



Appendix C: Water Transaction Application Evaluation Criteria



The following is a scoring matrix that the PFA Advisory Committee will reference when scoring Water Transaction Applications requesting funding from the PFA Grants Program.

Criteria Category	Criteria Descriptor	Max Score	Scoring Considerations
Applicant Capacity	Demonstrated organizational capacity, staff expertise, and partnerships necessary to complete complex water transactions.	4	Evaluate the applicant’s technical and administrative experience with water transactions, partnerships with Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) or other agencies, and ability to manage legal, financial, and reporting requirements.
Clarity and Completeness of Proposal	Clear and complete description of project goals, timeline, and deliverables.	4	Assess whether the proposal clearly defines the water right(s) involved, transaction structure, flow benefits, and measurable objectives. A strong proposal will include a well-justified budget and transparent cost estimates.
Ecological and Conservation Benefit	Anticipated ecological benefit for HCP-covered species and habitat.	10	Evaluate how the proposed water transaction increases instream flow, addresses limiting factors, supports aquatic species life stages, improves water quality, and enhances climate resilience.
Hydrologic and Biological Significance	Location within priority basins or areas of high biological importance.	5	Projects in flow restoration priority basins or that address key limiting factors identified in recovery or conservation plans receive higher scores.
Project Feasibility and Readiness	Likelihood of successful completion within program timelines.	5	Consider project stage, landowner willingness, completion of preliminary due diligence, and ability to meet required timelines for approval, escrow, and closing.

Strategic Alignment with PFA and State Priorities	Consistency with PFA goals, ODFW strategies, and regional flow restoration plans.	5	Score based on alignment with the Oregon Conservation Strategy, or other basin-level priorities.
Cost Effectiveness and Justification	Appropriateness and transparency of proposed costs relative to outcomes.	5	Assess the strength of cost justification (comparables, third-party valuations, unit-cost metrics). High scores reflect well-supported, market-consistent valuations and strong justification of public investment.
Monitoring and Compliance Framework	Plan for measuring, tracking, and reporting flow benefits and compliance.	3	Review clarity of monitoring metrics, flow tracking, and compliance with lease or transfer terms, including ODFW and OWRD reporting requirements.
Public and Collaborative Value	Collaboration with partners, community support, and outreach.	2	Evaluate involvement of stakeholders, coordination with tribes, watershed councils, or local entities, and demonstrated basin-scale collaboration.
Legal and Regulatory Readiness	Conformance with all permitting, title, and water law requirements.	2	Score based on completeness of documentation (title reports, OWRD forms, transfer applications) and readiness to meet regulatory standards.

Maximum Points Possible: 45

Notes for Committee Use

- Use fractional scoring when criteria are partially met.
- Narrative comments should summarize ecological value, feasibility, and fiscal responsibility.
- Reviewers should note consistency with flow restoration priorities and measurable species benefits.