

Memorandum

Date: April 2, 2024

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director



Subject: Proposed Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation Process and Timeline

At their February 14-15, 2024, meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) referred 20 Marine Protected Area (MPA) regulation change petitions to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for review, evaluation, and recommendation. In addition, the CFGC requested CDFW develop a proposed approach to evaluate the petitions to discuss at the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting on March 19, 2024. After discussion and input from interested stakeholders, the MRC recommended approval of CDFW's proposed 3-phase approach to evaluate MPA petitions. The proposed approach is briefly described below and in the enclosed presentation that was provided to the MRC on March 19, 2024.

Proposed 3-Phase Approach to MPA Petition Evaluation

Phase 1: Petitions will be categorized into two bins using the criteria outlined below to determine which petitions can be evaluated in the near-term and which petitions will require additional policy guidance, information, and/or resources prior to evaluation.

- **Bin 1 petitions:** Petitions that can be evaluated in the *near-term* must meet all the following criteria:
 - Policy direction not needed for next phases.
 - Within CFGC authority.
 - Immediate evaluation possible.
 - Limited clarification needed from petitioner.
 - Limited controversy anticipated.
- **Bin 2 petitions:** Petitions that do not meet all the above criteria will be categorized into Bin 2. The analysis of these petitions will be more complex as they will require additional policy guidance, information, and/or resources before they can be evaluated. Due to the complexity of these petitions, these will be evaluated in the *longer term*.

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Phase 2: Separate all Bin 1 petitions into individual actions and proceed to phase 3. Separate Bin 2 petitions into individual actions and identify additional policy guidance, information, and/or resources that are necessary to advance individual actions to phase 3.

Phase 3: Adaptive management evaluation and recommendations. Apply the evaluation framework approved by the CFGC to each petition action. The process will identify which petitions, and/or actions within each petition, would be recommended to be granted, denied, or considered through an alternative pathway.

Proposed MPA Petition Evaluation Anticipated Timeline

- **March-April 2024: Development of Evaluation Framework**
 - Receive and discuss proposed 3-phase evaluation process at the March 19 MRC and April 17 CFGC meetings.
- **April-August 2024: Phase 1— CDFW Sort Petitions into 2 Bins**
 - Discuss proposed bins at the July 18 MRC and August 14 CFGC meetings.
- **August 2024 and beyond: Phases 2 and 3—Separate petitions into individual actions**
 - Receive guidance on Bin 2 actions as needed.
 - Move forward with evaluation on both Bin 1 and 2 actions. Evaluation timelines for Bin 1 and Bin 2 actions will vary.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Dr. Craig Shuman, Marine Regional Manager, at (805) 568-1246.

Attachment 1: Proposed Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation presentation.

Attachment 2: Evaluation Framework

cc: Jenn Eckerle, Deputy Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy
Natural Resources Agency

Craig Shuman, D. Env., Region Manager
Marine Region

Becky Ota, Environmental Program Manager
Marine Region

Stephen Wertz, Senior Environmental Scientist
Marine Region

Sara Worden, Environmental Scientist
Marine Region



Proposed Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation and Timeline

19 March 2024

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
California Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

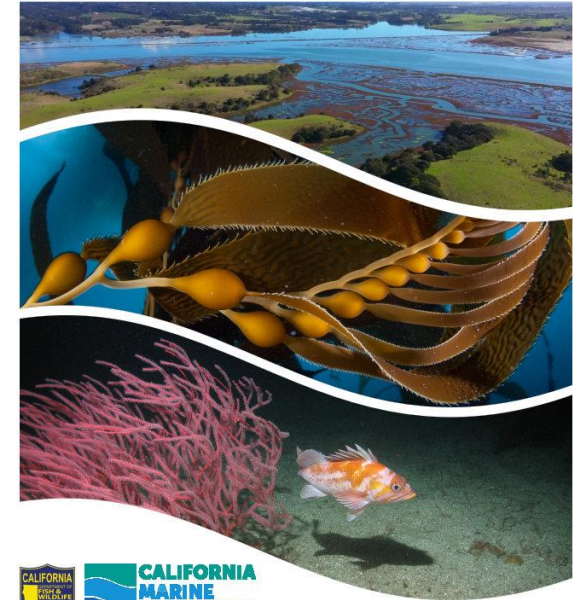
Dr. Craig Shuman
Marine Regional Manager



