

**TO:** Board Members

**THROUGH:** Jeff Walker, Executive Administrator  
Todd Chenoweth, General Counsel  
Jessica Zuba, Deputy Executive Administrator, Water Supply & Infrastructure

**FROM:** Temple McKinnon, Director, Water Use, Projections, & Planning

**DATE:** February 11, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Uniform Standards for Project Prioritization of the Regional Water Plans

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Consider approving the revised Uniform Standards for use by the regional water planning groups in prioritizing projects in their regional water plans, as updated by the Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee.

**BACKGROUND**

House Bill 4 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature established a project prioritization process to be conducted by the regional water planning groups. As part of this process, House Bill 4 required the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to create a Stakeholders Committee (Committee) composed of regional water planning group chairs or their designees.

The Committee held several meetings in the fall of 2013 and by consensus, adopted the final Uniform Standards in November 2013. The Uniform Standards were approved by the TWDB Board in December 2013. In 2014, regional water planning groups used the Uniform Standards to prioritize projects previously recommended in the 2011 Regional Water Plans.

The Committee reconvened in January 2015 and determined that no changes to the Uniform Standards were necessary to complete the 2016 Regional Water Plan project prioritizations. The Committee also discussed whether to issue guidance on the Uniform Standards. There was agreement that the prioritization guidance developed by TWDB was available for use, but the guidance was not formally adopted by the Committee.

**Our Mission** : **Board Members**

To provide leadership, information, education, and support for planning, financial assistance, and outreach for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas : Peter M. Lake, Chairman | Kathleen Jackson, Board Member | Brooke T. Paup, Board Member  
: Jeff Walker, Executive Administrator

In 2017, the TWDB recommended that the Committee meet at least once per planning cycle to review the Uniform Standards. The Committee met November 28, 2018 to review the Uniform Standards for project prioritization of the 2021 Regional Water Plans and submitted their work to TWDB on December 17, 2018 (Attachment).

### **KEY ISSUES**

#### ***Summary of substantive meeting decisions (all made by consensus):***

The Committee agreed to make the following changes to the Uniform Standards (as reflected with strikeout and underlining):

- The specified decades in 1A and 1B under the point system will be updated to reflect 2020 as the most immediate decade (with 10 points) and 2070 as the latest decade of need (with 0 points), with other decades adjusted accordingly.
- 2A. Change language that relates to the allocation of 5 points to read as follows: Field tests, ~~and measurements,~~ or project specific studies confirm sufficient quantities of water.
- 2D. Has the project sponsor requested (in writing ~~for the 2016 Plan~~) that the project be included in the Regional Water Plan.

The TWDB Guidance Document (included in submittal attachments as revised to reflect changes in the Uniform Standards adopted by the Committee at the November meeting) will be made available to regional water planning groups with the revised Uniform Standards but are not mandated for use.

For future meetings of the Committee, it was decided that:

- The Committee will meet in person during the first year of each planning cycle.
- The Committee would determine the need for and schedule additional meetings through discussions in the quarterly planning group chair conference calls.
- The Committee would like to continue to use a third-party facilitator for their in-person meetings.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive Administrator recommends approving the revised Uniform Standards to be used by the regional water planning groups to prioritize projects in the 2021 Regional Water Plans.

Attachments: Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee December 17, 2018 submittal to the Board, including:

- Updated Uniform Standards
- Updated November 28, 2018 TWDB Guidance
- Facilitator's final November 28, 2018 meeting notes

December 17, 2018

The Honorable Peter M. Lake, Chairman  
The Honorable Kathleen Jackson, Director  
The Honorable Brooke T. Paup, Director  
Texas Water Development Board  
1700 North Congress Avenue  
P.O. Box 13231  
Austin, Texas 78711-3231

