Proposal Reviews

#143: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Initial Selection Panel Review	
Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review	
Delta Regional Review	
San Joaquin Regional Review	
External Scientific Review	#1 #2 #3 #4
Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding	
Environmental Compliance	
Budget	

Initial Selection Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP
Initial Selection Panel Review

Proposal Number: 143

Applicant Organization: San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

Please provide an overall evaluation rating.

Explanation of Recommendation Categories: Fund

- **As Is** (a proposal recommended for funding as proposed)
- **In Part** (a proposal for which partial funding is recommended for selected project phases or components)
- **With Conditions** (a proposal for which funds are recommended if the applicant contractually agrees to meet the specified conditions)

Consider as Directed Action in Annual Workplan (a proposal addressing a high priority action that requires some revision followed by additional review prior to being recommended for funding)
Not Recommended (a proposal not currently recommended for funding-after revision may be considered in the future)

Note on "Amount":

For proposals recommended as Fund As Is, Fund In Part or Fund With Conditions, the dollar amount is the amount recommended by the Selection Panel.

For proposals recommended as Consider as Directed Action in Annual Workplan, the dollar amount is the amount requested by the applicant(s).

Fund	
As Is	**-**
In Part	**-**
With Conditions	**-**
Consider as Directed Action	**-**
Not Recommended	**X**

Amount: **$0**

Conditions, if any, of approval (if there are no conditions, please put "None"):

None

Provide a brief explanation of your rating:

There is little doubt that the topic this proposal addresses is a high priority for CALFED goals. The restoration panel gave it high marks primarily based upon the merit of the principal goal, strong stakeholder involvement and a reasonably well-written proposal. However, the external reviewers noted several serious drawbacks. The consensus among reviewers was that the proposal needs a more detailed plan for implementation of action steps and a properly justified and reasonable budget. The relatively high ranking of this proposal seems to rest on the need for such a project rather than the merits of the project as proposed. The panel believes that the proposed efforts are premature and this group needs to sort out ongoing efforts before proceeding with the next step.

Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review:

CALFED Bay-Delta 2002 ERP PSP
Research and Restoration Technical Panel Review Form

Proposal Number: 143

Applicant Organization: San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Superior: outstanding in all respects;
Above Average: Quality proposal, medium or high regional value, and no significant administrative concerns;
Adequate: No serious deficiencies, no significant regional impediments, and no significant administrative concerns;
Not Recommended: Serious deficiencies, significant regional impediments or significant administrative concerns.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Superior	**An 'above average' rating was given by the technical panel because the merits of such a project was considered to be worthwhile to CalFed. However, while the scope as defined by the applicants was well organized and articulated, some concerns were raised by various reviewers and panels. This proposal has merit, particularly if the applicants can provide a detailed plan for implementation of action steps, and justify the apparent high budget.**
XAbove average	
-Adequate	
-Not recommended	

1. **Goals and Justification.** Does the proposal present a clear statement of goals, objectives and hypotheses? Does the proposal present a clear justification and conceptual model for the project?

   This project is intended to provide watershed (3 to 10 watersheds) stakeholders with facilitation, technical, and financial resources to address DO problems in the San Joaquin River and to develop an implementation plan. The goals and objectives are clearly stated. Objectives are specifically identified for each phase and element of the project.

2. **Likelihood of Success (Approach, Feasibility, Capabilities and Performance Measures).** Is the project likely to succeed based on the approach, feasibility and project team capabilities? Are the proposed performance measures adequate for measuring the project's success?

This project is relevant to existing problems identified in several watersheds of the Lower San Joaquin River. The approach is a 3-phase scope focusing on public outreach and facilitation. However, no details are given to support the premise that reducing NPS inputs (the underlying goal of this proposal) will be sufficient, or are even necessary. The performance measures were not adequately addressed, and, thus, the feasibility of success is in question (i.e., what are alternatives to stakeholder refusal, unacceptance, etc.).

