

ASRP IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW (2023–2025 BIENNIUM)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Chehalis Basin Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) is a key element of the Chehalis Basin Strategy, which was launched in 2010 to meet two of the basin’s greatest challenges: the precipitous decline of salmon and other aquatic species and the certainty that catastrophic flooding will once again devastate the basin. The ASRP presents a detailed, science-based roadmap for restoring habitat and protecting intact ecosystems of aquatic species along the rivers and streams in the Chehalis Basin.

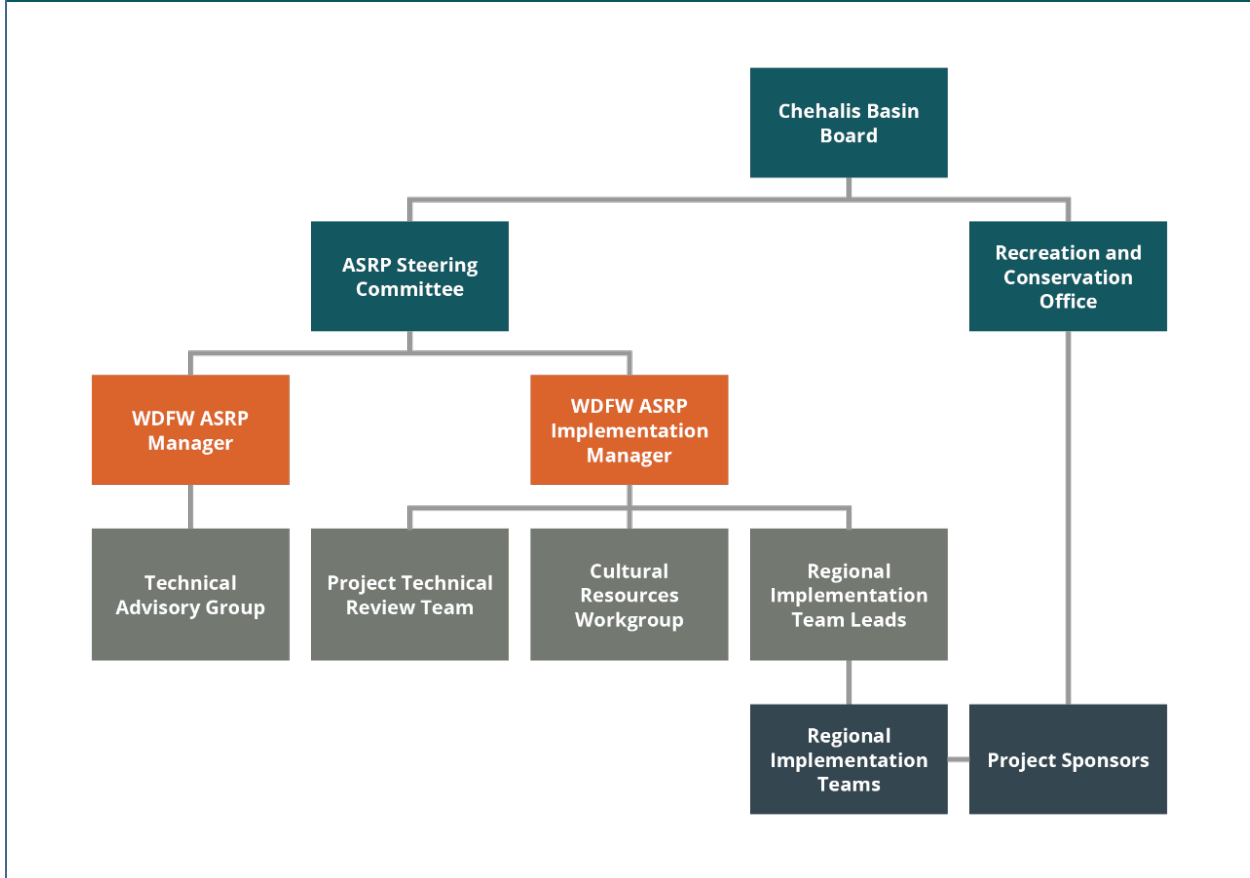
Together with other parts of the Chehalis Basin Strategy, these actions present a historic opportunity to create a safer, more resilient region for current residents and future generations.

