Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
State Agency-Supported Project Initiation Workflow
August 9, 2024

This document is provided to help UW and WSU principal investigators (hereafter, PIs) and agency project officers (hereafter, POs) – collectively, "project leads" – establish projects funded by state cooperators (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Washington Department of Ecology) through the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (WACFWRU).

Steps in the project initiation workflow include:

1. **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**: For candidate projects, project leads must produce a title, list of personnel, abstract, budget, and expected project start date.
   a. **Abstract**. The abstract should describe project goals, methods, and expected outcomes, and must clearly articulate how the project fits within the mission of the WACFWRU. Briefly: *The Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit works to support conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats in Washington, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond.* Project leads can consult the policy on project fit for more information: (depts.washington.edu/wacfwru/working-with-the-wacfwru/).
   b. **Budget**. Beginning in Washington State fiscal year 2025, all approved projects will be subject to a reduced indirect rate of 18% at both WSU and UW (assessed on total direct costs), unless the lead PI is a federally employed Unit staff member (i.e., Converse, McInturff, or Scheuerell), in which case the project will be subject to 0% indirect.
2. **PROJECT APPROVAL**: Once all elements described in Part 1 are developed, the PO should contact their agency's cooperating committee (CC) member (see depts.washington.edu/wacfwru/cooperators/) and provide this documentation. The agency CC member, followed by the Unit Leader, will assess the project to determine if it fits within the Unit mission. The CC member or Unit Leader may request additional information or clarification when evaluating projects, and this can slow down the process, so project leads should be sure that the abstract makes a clear case regarding how the project fits within the Unit mission. Approved projects will receive the following benefits:
   a. administrative support through the WACFWRU,
   b. eligibility of project-supported students to participate in the annual student symposium and to be considered for annual WACFWRU awards, and
   c. a reduced indirect rate as described above.
3. **PROJECT CONTRACTING**: Once the project is approved, the project contracting process can begin. This will require communication between the PI, the PO, the agency financial lead, the Unit Administrator, and – for WSU projects – the applicable WSU financial lead. The Unit administrator will handle contracting of UW projects directly. For WSU projects, the Unit administrator must be kept up to date through the contracting process, and a final version of the contract, including the project title, abstract, and complete statement of work must be provided to the Unit administrator.
4. **PROJECT REPORTING:** After contracting is complete, project leads should be aware that the Unit Leader will contact the PI annually to request information on student and postdoc support provided by the project. Failure to provide a prompt response may jeopardize future collaboration with the WACFWRU.
5. **PROJECT CLOSEOUT**: Upon closeout, project leads must provide the Unit Administrator with a final abstract including the project aims, methods, results, and significance. Failure to provide this documentation may jeopardize future collaboration with the WACFWRU.
6. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** The WACFWRU should be acknowledged for facilitating funding in any publications or presentations stemming from project funds.

For additional questions, investigators are welcome to reach out to Sarah Converse, Unit Leader, at sconver@uw.edu or Sarah Romero, Unit Administrator, at sarahjh@uw.edu.