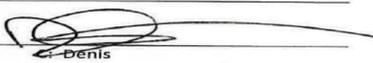
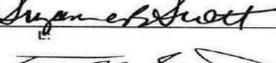
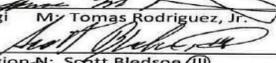
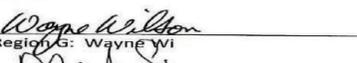
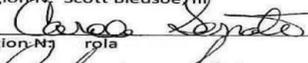
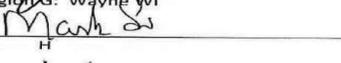
Dear Chairman Lake and Directors Jackson and Paup,

The Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee (SHC) is pleased to submit the attached revised uniform standards for prioritizing regional water plan projects for the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) consideration. These revised standards were approved by the SHC at its November 28, 2018 meeting. Upon approval, they will guide the regional water planning groups in prioritizing projects under Section 15.346, Texas Water Code for the 2021 planning cycle.

The attached document reflects only minor changes to the uniform standards that were used by regional water planning groups to prioritize projects in their 2011 and 2016 regional water plans. The SHC also agreed to attach to these revised standards the TWDB guidance document (modified to reflect changes based on our November 28 meeting). Although this guidance document is not mandated for use by RWPGs, it may provide valuable information for use by RWPGs when scoring projects. Also attached are meeting notes prepared by the facilitator and reviewed by us. They reflect the issues discussed and decisions made at the November 28 meeting.

In our view, the prioritization process has worked well, and reflects a strong partnership of the TWDB and regional water planning groups. We particularly commend the Texas Water Development Board and its staff for a well-run program.

Respectfully submitted,

	
	on V: Jonathan Letz
	
Region D: Denis	Region K: Jen
	
Region D: Bill Kirby	Region M: Tomas Rodriguez, Jr.
	
Region E: Scott Bledsoe, III	Region N: Scott Bledsoe, III
	
Region G: Wayne Wilton	Region O: Carlos Serrato
	
Region H: Mark S	Region P: Aubrey Spear
	
Region I: Spencer	Region Q: Spenrath

Attachments:

- Revised uniform standards (both in final form and redlined to show changes)
- Revised TWDB guidance document
- Uniform Standards SHC meeting notes of November 28, 2018

Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee  
 Final Uniform Standards for Prioritization  
*Approved by Committee November 28, 2018*

PROJECT NAME:

PROJECT SPONSOR:

**Overall Criteria Weightings:**

Decade of Need	40%
Project Feasibility	10%
Project Viability	25%
Project Sustainability	15%
Project Cost Effectiveness	10%
	<b>100%</b>

potential SWIFT funding category	flag all that may apply
mainstream	
rural/agricultural conservation	
conservation/reuse	

**\*\* indicates that additional data may have to be collected by RWPG in order to score projects**

1. Decade of Need for Project	Max Score	Actual Score														
<b>A</b> What is the decade the RWP shows the project comes online? <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Points</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>0</td><td>2070</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>2060</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>2050</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>2040</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>2030</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>2020</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Points	Year	0	2070	2	2060	4	2050	6	2040	8	2030	10	2020	10	0
Points	Year															
0	2070															
2	2060															
4	2050															
6	2040															
8	2030															
10	2020															
<b>** B</b> In what decade is initial funding needed? <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Points</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>0</td><td>2070</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>2060</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>2050</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>2040</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>2030</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>2020</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Points	Year	0	2070	2	2060	4	2050	6	2040	8	2030	10	2020	10	0
Points	Year															
0	2070															
2	2060															
4	2050															
6	2040															
8	2030															
10	2020															
<b>Criteria Total</b>	20	0														

Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee  
 Final Uniform Standards for Prioritization  
*Approved by Committee November 28, 2018*

**2. Project Feasibility**

**Max  
Score**      **Actual  
Score**

**A** What supporting data is available to show that the quantity of water needed is available?

5

0

**Points**      **Measure**

- 0 Models suggest insufficient quantities of water or no modeling has been performed
- 3 Models suggest sufficient quantity of water
- 5 **Field tests, measurements, or project specific studies confirm sufficient quantities of water**

**\*\* B** If necessary, does the sponsor hold necessary legal rights, water rights and/or contracts to use the water that this project would require?