3. **Outcomes and Products.** Will the project advance the state of scientific knowledge in general and/or make an important contribution to the state of knowledge of the Bay-Delta Watershed? For restoration proposals, is the project likely to contribute to ecosystem restoration or species recoveries in a significant way? Will the project produce products useful to decision-makers and scientists?

   The desired outcome is a series of recommendations obtained from interactive forums with stakeholders. The reports, if well constructed, would be valuable assets for implementation of restoration plans. However, how successful will be the outcome if there is not clear consensus on recommendations? Some description of how dissension will be handled to ensure success.

4. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   The budget for this proposal was considered adequate in the budget review. The technical panel considers this budget to be high without adequate justification. However, the primary technical reviewer found errors in the budget and questions the allocation of $350,000 for subcontracting assistance without more detailed description. Past performance indicated some funding problems.

5. **Regional Review.** How did the regional panel(s) rank the proposal (High, Medium, Low)? Did the regional panel(s) identify significant benefits (regional priorities, linkages with other activities, local involvement) or impediments (local constraints, conflicts with other activities, lack of local involvement) to this proposal? What were they?

   Two regional reviews medium rank for both. Lack of action steps to reduce DO problems in this proposal considered to be a negative. The heavy emphasis on public outreach (as opposed to action-oriented activities) was considered of lower priority by the regions. However, the technical panel believed this aspect to be a strength.

6. **Administrative Review.** Were there significant concerns about the proposal with regard to the prior performance, environmental compliance and budget administrative reviews? What were they?

   Past performance indicates some deficiency in progress toward previous project milestones. Lack of funding and tardiness and questionable quality of reports cited. however, it was not clear to the technical panel whether the tardiness was due to funding deficits, or whether the lateness of the reports was considered to be a problem. No environmental compliance concerns raised.

Miscellaneous comments:

Delta Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 143

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

Overall Ranking: **-**Low **X**Medium **-**High

Provide a brief summary explanation of the committee's ranking:

This is a solid proposal, but does not feature action steps to reduce reunoff + other contribuors to the San Joaquin's low DO levels, which the panel prefers.

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   The SJR DO TMDL Steering Committee has been meeting and convening studies on the DO problem for three years; the Committee has established good representation for each watershed. This project would build upon what's been learned, culminating in individual watershed plans for SJ tributary watersheds contributing the most loads.

2. Does the project pursue the restoration priorities applicable to the region as outlined in the PSP?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   Low DO in the lower SJR has been of great concern to regulatory agencies, and CALFED has made funding actions to study and attempt to alleviate the problem a top priority during FYs 2000 and 2001 (Directed Action).

3. Is the project adequately linked with other restoration activities in the region, such as ongoing implementation projects and regional planning efforts?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   This is a continuation of work that has occurred under two previous CALFED grants, so it has a direct connection with those. It is also generally linked with other projects and efforts addressing the DO problem through its Steering Committee.

4. Does the project adequately involve local people and institutions?

   XYes **-**No

How?

The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from most major watershed and regional interest groups. Consultants and liaisons (one agricultural and one environmental) would provide technical assistance in formulation of the watershed plans and asist in communication with landowners and others. The RWQCB has also been involved, and is supportive of this approach.

Other Comments:

A very well-written proposal about a high priority issue. Panel favors more action-oriented activities to reduce loads into the SJR.

San Joaquin Regional Review:

Proposal Number: 143

Applicant Organization: San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

Overall Ranking: **-**Low **X**Medium **-**High

Provide a brief summary explanation of the committee's ranking:

This group has a strong Technical Advisory Committee and has an excellent track record for developing background studies. But the reviewers expressed two concerns: 1)Is this the appropriate program to fund this type of work? and 2)Will the work effectively address the environmental issue targeted, low DO in the Stockton Channel?

1. Is the project feasible based on local constraints?

   -Yes **X**No

   How?

   While the TAC has a strong track record on developing studies, this proposal calls for a completely different type of effort. Developing effective outreach to local watershed residents to convince them of the need to develop best management practices for a physical/chemical characteristic of water that has an adverse effect quite a distance downstream will present an altogether new challenge.

2. Does the project pursue the restoration priorities applicable to the region as outlined in the PSP?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   The priority addressed is the reduction of degraded water quality by improving dissolved oxygen levels in tributaries to the San Joaquin River.

3. Is the project adequately linked with other restoration activities in the region, such as ongoing implementation projects and regional planning efforts?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   The proponent has had previous CalFed grants and other funding which it used effectively to evaluate alternatives and develop tools for tackling the San Joaquin River dissolved oxygen Total Maximum Daily Load.

4. Does the project adequately involve local people and institutions?

   XYes **-**No

   How?

   Local participation is end result of the proposed work. The San Joaquin tributaries to be targeted have yet to be chosen, so no specific local involvement has been indicated in the proposal.

Other Comments:

The reviewers recommend that this proposal be evaluated by the watershed group.

External Scientific: #1

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **143**

Applicant Organization: **San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee**

Proposal Title: **Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

None

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**I gave a Very Good rating overall, because of the well-described approach and the strong credentials of the team. The deficiencies in various aspects of the proposal prevented a higher rating.**
XGood	
-Poor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   Rating: Excellent. This proposal is for a broadscale support mechanism for several watersheds (13 listed) to effectively address a TMDL for low DO conditions. Objectives are specifically identified for each phase and element of the project.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

Rating: Very Good. This project is relevant to existing problems identified in several watersheds of the Lower San Joaquin River. The outcome of this project is a series of recommendations on appropriate solutions. No actual restoration or mitigation is part of this project.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   Rating: Very Good. The approach is a major public outreach and facilitation scope. The approach is well organized and described, and presents specific objectives for each facet of the project. The 3-phase approach appears to be an effective strategy for accomplishing the intended goal and objectives.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   Rating: Very Good. The applicants describe feasibility for the organizational, technical, and practical aspects of this project. A priori organizational efforts have minimized the risk of failure. However, it is likely that success will not be 100% in all watersheds.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Rating: Fair. The performance measures were not addressed adequately in this proposal. The applicant stated that the ultimate performance measure was the improvement of DO in the aquatic systems; however, this restoration endpoint is not part of this project.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   Rating: Excellent. The interactive assistance to the Watershed Groups will likely produce valuable reports that highlight and document the recommendations for mitigation and restoration.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   Rating: Excellent. The credentials and past experience of the proposed team appears to be of very high quality for this work.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   Rating: Good. The budget raises questions as to the allocation of funds for subcontractor assistance. $350,000 are identified for subcontractors, but it is not clear on how that will be spent. The budget sheet has an error, I believe, that provides some confusion on these funds. My feeling is that the funds requested are high, in light of the matching funds of $120,000 from the Steering Committee and $10,000 from each Watershed Group.

Miscellaneous comments:

This project appears to be the initial phase of restoration, in that facilitation and support are to be given to Watershed Groups for the determination of the best restoration plan. The actual implementation of the plan(s) will be left to another phase. It is not clear on how the applicant and her team will ensure that mitigation activities will be followed through.

External Scientific: #2

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **143**

Applicant Organization: **San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee**

Proposal Title: **Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

none

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
-Excellent	**This is a worthy effort - it is important to involve stakeholders in decisions related to TMDL reduction, rather than having solutions handed down from an outside party. The proposers understand the basin and the issues. However, there are too many questions about what would be done and how contingencies would be addressed to predict whether this will be a successful way to correct the DO problem.**
-Good	
XPoor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The goals and objectives are clearly stated. The proposers understand the nature and complexity of the dissolved oxygen (DO) problem in the San Joaquin River (SJR) and the Deep Water Ship Channel (DWSC), and the need to develop quickly a TMDL reduction plan. There are no testable hypotheses.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project

justified?