The ASRP is overseen by a Steering Committee whose members have collaboratively developed program priorities and a structure for implementing projects. The Steering Committee presents this document as an overview of the ASRP implementation structure and the process through which projects will be developed and funded to achieve program goals. This document describes the full implementation structure and provides details to facilitate successful project implementation through the ASRP. Together with project sponsors, project partners, and landowners, the actions funded through the ASRP are poised to make a lasting, positive impact on the Chehalis Basin’s aquatic species and communities.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Several organizations are integral to the successful implementation of the ASRP (Figure 1). To begin, the Chehalis Basin Board (Board) and its staff and the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB) oversee the development, implementation, and allocation of funds to fulfill the mission of the Chehalis Basin Strategy. The ASRP Steering Committee is responsible for developing and implementing the ASRP, which includes setting priorities and recommending funding allocations to the Board. The ASRP Steering Committee is supported by staff at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) who manage the operations of the program. WDFW staff are also responsible for organizing and facilitating groups of experts to advance the goals of the ASRP. These groups include the Technical Advisory Group, Project Technical Review Team, Cultural Resources Workgroup, and Regional Implementation Team Leads (RIT Leads). The ASRP Steering Committee and OCB work directly with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to contract approved grants with project sponsors. Project sponsors, who will work with RCO to fulfill all contract deliverables, also work with the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) to identify, collaborate, and coordinate on priority project opportunities.

Figure 1
ASRP Implementation Organizational Chart



2.1 Definitions in Relation to ASRP Implementation

ASRP Steering Committee: ASRP guiding committee that directs the staff and technical work to develop and implement the ASRP and is responsible for developing priority areas and making recommendations for allocations for funding each biennium. The ASRP Steering Committee is chartered to make recommendations to OCB and the Board on specific funding dispersals to enact program priorities.

Chehalis Basin Board: Leads development of a long-term strategy for the Chehalis Basin and has spending authority of funds allocated to the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Approves budgets and spending plans for programs within the Chehalis Basin Strategy, including the ASRP.

Cultural Resources Workgroup: Representatives from each interested tribal nation who review and provide comment on cultural resources surveys for ASRP restoration projects.

Ecological Region: Because of the size and diversity of the Chehalis Basin, the ASRP uses the concept of ecological regions. Ecological regions are areas that have distinct geologic and hydrologic characteristics and processes. The boundaries around the ecological regions were drawn to group similar systems and habitat types together based on current ecological characteristics and processes—such as geologic,

climatic, and topographic conditions.

Geospatial Unit: Also known as a GSU, typically representing a major segment of a river; may also be an entire small tributary sub-basin. Ecological regions are typically composed of numerous GSUs. GSUs are the spatial reference for prioritization and sequencing the implementation of the ASRP.

Office of Chehalis Basin: Washington Department of Ecology office to support the Board in developing and implementing the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Reviews ASRP Steering Committee funding recommendations within context of the appropriated budget and goals of the overall Chehalis Basin Strategy.

Project Sponsor: Eligible organization selected through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) that coordinate and manage all aspects of project development, project management, design, permitting, and construction in line with ASRP program requirements.

Project Technical Review Team: Independent experts selected through a Request for Qualifications and Quotations (RFQQ) process to provide ongoing review and consultation on all projects submitted for design and construction funding through the RITs.

Recreation and Conservation Office: State agency responsible for project contract development and management of state-funded projects. All project funding is dispersed from RCO to project sponsors.

Regional Implementation Team: Willing project sponsors, community members, and other interested parties that participate on a voluntary basis to coordinate and collaborate on ASRP project development and implementation.

Regional Implementation Team Lead: Staff from conservation districts who facilitate teams of willing project sponsors in their respective implementation region to coordinate landowner outreach, project development, sponsorship, and project-related materials sourcing needs.

Technical Advisory Group: Science advisory group to the ASRP Steering Committee that develops the technical recommendations on program priorities, monitoring, and adaptive management.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ASRP Program Manager: Staff lead on ASRP program development and execution. Works closely with implementation staff to ensure coordination of project implementation with programmatic vision and goals.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ASRP Implementation Manager: Staff lead on ASRP project implementation. Responsible for ongoing management of project lists and coordination between the Team Leads and WDFW, RCO, and OCB staff.

