



Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360
Salem OR 97301-1290
www.oregon.gov/oweb
(503) 986-0178

Agenda Item I supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 3: Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
FROM: Courtney Shaff, Interim Business Operations Manager
SUBJECT: Agenda Item I – Organizational Collaboration Grants
September 9, 2020 Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of Organizational Collaboration grants and requests the board approve a revised Organizational Collaboration grant offering and signal their intent to add funding to this offering at the December 2020 board meeting.

II. Background

Organizational collaboration technical assistance grants have been offered since 2013 and support organizations working together to create strategic collaborations in order to build resilient, sustainable, local organizations that achieve ecological outcomes and engage local communities.

Past grants have funded two or more organizations to work together to change operational structure of the organizations, including the merger of four watershed councils. Through consultations, application materials, and interviews the applicants must demonstrate the organizational restructuring options being considered will strengthen organizational impact and sustainability for the purposes of achieving ecological outcomes and engaging local communities. The evaluation criteria contained in Attachment A focus on stakeholder engagement, proposal clarity, organizational capacity, and technical soundness.

III. Revised Offering

Many of our local partners are facing new and unforeseen challenges due to COVID-19. In May the Oregon Conservation Partnership sent a survey to watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and land trusts to gain an understanding of concerns and challenges due to COVID-19. Results of the survey showed that 53% of respondents are concerned about their ability to maintain current staffing levels and more than 30% expressed that they could not maintain current staffing levels if the pandemic lasted more than six months.

The revised Organizational Collaboration grant offering would focus funding specifically toward organizations exploring operational change to support improved delivery of actions

to protect and restore native fish and wildlife habitats and water quality and stream flows. Change can happen in many forms such as merger, formal alliances (i.e. administrative consolidation, fiscal sponsorship, joint programming, joint fundraising) or action networks (organizational aligning around specific objectives and common purpose and goals). Staff understand this work takes time to develop, with many conversations needed between staff and boards of interested organizations before concepts can move forward. Collaborating organizations might not be ready to apply for funds, but by announcing the offering now some groups might begin serious conversations with their partners and could be ready to apply in early 2021.

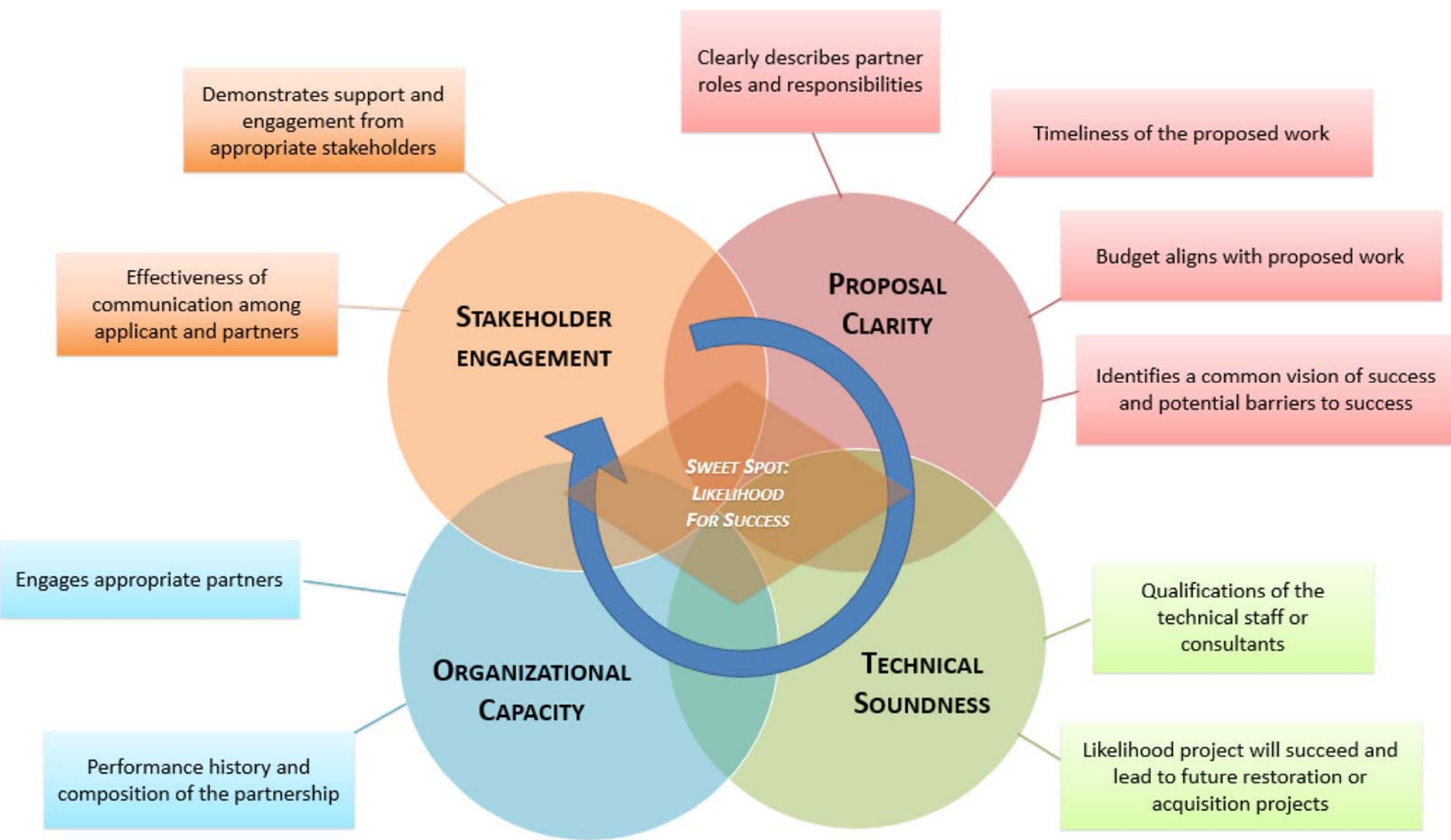
Staff intend to announce the offering in September, hold consultations beginning in October and accept applications, via a rolling deadline, beginning in early 2021. The review process involves a technical review team composed of OWEB staff and external reviewers and involves an interview with the staff and board of all organizations involved in the grant. Board action on applications could occur in March or June 2021.

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommend the board approve a revised Organizational Collaboration grant offering and signal its intent to add additional funds to the Organizational Collaboration TA grant spending plan category in December 2020.

Attachments

Attachment A. Evaluation Criteria



Evaluation Criteria
OAR 695-030-0045(3)a-j