Hard to tell. Reference is made to computer modeling of the DO dynamics in the DWSC, but no specifics are provided to convince the reviewer that Non-Point Source (NPS) pollutants from the watersheds are significant contributors to the problem. Similarly, no details are given to support the premise that reducing NPS inputs (the underlying goal of this proposal) will be sufficient, or are even necessary. It is probably true that correcting the DO problem will involve reducing point-source and NPS inputs, improving instream flows, improving circulation in the DWSC, and other measures; the proposers suggest this, but do not provide evidence for it.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   The 3-phased approach is generally appropriate, but details are lacking. The allocation of financial resources from this proposal is fuzzy - will assistance be provided to 5 watersheds? 3? 8? I understand that there is uncertainty until the tributary watersheds are prioritized in March, 2002, but the level of assistance and details of the TMDL reduction plans will differ greatly if 8 watersheds are selected instead of 3. Will this money be enough for 8 watersheds? Too much for 3 watersheds? What about the tributary watersheds that are not selected in the top 3/5/8? Will they have any resources, or will they have to develop TMDL reduction plans on their own? What will be accomplished if the total contribution of BOD/COD from the "have-not" watersheds far exceeds the contribution from the 5 watersheds selected for assistance?

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The approach is poorly documented. How would they contact the stakeholders and ensure participation? What if major stakeholders (NPS pollution sources) refuse to participate - can a useful TMDL reduction plan still be crafted? There are a lot of contingencies that are unstated. The proposers' involvement with these issues and the work of the DO TMDL Steering Committee over the last few years give some confidence that these things have been throught about and could be resolved.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Poorly quantified. Reports will be written and plans completed, but no details are provided about the kinds of measures that might be used to demonstrate success. Is it intended that the 3/5/8 watersheds selected for assistance will account for 50% of the TMDL in the SJR? 75%? 90%? Within a particular watershed, what percentage of the stakeholders involvement is sought? Or what percentage of DO-reducing pollutants are hoped to be addressed? The proposers appropriately recognize that an adaptive management approach will need to be adopted in order to make mid-course corrections in the TMDL reduction plans, but they don't suggest what would be monitored, or what or where.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

Hard to say, because there is not enough detail about what the products might contain. Would the TMDL reduction plan make firm commitments to all stakeholders? If not, major NPS dischargers could refuse to participate and seriously reduce the effectiveness of the plans.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   They have the knowledge, connections, and skills to involve the stakeholders in a meaningful way. Their involvement in the DO TMDL issue in the SJR over the years is a plus. It's hard to tell from the proposal whether they have the technical skills to develop the appropriate mix of TMDL reduction strategies/technologies, but the involvement of others on the DO TMDL Steering Committee should help ensure that this happens.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   A major part of the cost (354k out of 564k) is for technical support services/consultants. Little information is offered to explain the duties of these individuals or their qualifications.

Miscellaneous comments:

This is a needed effort, and the 3-phase approach is a reasonable way to tackle the problem. The proposers have good experience and knowledge of the issues in this basin. However, there are major contingencies related to which and how many tributary watersheds will be selected, and whether stakeholders will participate in a meaningful way, that could make a big difference. The proposal provides too few details to know whether this effort stands a good chance of correcting DO problems in the SJR and DWSC.

External Scientific: #3

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **143**

Applicant Organization: **San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee**

Proposal Title: **Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

none

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

Excellent: outstanding in all respects;
Good: quality but some deficiencies;
Poor: serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
XExcellent	**This project has excellent use of a steering committee that has been together for several years and has excellent sector balance. This is important for resolving the complex issue of establishing a DO TMDL in the San Joaquin River. The DO issue is identified in CALFED plan as strategic goal #6, plus this project will be of value to decision makers. The team has good experience. There is good cost sharing involved.**
-Good	
-Poor	