3 IMPLEMENTATION REGIONS AND TEAMS

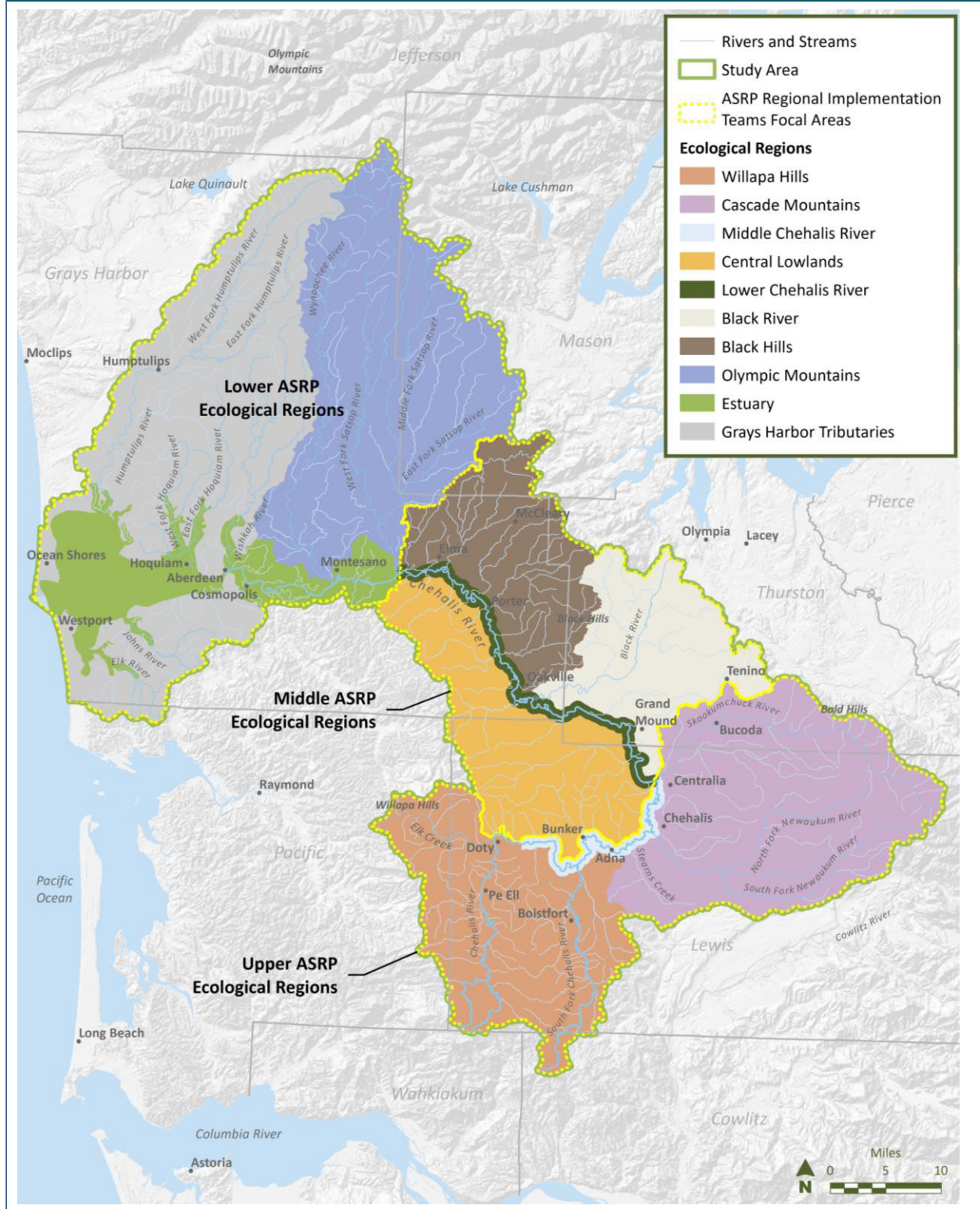
The Chehalis Basin is a large and diverse basin, and thus many partners are needed to successfully meet the ASRP’s goals for restoration and protection. Funding and localized resources are needed to achieve these goals at the pace and scale desired by the program. Implementation Regions, which are portions of the Chehalis Basin, were delineated to focus project sponsor participation and provide a specific geographic area for project coordination. This overview highlights the structure, outreach, and collaboration essential to meet ASRP goals.

3.1 Implementation Regions

Implementation Regions group three or more Ecological Regions in the Chehalis Basin as follows:

- Upper Region
 - Ecological Regions: Willapa Hills, Cascade Mountains, Middle Chehalis River
 - Counties: Lewis County and to lesser extents Thurston County, Pacific County
- Middle Region
 - Ecological Regions: Central Lowlands, Lower Chehalis River, Black River, Black Hills
 - Counties: Thurston County and to lesser extents Lewis County, Grays Harbor County, Mason County
- Lower Region
 - Ecological Regions: Olympic Mountains, Grays Harbor Tributaries, Estuary
 - Counties: Grays Harbor County and to lesser extents Mason County, Thurston County

Figure 2
ASRP Implementation Regions



3.2 Regional Implementation Teams

Regional Implementation Teams are groups of interested project sponsors and other project partners who participate in creating local priorities for implementation within the ASRP priority GSUs. Project Sponsors may participate on at least one Regional Implementation Team in the area of the basin they are interested in implementing projects. Participation on this team will foster collaborative and efficient project planning and landowner outreach in a single region.

