criteria and if the project should be considered for funding. For continuing projects, ratings will be based on whether the project should be continued and whether it continues to meet the criteria.
- (g) The Committee chair will sign the ranked list, and the Committee’s comments will then be forwarded to the RDOS in a summary report.
- (h) The consultant retained by the RDOS to oversee the administrative management will participate in the technical review process but will not rank proposals or influence the TAC; will provide additional file information as requested by the Committee members before and at review meetings; and will be available to answer questions from the RDOS on behalf of the Committee.

4. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.1 New Projects

(a) Feasibility (i.e., is the project doable – Yes or No)

- Is the overall proposal well written?
- Are the objectives clearly defined?
- Are the techniques and methods proposed the most appropriate ones to address the threat?
- Does the proponent clearly understand the challenges they may face in completing the project?
- Has the proponent demonstrated that the project will be able to overcome these challenges?
- Are the proposed timelines reasonable?
- Do the proponents have the capacity to deliver the project?
- If applicable, are plans in place to get required permits or authorizations?
- Have any possible negative implications or effects on other targets been identified and minimized?

Based on the answers to the above questions, rank the feasibility of the project from 0-10 with 10 being the highest ranking.

(b) Cost Effectiveness (Yes or No)

- Is there value for the funding being requested?
- Are the benefits as described in the proposal in line with the cost of the project?
- Are the project budget and in-kind rates realistic?

Based on the answers to the above questions, rank the cost effectiveness of the project from 0-5 with 5 being the highest ranking.

(c) Outside Participation / Cost Sharing (Yes or No)

- Do the proposed activities involve other agencies and organizations?
- Does the project leverage funds from other sources?

Based on the answers to the above questions, rank the leverage potential of the project from 0-5 with 5 being the highest ranking.

(d) Project Effectiveness (i.e., is the project worth doing?)

- Is there a clearly demonstrated ability for the results of this project to reduce an identified threat (IUCN) to a biodiversity target?
- Is the project outside of the realm of regular government responsibilities?
- Is the project rationale science-based and do the results move us from reactive conservation to prevention using appropriate management actions?
- Does the project build on conservation measures from relevant strategies including *Keeping Nature in our Future*?
- Does the project align conservation investments, priorities, and actions among conservation partners and stakeholders?
- Is there an evaluation of project benefit or other measurables or indicators identified in the proposal?

- Is there a clearly described extension component of the project (e.g., communicating results to the community, resource managers, workshops, reports, presentations, etc.)?

Based on the answers to the above questions, rank the effectiveness of the project from 0-20 with 20 being the highest ranking.

(e) Other Comments

- Are there any other technical concerns?
- Are there any technical conditions to funding?
- Are there any other general comments from reviewers?

4.2 Multi-Year, Continuing Projects

Each Committee member answers Yes or No to the following criteria and on whether the project should continue to be funded. Continuing projects have undergone an extensive review to receive original approval; therefore, no evaluation score is needed.

(a) Progress to Date

- Has there been satisfactory progress to date in terms of the project's scheduled activities?
- Does the proposal build on past accomplishments?
- If difficulties arose in the previous or current year, will they affect proposal activities?
- Should the proposal be modified to address any problems arising from the previous year?
- Are any budget changes justified?

(b) Overall Evaluation

- Should the project continue to be funded?
- Are there any conditions to continued funding?
- Does the scope continue to meet the criteria?

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APPENDIX 3

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- (a) Technical Advisory Committee ("Committee") members will act at all times with honesty and in good faith, for the public interest.
- (b) The conduct and language of Committee members will be free from any discrimination or harassment prohibited by the *Human Rights Code of Canada*.
- (c) The conduct of Committee members will reflect social standards of courtesy, respect, and dignity.

2. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- (a) Committee members will not reveal or divulge confidential information (defined as that which cannot be obtained from other sources) received in the course of Committee duties.
- (b) Confidential information must not be used for any purposes outside that of undertaking the work of the Committee.
- (c) Committee members shall refrain from discussing a proposal with anyone, including the proponent. Committee members and proponents must direct questions, concerns, clarifications to the Fund Administrator.

3. DUTY TO INFORM

- (a) Committee members will disclose any perceived or real conflict of interest which may have a negative or harmful effect on their ability to perform the duties required of the appointment or the reputation of the Committee. The member will advise all other members and staff, in writing (email accepted), well in advance of the Committee meeting: (a) that there is a potential conflict; (b) the nature and scope of the conflict; and (c) the specific project to which the conflict may apply.
- (b) Upon disclosure of any conflict, the Committee member shall leave the meeting during the discussion of such proposals.

4. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- (a) Participation in Committee work should not result in any personal or private financial or other substantive gain.
- (b) Members of the Committee will avoid any conflict of interest that may impair or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of the RDOS.
- (c) There shall be no apprehension of bias based on what a reasonably knowledgeable and informed observer might perceive of the actions of the Committee or the actions of an individual member of the Committee.

5. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION IN DETERMINING CONFLICT

- (a) Activities undertaken as a citizen must be kept separate and distinct from any responsibilities held as a member of the Committee.
- (b) Activities undertaken as a Committee member must be kept separate and distinct from other activities as a citizen.
- (c) Other memberships, directorships, voluntary or paid positions, or affiliations remain distinct from work undertaken in the course of Committee work.
- (d) Committee members will not assist anyone in their dealings with the Committee if this may result in advantageous treatment or the perception of advantageous treatment by a reasonably knowledgeable and informed observer.
- (e) Actions taken in the course of Committee duties can neither cause nor suggest to a reasonably knowledgeable and informed observer that members' ability to exercise those duties has or could be affected by private gain or interest.
- (f) All personal financial interests, assets, and holdings must be kept distinct from and independent of any decision, information or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by the Committee.
- (g) Personal employment shall not be dependent on any decision, information or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by the Committee. If such a situation arises, Committee members must disclose to the Committee any involvement in a proposal or issue before the proposal or issue is discussed by the Committee. Members will leave the meeting during discussion of the project.

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and considered the conflict of interest guidelines for Technical Advisory Committee members of the South Okanagan Conservation Fund and agree to conduct myself in accordance with these guidelines.

Name of Committee Member (print) _____

Signature of Committee Member _____

Date Signed _____

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APPENDIX 4

DEFINITIONS

1. Fund Administrator means RDOS manager, employee or contracted administrator acting on behalf of the RDOS.
2. Project means a singular, focused endeavour to deliver a tangible output with a defined time frame and budget. The components are specific and exact, and the scope and goals are well-defined. Projects are normally focused on achieving tangible outcomes and results.
3. Program means coordinated management of two or more projects which are managed and delivered as a single package. Different projects complement each other to assist the program in achieving its overall objectives; the benefits provided by a program depend on the collective benefits of its projects. Programs often take a longer time to complete than a project and are generally focused on generating broad organizational or technical benefits and may include elements of on-going operational work.
4. Qualified Donee is determined by the Canada Revenue Agency and means organizations that are registered and can issue official donation receipts for gifts they receive from individuals and corporations under the *Income Tax Act*.