1. **Goals.** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   The project goals, objectives and hypotheses are clearly stated for each of the three phases of the project.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

clearly outlined in proposal.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   The study clearly outlines the tasks to be conducted over the 3 year period. There are three steps of this project to develop the DO restoration plan: convening phase, responsibility phase and solutions phase.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   The success of this project is that a very committed and well rounded team of stakeholders are involved in the steering committee (SC). SC members range from several cities, CDWR, consulting firms, USFWS, farmers, irrigation districts, and Central Valley Regional Water Board. The SC has been working together since 1999 and therefore dont need to get their feet wet before getting down to business. This is important for resolving the complex issue of establishing a DO TMDL in the San Joaquin River.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   Are clearly outlined in proposal on page 10. However, the solution phase will most likely go beyond the date of December 2002.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

   A product maybe the use of this as a role for other complex watershed/pollutant combination TMDL that need to be developed within the Bay/Delta ecosystem. A responsibility paper will be prepared to explain options, analyze the impacts of most implementation and allocation scenarios. It is stated that both the environmental and agricultural liaisons will be important in this process. This is critical.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   The team has adequate experience as a collective whole.

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   The costs appear reasonable. There is a good cost share amount of $129,000 (members of the steering committee).

Miscellaneous comments:

External Scientific: #4

Research and Restoration External Scientific Review Form

Proposal Number: **143**

Applicant Organization: **San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee**

Proposal Title: **Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton**

Conflict of Interest Statements:
I have no financial interest in this proposal.
XCorrect
-Incorrect

In the blank below please explain any connection to proposal, to applicant, co-applicant or subcontractor or to submitting institution (write "none" if no connection):

none

Review:

Please provide an overall evaluation summary rating:

<u>Excellent:</u> outstanding in all respects;
<u>Good:</u> quality but some deficiencies;
<u>Poor:</u> serious deficiencies.

Overall Evaluation Summary Rating	**Provide a brief explanation of your summary rating**
XExcellent	**Concise, clear, comprehensive, integrated, inspired. If these qualities and their importance are agreed to by a significant majority of the stakeholders, the project has a decent chance of being effective. That's a big "if," but the alternative is to do nothing or rush forward ill-prepared and unaware of the wild cards. The latter would, as the proposal sagely realizes, be tragic.**
-Good	
-Poor	

1. **<u>Goals.</u>** Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the concept timely and important?

   a. Are the goals, objectives and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent?

   Yes.

   b. Is the concept timely and important?

   Yes.

2. **Justification.** Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work? Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

   a. Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge?

   Yes.

   b. Is a conceptual model clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work?

   Yes.

   c. Is the selection of research, pilot or demonstration project, or a full-scale implementation project justified?

   Yes.

   Approach.

   a. Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project?

   Yes.

   b. Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge?

   Yes.

   c. Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches?

   Yes, particularly if the fundamental driving principles of integration, comprehensiveness, and dynamic synergy are at least not rejected out of hand by the participants.

   d. Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   Essential and crucial.

3. **Approach.** Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

   a. Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project?

   Yes.

   b. Are results likely to add to the base of knowledge?

   Yes.

   c. Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodology or approaches?

Yes, particularly if the fundamental driving principles of integration, comprehensiveness, and dynamic synergy are at least not rejected out of hand by the participants.

d. Will the information ultimately be useful to decision-makers?

Essential and crucial.

4. **Feasibility.** Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   a. Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible?

   Yes.

   b. What is the likelihood of success?

   Optimism is the only option.

   c. Is the scale of the project consistent with the objectives?

   Yes, but while great care has apparently been exercised to avoid excesses in a traditionally excessive realm of endeavor, this reviewer hopes that the authors have not erred too far in the direction of caution and underestimated the true needs of such a project. Much will depend upon the leadership abilities, intelligence, patience and courage of the professional facilitators. Human psychology is the wildest of wild cards, and there is always the danger that the opinion cum consensus tail could wind up wagging the factual dog at the expense of truth.

