

Panel Scientific and Technical Review Form
(Note: Review comments will be anonymous, but public.)

Proposal number: 2001-C204

**Short Proposal Title: Sediment in Delta and
Suisun Bay**

1a) Are the objectives and hypotheses clearly stated?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"The objectives are fairly well stated; the hypotheses are not." "It would have been preferable had the applicants clearly stated all the hypotheses in the form of a question to be answered through the research. This was done in a couple of instances, but not consistently through the section." "...it is often not clear how the intended research approach will discriminate between the competing (but 'not mutually exclusive') elements of the system. For example, as for differentiating the effects of large events, historical (mining) pulses, and land-use changes or reservoirs, it was simply stated that 'monitoring will be adjusted to discriminate possible sources'."

Panel Summary:

The objectives set forth in the proposal are satisfactory. The hypotheses are testable over the long term. They may not be testable over time frames of interest to CALFED.

1b1) Does the conceptual model clearly explain the underlying basis for the proposed work?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"Yes, the narrative conceptual model describes the physical connections and processes between environmental variables (flows, tides, wind) and the movement of bedload and suspension of sediment." "Too often the reviewer is left to assume that the authors know what they are talking about (or are referred to a website for checking out the data), and so we must read between the lines. Preliminary data or some sort of graphic representation to support the proposed study would have been useful so that it all makes more sense."

Panel Summary:

The panel agrees the conceptual model is reasonable.

1b2) Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"...the approach seems well thought out based upon sound principles." "I have no reason to doubt that the proposers are fully competent at conducting appropriate analysis and evaluation of their results, but that process was not really very clearly stated in the proposal."

Panel Summary:

The proposal is well designed to accomplish the objectives of the proposer, but the panel does not consider that there is a clear link to CALFED environmental restoration.

1c1) Has the applicant justified the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"The applicant has correctly identified the proposal as one of monitoring/research. All facets of the proposal are directly related to research and monitoring." "... this is high quality research using appropriate methods, even if I am not entirely clear on how the research analysis and evaluation will be conducted."

Panel Summary: The description of the connection between the proposal and the assessment of habitat is tortured. A synoptic study of the sort proposed is potentially valuable, but it is not necessarily relevant to CALFED's often urgent information needs.

1c2) Is the project likely to generate information that can be used to inform future decision making?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"Information developed on sediment movement in the Delta will help provide a clearer picture of adherents to the sediment, including nutrients, toxic metals and organic compounds." "The assumed benefits to anadromous fish seem problematic but the information gained relative to sediment movement and heavy metals will be of value."

Panel Summary:

This proposal could generate information of some use to Delta restoration projects that rely on the accretion of sediment, but those would require more detailed analysis of local conditions than a project at the scale of this one would provide. Likewise, investigators of contaminant transport, and others studying the fate of organic compounds important in treating drinking water might use the information.

2a) Are the monitoring and information assessment plans adequate to assess the outcome of the project?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"The information assessment plans include formal and informal technical reports, and presentations at appropriate forums, such as the CALFED Science Conference. They are adequate to convey information learned from the project to technical colleagues, managers and decision-makers."

Panel Summary:

The proposal justifies its monitoring and information assessment plans well, and addresses its selection among contemporary tools.

2b) Are data collection, data management, data analysis, and reporting plans well described, scientifically sound and adequate to meet the proposed objectives?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

The information assessment plans include formal and informal technical reports, and presentations at appropriate forums, such as the CALFED Science Conference. They are adequate to convey information learned from the project to technical colleagues, managers and decision-makers.

Panel Summary:

Proposal justifies its data collection, data management, data analysis, and reporting plans.

3) Is the proposed work likely to be technically feasible?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"The proposed work is likely to be technically feasible principally because known and tried techniques are being used to conduct the project. The approach has already been proved to be feasible in the Bay-Delta based on previous work conducted by the Principal Investigators and reported in various technical reports." "... this is high quality research using appropriate methods, even if I am not entirely clear on how the research analysis and evaluation will be conducted."

Panel Summary:

Proponents are doing substantially the same work now, confirming its feasibility.

4) Is the proposed project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project?

Summary of Reviewers comments:

"The project team is very qualified to conduct this work." "Since the project is ongoing research it is assumed they know what they are doing."

Panel Summary:

These investigators are recognized, currently working in the field and generally sharing their results.

5)Other comments

The writing style in the proposal is difficult to follow, and the investigators' agency is well known for extensive internal review. The panel recommends if this project is funded that the written work

products be solicited in "open file" format to expedite its release. The panel acknowledges the proposal is likely to produce good science, but there was a divergence of opinion on the degree to which it can inform CALFED decisions.

Overall Evaluation
PANEL SUMMARY COMMENTS

The panel felt the proposed work could produce good science, but that it would be difficult to apply it directly to problems and specific projects important to CALFED.

Summary Rating

Excellent
Very Good X
Good X
Fair
Poor

Your Rating:

