

Chapter 4 —Proposal Review and Selection

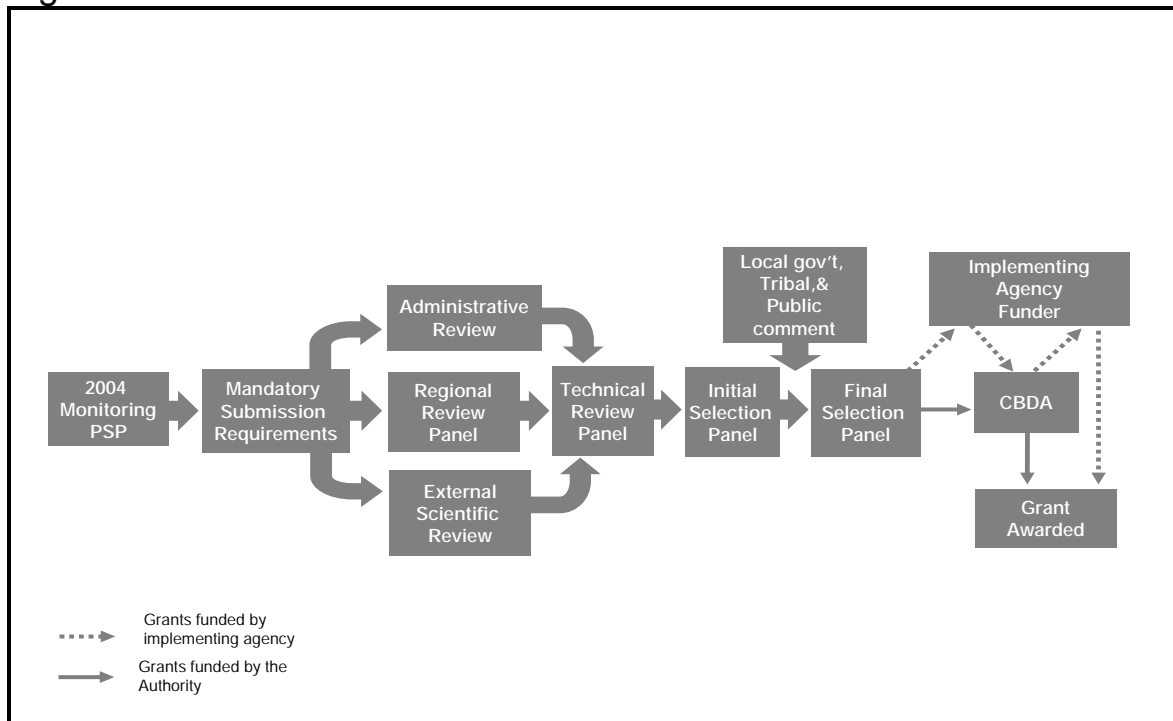
What is in this chapter?

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. 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 to the ERP implementing agencies. These agencies will present their funding recommendations to the California Bay-Delta Authority. It will consider the recommendations in a public meeting and advise the funding authorities whether to fund the projects. Some grants may be awarded directly by the Authority itself. Figure 2 is a flow chart of the proposal review process.

Figure 2. Review Process



Administrative Review. ERP implementing agency staff and contract managers will provide summary evaluation information for each proposal on the following elements:

- Past performance, including effective management on previous CALFED Bay-Delta or CVPIA program grants;
- Next-phase funding (proof of earlier phases progress is shown);
- Environmental compliance (accurate identification of potential environmental compliance or access issues);
- Budget evaluation (clarity, consistency, and sufficiency of budget and budget justification; availability of matching funds is noted, but matching contributions are not required); and barriers, if any, to executing a grant agreement; and
- Land acquisition summary, where necessary (see Land Acquisition Selection Criteria).

Regional Review Panels. There will be four 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 Suisun Marsh and San Pablo Bay). Proposals will be separated into the four regions based on their locations. 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, key species listed in the MSCS (including their habitats and the processes and stressors that affect them), important types of habitat proposed for restoration in the *Draft Stage 1 Implementation Plan*, CVPIA priorities, and restoration of the priority ecosystems listed in Chapter 2.
- Linkages with other restoration activities in that region, such as long-term monitoring programs, ongoing implementation projects and 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, including participation by universities, other research institutions, resource management agencies, and others with an enduring interest in the region; and
- Local value, including extent to which the project is likely to increase understanding of restoration actions' outcomes by resource managers, stakeholders, and others, and will aid resource management decisions.

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

External Scientific Review. Proposals will undergo external scientific review. Proposals will be sent to three external scientific reviewers. External independent reviewers will be selected based on their expertise in the subject areas of the proposal.

The external scientific reviewers will be asked to offer qualitative reviews of proposals based on the following criteria:

- Clearly stated goals, objectives, and hypotheses, and relevance of idea;
- Justification for project, including conceptual model;
- Approach and scope of work, including study design, information richness, and replicability;
- Technical feasibility and likelihood of success;
- Appropriate performance measures;
- Value of products, including accessibility, reliability, and usefulness to decision-makers and other scientists;
- Capabilities (project team qualifications and track record, appropriateness of interdisciplinary team, ability of project team to complete the project); and
- Cost/benefit comments (Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?).