5. **Project-Specific Performance Measures.** Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives? Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified? For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   a. Does the project include appropriate performance measures to measure success relative to the project's goals and objectives?

   Yes.

   b. Is there enough detail as to how the performance measures will be quantified?

   Yes.

   c. For restoration projects, are monitoring plans explicit and detailed enough to determine if performance measures will be adequately assessed?

   It is an inherently risky endeavor, full of variables and imponderables. The only useful measure this reviewer can think of is whether or not movement in the direction of progress is greater in relation to current conditions than the opposite in proportion to the investment of time, energy, and money. This judgment may defy measurement in any precise sense, but not in terms of common sense.

6. **Products.** Are products of value likely from the project? Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component? Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

a. Are products of value likely from the project?

Yes.

b. Specifically for restoration projects, are products of value also likely from the monitoring component?

Not applicable.

c. Are interpretative outcomes likely from the project?

Yes, but the program specifically lacks a public relations program that would PUSH its principles, the applications derived from them, widely publicize the results and reflect the enthusiasm that the proposal promises to generate by its vigorous tone and nature. If there is such a thing, a combination publicist/historian might be preferable over the more dominant species, e.g., spin doctors.

7. **Capabilities.** What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

   a. What is the track record of applicants in terms of past projects?

   Those whose qualifications are listed appear to be well-qualified. Four facilitators are listed, but no qualifications are given. The agricultural and environmental liaisons will be chosen during the course of the proposed project.

   b. Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project?

   c. Do they have available the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

8. **Cost/Benefit Comments.** Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the work proposed?

   More than reasonable. Apart from the publicist/historian suggested in 6c above, serious consideration should be given to adding at least one administrative assistant and one technical assistant/researcher (might be combined with the publicist/historian, depending upon the personal qualifications of the individual, but this is rare), and to increasing the contingency to 20%.

   The implied concept that if the number of task units exceeded five that no additional funds would be required needs to be explained.

   Budget line item 6.1 should be broken down somewhat.

Miscellaneous comments:

It was a pleasure to read such a concise and clearly written proposal, especially so because of the changeable and nebulous nature of the work where most authors tend to fall back on hype.

In some places a text-reference note would have been useful.

The project schedule is ambitiousand it should be. There is no need to lollygag. This may be the crucial bit of genius in the whole proposal that will make the difference between a bureaucratic tar pit and truly soaring! Simple, certainly. But it is just such simple tipping-point things that make the difference between success and failure. Just getting with it may not be a new formula, and it may be tarnished from disuse, but its a reliable way to strike up the band and keep it moving. Contingencies, si! Excuses, no! Realistically, avoid Parkinsons Law. Delete any reference to tolerance for slackness. But make sure the schedule is not based on an arbitrary guess.

Coefficients should perhaps be tested in context or their bases carefully review for relevance in context before heavy reliance is placed upon them. Certainly, however, the method of choice should always be the simplest, roughest, quickest, sufficiently reliable measure possible. In some cases the number and frequency of samples can be more useful that an unneeded degree of accuracy, no matter how much fun impressive and expensive instruments may be. Good science does not always live by the degree of measurement accuracy alone.

A few concerns and thoughts (stimulated by the proposal) arose during the review, but they may be based as much on the ignorance and overactive imagination of the reviewer as on reality:

1. One would hope that a well-founded scheme can be developed for weighting the variables with some accuracy or at least recognizing the need to do so before analysis is converted to policy and action. For example, in much the fashion that the proposal suggests the apportionment of proportional responsibility for those entities causing low flow, increased river depth, and various nutrient loads (natural background debris load sources probably should receive zero weight), alternative solutions, locations, and the relative impacts under variable conditions should be carefully analyzed in depth and prioritized.

2. Is any level of DO improvement enough? How much reduction is significant under what conditions? One wonders about the levels of reduction required for the restoration of certain biological and ecological functions and the importance of comparing such levels with those which can reasonably be achieved and in what locations at what times.

