

Chapter 4 —Proposal Review and Selection

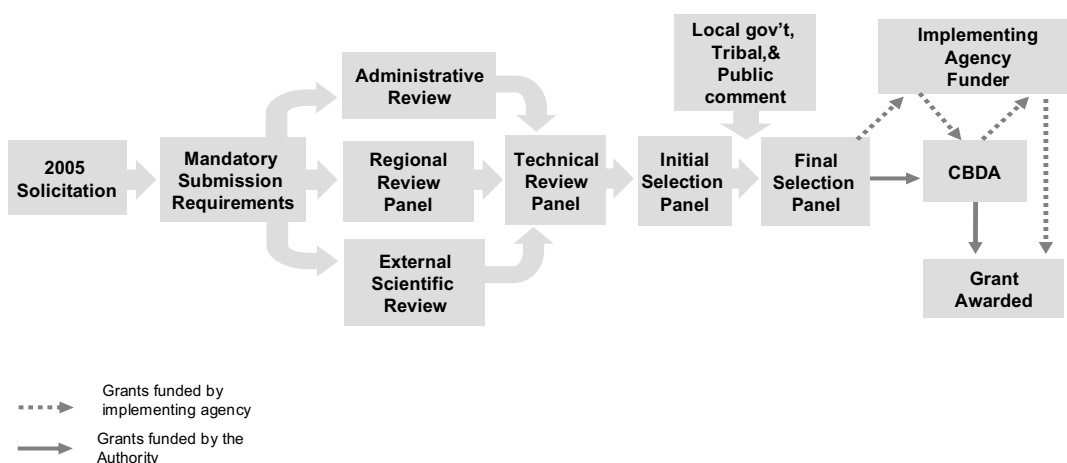
What is in this chapter?

In this chapter you will find information about the process, criteria, and schedule for reviewing proposals and selecting projects for funding.

How will proposals be reviewed?

The proposal review process involves eight steps (see Figure 2). All complete proposals will undergo administrative review, external scientific review, regional review, and technical panel review prior to consideration by the Selection Panel. The Selection Panel's initial funding recommendations will be available to local governments, tribes, and the public for comment. The Selection Panel will consider these comments in making its final recommendations. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Authority which will consider the recommendations in a public meeting and determine whether to fund the projects. In cases where funds are to be awarded by the DFG or others, the Selection Panel will forward its recommendations to the applicable agency. That agency will forward its recommendations to the Authority, which will advise the agencies whether to fund the projects.

Figure 2. Review Process



Mandatory Submission Requirements. Proposals will be rejected without further review if:
(1) project applicants do not complete all four steps (user registration; all online forms; proposal

document, upload and verification; and fax signature page); (2) proposals are from ineligible applicants; or (3) proposals are otherwise not responsive to the solicitation's priorities and requirements.

Administrative Review. ERP implementing agency staff and contract managers will evaluate each proposal, using the following criteria:

- Past performance, including effective management of grants, if any, previously received from CALFED or CVPIA programs;
- Next-phase funding (proof of earlier phases' progress is shown);
- Environmental compliance (accurate identification of potential environmental compliance or access issues, reasonable compliance schedules and budgets); and
- Budget evaluation (clarity, consistency, and reasonableness of budget and budget justification; availability of matching funds, where applicable).

Regional Review. There will be Review Panels comprised of resource management experts from the four ERP Regions: Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, Delta and Eastside Tributaries, and Bay (which includes North San Francisco Bay). Proposals will be separated into the four regions based on project location. All appropriate Regional Review Panels will review proposals for projects that fall into more than one region. The regional panels will make qualitative ratings of projects based on these regional criteria:

- Applicability to ERP goals, the MSCS (including addressing specific objectives in the milestones assessment), *Draft Stage 1 Implementation Plan*, and priorities listed in Chapter 2;
- Linkages with other restoration activities in that region, such as ongoing implementation projects, watershed or regional planning efforts;
- Feasibility based on local circumstances (e.g., are there local constraints on the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner?);
- Local involvement, such as participation by farmers and other landowners, county agricultural commissioners, resource conservation districts (RCDs), agricultural extension, farm organizations, and other community organizations.
- Local value, including extent to which the project will improve fish and wildlife habitat and support replicable agricultural activities that contribute to local or regional environmental and economic sustainability.

Comments on technical quality are appropriate in this step, but are a secondary output of this review.

External Scientific Review. Two or more independent external reviewers will be selected to review each proposal based on their expertise in the subject areas of the proposal. The external scientific reviewers will base their reviews on the following criteria:

- Clearly stated goals, objectives, and hypotheses of the proposed project;
- Justification for project, including conceptual model;

- Approach, including study design, methods, information richness, and value of information to farmers, cooperating agencies or non-governmental organizations, and decision makers;
- Technical feasibility and likelihood of success;
- Appropriate performance measures;
- Value of the proposed outcomes, including contributions to ecosystem health and agriculture, contribution to understanding how agricultural activities benefit wildlife and fish, and how results of the project could be applied to future projects;
- Capabilities (project team qualifications and track record, appropriateness of interdisciplinary team, ability of project team to complete the project); and
- Cost/benefit comments (e.g. is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?).

