

NM Interstate Stream Commission

Guidelines for Implementation of the Water Security Planning Act and Rule

Version 7-15-26

A. Introduction

The Water Planning Bureau of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC or Commission) is responsible for implementing the Water Security Planning Rule (Rule), 19.25.16 NMAC, in accordance with the Water Security Planning Act (WSPA or Act), NMSA 1978, §72-14A-1. These guidelines describe the types of support and resources that the NMISC and NMISC staff, as defined in Section 7(C) of the Rule, will provide to regions for regional water security planning. They also describe a recommended planning process for regional water security planning councils (Councils), as defined in Section 7(G) of the Rule, to follow to help ensure their plans will meet the criteria in the Act and Rule.

Section 4.C(2) of the WSPA directs the NMISC to adopt guidelines that, at a minimum, address the following:

1. The identification of regional stakeholders (as defined in Section 7(I) of the Rule) and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration
2. The public input requirements for regional water planning
3. The requirements for a proposal for grants or loans for planning activities
4. The process for approval of grants or loans
5. The process for state agency collaboration
6. The metrics for reporting on regional water projects, programs and policies (PPPs) (as defined in Section 7(E) of the Rule)
7. The procedures to support implementation of a Regional Water Security Plan (plan or plans) (as defined in Section 7(F) of the Rule)
8. The schedule for implementation of regional water planning, including integration with statewide objectives

These guidelines are intended to complement the Act and Rule and will be updated as needed to reflect lessons learned and current best practices. They do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to create legal rights or obligations.

B. Overview of the planning process

These guidelines present the five recommended stages of the regional water security planning process: Organize, Explore, Prioritize, Plan and Action.

During the Organize stage, NMISC staff and representative members, as defined by Section 12 (A)1 of the Rule, establish and convene the region's Council through stakeholder coordination and public input.

During the Explore stage, Councils develop a common understanding of the hydrologic and administrative conditions, needs and opportunities for the region, regional public welfare values and the needs of future generations of New Mexicans, and identify goals.

During the Prioritize stage, Councils identify, evaluate, and prioritize projects, programs, and policies (PPPs) that support regional water security. Once identified, during the second part of the Prioritize stage, the Councils develop a preliminary prioritization of those PPPs.

During the Plan stage, Councils prepare a Regional Water Security Plan, seek public input, revise the draft plan, and present the final plan for requested approval to the Commission.

During the Action stage, Councils implement their approved plans, monitor progress, and periodically update priorities and plans. Once a plan is in place, the Rule envisions that each Council will revisit and update its prioritized PPP list at least every five years and reassess and replan at least every 10 years.



The first four stages of the planning process as outlined in these guidelines – Organize, Explore, Prioritize, and Plan – occur during the Initial Planning Period (IPP) (defined in Section 7(B) of the Rule) and then reoccur when a Council updates its plan during the Ongoing Planning Period (OPP) (defined in the Section 7(D) of the Rule).

Guideline sections for Organize, Explore, Prioritize, and Plan are organized in parallel structure as follows: key steps, recommended collaboration and input, resources available, and deliverables.

NMISC staff will provide tools and templates to support Councils during each of these stages. NMISC staff will update and improve tools and templates as implementation of the WSPA evolves.

The fifth stage, Action, occurs after a Council's plan is approved by the Commission. The Action stage is the beginning of the OPP.

As provided by the Rule, a Council may choose to self-convene, provided it is able to satisfy the requirements in Section 15 of the Rule. Self-convened Councils will have access to the tools and templates as they are available and will have access to staff support and services contingent on capacity and budget.

As called for by the Act and as available, NMISC staff will also administer funding to support regional water security planning. Both NMISC staff-led and self-convened Councils will be eligible for funding. Additional information about funding is found in Section D of these guidelines.

C. Getting started

Before a Council is convened and the planning process begins, NMISC staff will prepare for the Organize stage by:

1. Developing a proposed implementation schedule for the region
2. Identifying outreach priorities, including strategies for engaging small and rural communities
3. Identifying opportunities to engage the Water Security Tribal Advisory Council (WSTAC)
4. Identifying opportunities to engage acequias, including coordination with the New Mexico Acequia Commission

Before convening a Council, NMISC staff will conduct outreach to increase awareness of the planning process and available resources. NMISC staff will mobilize various public outreach campaigns to raise awareness of the upcoming planning process, such as website advertisements, local utility bill inserts, public service announcements, and other outreach activities. NMISC staff will be available to provide a "Regional Water Planning 101" presentation upon request and will provide an outreach toolkit to further raise awareness through community leaders.

NMISC staff anticipate supporting up to three Councils at a time through the IPP. The IPP is expected to take approximately two years, with each of the four planning stages - Organize, Explore, Prioritize, and Plan - lasting about six months.

COHORT 1				COHORT 2				COHORT 3			
2027		2028		2029		2030		2031		2032	
FY27	FY28			FY29	FY30			FY31	FY32		FY33
Organize	Explore	Prioritize	Plan	Organize	Explore	Prioritize	Plan	Organize	Explore	Prioritize	Plan
High Plains Council				Canadian Council				Upper Rio Grande Council			
Southwest Council				Middle Rio Grande Council				Central Basin Council			
Lower Rio Grande Council				Northwest Council				Pecos Council			

NMISC will continue to engage and support the WSTAC.

NMISC is prepared to support a proposed convening of an acequia advisory group, dependent on available agency resources.

Councils can request Commission approval to establish a sub-region, pursuant to Section 9 of the Rule, within a planning region or across multiple planning regions. NMISC staff recommend that Councils complete the IPP before requesting Commission approval for a sub-region so as to build and maintain regional collaboration during the foundational planning process.

D. The five planning stages

Below are the recommended five stages of the regional water security planning process under WSPA.

1. Organize stage

Key steps

During the Organize stage, NMISC staff and representative members, as described in Section 12 of the Rule, establish, and convene the region's Council through stakeholder coordination and input. NMISC staff, with support from contractors and partners, will facilitate the following steps:

Step 1: Convene representative council members

- Using a publicly available Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portal at www.mainstreamnm.org, identify the representative members and issue invitations —via email and postal mail—to each of the governing bodies of identified representative members.
- Host a preliminary gathering online or in person to confirm delegated representative members and discuss invitations and nominations for at-large

and non-voting members. This preliminary gathering does not constitute one of the four annual Council meetings required by the Rule.

Step 2: Recruit, establish, and host council

- a. Provide an online platform that allows residents of a region to self-identify for consideration as at-large members and/or sign up as a region-specific stakeholder.
- b. Assist the representative members as needed in sending communications to potential at-large and non-voting members to join the Council at the first required meeting.
- c. Confirm that all proposed at-large and non-voting members meet the required representation criteria in Section 12(A)(2) and (A)(3) of the Rule. At-large members who reside within the region serve as voting members. Those who reside outside the region serve as non-voting members pursuant to Section 7(H) of the Rule. If no qualified at-large member resides within the region, NMISC staff will seek to fill the required seat with a qualified person from outside the region who meets the applicable water use group requirements per Section 12 of the Rule. A non-voting at-large seat becomes a voting seat upon appointment of a qualified at-large member who resides within the region.
- d. Assist the Council's first convening as required by statute once the 10 at-large member seats and non-voting member seats on the Council are filled.
- e. Host an online forum at www.mainstreamNM.org to allow for region-specific stakeholders to continue to identify themselves to the Council. This online forum requires each potential region-specific stakeholder to identify themselves as someone who has a physical presence within the region or an explanation of their interest in engaging in that region's planning process. This online forum will stay active throughout the entire IPP and OPP.

Step 3: Create a council schedule

- a. Develop a schedule for the remaining IPP by mapping out the key tasks and deliverables outlined in the next planning stages of Explore, Prioritize, and Plan. This schedule is both incorporated into the final plan document and posted on www.mainstreamnm.org.