3. One wonders about the risk of, for example, the limitations of funding and technology translating to a level of effectiveness that falls just, but crucially, short of achieving the requirements for a given set of biological and ecological functions--especially if caused by incorrect information, interpretation, or presumption.

4. One wonders, for example, if pre-fixation on a particular measure (say, mechanical aeration?) might soak up funds that less familiar or unfamiliar technology might use to greater effect?

5. Will there be a recognition that quantum leaps may lie below the radar, especially that directed only toward past achievements elsewhere? Will challenges to the status quo get a fair hearing--especially if they contradict current practice?

6. Will flexibility, particularly the facility to recognize error in a previously revered technology, policy, or action be retained throughout the process even if it means admitting error, or will the presumption of perfection and policies and actions cast in concrete rule?

These are all merely examples (and speculative at that) of possible entrees into acute critical thinking and brainstorming that might be considered as the assessment and evaluation process goes forward.

Within a framework of scientific discipline a freedom of intellectual movement, even play, can be permitted to fuel creative hypotheses that center more upon fundamental principle and less upon comfortable and boring convention. Certainly, however, the inspired speculation needs to be winnowed from the chaff of wild assumptions without foundation. But initially at least, the whole crop needs to be brought to the threshing-floor.

Prior Performance/Next Phase Funding:

New Proposal Number: 143

New Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

1. Prior CALFED project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

   01-N61, SJR Do Depletion, Directed Action

2. Prior CVPIA project numbers, titles, and programs: (*list only projects for which you are the contract manager*)

   N/A

3. Have negotiations about contracts or contact amendments with this applicant proceeded smoothly, without persistent difficulties related to standard contract terms and conditions?

   XYes **-**No **-**N/A

   If no, please explain any difficulties:

4. Are the status, progress, and accomplishments of the applicant's current CALFED or CVPIA project(s) accurately stated?

   XYes **-**No **-**N/A

   If no, please explain any inaccuracies:

5. Is the applicant's progress towards these project(s)' milestones and outcomes to date satisfactory?

   -Yes **X**No **-**N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

   Significant delays have occurred due to lack of funding. See answer to question 6.

6. Is the applicant's reporting, records keeping, and financial management of these projects satisfactory?

   -Yes **X**No **-**N/A

   If no, please explain deficiencies:

   Significant delays in submission of deliverables have occurred, as well as submission of acceptable deliverables due to incorrect formatting and/or typographical errors.

7. Will the project(s) be ready for next phase funding in 2002, based on its current progress and expenditure rates?

   XYes -No -N/A

   If no, please explain:

Other Comments:

Environmental Compliance:

Proposal Number: 143

Applicant Organization: San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

1. Are the legal or regulatory issues that affect the proposal identified adequately in the proposal?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

2. Does the project's timeline and budget reflect adequate planning to address legal and regulatory issues that affect the proposal?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

3. Do the legal and regulatory issues that affect the proposal significantly impair the project's feasibility?

   -Yes **X**No

   If yes, please explain:

Other Comments:

Budget:

Proposal Number: 143

Applicant Organization: San Joaquin River DO TMDL Steering Committee

Proposal Title: Restoration Planning for Watersheds Impacting low Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lower San Joaquin River Near Stockton

1. Does the proposal include a detailed budget for each year of requested support?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

2. Does the proposal include a detailed budget for each task identified?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

3. Does the proposal clearly state the type of expenses encompassed in indirect rates or overhead costs?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

4. Are appropriate project management costs clearly identified?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

5. Do the total funds requested (Form I, Question 17A) equal the combined total annual costs in the budget summary?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain (for example, are costs to be reimbursed by cost share funds included in the budget summary).

6. Does the budget justification adequately explain major expenses?

   XYes **-**No

   If no, please explain:

7. Are there other budget issues that warrant consideration?

-Yes **X**No

If yes, please explain:

Other Comments: