

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Distinct Tribal Program Framework

A. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Background

- 1) The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) [Action Plan III](#) will guide the actions of Federal agencies and their many partners from Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 2020) to Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) to protect and restore the Great Lakes.
- 2) In selecting the best combination of programs and projects for Great Lakes protection and restoration, GLRI Federal agencies will continue to consult with the Great Lakes States and Tribes and engage with other nonfederal stakeholders.

B. Distinct Tribal Program Background

- 1) GLRI Federal agencies seek to work with Tribal governments in the spirit of self-determination, maximum flexibility, and consistent with Federal Indian trust responsibilities to support Tribal priorities that are consistent with GLRI goals and objectives.
- 2) Beginning in FY2020, Congressional appropriations for the GLRI included additional direction¹ to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stating: “as the Agency distributes funds across the five focus areas, tribal related activities should be maintained at not less than \$15,000,000.”
- 3) To meet this Congressional directive and better support Tribal priorities aligned with those of the GLRI, the Regional Working Group (RWG)² created the GLRI Distinct Tribal Program (DTP) in FY 2020.

C. Distinct Tribal Program Overview

- 1) The DTP will be supported by GLRI funds so that self-determined tribal-related GLRI activities are maintained at not less than \$15,000,000.
- 2) The U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) will administer the DTP with funds provided by the GLRI.
- 3) Eligibility to participate in the DTP is limited to Federally recognized Tribes and Native American Organizations authorized by Tribal governments.
- 4) The DTP will consist of two components:
 - a. Tribal Capacity Building
 - b. Tribal GLRI Projects
- 5) The DTP Framework will guide the implementation of the program and will be revised as necessary by EPA and BIA with discussion and input from Tribes as well as input from other RWG Federal agencies.
- 6) The DTP will likely represent most of the funding that Tribes receive from GLRI. Exceptions will include, but are not limited to:
 - a. GLRI Federal agency competitive funding opportunities where Tribes are eligible entities;
 - b. Area of Concern (AOC) project funding;
 - c. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Tribal Aquatic Nuisance Species Program;

¹ HR: 116-100 and HR: 116-448

² The Regional Working Group (RWG) is a sub-group of the Interagency Task Force established by [Executive Order 13340](#). The RWG consists of senior management officials of the 16 federal agencies and departments identified in the GLRI Action Plan III (<http://glri.us>).

- d. U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service Wildlife Habitat contracts; and
- e. Small projects funded by the GLRI Federal agencies largely for their purpose (e.g. fish collection for EPA).

D. Tribal Capacity Building

- 1) The DTP will provide funding to maintain capacity for those Tribes with long-standing Great Lakes programs and enhance opportunities to build capacity in other Tribes.
- 2) Capacity is intended to support Tribal activities:
 - o To provide input and participation in Great Lakes meetings and initiatives (e.g., Lakewide Action and Management Plan (LAMP) Partnerships, AOCs, and other working groups pursuant to GLRI and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement) for the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem; and as appropriate
 - o To conduct additional activities that fall within the scope and intent of a LAMP objective or advance the objectives of the GLRI Action Plan III (i.e., routine monitoring, project oversight/coordination, education and outreach, etc.).
- 3) Approximately \$3 million will be made available annually in the Tribal capacity category, unless there is increased need in future funding years.
- 4) Funding requests for Tribal capacity shall be solicited on a three-year basis by BIA, unless new needs are identified (e.g., new Tribal entities seeking capacity support).
- 5) Successful applicants will be selected to receive annual capacity funding incrementally over a three-year period, subject to congressional appropriation and availability of funds.

E. Tribal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Projects

- 1) Remaining annual DTP funding will be allocated to the Tribal projects category.
- 2) BIA will solicit an annual competitive Request for Proposals for GLRI DTP funding for eligible Tribal projects contributing to one or more measures of progress in GLRI Action Plan III (except Measures 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3 specific to AOCs).
- 3) Eligible projects must be located in the Great Lakes basin or seek to protect or restore the health of Great Lakes ecosystems pursuant to the [GLRI Action Plan](#).
- 4) Individual proposal workplans should not exceed 3 years, with a majority of workplans expected to be 1 or 2 years.³
- 5) An eligible Tribal entity may request and receive funding for more than one GLRI project. Tribes submitting more than one project proposal should indicate their internal project prioritization.

F. BIA Administration of the DTP

- 1) It is essential that BIA is adequately resourced to effectively administer and support the DTP.
- 2) BIA personnel involved in administering the DTP will include a Program Manager, Biologists/Awarding Official's Technical Representatives, and additional personnel support as necessary.
- 3) The costs for BIA's administration of the DTP will be supported using GLRI funds.
- 4) The administrative costs will be approximately \$500,000 annually unless increased need is demonstrated.

G. Enhanced Communication and Coordination

³ This does not limit longer-term Tribal restoration programs supported by individual 1-3-year project workplans.

- 1) The RWG remains committed to holding GLRI Tribal Forums 1-2 times per year, co-led by BIA and EPA, to discuss Tribal issues, priorities and ideas for improved GLRI implementation.
- 2) BIA and EPA shall share contact information among Tribes and Federal agencies to promote partnerships. RWG agencies are encouraged to continue building relationships directly with the Tribes.
- 3) BIA will continue to participate in GLRI Focus Area working groups to help facilitate coordination and support outreach for direct Tribal participation and input where appropriate.
- 4) GLRI Federal agencies may support, where appropriate, the scoring and technical review of DTP proposals coordinated by BIA.
- 5) BIA will update RWG and Focus Area working groups on Tribal projects supported by the DTP.
- 6) BIA will engage with Tribes on out-year budget planning to estimate future funding needs, identify larger projects, and estimate Tribal contribution to annual Measure of Progress targets.