Petitions for Proposed MPA Network Changes

- CFGC received **20 petitions** to change MPAs at the December 2023 meeting
- At the February 2024 meeting, CFGC **referred all petitions** to CDFW
- **16 individual organizations** submitted petitions
- Petitions include **80+ proposed petition actions**
- **49+ MPAs and special closures affected** by proposals

California's Marine Protected Area Network **DECADAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

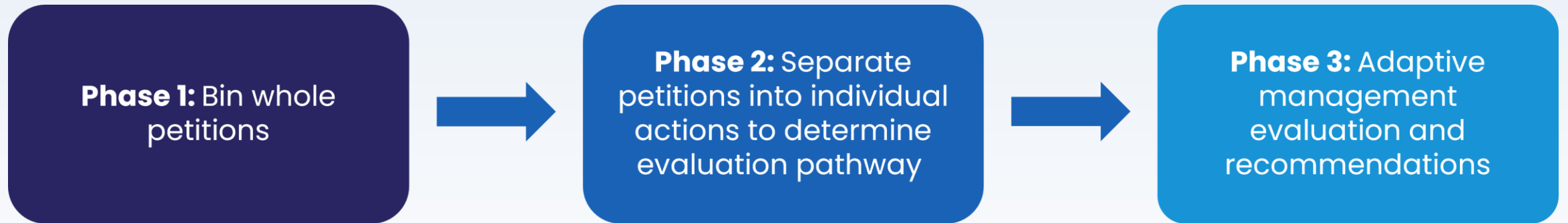


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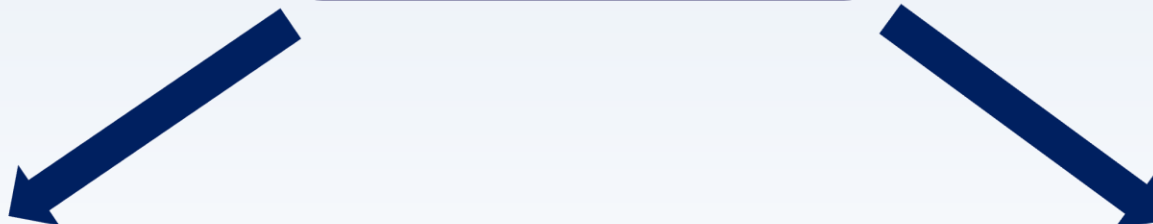
Proposed Petition Evaluation Framework: 3-phase Approach