5

0

**Points**      **Measure**

- 0 legal rights, water rights and/or contract application not submitted
- 2 application submitted
- 3 application is administratively complete
- 5 legal rights, water rights and/or contracts obtained or not needed

**\*\* C** What level of engineering and/or planning has been accomplished for this project? (Points based on progress on scientific data collection, stage of studies and design)

10

0

**Points**      **Measure**

- 1 Project idea is outlined in Regional Plan.
- 2 Feasibility studies initiated.
- 3 Feasibility studies completed.
- 4 Conceptual design initiated.
- 5 Conceptual design completed.

**Points**      **Measure**

- 6 Preliminary engineering report initiated.
- 7 Preliminary engineering report completed.
- 8 Preliminary design initiated.
- 9 Preliminary design completed.
- 10 Final design complete.

**D** **Has the project sponsor requested in writing that the project be included in the Regional Water Plan?**

5

0

**Points**      **Measure**

- 0 no
- 5 yes

**Criteria Total**

25

0

Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee  
 Final Uniform Standards for Prioritization  
*Approved by Committee November 28, 2018*

### 3. Project Viability

**Max  
Score**      **Actual  
Score**

For A and B, the calculation is to be based on the total needs of all WUGs receiving water from the project.

<p><b>A</b> In the decade the project supply comes online, what is the % of the WUG's (or WUGs') needs satisfied by this project?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">0.00</span> %</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">10</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0.00</div> ←						
<p><b>B</b> In the final decade of the planning period, what is the % of the WUG's (or WUGs') needs satisfied by this project?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">0.00</span> %</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">10</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0.00</div> ←						
<p><b>C</b> Is this project the only economically feasible source of new supply for the WUG, other than conservation?</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>Points</u></td> <td><u>Measure</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td>no</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td>yes</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>	0	no	5	yes	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">5</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>
<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>							
0	no							
5	yes							
<p><b>D</b> Does the project serve multiple WUGs?</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>Points</u></td> <td><u>Measure</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td>no</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td>yes</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>	0	no	5	yes	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">5</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>
<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>							
0	no							
5	yes							
	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">30</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>						

### 4. Project Sustainability

<p><b>** A</b> Over what period of time is this project expected to provide water (regardless of the planning period)?</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>Points</u></td> <td><u>Measure</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td>less than or equal to 20 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> <td>greater than 20 years</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>	5	less than or equal to 20 years	10	greater than 20 years	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">10</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>		
<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>									
5	less than or equal to 20 years									
10	greater than 20 years									
<p><b>B</b> Does the volume of water supplied by the project change over the regional water planning period?</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>Points</u></td> <td><u>Measure</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td>decreases</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> <td>no change</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td>increases</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>	0	decreases	3	no change	5	increases	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">5</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>
<u>Points</u>	<u>Measure</u>									
0	decreases									
3	no change									
5	increases									
	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 40px;">15</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; width: 60px;">0</div>								

**5. Project Cost Effectiveness**

**Max  
Score**      **Actual  
Score**

**A** What is the expected unit cost of water supplied by this project compared to the median unit cost of all other recommended strategies in the region's current RWP? (Project's Unit Cost divided by the median project's unit cost)

5

0

<u>Points</u>	<u>Relative to Median unit cost</u>
0	200% or greater than median
1	150% to 199% of median
2	101% to 149% of median
3	100% of median
4	51% to 99% of median
5	0% to 50% of median

**Criteria Total**

5

0

**SCORING RESULTS ON SCALE OF 1,000 POINTS MAXIMUM:**

*sub-score for: Decade of Need*

-

*sub-score for: Project Feasibility*

-

*sub-score for: Project Viability*

-

*sub-score for: Project Sustainability*

-

*sub-score for: Project Cost Effectiveness*

-

**FINAL SCORE FOR PROJECT**

-

0  
0

Updated November 28, 2018 TWDB Guidance

## **Recommended Guidance to Ensure Uniformity of Final Prioritization Submissions**

The following guidance is being provided to regional water planning group (RWPG) stakeholders at the request of the Stakeholder Committee to assist RWPGs in achieving an acceptable degree of uniformity in the application of the uniform standards adopted by the stakeholder committee on November 28, 2018 and to be approved by TWDB at a future date. This guidance was developed based on: a generic interpretation of the language of the uniform standards; the limits of the information contained within the regional water plans; the time and resources available to the RWPGs; clarifications made to the uniform standards by the Stakeholder Committee on November 28, 2018; and with an acknowledgement of the flexible nature of the prioritization process moving forward. This guidance is strictly limited to recommending how the existing uniform standards should be applied within the confines of their existing scope as most recently adopted by the Stakeholder Committee. **This guidance does not attempt to address any overall concerns about the uniform standards themselves or matters not currently taken into consideration by the uniform standards.**

**This guidance is subject to the Stakeholder Committee’s discretion. Coordinate with your Stakeholder Committee representative before applying these guidelines.**

### **RECOMMENDED GUIDANCE FOR APPLYING THE UNIFORM STANDARDS**

#### **1. GENERAL - Grouping Projects for Scoring**

**Guidance:** *(As indicated in previous guidance provided on October 9, 2013)*

Projects cannot be bundled if they are considered separate water management strategy projects (WMSPs) and are presented as such in the regional plans and will or can be implemented separately. For example, two groundwater well projects that would serve two different entities and are entirely separate physically shouldn’t be prioritized together. **The reason for this is that each project could be built independently and there would not be a single borrower to implement those two projects.** Moreover, with separate entities, the projects may receive different scoring under the criteria specified by House Bill (HB) 4 (83<sup>rd</sup> Leg. Session) due to entity-specific circumstances (e.g., decade of need, availability of water rights, cost-effectiveness, taking into consideration the expected unit cost). In instances when it is appropriate to bundle projects for scoring, please leave all the associated project line items in place (with their shared prioritization scores) and clearly note in the final submission where this occurred and which projects were related to each other.

#### **2. GENERAL – Tie-breakers**

**Background:** There are likely to be some ties in scoring projects at the regional level.

**Guidance:** In order to ensure uniformity in applying the uniform standards across all 16 regions, RWPGs should not introduce new variability into the scoring of projects by developing regional tie-breaking criteria. Ties at the regional level may not remain after a state-level prioritization.

#### **3. GENERAL – SWIFT funding category “flags”**

**Background:** The Stakeholder Committee included flags in the Uniform Standards document to allow RWPGs to indicate potential funding categories.

**Guidance:** These labels will not affect funding opportunities or priorities of projects requesting funding from TWDB. TWDB will determine what categories of funding each

project will qualify for at the time that funding applications are submitted, regardless of these flags.

4. **Uniform Standard 1A** - *What is the decade the RWP shows the project comes online?*

**Background:** (The choices for response to standard 1A include only the planning decades 2020-2070.)

**Guidance:** All the regional water plans present water supply information in the common form of the 2020-2070 planning decades. The online date of a project is the earliest planning decade presented in the published regional water plan in which there is a water supply volume shown, regardless of the date of water needs of any participants. A project that has zero supply shown for the 2020 decade, for example, could not be considered online in 2020 since there is not a supply volume in the 2020 decade. (Note that the online date of a project cannot be changed from what is in the regional water plan without a formal regional water plan amendment.)

5. **Uniform Standard 1B** - *In what decade is initial funding needed?*

**Background:** There were questions about how to determine the score if there was no response to the Infrastructure Financing Survey or other information in the published plan regarding a date that initial funding will be needed. Several standards (including 1B, 2B and 2C) include a footnote indicated by a double asterisk that states: “\*\* indicates that additional data may have to be collected by RWPG in order to score projects.”

