

**Research Administration**

*Selection of Research Topics: The Research Plan Process*—The three projects implemented to date were selected on the basis of input from the 1997 Conference and recommendations of the RWG, SAG and Research Manager. The completion of each project has resulted in the development of recommendations for follow-up projects. These recommendations have come from a variety of sources including outreach efforts, the researchers, and SAG and RWG meetings. These activities coupled with the findings from funded projects have generated numerous ideas for potential research activities. Input from these various sources has resulted in the creation of three ways to categorize research activities (Table 2). The selection of any project for research should satisfy all three categories:

<b>Table 2. Research Topic Selection Process</b>		
<b>Research Area Technical Framework<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Regulatory Interest Framework<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Selective Criteria<sup>3</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Habitats of Concern</li> <li>▪ Biological and Ecological Criteria and Standards</li> <li>▪ Chemical Criteria and Standards</li> <li>▪ Whole Effluent Toxicity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designated use characterization, e.g., ephemeral, effluent-dependent, effluent-dominated, etc.</li> <li>▪ Minimum criteria to protect the use</li> <li>▪ Policies and procedures to support implementation of Project findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build upon completed studies</li> <li>▪ Have regulatory relevance to the arid West</li> <li>▪ Emphasize watershed or ecosystem level issues</li> <li>▪ Have regional rather than site-specific application</li> <li>▪ Provide regional context to national initiatives, e.g., nutrient criteria.</li> </ul>

- (1) **Research Area Technical Framework**—Research projects will be categorized technically into the same categories established as a result of the 1997 Conference (Habitats of Concern, Biological and Ecological Criteria and Standards, Chemical Criteria and Standards, and Whole Effluent Toxicity). These categories define key physical, chemical and biological elements of the water quality standards program.
- (2) **Regulatory Interest Framework**—Research projects should support the emerging regulatory framework that has developed from Project meetings, especially RWG meetings. Ultimately, it is within this framework that Project results would be implemented.
- (3) **Selective Criteria Framework**—While a project may not meet all the criteria within the selective criteria framework, projects that satisfy the majority of criteria will be viewed as better candidates for research.

Recommended research topics are evaluated in the context of the Research Agenda established for the Project. The Research Manager in consultation with Pima County staff selects one or more research topics that support the Research Agenda for development as research projects.

These specific projects will be based upon the recommendations of major Project participants, including the RWG, SAG and EPA. The specifics of each research topic are identified in a separate document, the Research Plan, which has a limited distribution to safeguard the solicitation and procurement process for RFQs.

*Preparation of RFQs and Selection of Contractors*—The Research Manager and AWWQRP Office will draft research proposals according to requirements for RFQs established by the Pima County procurement procedures. Draft RFQs will be submitted to the RWG and SAG for comment. As applicable, RFQs will include specifications for professional services, quality control, deliverables including presentation and publication requirements, financial limitations, submittal dates, proposal evaluation criteria, proposed award dates, and describe the relevance and importance of the proposed research in the context of AWWQRP goals and objectives.

After an initial screening by Pima County Procurement Department, the Research Manager and AWWQRP Office will screen responses to RFQs for adherence to specifications. The SAG will review qualifying responses to evaluate qualifications of the respondents' project teams and facilities for conducting the research, including their prior project experience and recognition in the scientific community. The SAG will also evaluate each respondent's understanding of the request for professional services, their approach to conducting research to fulfill the request, including the reasonableness of their timetable and budget. Following this review the SAG will submit a recommendation to the Research Manager for selection of a contractor. The recommendation will consist of a ranked list. The RWG may provide comments on the SAG ranked list. The Research Manager and AWWQRP Project Director will review the ranked list and SAG comments and select a contractor.

Following the selection of a contractor, the contractor will be invited to meet with the AWWQRP Project Director, Program Manager and Research Manager to finalize the scope of professional services, schedule and address contract issues. It will be the responsibility of Pima County to manage the administrative and financial obligations of the contract. Contract management will include the tracking of deliverables, monitoring of contract requirements, processing of invoices and payment of contractors. The Research Manager will monitor the progress of those contracts and compliance with research objectives. The Research Manager and AWWQRP Office may also arrange and schedule meetings and presentations between the contractor and the SAG or RWG.