Step 4: Develop an engagement strategy

- a. Develop an engagement strategy to be used throughout the planning process. The engagement strategy will describe how the Council will engage region-specific stakeholders, key collaboration groups, the public and tribes throughout the planning process.

Recommended collaboration and public input

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners will collaborate with region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, acequias, and state agencies, to ensure sufficient public and tribal input through the following actions:

1. Facilitate stakeholder collaboration, communications planning, publications, public and tribal outreach, venue selections for meetings, virtual meetings, as well as options and organizational tools similar to those provided in the initial outreach campaign.
2. Assist Council-formed subcommittees or work groups, inclusive of region-specific stakeholders, as determined (subject to available resources).
3. Support opportunities for collaboration with WSTAC, as identified in Section 15(A)(1) of the Rule, including:
 - a. Notice to WSTAC of the convening of Councils and membership roster.
 - b. Communication with WSTAC regarding meetings and opportunities to engage and participate.
 - c. Establishing with WSTAC protocols for ongoing engagement.
4. Support opportunities for collaboration with acequias, including:
 - a. Notice to the New Mexico Acequia Commission of the convening of Councils and membership roster.
 - b. Communication with New Mexico Acequia Commission regarding meetings, and opportunities to engage and participate.
5. Inform state agencies of the commencement of the planning process and opportunities to provide information and input in the planning process.
6. Post notice at www.mainstreamnm.org of each Council's minimum required two meetings and any additional meetings during this stage.
7. NMISC staff will support rural outreach in the following ways:
 - a. Provide recommendations on outreach strategies and communication materials to reach and inform rural residents within the region.
 - b. Develop tailored outreach based on input from regional residents.
 - c. Coordinate communication with counties, councils of governments, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, the New Mexico Acequia Association, and other coordinated efforts designed to reach rural residents.

Resources available for the Organize stage

As needs are identified and evolve, NMISC staff will develop tools and templates for this stage and make them available at www.mainstreamnm.org. Tools and templates can be

used at Councils' discretion. Initial tools and templates provided by NMISC include, at a minimum:

1. Overview of the planning process: Summary of the regional planning process.
2. FAQs: List of frequently asked questions about the regional planning process.
3. Engagement guide and strategy template toolkit: Guide to engaging different entities throughout the planning process, including best practice recommendations for engaging rural communities, an engagement strategy template, and customizable tools (e.g., open house agendas, facilitation tips, PowerPoint slides).
4. Recruitment tools and templates: Tools to support the identification and recruitment of Council members and region-specific stakeholders (e.g., map tool for identifying representative entities, position description recruitment letter templates, appointment resolution template, and roster).
5. Operating principles guide and template: Guide to developing Council operating principles with options for different components and a customizable template.
6. Planning process schedule template: A customizable schedule template identifying key milestones, points of engagement, and deliverables throughout the planning process.
7. Guide to hosting council meetings: Guidance and resources for hosting in-person and online Council meetings throughout the planning process.
8. Welcome packet for Council members: Resources to be provided with orientation and onboarding materials.

Deliverables at the Organize stage

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will produce the following deliverables:

1. Roster of Council members and roles
2. Council operating principles
3. Council schedule of activities
4. Council engagement strategy
5. Initial list of region-specific stakeholders

2. Explore stage

Key steps

During the Explore stage, Councils, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, develop a common understanding of the hydrologic and administrative conditions, needs and opportunities for the region, regional public welfare values and the

needs of future generations of New Mexicans, all of which will shape the planning process, including identification of goals. Together they will complete the following steps:

Step 1: Characterize current and future conditions

- a. Hydrologic conditions: NMISC will work with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) and other partners (scientists, engineers, planners, etc.) to provide a foundational understanding of the current hydrologic conditions of each region based on the best available science. NMISC staff will also provide an opportunity for Councils to contribute local knowledge, data, and trends.
- b. Administrative conditions: NMISC will work with NMOSE to provide information about current water rights administration within the region, anticipated advancements in administration and enforcement, and potential opportunities to develop alternative administration plans.
- c. Other relevant conditions: NMISC will connect with other relevant state agencies and state academic institutions to provide information on state activities, initiatives or concerns related to water resources management in the region that might help inform the planning process.
- d. Characterization reports: NMISC staff will prepare the first draft of each region-specific characterization report using tools and templates developed for this purpose. NMISC staff will provide the draft report to the Council for review and an opportunity to add local knowledge, data, and trends before finalization.

Step 2: Identify values, needs and opportunities

- a. Conduct a survey or facilitate activities to gather input on the needs and opportunities for the region. This step will include coordinated input from WSTAC, the New Mexico Acequia Commission, region-specific stakeholders, and the public, and will capture relevant information from state agencies. This step will be aided by templates.
- b. Collect input and develop a document identifying public welfare values in the region and the needs of future generations of New Mexicans. This document can identify areas of consensus but consensus is not required for the document to be completed. It will inform regional planning goals and be incorporated into the draft Regional Water Security Plan. NMISC staff will provide templates to support this deliverable.

Step 3: Review considerations for the planning process

- a. Review and evaluate the considerations included in Section 14 of the Rule, any other considerations, and harness relevant expertise.

Step 4: Define regional water security goals

- a. Using information developed during Steps 1 through 3, the Council will identify regional water security planning goals.

Recommended collaboration and public input

To ensure sufficient public and tribal input, the Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, or partners, will collaborate with region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, acequias, and state agencies through the following actions:

1. Provide multiple opportunities for stakeholder, public, and tribal input and collaboration to inform identification of regional needs, values, opportunities, and goals for the planning process.
2. Implement established protocols for engagement with WSTAC
3. Conduct an initial survey or discussion of goals for the region.
4. Post notice at www.mainstreamnm.org of the Council's minimum required two meetings and any additional meetings during the Explore stage.
5. NMISC staff will support state agency collaboration in the following ways:
 - a. Participate in multi-agency planning endeavors with state agencies whose subject area is directly relevant to water management (for example, the New Mexico Environment Department for water quality or stormwater management, the Forestry Division or State Parks Division of the Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department for proposed forest management, or the Department of Wildlife for proposed species management).
 - b. Provide a forum, either online or in-person, for state agencies and the Council to meet, share information and collaborate at the request of an agency or the Council.
6. NMISC staff will support rural outreach in the following ways:
 - a. Provide recommendations on outreach strategies and communication materials to reach and inform rural residents within the region.
 - b. Develop tailored outreach based on input from regional residents.
 - c. Coordinate communication with counties, councils of governments, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, the New Mexico Acequia Association, and other coordinated efforts designed to reach rural residents.

Resources available for the Explore stage

As needs are identified and evolve, NMISC staff will develop tools and templates for this stage and make them available at www.mainstreamnm.org. Tools and templates can be used at Councils discretion. Initial templates provided by NMISC include, at a minimum:

1. *Regional characterization report guide and template*: Guide to developing the regional characterization report, including data sources, and information to inform the identification of regional considerations and opportunities, along with a customizable template for the report deliverable.

2. *Public welfare values activity or survey and document template*: To support capturing public welfare values and the needs of future generations for the region.
3. *Planning goals guide*: Supports development of regional water security planning goals.
4. *State agency coordination guide*: Supports development of a process for collaboration with state agencies.

Deliverables at the Explore stage

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will produce the following deliverables:

1. Regional characterization report
2. List of public welfare values and the needs of future generations of New Mexicans for the region
3. List of regional water security planning goals

3. Prioritize stage

Key steps

During the Prioritize stage, Councils identify, evaluate, and prioritize PPPs that support regional water security and the goals identified in the Explore stage. Councils, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will complete the following steps:

Step 1: Identification of PPPs

- a. Conduct a survey and facilitate activities to gather input on potential PPPs for the region. This step should include coordinated input from WSTAC, Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes, the New Mexico Acequia Commission, region-specific stakeholders, the public, and state agencies. This step is supported by the PPP prioritization tool.

