**SIAS 2.0**

**Background and Instructions**

**December 2013**

The Science Investment and Accountability Schedule (SIAS) has been developed by the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for two substantial purposes: (1) to express the Services’ vision for, and to inform the Service’s investment in, the suite of activities, actions, and outcomes that an LCC would accomplish as it develops as a collaborative conservation forum and (2) to help respond to Congressional direction that “the Service establish clear goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for LCCs that can be used as benchmarks of success of the program.” As such, this version of SIAS is not expected to reflect the total suite of roles with which any individual LCC may be involved as part of meeting the needs of other partners.

The SIAS is comprised of eight interrelated Conservation Activity Areas and associated benchmarks that are guided by the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) framework in support of the LCC Network’s Vision and Mission. The SIAS is intended to provide one component of a performance standards system for the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and the National Landscape Conservation Cooperative Network. In support of the Service’s mission and vision for science, the SIAS will help inform the Service’s investment and participation in each LCC and in the LCC Network to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency. LCCs are staffed and currently are financially supported by many federal agencies (USGS, BOR, BLM, USFS, and NPS), as well as by State agencies and other partners, although the degree of support is variable. The Service clearly recognizes that the LCC network is a broad partnership relying on multiple investments. The construction of SIAS reflects many of the values of these partners, and we fully expect and encourage them to help develop other performance expectations to reflect their LCC involvement and perhaps include them in future versions of the SIAS.

LCCs are a partner driven effort to provide effective, science-based, and targeted conservation at landscape scales. The partnership of LCCs provides the opportunity for significant conservation progress, but also demands a complex set of interactions in which different agency and group authorities and priorities must be respected. This version of the SIAS is referred to as SIAS 2.0 in recognition that it is the next evolution of the original SIAS performance system. Because SIAS 2.0 is a new version, there is not a direct relationship between the LCC scores from the original SIAS and any scores that may be realized by implementing SIAS 2.0. SIAS 2.0 is another step along the path to develop an incentive based approach to Service investments in LCCs. Therefore, SIAS 2.0 will require further refinement after it is implemented and eventually a new SIAS 3.0 will result.

**SIAS 2.0 Assessment Process and Instructions**

* **GOAL:** The process outlined below is intended to ensure that the SIAS Assessments for individual LCCs accurately reflect performance and accomplishments relative to the SIAS 2.0 Benchmarks, and that these assessments are consistent, transparent, and comparable across all LCCs in the network.
* **Who conducts the assessment?** LCC coordinators will self-score their respective LCC’s performance using the SIAS 2.0 assessment spreadsheet. LCC coordinators are encouraged to work with co-coordinators, science coordinators, and steering committee representatives to arrive at an accurate and defensible score for each benchmark.
* **What should be reported?** The SIAS 2.0 Conservation Activity Areas (CAAs), Benchmarks, and Metrics have been transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate reporting. Each benchmark has a set of metrics with associated scores that describe the different levels of meeting the benchmark. Using the spreadsheet, the LCC coordinator should provide a numerical metric score and textual justification for each benchmark. The LCC coordinator should choose the single score that best describes the current state of LCC performance for each benchmark. To select a higher scoring metric, the LCC must demonstrate that it has also accomplished all of the lower scoring metrics for that benchmark. In the justification cell, the LCC coordinator should provide concise, but sufficient, narrative explanation and evidentiary documentation to support the metric score for each benchmark, including reference to preceding benchmark metrics. In some cases, the metric description provides guidance for reporting.
* **How is the final assessment score calculated for each LCC?** To assign each benchmark equal weight, scoring within each benchmark is automatically normalized in the spreadsheet to between 0 and 1. Normalized scores for each benchmark will be summed to result in a single SIAS 2.0 Assessment score for each LCC.
* **How will comparability of assessments across all LCCs in the network be ensured?** The Science Applications Assistant Regional Directors (SA ARDs) will work with the LCCs (coordinators, science coordinators, steering committee members) in their FWS regions during the self-assessment process to ensure consistent and comparable assessment and reporting of performance relative to the SIAS 2.0 Benchmarks. The final SIAS 2.0 assessment spreadsheets will be submitted by the SA ARDs to the Office of the Science Advisor (OSA). OSA and the SA ARDs will determine if additional steps are needed to ensure consistency and comparability of assessments across all LCCs in the network.
* **How will the assessments be displayed and used?** Final SIAS 2.0 Assessments will be compiled and placed on the LCC Network SharePoint site. To facilitate evaluating the LCCs as a community of practice, the individual SIAS assessment scores and supporting materials will be graphically displayed and shared internally and externally with partners. SIAS 2.0 Assessments for each LCC will be used by the Office of the Science Advisor, working with the SA ARDs, in developing recommendations to the Director regarding the allocation of FWS funding to the LCCs. The information provided by the SIAS 2.0 assessments will also be used to inform other actions to advance and support the entire network of LCCs.