Technical Review Panel. The panel will consist of experienced scientists whose expertise spans the range of topics covered by submitted proposals. The role of the Technical Review Panel is to evaluate and provide unambiguous ratings of each proposal's technical quality to the Selection Panel. The Technical Review Panel will consider all previous criteria and reviews in their overall evaluation of the proposals. The Panel will evaluate proposals on the external scientific criteria, while taking the regional and administrative review criteria and reviews into consideration. The desired end result of these discussions is the Panel's qualitative rating of the proposal's technical quality, along with clear evaluation statements for each review criterion.

Selection Panel and Selection Process. The Selection Panel will make recommendations for funding based on the evaluations conducted at all previous levels. The Selection Panel will be comprised of technical and resource-management experts covering a broad range of expertise. ERP implementing agency staff, in conjunction with the Lead Scientist, will consider nominations of prospective panelists from the ERP Science Board and others and determine panel membership. Panel membership should be balanced among practicing scientists and science managers or advisors with expertise in agency and stakeholder concerns. As a body the Selection Panel should be recognized and experienced, well-connected with others in their respective fields, represent different specialties within these fields, and have familiarity with the issues and ongoing activities in one or more of the regions of the Bay-Delta-watershed system.

The Selection Panel will provide a check on earlier reviews, but their primary purpose is to make strategic funding recommendations from among the high-quality proposals based on the following criteria (in order of priority):

- Strategic benefit toward accomplishing ERP and CVPIA goals, including focus on high priority ecosystems or species or widely replicated restoration actions
- Desired project features, including multi-institutional initiatives, durable partnerships, joint fact-finding, interdisciplinary understanding, program coordination, and usefulness at various scales.

- Implementation Plan priority
- Value of information to resource managers, decision makers and stakeholders
- Public support and implementability

All previous review criteria are embedded within the criteria listed above. The first bullet represents the overall evaluation criterion. It ensures that proposals to monitor and evaluate especially important ecosystems or restoration actions will have a higher priority for funding. The last two bullets are the selection criteria outlined in the Strategic Plan for Ecosystem Restoration. There is overlap among these criteria but they are presented here so that all will be considered and addressed by the Selection Panel.

The Selection 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 shortcomings identified during the reviews.

Land Acquisition Selection Criteria. Proposals that include land acquisition to secure rights of way or sites for monitoring activities will be subject to additional review criteria. These criteria reflect the CALFED agencies' ROD commitments. Summary information for these criteria will be compiled by CALFED Bay-Delta Program staff and provided to the Selection Panel:

- No public lands that would meet the project's needs are available;
- Willing seller;
- Consistent with county/city general plan or evidence of local government support;
- Prioritize land not mapped as Prime, of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, or where use remains agriculture;
- Acquire easements, rather than fee title, where feasible and consistent with a project's intended purpose;
- Consider third-party or redirected impacts.

Public Comment Period. Preliminary grant recommendations will be initially presented to the public at a publicly-noticed workshop followed by a public comment period. CALFED Bay-Delta Program staff will directly notify applicants, local governments and tribes of the initial recommendation and guidelines for providing comments. Only written comments will be accepted. Applicants will be asked to provide clarification comments only (no new information) and local governments and tribes will be asked to comment on local feasibility concerns.

The Selection Panel will meet again after the public comment period to consider written comments on technical aspects and local feasibility. The Selection Panel may revise its preliminary recommendation based on comments received. The Panel's final recommendation will be presented at a second publicly-noticed workshop and then moved forward to the ERP implementing agencies.

California Bay-Delta Authority Review and Action. The ERP implementing agencies will present their funding recommendations to the California Bay-Delta Authority. It will consider the recommendations in a public meeting and advise the funding authorities whether to fund the projects. Some grants may be awarded directly by the Authority itself. The Authority retains the discretion to award or recommend a package of grants that it determines is most responsive to its charge to promote implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta 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	September 20, 2004
Pre-submittal Workshops	<p>Thursday, September 23, 2004 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. California Bay-Delta Authority Bay-Delta Room, Fifth Floor 650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento</p> <p>Tuesday, September 28, 2004 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. UC Cooperative Extension 2145 West Wardrobe Avenue Merced, CA 95340</p> <p>Thursday, September 30, 2004 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Red Bluff Community Center Westside/Rose Room 1500 South Jackson Red Bluff, CA 96080</p>
Proposal Submittal Deadline	3 p.m. PDT on November 19, 2004
Proposals displayed on website + local governments and tribes notified	December 2004
Initial Selection Panel Recommendation	March 2005
Public Comment Period	April 2005
Final Selection Panel Recommendation	May 2005
California Bay Delta Authority Action	June 2005