Step 2: Prioritization of PPPs

- a. Brainstorm, identify, evaluate, and ultimately prioritize PPPs. This process is best supported through use of the PPP prioritization tools provided by NMISC. The tool generates a spreadsheet of three prioritized lists of PPPs, one list for each readiness level, for review by a Council. Identification and prioritization of PPPs is a critical step and a requirement of the Act. Use of the PPP prioritization tool is not required and Councils may choose a different process. However, Councils are required by Section 15(C)1 in the Rule to create a list of prioritized PPPs, identifying readiness stage and sponsor.
- b. The PPP prioritization tool provides a four-step process for PPP prioritization that may either be completed collectively by the Council through a facilitated

process, or by individual Council members. The PPP prioritization tool was created to inform consensus-based decision making or allow for a qualitative ranking structure.

- i. The first step outlined in the PPP prioritization tool allows a Council to define the criteria for evaluation of PPPs using their goals for regional water security planning, identified earlier in the planning process.
 - ii. The second step is to brainstorm a working list of PPP ideas informed by Council priorities and engagement with stakeholders, including the public and tribes. For each PPP idea, a Council must specify a name, type, sponsor, one of three readiness levels (idea, scoping, or ready to proceed), and estimated or potential funding sources.
 - iii. In step three, a Council will evaluate each PPP against their region-specific goals and criteria.
 - iv. In the final step, the PPP prioritization tool generates a spreadsheet of three prioritized lists of PPPs, one list for each readiness level, for review by a Council.
- c. Revisit and reconcile a Council's evaluation as needed and determine which PPPs to include in the final prioritized PPP list within the final plan.

Recommended collaboration and public input

To ensure sufficient input, the Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will collaborate with region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes, acequias, and state agencies, through the following actions:

1. Support and facilitation of stakeholder opportunities for collaboration, including:
 - a. Identifying PPPs, which must include the level of readiness and sponsor(s).
 - b. Discussing and evaluating PPPs, to express preferences or reasons why PPPs are favored or unfavored.
2. Engage through established protocols with WSTAC to:
 - a. Identify PPPs, which must include the level of readiness and sponsor(s).
 - b. Discuss preferences or reasons why PPPs are favored or unfavored.
 - c. Ensure consideration of tribal sovereignty, tribal water rights, federally executed Indian water rights settlements and the needs of tribal communities during development of the plan.
3. Incorporate PPPs tied to Indian water rights settlements.
4. Support facilitation of state agencies' review of PPPs from Councils for identification of permit requirements or other considerations.

5. Post notice at www.mainstreamnm.org of a Council's minimum required two meetings and any subsequent meetings during the Prioritize stage.
6. NMISC staff will support rural outreach in the following ways:
 - a. Provide recommendations on outreach strategies and communication materials to reach and inform rural residents within the region.
 - b. Develop tailored outreach based on input from regional residents.
 - c. Communicate communication with counties, councils of governments, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, the New Mexico Acequia Association, and other coordinated efforts designed to reach rural residents.

Resources available for the Prioritize stage

As needs are identified and evolve, NMISC staff will develop tools and templates for this stage and make them available at www.mainstreamnm.org. Tools and templates can be used at Councils discretion. Initial tools and templates provided by NMISC will include, at a minimum:

1. *List of potential PPPs*: Sample projects, policies, and programs.
2. *PPP prioritization tool*: Spreadsheet and process templates to support the prioritization of PPPs.
3. *Prioritized PPP list*: Template for the deliverable list of PPPs that will be shared with NMISC staff and WSTAC for review and ultimately included in the plan.

