

Beyond 2025 Small Topical Groups: Additional Guidance

Purpose: The small topical groups are charged with forming recommendations around cross-cutting, high-level topics that have arisen in the Executive Council (EC) Charge and partnership reports. The recommendations that the small topical groups draft, based on full Steering Committee feedback, will be integrated into the Steering Committee's final product.

Confirmed High Level Topics

- Climate
- Healthy Watersheds
- Clean Water
- People
- Shallow Water Habitats

Expectations

- **Defining the Scope:** Small topical groups are to define the scope and content of its work within the context of the assigned topical area. Examples include: The Clean Water group may want to focus its discussions and resultant recommendations on advancing implementation of the Bay TMDL/WIPs and/or strategies to address nonpoint sources of pollution in the agricultural and urban sectors. Healthy Watersheds may include land use and conservation as well as habitat quality. The People group may want to focus on Public Engagement. Shallow Water Habitats could include living resources.
- **Coordination:** Small topical groups will be asked to engage other partnership groups in addressing the guiding questions and cross-cutting considerations (in addition to any other guidance questions the groups choose to address) that will inform the development of the recommendations from each topical group. In addition, topical groups are encouraged to interact with each other to address any overlapping issues/priorities.
- **Developing Recommendations:** Small topical groups are empowered to identify the relevant scientific information and other supporting materials that could be considered when addressing the guiding questions and cross-cutting considerations, and ultimately, forming the recommendations.

Guiding Questions: These questions are not an exhaustive list but are meant to help structure and drive the discussions and ultimately, the recommendations from each small topical group. These topical groups have the flexibility to build upon the guiding questions as they see appropriate, but each of the guiding questions should be addressed within each group, at a minimum.

VISION: Where Do We Want To Be – What does success for the Bay and the watershed look like with relation to this topic? What is the timeframe under consideration (e.g., by 2050)?

EC Charge Connection

- *Science: Identify new and emerging scientific data and studies which could modify our progress reporting and adaptive management approach, as well as the goals and outcomes under the Watershed Agreement.*
- *Partnership: Focus on moving beyond 2025 by seeking ways in which restoration can be relevant to all communities within the watershed.*

VALUE: What We Do and How We Work –What new, emerging, and/or existing scientific information and other supporting information aligns with your small group topic and should be considered in developing recommendations? What are the specific factors influencing success and how can we incorporate lessons learned so we can achieve our goals (or refine our goals) more effectively and efficiently?

EC Charge Connection

- *Partnership: Assess the overall partnership to determine whether we*
 - *Are effectively hearing from and listening to all stakeholders, and*
 - *Have systems of evaluation and decision-making to enable meaningful action and allocation of partnership resources.*
- *Science: Define the existing and emerging challenges (e.g., climate change conditions, increasing growth, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice considerations) to accomplishing the partnership's work under the Watershed Agreement, and how addressing those challenges might alter our collective restoration priorities, including the possibility of extending the target date for completing restoration of water quality beyond 2025.*
 - *Science: Enhance our monitoring and reporting capabilities to improve our understanding of existing conditions and trends.*

VANGUARD – What idea would be transformational for the future of the Bay and its watershed, and what would it take to implement that idea?

EC Charge Connection

- *Science: Identify new and emerging scientific data and studies which could modify our progress reporting and adaptive management approach, as well as the goals and outcomes under the Watershed Agreement.*
- *Science: Identify opportunities to leverage action across multiple goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement.*
- *Partnership: Focus on moving beyond 2025 by seeking ways in which restoration can be relevant to all communities within the watershed.*

Cross-Cutting Considerations: These considerations are meant to help structure and drive the discussions and ultimately, the recommendations from each small topical group. These topical groups have the flexibility to build upon these cross-cutting considerations as they see appropriate, but each of the considerations should be addressed within each group, at a minimum.

- **Climate Considerations:** How does climate change interact with your topic, and how can we develop and implement approaches to account for it?
- **People Considerations:** How to be more effective at centering people in Bay conservation/restoration efforts for the future? How can principles of DEI, the social sciences (e.g., economics, anthropology), and methods for public engagement apply to the topical area?
- **Living Resources Considerations:** How to maximize with your topic the impact of management efforts for living resource response?
- **Cross-Program Coordination:** How can this coordination be strengthened within the context of a particular topic? How and where can resources be leveraged across programs to advance the topic forward within the partnership?

Schedule

- ✓ **November – January 2024:** Topical groups convene, discuss, and develop recommendations to be considered by the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee. Hold a coordination virtual call (with topical group leads) to plan for the 2-day symposium in February.
- ✓ **February 2024:** 2-day symposium to discuss and potentially refine topical group recommendations.
- ✓ **March 2024:** Adoption of topical group recommendations by the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee and review of the first draft of recommendations from the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee.
- ✓ **April 2024:** Adoption of the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommendations.
- ✓ **May – June 2024:** Solicit public feedback on the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommendations.

- ✓ **July 2024:** Revise and affirm the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommendations based on public input.
- ✓ **August – September 2024:** Seek approval of Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommendations from the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee.
- ✓ **October 2024:** Present and request approval of Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommendations from the Executive Council.