**Guidance:** The footnote (\*\*) suggests that not all the uniform standard scores would be based on water plan information obtained at a single, common point in time (e.g., from 2021). Data sources for this score should be limited as much as possible to the published plan and Infrastructure Financing Survey responses (survey data and forms provided by TWDB). In the absence of information directly related to the 2021 regional water plans, the RWPG should seek other published information and, in the absence of published information, the RWPG should apply a reasonable and consistent assumption for all project types. In any case, the decade that funding is needed should never be indicated later than the decade the project comes online in the plan.

6. **Uniform Standards (2A-C):**

**2A** - *What supporting data is available to show that the quantity of water needed is available?*

**2B** - *If necessary, does the sponsor hold necessary legal rights, water rights and/or contracts to use the water that this project would require?*

**2C** - *What level of engineering and/or planning has been accomplished for this project? (Points based on progress on scientific data collection, stage of studies and design)*

**Background:** There were questions about whether the scoring had to be based on conditions at the time of the plan (adoption) or current conditions. Several uniform standards (including 2B and 2C) include a footnote indicated by a double asterisk that states: “\*\* indicates that additional data may have to be collected by RWPG in order to score projects.”

**Guidance:** The addition of a new project through an amendment, for example, will likely require scoring the additional project based on currently available information. Therefore, we recommend currently available information whenever possible. Because the regional project prioritizations are not considered part of the regional water plans, they may be updated by the RWPGs in the future (e.g., if the uniform standards are modified). The effort and frequency with which RWPGs acquire updated information and update their regional water plan prioritizations is for each RWPG to determine. Any such updates to regional

water plan prioritizations would be subject to RWPG approval. Uniform standard 2A specifically was clarified by the Stakeholder Committee on November 28, 2018 to include project specific studies as a measure for sufficient quantities of water in the score of five points awarded. This clarification was to address concern that surface water projects could only be modeled and were thus limited to a maximum score of three points.

7. **Uniform Standard 2D** - *Has the project sponsor requested that the project be included in the Regional Water Plan?*

**Guidance:** Clarification was provided that project sponsors providing written requests during any cycle of regional water plan would be scored as “yes”.

8. **Uniform Standards (3A and B):**

**3A** - *In the decade the project supply comes online, what is the % of the WUG's (or WUGs') needs satisfied by this project?*

**3B** - *In the final decade of the planning period, what is the % of the WUG's (or WUGs') needs satisfied by this project?*

**Background:** The basis for obtaining points in these standards is meeting a percentage of identified water needs in the plans.

**Guidance:**

- If the entities served by a strategy in the plan have no needs in a decade of interest, that strategy would not be meeting any water needs and should therefore score zero points.
- County-wide water user groups are considered a single water user group for the purpose of applying this standard.
- RWPGs will need to perform an additional assessment to estimate the volume of supply from recommended projects. This may include but is not limited to reviewing the water management strategy volumes related to the project (data provided by TWDB).

9. **Uniform Standard 3C** - *Is this project the only economically feasible source of new supply for the WUG, other than conservation?*

**Guidance:**

- Since this particular uniform standard developed by the stakeholder committee does not directly consider conservation for scoring under this criteria, conservation would always score zero points based on the language.
- For projects that are the only economically feasible strategy other than conservation *for at least one of the WUGs served by the project* (in the case of a project sponsored by a wholesale water supplier and that serves multiple WUGs) it should score five points.

10. **Uniform Standard 3D** - *Does the project serve multiple WUGs?*

**Guidance:**

- A wholesale water provider project will only score 5 points if the water plan data indicates that multiple water user groups rely on the project.
- County-wide water user groups are considered a single water user group for the purpose of applying this standard.
- Water user groups split by river basin and/or regional water planning area are considered a single water user for the purpose of applying this standard.