Prioritize stage deliverables

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will produce the following deliverables:

1. Three prioritized PPP lists, organized by readiness level and identifying sponsors

4. Plan stage

Key steps

During the Plan stage, Councils integrate the information and deliverables developed during the Organize, Explore, and Prioritize stages into a Regional Water Security Plan. Councils then seek input on the draft plan from the public, region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, and Nations, Pueblos and Tribes; refine the draft plan; and present the final plan to the Commission for requested approval. Councils, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will complete the following steps:

Step 1: Develop draft plan and gather input

- a. Develop the plan by integrating the appropriate deliverables from Organize, Explore, and Prioritize into a single document. NMISC staff will provide a customizable template for the draft plan.

Step 2: Conduct a review and input period

- a. Provide sufficient time and opportunities for the public, region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, and Nations, Pueblos and Tribes to review the draft Regional Water Security Plan and provide input. Councils should implement the engagement strategy developed during the Organize stage.

Step 3: Finalize the plan

- a. Refine and finalize the plan based on the input received in Step 2, then submit the final draft plan to NMISC staff for review of compliance with applicable legal requirements before presentation to the Commission.

Step 4: Adopt the plan

- a. Present the final Regional Water Security Plan to the Commission for consideration at the next available Commission meeting.

Recommended collaboration and public input

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will collaborate with region-specific stakeholders, WSTAC, acequias, and state agencies to ensure meaningful participation throughout development of the plan through the following actions:

1. Support and facilitate multiple opportunities for input and collaboration:
 - a. Incorporate information and input received during earlier stages into the plan draft.
 - b. Invite region-specific stakeholders and others to provide letters of support or opposition of the plan to the Commission.
2. Post notice at www.mainstreamnm.org of the Council's minimum required two meetings and any subsequent meetings during the Plan stage.
3. Support and facilitate opportunities for collaboration with WSTAC, including:
 - a. Notice to WSTAC of the draft plan for review, consideration and comment.
 - b. Engagement, involvement, and recommendation, including documentation of any unresolved issues.
4. Support acequia review, consideration and comment.
5. NMISC staff will serve as liaisons to help state agencies provide timely agency comments to the Councils.
6. NMISC staff will support rural outreach in the following ways:

- a. Provide recommendations on outreach strategies and communication materials to reach and inform rural residents within the region.
- b. Develop tailored outreach based on input from regional residents.
- c. Coordinate communication with counties, councils of governments, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation the New Mexico Acequia Association, and other coordinated efforts designed to reach rural residents.

Resources available for the Plan stage

As needs are identified and evolve, NMISC staff will develop tools and templates for this stage and make them available at www.mainstreamnm.org. Tools and templates can be used at Councils discretion. Initial tools and templates provided by NMISC include, at a minimum:

1. Planning guide and template: To support development of the draft plan and a customizable template for the final plan document for Commission consideration and approval.
2. Commission approval resources: For Councils to use in the approval stage (e.g., example motion for approval, template letter(s)).
3. Planning evaluation survey: For use by the Council to solicit input on the planning process from Council members, Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes, region-specific stakeholders, and the public.

Deliverables at the Plan Stage

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will produce the following deliverables:

1. Draft Regional Water Security Plan
2. Final draft Regional Water Security Plan
3. Final Regional Water Security Plan

5. Action stage

Key steps

During the Action stage, Councils implement their Commission-approved Regional Water Security Plans and begin the OPP. During this stage, Councils advance PPPs, monitor progress, update priorities, and prepare for future plan updates.

Pursuant to the Rule, Councils must review and update their prioritized PPP lists at least every five years and update their Regional Water Security Plan at least every 10 years. NMISC staff recommend that Councils begin the planning process at least one year before the next plan update to allow sufficient time to complete the Organize, Explore, Prioritize,

and Plan stages. Councils with support from NMISC staff, contractors and partners, will complete the following steps:

Step 1: Share the adopted Regional Water Security Plans

- a. Publish the final Regional Water Security Plan online and make it readily available throughout the region.