Technical Review Panel. The Technical Review Panel will consist of technical experts whose expertise spans the range of topics covered by the submitted proposals. The Technical Review Panel evaluates and provides a qualitative and unambiguous rating of each proposal's technical quality to the Selection Panel. The Technical Review Panel will evaluate proposals on the external scientific criteria, while also taking into account the regional and administrative reviews. The extent to which the project addresses desirable project features listed in Chapter 2 also will be considered. The end result is a panel rating of the proposals' technical quality, along with clear evaluation statements for each review criterion.

Selection Panel and Initial Selection Process. The Selection Panel will make initial recommendations for funding based on the previous evaluations listed above. The Selection Panel will include technical and resource-management experts covering a broad range of expertise. Authority staff and the Lead Scientist (or designee) will choose panel members, considering nominations from the ERP Science Board and others. Panel membership will be balanced among practicing scientists and program managers or advisors knowledgeable about agency and stakeholder concerns. The Lead Scientist (or designee) will serve as the non-voting chairman for the panel with primary responsibility for assuring that the discussion is balanced, fair, and comprehensive.

The Selection Panel provides a check on earlier reviews, but its primary purpose is to make strategic funding recommendations from among proposals highly rated based on the following criteria (in order of priority):

- Strategic benefit toward accomplishing ERP goals, including focus on high priority areas or species or widely replicable restoration actions;
- *Draft Stage 1 Implementation Plan* priority;
- Ecological benefit;
- Compatibility with prior investments (complements previous program actions, builds on prior program funding, or sustains essential efforts);
- Value of products to decision makers and stakeholders; and
- Public support and implementability.

Land and Easement Acquisition Selection Criteria. Proposals that include land acquisition are subject to additional review criteria. These criteria reflect the commitment made by CALFED Bay-Delta Program agencies to minimize the impact of ERP implementation on agricultural land, and to use publicly-owned lands and land already acquired with Program funds, when feasible, before acquiring new private property. Authority staff will compile and provide the Selection Panel with summary information regarding land and easement acquisition using the following criteria:

- Availability of public lands that alternatively would meet the project's needs;
- Willing seller;
- Consistency with county/city general plan or evidence of local government support;
- Prioritization of land not mapped as Prime, of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, or maintain agricultural uses on such lands currently in agricultural use;
- The process and timing of notification of interested members of the public and local governments;
- Other measures taken to minimize impacts on agricultural land pursuant to the Record of Decision; and
- Preliminary management plans are included for all properties to be acquired, including an overview of existing conditions (including habitat types in the affected project area), the expected ecological benefits, preliminary cost estimates, and implementation schedules.

Public Comment Period. Local governments and tribes will be asked for their comments regarding local concerns. During this time, applicants may provide comments clarifying their submitted proposals, but are not allowed to supply new information, additional supporting documentation, or additional justification of a proposal.

Selection Panel and Final Selection Process. The Selection Panel will meet again after the public comment period to consider written comments on technical aspects and local concerns. The Selection Panel may revise its initial recommendation based on comments received.

The panel may recommend that projects be funded, in whole or in part. Conditions of funding may be recommended to address issues raised during the proposal review. The panel may also identify projects that are high priorities and whose funding should be considered if they are revised to address the shortcomings identified during the reviews.

California Bay-Delta Authority Review and Action. The Selection Panel will forward its final recommendations to the Authority which will consider the recommendations in a public meeting and determine whether to fund the projects. In cases where funds are to be awarded by the DFG or others, the Selection Panel will forward its recommendations to the applicable agency. That agency will forward its recommendations to the Authority, which will advise the agencies whether to fund the projects. The Authority may at its discretion award or recommend a package of grants that it determines is most responsive to its charge to promote implementation of the Program in a balanced manner, consistent with the goals and objectives of the CALFED ROD.

What is the schedule for reviewing and selecting projects for funding?

The schedule for reviewing and selecting projects for funding is shown below. The schedule is subject to change. Please check the PSP website at:

<https://solicitation.calwater.ca.gov> for updates, or call (877) 408-9310.

PSP Release	October 11, 2005
Pre-submittal Workshops	Thursday, October 13, 2005 5:30-7:30 pm Yolo Basin Wildlife Area Headquarters 45211 County Road 32 B Davis, CA Monday October 17, 2005 5:30-7:30 pm Modesto Library 1500 I Street Modesto, CA Tuesday October 18, 2005 12-1:30 pm Exchange Contractors 541 H St. Los Banos, CA Thursday October 20, 2005 5:30-7:30 pm Monday Afternoon Club 120 North Lassen Street Willows, CA Tuesday October 25 12-1:30 pm Napa County Library 580 Coombs St Napa, CA
Proposal Submittal Deadline	5 p.m. PST on December 15, 2005
Proposals displayed on website; local governments and tribes notified	December 2005
Initial Selection Panel Recommendation	May 2006
Public Comment Period	June 2006
Final Selection Panel Recommendation	July 2006
California Bay Delta Authority Action	August 2006