

Attachment 3 Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan Independent Peer Review Strategy

Objective

This strategy was developed by the Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan Adaptive Management Planning Team (DRERIP AMPT) to ensure that independent technical peer review is an integral part of the DRERIP process. The strategy identifies six critical points in the DRERIP planning process where draft products will undergo peer review via one of three methods. Review comments will be linked to document revisions and tracked to demonstrate specific responses to peer review input. The AMPT and Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) implementing agency staff are responsible for ensuring that this strategy is followed, with support and advice from the CALFED Science Program.

Principles

The following principles are intended to maximize the independence and effectiveness of the peer review:

- Seek reviews from experts who are not directly involved in CALFED Bay-Delta Program activities.
- Use a spectrum of peer review approaches including: 1) reviews by standing boards that are internal to the system, but independent of DRERIP, such as the former ERP Science Board which is currently being replaced by a technical review panel (see Attachment 3A); 2) technical peer review panels involving experts from outside the area conducted in a workshop setting; and 3) individual experts, not directly involved in CALFED Bay-Delta Program activities, who are asked to provide written comments on specific products.
- Apply different approaches for different products.
- Schedule independent reviews throughout the process to ensure timeliness and maximize utility throughout the DRERIP process.
- Provide a clear charge to reviewers, including specific questions to address in the review.
- Provide reviewers sufficient background material on DRERIP and the context for the review.

Definitions

Review: A review is a written critical report evaluating a specific DRERIP product. Reviews will explicitly address each of the following two questions:

1. Is there sound technical basis for the approach, product, and conclusions?
2. Are potential impacts and uncertainties fully identified and considered?

Peer: A peer is a person who was not involved as a participant or supervisor in the product being reviewed but who has a level of expertise in the subject matter at least equivalent to that among the persons who produced the product to be reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: A person is free from conflicts of interest if the person has had no connection with or involvement in the study that is the subject of review and will not be directly/personally affected either positively or negatively by the outcome of the review.

Identifying Suitable Reviewers

Individual Peer Reviewers ERP implementing agency staff will identify individual peer reviewers in consultation with the AMPT, CALFED Science Program, and other Bay-Delta Program staff as appropriate. Where financial remuneration will improve the quality or timeliness of review, the ERP agencies will attempt to fund such reviews.

Technical Peer Review Panels A peer review panel may be established for the review of some DRERIP products. In this case, a panel lead will be identified. The panel lead will be responsible for ensuring that the panel completes its work in a timely manner, including the production of any minority reports, if necessary. The panel composition and the panel lead will be identified by the implementing agency staff, in consultation with the AMPT, CALFED Science Program, and other Bay-Delta Program staff as appropriate.

Standing Boards The CALFED Bay-Delta Program includes a standing scientific board, the Independent Science Board. Specifically, the Independent Science Board (ISB) may conduct reviews of DRERIP responses to reviews.

Points of Review

The DRERIP peer review strategy will include programmed reviews at six distinct points in the process (Table 1). The AMPT considers peer review of the work products produced at these six points critical to the integrity of the overall DRERIP process either because they represent development of foundational scientific content, or because they represent potentially controversial aspects of the process, such as vetting and priority setting. The table below outlines the six distinct points of review and the peer review approach that will be employed. Three of these reviews will be conducted by individual experts or expert teams assembled specifically for the review in question. The other three reviews will be conducted by standing independent bodies within the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Table 1. DRERIP Products to be Reviewed, Review Techniques, and Timing.

Product to be Reviewed	Review Technique	Timing
1. Species Life History Conceptual Models	Each species life history conceptual model will be reviewed by individual peer reviewers (via mail/website) and/or by groups of individual peer reviewers through focused workshops. A given individual or group may review multiple models.	To be conducted by individual peer reviewers as species models/groups of models are completed.
2. Ecosystem Element Conceptual Models	Focused workshops involving ERP Science Board representatives (currently a review panel in the absence of this Board). Review will be interactive through scheduled workshops that will include both Action Team and the review panel members.	To be conducted as ecosystem models are completed.
3. Vetting Process	Originally was review by ISB and currently under revision given new role of ISB.	Upon development of vetting process by AMPT.
4. Priority Setting Process	Originally was review by ISB and currently under revision given new role of ISB.	Upon development of priority setting process by AMPT.
5. DRERIP Chapter 5, Delta ERP Actions in an Adaptive Management Context	Technical Peer Review Panel convened specifically for this review, including experts in adaptive management.	Upon completion of Draft Chapter 5.
6. Complete DRERIP (all chapters combined)	Technical Peer Review Panel convened specifically for this review.	Upon completion of Chapter 7 (and all previous chapters)