Step 2: Advance PPPs

- a. PPP sponsors will work to implement prioritized PPPs.
- b. NMISC staff will support PPP implementation by:
 - i. serving as liaisons between Councils and other potential partners such as state or federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, or private entities.
 - ii. identifying knowledgeable local resources.
 - iii. identifying funding opportunities, including coordinating with the NM Department of Finance and Administration's funding navigator.
 - iv. connecting Councils with opportunities to coordinate on projects with multiple benefits.
- c. NMISC staff will maintain existing tools and templates as appropriate, and develop new materials in response to Council needs. Existing tools and templates include, but are not limited to:
 - i. water planning documents, such as a consolidation of relevant water-related plans.
 - ii. websites and interactive tools that support development and use of current science, data, and models.
- d. NMISC staff will inform Councils about statewide objectives.
- e. NMISC staff responsibilities do not include:
 - i. Acting as a fiscal agent for PPPs;
 - ii. Serving as decision maker for prioritizing PPPs;
 - iii. Presenting plans to the Commission;
 - iv. Implementing plans;
 - v. Assisting with water rights or other permitting associated with PPPs;
 - vi. Managing grants or loans; or
 - vii. Providing PPP project management.

Step 3: Track and report on PPPs

Councils will report annually on implementation status of their plans. Reporting metrics for PPPs and plans may include the following information as relevant:

1. Cost estimates, including identification of long-term operation and management (O&M) costs
2. Funding leveraged
3. Permitting progress
4. Identification of next steps
5. Quantity and reach of outreach and engagement activities
6. Number of people benefiting from activities

Step 4: Meet and Maintain the Council

1. Post notice at www.mainstreamnm.org of a Council's required meetings, which occur at least two times each year during periods when a Council is not in the process of updating a plan and at least four Council meetings per calendar year while a Council is updating its Regional Water Security Plan.

Step 5 (optional): Sub-region approval process

The process for Councils to request Commission approval for a sub-region includes the following steps:

- a. Proposed sub-regions request approval from their Council(s) at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council(s).
- b. Councils evaluate the request using the criteria specified in Section (C) of the Rule.
- c. If the Council determines that a sub-region may be beneficial for regional water security planning, the Council(s) will submit a request to NMISC staff to be placed on a Commission meeting agenda.
- d. The Commission will evaluate the request and decide, by vote, whether the proposed sub-region satisfies the criteria in Section 9 (C) of the Rule.
- e. If a Council denies the request for a sub-region, proponents of the proposed sub-region may appeal to the Commission by submitting a request to NMISC staff to be placed on a Commission meeting agenda. The Commission will also request that the Council(s) give a presentation at the meeting on the reasons for not supporting the sub-region recognition. The Commission will decide, by vote, whether the proposed sub-region satisfies the criteria in Section 9 (C) of the Rule.
- f. NMISC staff will provide an initial review of proposals from potential sub-regions based on the criteria in Section 9 of the Rule.

- g. Sub-regions are responsible for staffing and carrying out their own planning processes. NMISC staff will prioritize supporting regional Councils and are unlikely to have sufficient capacity and budget to also support sub-region activities.
- h. NMISC staff will support Councils in developing a process for the integration of sub-region PPPs in prioritized PPP lists in advance of any request from a Council for Commission approval of a sub-region.