11. **Uniform Standard 4B** - *Does the volume of water supplied by the project change over the regional water planning period?*

**Guidance:** Standard applies only to the associated “regional water planning period” (i.e., 2020 to 2070)

12. **Uniform Standard 5A** - *What is the expected unit cost of water supplied by this project compared to the median unit cost of all other recommended strategies in the region's current RWP? (Project's Unit Cost divided by the median project's unit cost)*

**Background:** There were questions about a) whether strategies with zero unit costs should be included in the calculation, and b) which decade should be used as the basis for the calculation when determining the cost of the project relative to the median unit cost of all the recommended strategies.

**Guidance:**

- TWDB’s Regional Water Planning rules have been revised since the development of the Uniform Standards such that projects are required to have a non-zero capital cost. Therefore, there should not be any projects with zero unit costs.
- The unit cost should be calculated using the first decade online unit cost of the project of interest relative to the median of the first decade online unit costs of all recommended strategies.

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## Facilitator's November 28, 2018 Meeting Notes

**Meeting Notes**  
**Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 28, 2018**  
**Stephen F. Austin Building, 1700 N. Congress Ave., Austin, TX Room 600A**

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**Participation**

**Number of Planning Group Chairs or Designees represented 14 of 16:**

A	C.E. Williams	E	Jesus Reyes	I	Kelley Holcomb	M	Tomas Rodriguez
B	DNP	F	DNP	J	Jonathan Letz	N	Scott Bledsoe, Carola Serrato
C	Denis Qualls	G	Wayne Wilson	K	Jennifer Walker	O	Aubrey Spear
D	Bill Kirby	H	Mark Evans	L	Suzanne Scott	P	Phillip Spenrath
DNP – Did not participate in meeting							

**Facilitator:** Suzanne Schwartz

**Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Staff:** Sarah Backhouse, Lann Bookout, Temple McKinnon, Matt Nelson, Ron Ellis, Elizabeth McCoy, Chairman Peter Lake, Tara Rejino, Jessica Zuba, Aaron Waters, Sabrina Anderson, Laura Bell, Tom Entsminger, John Barnard

***Summary of substantive meeting decisions (all made by consensus):***

- The Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee (SHC) agreed by consensus to make the following changes to the Uniform Standards: <sup>1</sup>
  - The specified decades in 1A and 1B under the point system will be updated to reflect 2020 as the most immediate decade (with 10 points) and 2070 as the latest decade of need (with 0 points), with other decades adjusted accordingly.
  - 2A. Change language that relates to the allocation of 5 points to read as follows: Field tests, ~~and~~ measurements, or project specific studies confirm sufficient quantities of water.
  - 2D. Has the project sponsor requested ~~(in writing for the 2016 Plan)~~ that the project be included in the Regional Water Plan.
- The TWDB Guidance Document (revised to reflect changes in the Uniform Standards adopted by the SHC at this meeting) will be made available to Regional Water Planning Groups (RWPGs) with the revised Uniform Standards, but are not mandated for use.
- Future SHC meetings:
  - The SHC will meet in person during the first year of each planning cycle.
  - The SHC could determine the need for and schedule additional meetings through discussions in the quarterly RWPG chair calls.
  - The SHC would like to use an outside facilitator for their in-person meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific language changes reflected with strikethrough and underlining.

**Parking lot:** *The SHC agreed to place the following on its parking lot for future discussion:*

- Whether to ask the TWDB to give greater weight to RWPG rankings.
- Standardized scoring under the uniform standards for projects included in more than one RWPG plan.
- Whether to give points to innovative projects.
- Discussing consistency between RWPG scoring/use of standards.
- How to encourage applications for TWDB funding.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. Welcome, meeting goals, and agenda, operational protocols, introductions of participants**

TWDB Chairman Peter Lake welcomed the SHC and discussed the importance of the regional water planning process. Matt Nelson, TWDB assistant deputy executive administrator - water supply and infrastructure, and Temple McKinnon, TWDB director - water use, projections and planning division, also provided a welcome and overview.

The SHC agreed to the goals for the meeting, and to continue using its current operating procedures.