As a team, Project Sponsors will identify project development areas of interest within the priority GSUs based on guidance set by the ASRP Steering Committee. The teams will also discuss priority project opportunities to propose for inclusion in the ASRP project portfolio. Teams should work to develop and propose project opportunities collaboratively and in line with the level of effort described in ASRP Steering Committee biennial funding guidance. To avoid potential conflict of interest, the ASRP Implementation Manager will facilitate any Regional Implementation Team discussions relating to funding allocations.

3.2.1 Regional Implementation Team Leads

Team Lead positions are staffed by their respective Conservation Districts and will support outreach and coordination efforts within each of the implementation regions: the Lewis Conservation District in the Upper Region, Thurston Conservation District in the Middle Region, and Grays Harbor Conservation District in the Lower Region.

Team Leads facilitate teams of willing project sponsors to coordinate landowner outreach, project development, sponsorship, and potentially project-related materials sourcing needs. These team leads perform the following tasks:

- Collaboratively develop Regional Implementation Team structure and processes in partnership with the ASRP Implementation Manager.
- Engage and coordinate with project sponsors to participate in Regional Implementation Teams.
- Organize and facilitate Regional Implementation Team meetings.
- Coordinate with the ASRP Implementation Manager to support project portfolio management.
- Support sponsor project development and clarify goals of ASRP priority areas to help ensure projects developed will be supported for funding.
- Communicate and coordinate landowner interest in Chehalis Basin Strategy-related engagement with all sponsors participating on Regional Implementation Teams.

Developing on-the-ground opportunities with private landowners is critical to the success of the ASRP program, and implementing this work requires a diverse collective of expertise. Ideally a Team Lead will be a consistent face from the Conservation District to build awareness of the program and promote trust with sponsors, landowners, and stakeholders.

4 PROJECT PIPELINE PROCESS

The ASRP will fund planning, design, and implementation restoration and protection projects. Complex projects can be funded on either a phase-by-phase approach (e.g., design funded separately from implementation) or packaged into a larger single proposal. Project sponsors should consult with their Team Lead and other peers on their RIT on how to package their specific proposal. ASRP projects are most often funded using the following phased process:

1. Project Development Grant
2. Preliminary and Final Design Grant
3. Project Implementation Grant

Sponsors, as part of Regional Implementation Teams, will coordinate to identify opportunities that align with *ASRP Project Funding Guidance 2023–2025*. This can happen for the project development stage and for projects that may already be developed enough to complete the Project Proposal Checklist (see Table 1) and be reviewed for potential inclusion. Once project concepts are identified, Regional Implementation Teams will discuss the regional priorities and recommend specific projects that meet program guidance to submit for technical review.

The Project Technical Review Team (TRT) includes independent experts evaluating each project using a set of criteria. Potential projects are reviewed for technical merit and habitat uplift potential. All materials on the Project Proposal Checklist must be submitted for technical review. Projects which meet a threshold score will be recommended to the ASRP Steering Committee for funding consideration. For projects which fall below this threshold score, the TRT will provide feedback for the project sponsor to refine their proposal. For especially large and complex projects, the project sponsor can consider a site visit or other meeting with the TRT to provide additional context.

All projects must submit the suite of items in the project proposal checklist (Table 1) to be evaluated for funding potential. These are also the deliverables for the project development funding phase. If partnering with other organizations on a single project, project sponsors should clarify the roles and responsibilities as well as funding requests for each organization.

Table 1
Project Proposal Checklist

CHECKLIST ITEMS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed Landowner Acknowledgement form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Assessment and Project Proposal Form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Extent Maps

4.1 Project Type Eligibility

Table 2
 Project Type Eligibility

<p>The following activities are considered ELIGIBLE for funding through the ASRP project portfolio:</p>	<p>The following activities are considered INELIGIBLE for funding through the project portfolio:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat protection • Habitat restoration • Combination protection and restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Fish passage projects falling under the Washington Department of Natural Resources’ Road Maintenance Abandonment Plan Program (large forest landowners harvesting greater than 2 million board feet per year) • Projects outside of the Chehalis River Basin and its tributaries

The ASRP can fund development of projects and local strategies. For eligibility guidelines, see the [ASRP Project Development Funding Guidance](#).