Phase 1: Bin Whole Petitions

Phase 1:
Bin whole petitions



Bin 1

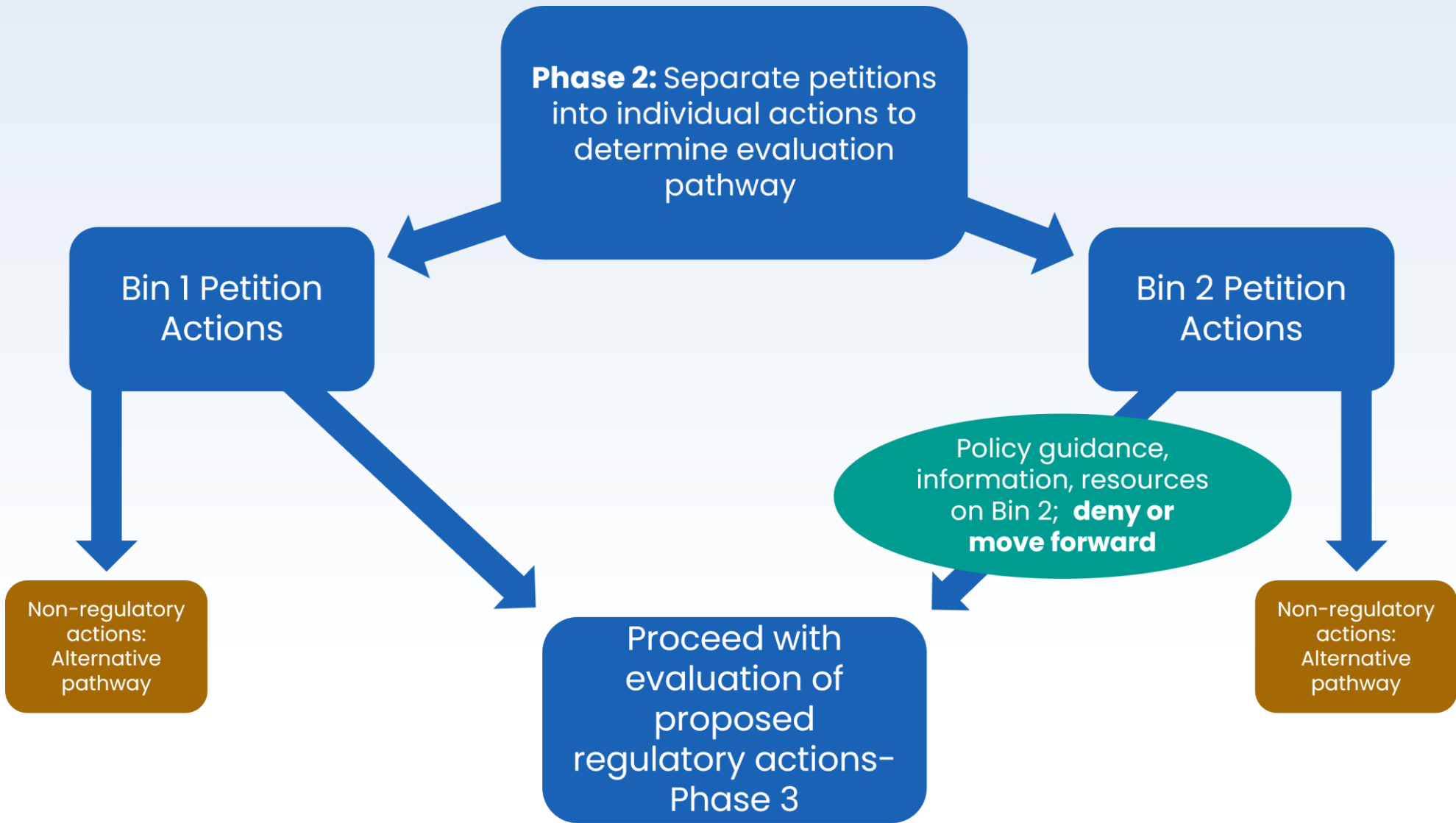
- Policy direction not needed for next phases
- Within CFGC authority
- Immediate evaluation possible
- Limited clarification needed from petitioner
- Limited controversy anticipated

Bin 2

Do not meet criteria for Bin 1

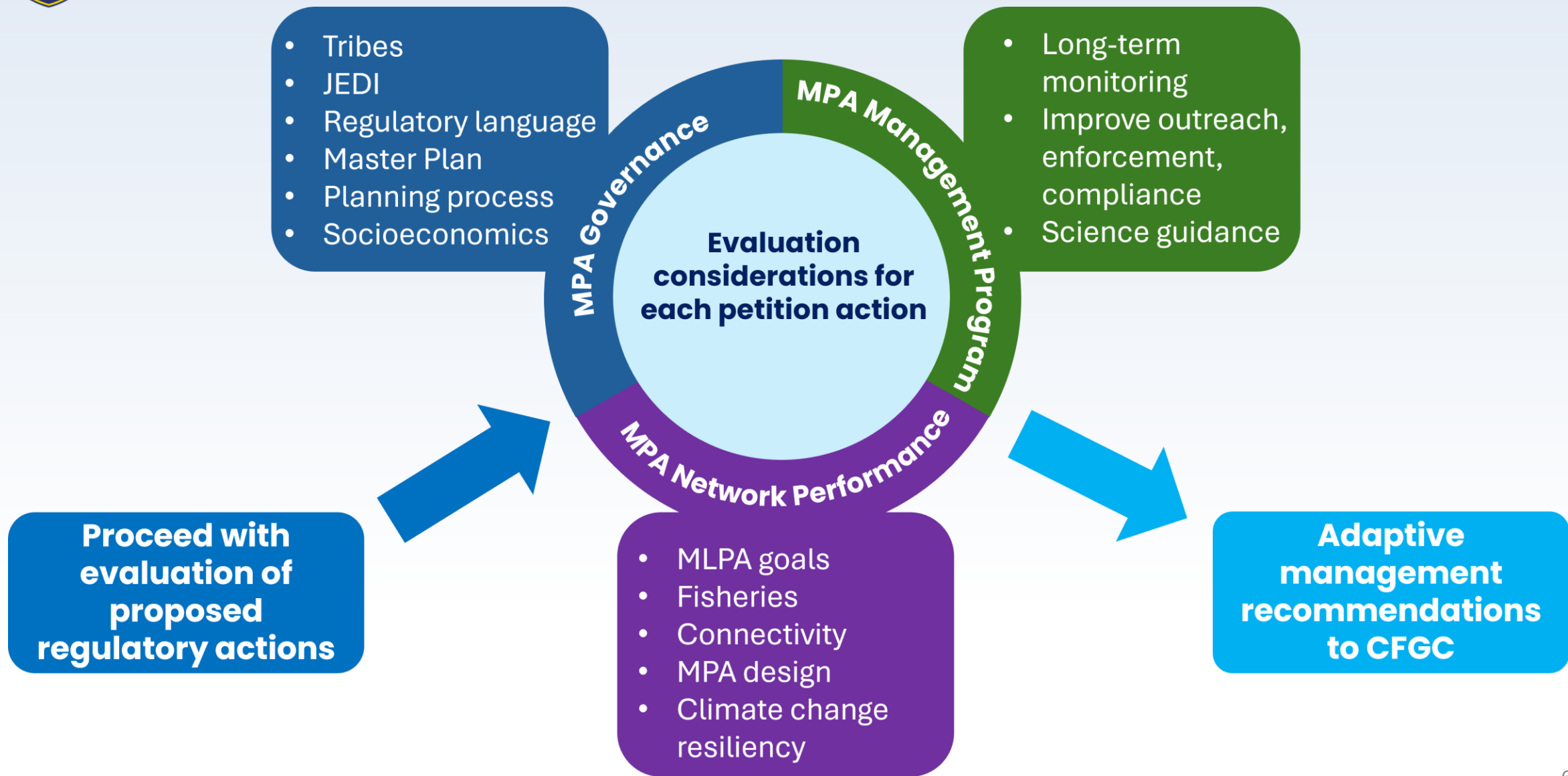


Phase 2: Actions and Evaluation Pathway



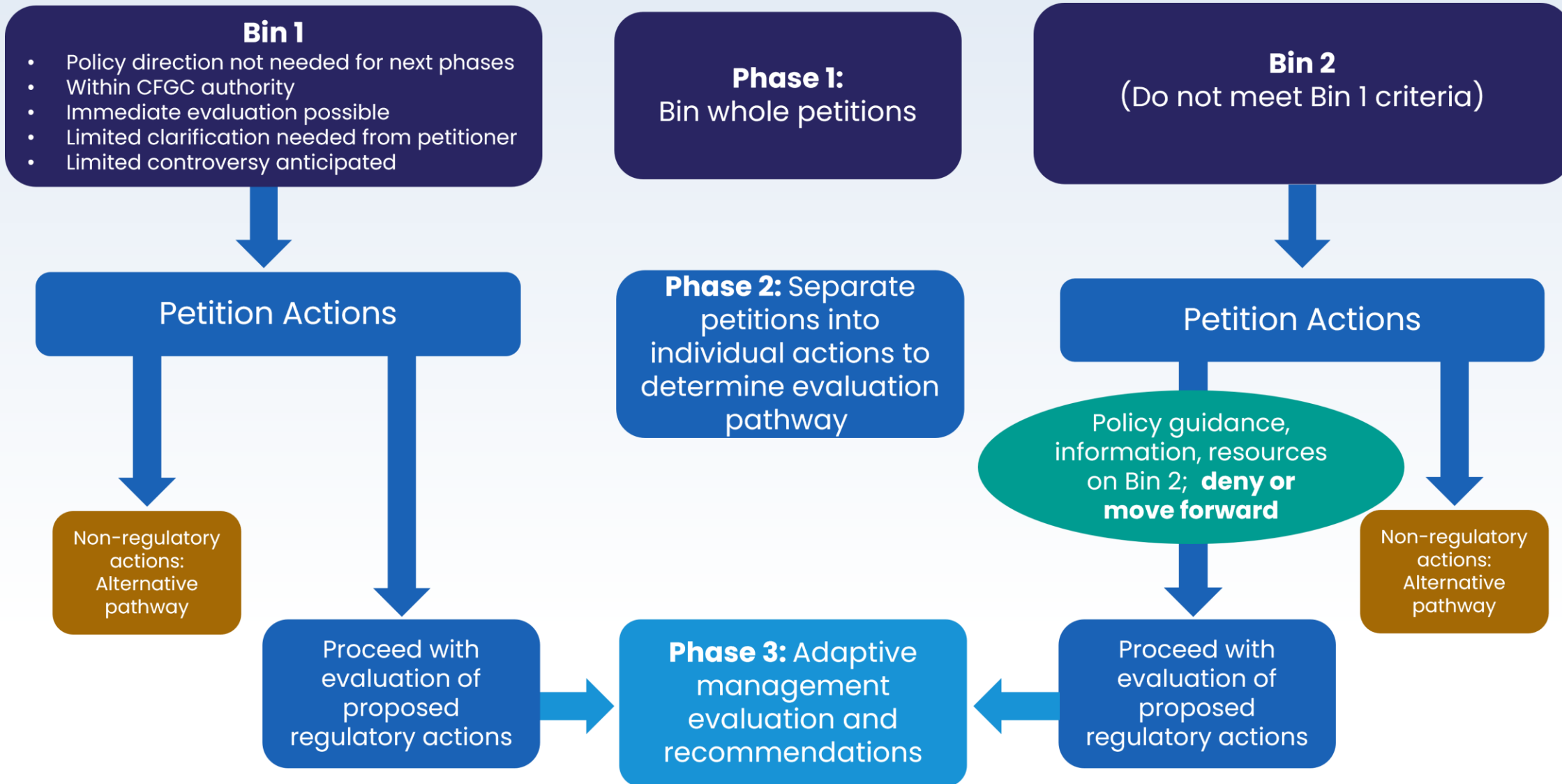


Phase 3: Evaluation Considerations and Recommendations





Proposed Petition Evaluation Framework: Detailed 3-Phase Approach





Proposed MPA Petition Evaluation: Anticipated Timeline

Development of evaluation framework

- MRC and FGC receive and discuss 3-phase evaluation process.
 - MRC: March 19
 - CFGC: April 17

Phase 1: Sort petitions into 2 Bins

- Sort petitions and discuss petitions in Bin 1 and Bin 2.
- MRC July 18
- FGC August 14

Phases 2 and 3: Separate petitions into individual actions, receive guidance on Bin 2 actions as needed, move forward with evaluation.

- Anticipate Bin 1 and 2 evaluation timelines will vary.



Thank You

Questions?

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