Suzanne Schwartz, facilitator, summarized portions of her pre-meeting interviews with participants, noting that most regions said the prioritization process had worked well in the past, that they valued the opportunity to hear from their fellow chairs, and that they wanted to receive information regarding the interaction of RWPG rankings and TWDB rankings and funding. Several of those interviewed also provided guidance for changes to the standards: keep the standards as simple as possible; remember that RWPG rankings are a small percentage of the TWDB rankings; and be cautious of unintended consequences.

### **2. TWDB overview of prioritization requirements and the intersection of prioritization and funding**

Matt Nelson provided an overview of the statutory requirements imposed on RWPGs to develop uniform standards for the prioritization of projects for State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) funding, and also the statutes and rules under which the TWDB prioritizes projects. He described the funding that has occurred to date, during which all applicants were able to receive funding for their projects. SHC members discussed concerns that the RWPG prioritizations do not receive a significant enough weighting in the TWDB SWIFT prioritization process, thus minimizing the ranking effort the RWPGs.

**3. Experience with implementation of Uniform Standards; Identify specific standards for further review; and**

**4. Agree on modifications to the Uniform Standards, or re-adoption if no changes**

Based on information gathered during interviews and ideas generated during the meeting, the SHC considered the following Uniform Standards and issues:

- Standard 1A and B (Decade of need)

*Concern and discussion: Participants discussed whether decade of need received too much weight in the RWPG Uniform Standards. Members present during the adoption of the original standards noted that the overall weighting was debated in great detail and represented significant negotiation and compromise. They expressed concern about unintended consequences and an upsetting of the balance originally negotiated if changes were made. The SHC also discussed the need for changing the decades themselves to reflect the passage of time.*

Decision: The specified decades in 1A and 1B under the point system will be updated to reflect 2020 as the most immediate decade (with 10 points) and 2070 as the latest decade of need (with 0 points), with other decades adjusted accordingly.

- Standard 2A (Project Feasibility – Availability of water)

*Concern and discussion: The scoring criteria do not allow a surface water source to receive the maximum score for this standard because field tests and measurements are not used to confirm sufficient quantities of surface water. Rather, detailed hydrological models specific to the project are used for this purpose. Some participants noted that the full five points are being given to surface water supply by some regions, creating the possibility that this standard is being interpreted inconsistently.*

Decision: Change language that relates to the allocation of 5 points to read as follows:<sup>2</sup> Field tests, ~~and~~ measurements, or project specific studies confirm sufficient quantities of water.

- Standard 2C (Project Feasibility – Engineering and planning)

*Concern and discussion: The concern related to difficulty in making judgements among the 10 different scoring options. Others noted that having a large point spread potentially would allow the overall scoring on projects to spread out and to avoid some ties.*

Decision: No change to the standard.

- Standard 2D (Project Feasibility – Request by project sponsor to include project in RWP)

Concern and discussion: Participants noted that the wording on the standard was developed during the original adoption to distinguish between requests for ranking of

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<sup>2</sup> Changes reflected with strikeout and underlining.

projects in the 2011 plan (which did not need to be in writing) and those in the to-be-developed 2016 plan (which was required to be in writing to receive points). They agreed that for all future RWPs, this request should be in writing.

Decision: Modify the language to read as follows:

D. Has the project sponsor requested ~~(in writing for the 2016 Plan)~~ that the project be included in the Regional Water Plan.<sup>3</sup>

- Standard 3A&B (Project Viability – Percentage of WUGs needs satisfied by project)

*Concern and discussion: Whether scoring on these standards penalize projects for entities needing many projects over time.*

Decision: No change to the standard

- Standard 3C (Project Viability – Only economically feasible source)

*Concern and discussion: That this gives an advantage to sponsors with only one recommended water management strategy, and a disadvantage to those with several, even if one of the several strategies is the most economically feasible source of water.*

Decision: No change to the standard.

- Standard 3D (Project Viability – Project serves multiple WUGs)

*Concern and discussion: The scoring criteria do not account for how many WUGs a recommended project serves. A more detailed scoring breakdown to distinguish between water user groups greater than two would be helpful.*

Decision: No change to the standard.