Resources available for the Action stage

As needs are identified and evolve, NMISC staff will develop tools and templates for this stage and make them available at www.mainstreamnm.org. Tools and templates can be used at Councils discretion. Initial tools and templates provided by NMISC include, at a minimum:

- 1. *Annual progress report template*: For Councils to report on required metrics for PPP and plan implementation

Deliverables at Action stage

The Council, with support from NMISC staff, contractors, and partners, will produce the following deliverables:

- 2. Annual progress reports
- 3. Twice annual Council meeting minutes
- 4. Updated PPP list every five years
- 5. Updated Regional Water Security Plan every 10 years

E. Funding to support regional water planning and plan implementation

NMISC will make funding available to support regional water planning activities and implementation of prioritized PPPs in the idea or scoping stage as described in Section 15(C)(1) of the Rule including:

- 1. **Available funding**: NMISC staff will make funding available for the following activities:
 - a. *Planning activities*: NMISC staff will budget up to \$100,000 annually to be awarded competitively to convened Councils who submit requests for aid in the development of a plan. Councils may request funding for planning activities for a subsequent fiscal year by submitting an email to NMISC planning staff by March 31. Convened Councils may request up to \$50,000 for eligible planning activities. Eligible planning activities include communication, engagement, studies or assessments, data collection or

synthesis, or any other planning activity that aids in the development of a plan. The emailed request must include activity name, activity timeline, budget, requesting entity, identified sponsor, description of the activity in a scope of work format, rationale for the activity, and the desired funding mechanism type (funding agreement or on-call contractor, see below). NMISC staff will evaluate and prioritize all requests received, then present all requests received and requests recommended by staff for funding to the Commission for approval as part of the Water Planning Bureau's next fiscal year work plan. This process is competitive and not all requests may result in awards.

- b. Implementation of prioritized PPPs in the idea or scoping stage: Upon Commission approval of a plan, each Council will receive \$50,000 to help move PPPs that are in the idea or scoping stage to the ready to proceed stage.¹

Funds must support either Council planning activities or implementation of prioritized PPPs in the idea or scoping stage. Requests that overlap, conflict, or duplicate projects, tools, templates or other work may not be eligible for funding. Requests for funding of salaries, personnel costs, travel expenses or travel reimbursements, and any PPP identified that is in the ready-to-proceed stage of an approved plan are also ineligible. Finally, requests and funding expenditures must comply with applicable law and regulations. The determination of whether a request is ineligible is in NMISC's sole discretion.

2. **Funding mechanisms**: Commission approved activities for funding can use one of two mechanisms: (a) funding agreements or (b) NMISC on-call contractors.

- a. Funding agreements: Reimbursement-basis grants may be provided by the NMISC through funding agreements with an eligible entity sponsoring the activity, or with a fiscal agent if the sponsor is not an eligible entity. Under a funding agreement, the sponsor and/or fiscal agent will implement the work necessary to complete the activity. A sponsor is eligible if it is a public entity and meets the requirements of the Public Finance Accountability Act (PFAA). Activity sponsors must provide their most recent audit, current budget, and any financial reports required under the Audit Act. Based on the audit, budget, and financial requirements of the PFAA, the NMISC may determine that a fiscal agent is necessary and will coordinate with the Council and identified sponsor to identify a fiscal agent. Individuals, businesses, civil society groups such as non-profit organizations and other non-public entities may receive funds through a valid procurement process but are not eligible to receive reimbursement-basis grants.
- b. NMISC on-call contractors: Councils may use NMISC on-call contractors, managed by NMISC staff on behalf of the Council, for professional services

¹ Amounts are established as of FY27 and may be adjusted up or down based on recurring funding from the legislature.

to implement a funded activity. NMISC staff and the Council will develop a proposed scope of work and coordinate on the selection of on-call contractors. For an on-call contractor to provide work to implement the activity, the contractor must have an existing contract with the NMISC, the activity must fall within the existing contract's scope and cost ceiling, and the contractor must agree to implement the work.

3. **Future funding for planning activities or PPP implementation:** Contingent upon sufficient funding from the Legislature, NMISC will provide additional funding for planning activities or for Councils to direct towards implementation of prioritized PPPs in the idea or scoping stage.

These guidelines may be revised or modified as needed and as approved by the Commission.

These guidelines are adopted, approved, accepted and effective on this ____ day of ____, 2026 by a vote of _____ in favor, _____ opposed and _____ abstaining.

Mark Sanchez, Chairman
NM Interstate Stream Commission