4.2 Project Design, Implementation Reviews, and Funding Allocations

ASRP portfolio projects will undergo a series of technical reviews at each stage of development similar to the review for inclusion into the project portfolio (Section 4.1). These reviews will happen as soon as the previous phase is completed and will be evaluated using technical criteria.

4.2.1 Design and Review Process

Project sponsors will submit project deliverables that are agreed to by the sponsor and Implementation Manager for each major phase of the restoration project once completed. For complicated projects, such as reach-scale actions, sponsors will submit the agreed-to deliverables at the following major phases:

1. Conceptual design
2. Preliminary design
3. Final design
4. Construction

For comparably simple projects, such as fish passage barrier corrections or riparian planting only, a project could go from conceptual to final design in one to two revised form submissions and technical reviews. It will be up to the ASRP Implementation Manager to discuss necessary deliverables with each sponsor as their project is reviewed and included in the project portfolio.

These forms, along with technical criteria and site visits, will be the basis for which the Project Technical Review Team (TRT) will review each project in the portfolio to ensure continued technical merit and feasibility. The TRT will consult the project sponsor with any questions, suggestions, or refinements related to the project at each phase. Once a sponsor submits the final design deliverables, they must also include construction and materials costs, the appropriate breakdown of costs, and any construction specification designs and basis of design reports.

TRT reviews occur once a project is ready to advance to the next stage of implementation. The TRT have consistent technical criteria to ensure objective, unbiased project reviews. Once the TRT recommends the project to enter the next stage of development, the ASRP Implementation Manager will consult the ASRP Steering Committee and OCB for approval, then authorize RCO to reimburse invoices for the next stage of development.

If a project is protection focused, sponsors are required to submit a refined Site Assessment and Project Proposal form at the following stages:

1. Initial landowner negotiation
2. Final landowner negotiation agreement

4.2.2 Funding

Funding is obligated at the time of OCB or Board approval. Board approval is required to fund projects seeking greater than \$500k in funding. Funding can be reappropriated across multiple biennia. ASRP Steering Committee and OCB approval is needed for scope changes, cost increases, and time extensions.

4.3 Project Closeout

Once a project is either constructed or acquired, the project sponsor will formally close out the project. This entails ensuring that all subcontracts are paid in full and deliverables to RCO are fulfilled.

5 FUNDING

All funding for ASRP implementation comes from the state biennial capital budget. Funding for this work is approved and allocated from the Washington Department of Ecology, then through RCO directly to the project sponsor implementing the project. All ASRP funding is authorized by the Board as part of the Chehalis Basin Strategy budget. In-kind contributions and other funding sources are encouraged to contribute to projects funded by the ASRP. To qualify for receiving ASRP project funding, project sponsors must be selected through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and enter into a contract with RCO.

5.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for project funding, project sponsors are selected through an RFQ administered by RCO. Selected project sponsors will maintain eligibility for 6 years with the option to renew thereafter on a biennial basis. Contact the [ASRP Implementation Manager](#) for more information.

5.2 Contracting

RCO will contract directly with project sponsors to implement projects. RCO will oversee all project contracts to ensure that deliverables are met. WDFW will consult with RCO on any technical questions relating to project deliverables.

5.3 Project Funding Strategy

The ASRP Steering Committee publishes [ASRP Project Funding Guidance](#) where targeted project budget amounts and priority action types are identified biennially. This guidance directs the Regional Implementation Teams as they identify and prioritize projects for the project portfolio.

Funding will be allocated to project development actions and projects in the portfolio at any time during the biennium, and amounts will be dictated by the following:

- Amount of available funding for ASRP implementation (i.e., the allocation of the project implementation budget)
- Project implementation progress in line with biennial program priorities

The ASRP Steering Committee will monitor implementation progress to identify potential shifts in project funding guidance throughout the biennium to increase feasibility of implementation and support project sponsor success with willing landowners.

A reserve pot of funding will be set aside at the start of each biennium for high-priority opportunistic projects. This reserve will include 5% of the ASRP project implementation budget in the 2023–2025 biennium. Funds are intended to be allocated for opportunistic protection actions or restoration actions to advance the goals of the program, which may be in the form of match funds or (for certain instances) full project funding. Guidance for this funding can be found in the [ASRP Opportunistic Funding Guidance](#).

6 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The ASRP Steering Committee puts forth this document as a reference for 2023–2025 implementation efforts. As the processes described in this document get implemented over the 2023–2025 biennium, the ASRP Steering Committee may refine and adjust specific steps as needed to ensure successful project implementation and project sponsor engagement. Any adjustments to the content of this document will be published in a new version of the *ASRP Implementation Structure Overview 2023–2025*, with updates flagged for the reader.