- Issue: Weight of RWPG rankings in TWDB ranking

*Concern and discussion: The SHC discussed that the RWPG scoring only received a maximum of 15 percent in the TWDB scoring. Participants noted concern that this was too small a percentage, and discussed whether to request TWDB to consider a higher percentage. Matt Nelson explained that there were four criteria in the TWDB funding rules that, by statute, were mandated to receive the highest percentage of weight, and that these collectively could only receive up to 50 percent of the total TWDB scoring. The remaining possible 50 percent of the scoring awarded by TWDB was distributed among six other factors, with the highest scores of 15 percent going to two factors, one of which is the RWPG prioritization.*

Decision: Keep on the parking lot the idea of asking the TWDB to give greater weight to RWPG rankings.

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<sup>3</sup> Changes reflected with strikeout and underlining.

- Do the standards fairly assess County Other

*Concern and discussion: The standards may not be entirely fair in assessing county-other projects, but the TWDB has made improvements in county-other representation by their rule revision to utility-based water user groups.*

Decision: Do not discuss further at this meeting.

- Accuracy of DB17 and other databases

*Concern and discussion: This was not considered to be a problem for the SHC to discuss.*

- Public understanding of the rankings

*Concern and discussion: Participants noted the challenges of getting the public interested and educated in the RWP and prioritization processes. TWDB offered to provide educational materials if requested by the regions.*

- Appropriateness of comparing projects with different water types and uses

Decision: Do not discuss further at this meeting.

- Projects shared across regions

*Concern and discussion: The concern was how to assure standardized scoring under the uniform standards where a project is included in more than one RWPG plan.*

Decision: Put this on the parking lot.

- Ways to give points to innovative projects

*Concern and discussion: Participants noted the difficulty of advancing innovative projects within a set scoring system, including how to measure what was innovative, and how a project that was "innovative" for one region might be "standard" for another.*

Decision: Put this on the parking lot.

## **5. Determine need for guidance document**

Temple McKinnon explained that TWDB developed a guidance in the first round of prioritizations to help provide uniformity in the RWPG use of the uniform standards. In January 2015, the SHC discussed whether it would like to adopt a SHC generated or approved guidance document for the 2016 prioritization process. At that time, the SHC agreed not to formally adopt a guidance document, but to note that the TWDB guidance was available for use by RWPGs for the 2016 prioritizations.

At this meeting, the SHC discussed whether, for the 2021 prioritization process, to adopt a document that the RWPGs would be required to use to guide their scoring under the uniform standards.

Factors identified as supporting such adoption were: adding uniformity, credibility and legitimacy; providing transparency in distribution of money; removing possible gaming of the system; and the opportunity to adopt guidance now when there is less competition for funding.

Factors identified as against such adoption were: whether such guidance was needed; inappropriately controlling RWPGs; reducing flexibility to address regional quirks; the time and effort needed to develop guidance; and the possibility of creating conflict between regions.

Decision: The TWDB Guidance Document (revised to reflect changes in the Uniform Standards adopted by the SHC at this meeting) will be made available to RWPGs with the revised Uniform Standards, but are not mandated for use.

#### **6. Format, content, and process for developing any needed submittal to TWDB**

The following will be transmitted to TWDB by the facilitator on behalf of the SHC. All materials will be provided for review by the SHC members before transmittal.

- Letter of transmittal (drafted by facilitator) with signature page of SHC members participating in meeting
- Revised uniform standards
- Revised TWDB-guidance document
- Meeting notes (drafted by facilitator)

#### **7. Consider future focus and governance of Uniform Standards Stakeholder Committee**

Temple McKinnon noted the purpose of this item was to allow the SHC to discuss how they would like to operate as a group moving forward.

Decision:

- The SHC will meet in person during the first year of each planning cycle.
- The SHC could determine the need for and schedule additional meetings through discussions in the quarterly RWPG chair calls.
- The SHC would like to use an outside facilitator for their in-person meetings.

#### **8. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.**