

Habitat Strategic Initiative Advisory Team

Charter and Meeting Protocols

Vision

- The HSIAT will provide technical, communication, and policy guidance from a diverse set of experts and perspectives shaping the path to Puget Sound habitat recovery and protection.

Purpose and Authority

- The Habitat Strategic Initiative Advisory Team (HSIAT) will provide expert opinions and recommendations to the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead (HSIL). This will include opinions regarding policies, social sciences, and overall approaches to advancing the Habitat Implementation Strategies. The HSIAT will also guide how to better integrate topical issues, including climate resilience, environmental justice, and Tribal Treaty Rights. The HSIAT will apply guidance from the EPA and related Implementation Strategies as applicable.
- The HSIAT will:
 - Provide input on opportunities for advancing the HSIL Implementation Strategies.
 - Provide input on how to adaptively manage the HSIL Implementation Strategies, including the development of metrics.
 - Provide input to HSIL on Action Agenda update needs. Provide support for the amplification of findings and sharing of new tools and resources related to previous and ongoing HSIL investments.
 - Recommend a funding strategy for Puget Sound Geographic Program funds Team Membership and Duration
- **Selection and Membership Process**
 - SILs selected SIAT members based on predetermined criteria from the [recruitment notice](#).
 - Team members appointed in 2024 will serve two-year terms. The recruitment process will occur every two years, complemented by replacements/additions as needed.
 - Withdrawals/Re-appointments: If an appointed team member needs to withdraw, they must submit in writing their resignation from the team to the appropriate SIL. The SIL has the authority to recruit a replacement team member to fill the gap for the remainder of the 2-year term.
 - A SIL may add to their individual SIAT membership to enhance geographic or technical expertise as needed.

- **Participation and Meeting Logistics**
 - Members are expected to participate regularly and constructively. The estimated time commitment for preparation and participation is 50 to 120 hours per year. The HSIL team may dismiss members who fail to participate fully. HSIL will first provide a written warning before membership termination.
 - HSIAT meetings will primarily be held virtually, with several opportunities for in-person meetings throughout the year. This is intended to better support participation from representatives of community groups and all regions across Puget Sound.
 - HSIL anticipates meeting 12 times per year and will make every effort to provide meeting materials with reasonable lead time.
- **Role of members, observers, advisors, and others**
 - Members fully participate and inform the work of the team.
 - Observers are welcome and may be called on for input.
 - Subject Matter Experts may be added to the agenda for particular topics.
- **Additional Protocols**
 - HSIL will obtain signed Conflict of Interest agreements from each member prior to engaging in funding strategy conversations.
 - All meetings are open to the public.
 - HSIAT members may be eligible for compensation or reimbursement per the HSIL Compensation and Reimbursement policy
 - Meeting Materials, including agendas and minutes, will be housed in the Box.com collaborative file-sharing system hosted by the Puget Sound Partnership.

Decision-Making Protocols

- HSIL decisions related to Puget Sound Geographic Program funding strategies and other HSIL work products will seek advisory input from the HSIAT.
- HSIL reserves the right to use policy review by DNR and WDFW management and subject matter experts on HSIAT recommendations.
- HSIL will be clear when they are seeking general feedback or when they are seeking an HSIAT recommendation.
- If a recommendation is needed, the HSIAT will operate on a gradient of agreement process, with HSIL staff facilitating and managing the process for reaching an agreement.
- When possible, consensus (unanimous) agreement will be the goal. If consensus cannot be reached, all opinions and feedback will be documented in the meeting minutes.
- The HSIL will work in good faith to implement decisions per the recommendation of the HSIAT. However, the HSIL will retain final decision-making authority and responsibility for all Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead policies and operations, per EPA and agency guidance.
- If the HSIL determines the need to deviate (non-de minimis) from the HSIAT recommendation, the HSIL will provide a clear rationale and provide the HSIAT the ability to evaluate alternative solutions.

Meeting Protocols

- HSIAT and HSIL members all agree to the following:
 - Arrive to meetings on time and prepared. Let staff know if you are unable to attend a meeting.
 - Communicate openly, honestly, and with respect.
 - Speak in turn and ensure that you are allowing everyone else the time and support to contribute ideas.
 - Focus on interests rather than positions. Seek solutions that meet multiple interests.
 - Ask for clarity when needed.
 - Communicate early with HSIL staff when there are questions or concerns related to process, logistics, or interactions with other members.

Coordinating Agencies

The following Strategic Initiative Lead agencies coordinate the Strategic Initiative Advisory Teams:

Habitat SIAT: Washington State Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources

Shellfish SIAT: Washington State Departments of Health, Ecology and Agriculture

Stormwater SIAT: Washington State Departments of Ecology, Commerce and the Washington State University Stormwater Center.

In collaboration with: The Environmental Protection Agency, the Puget Sound Partnership and tribal representation