

## 4. Implementing Projects and Programs

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Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plans must select projects for inclusion in the Plan. The process must include the following:

- Procedures for submitting a project to the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG)
- Procedures for review of projects that consider a number of factors outlined in the Proposition 84 & 1E IRWM Guidelines
- A list of selected projects

### 4.1. Project Review Process

#### 4.1.1. Procedure for Submitting Projects and Programs

Project solicitation is the process by which agencies, organizations, and interested individuals can submit projects for inclusion in the IRWMP. To be considered for the IRWMP, projects must be sufficiently described to allow objective analysis; however, they can be in any stage of development, from conceptual to design. There are many benefits to submitting a project for inclusion in the IRWMP, including raising local awareness of the potential project and associated benefits and positioning the project for potential State funding.

Two project solicitation periods were implemented as part of the MAC IRWMP update. An initial call for projects was emailed to the stakeholder contact list and posted on the MAC IRWMP website informing participants that the initial project solicitation period would be held from December 21, 2011 to January 20, 2012. A project information form was developed and distributed on December 21<sup>st</sup> for the first round of project solicitation. The form was emailed to the stakeholder contact list and posted on the website. In addition, RPC members were asked to distribute the form to others that might be interested and announce the process at their respective meetings. Project information forms were required to be submitted to the project team by January 20, 2012. If there was a project included in the 2006 IRWMP that an agency or stakeholder wanted included in the MAC Plan Update, they were requested to resubmit the project to ensure any updates to the project and status were included in the Update. Almost fifty projects were collected for the 2006 MAC IRWMP.

In addition, a second project solicitation period followed, with project information forms being due on May 23, 2012. On May 22, 2012, the solicitation period was extended until May 30, to provide time for proponents to provide additional requested information. This solicitation period and the extension were noticed in the same manner as the initial solicitation, with email announcements, a website update, and a request for distribution by RPC members. Holding a second solicitation provided project proponents with additional time to develop projects that would contribute to meeting the MAC Plan objectives and gather information necessary to complete the project template.

In the future an official project solicitation process for the MAC region will be conducted periodically. The timing of future project solicitations will be determined by the UMRWA Board of Directors based on state IRWM program requirements, MAC region needs and changed circumstances, and public input. For each future project solicitation process the RPC will be re-convened to review the projects and develop an updated prioritized project list.

#### 4.1.2. Procedure for Review and Selection of Projects/Programs

A two-tiered project review process was employed for the MAC Plan Update as depicted in Figure 4-1. This screening and evaluation process yielded a list of projects which are prioritized based on the extent to which the projects meet regional IRWMP goals and statewide water resource management priorities. The order of prioritized projects reflects the MAC Region's priorities as determined by the stakeholder RPC. The prioritized list does not reflect the recommended implementation order or the relative priority of projects to individual agencies and organizations.

As depicted in Figure 4-1, after a project was submitted for inclusion in the MAC Plan Update, it went through a two-step screening process. To be included in the IRWMP, each project had to meet at least one regional goal, at least one Statewide Priority, and at least two Resource Management Strategies (RMS). This screening process, depicted as Steps 1 and 2 of Tier 1 as shown in Figure 4-1, is summarized below. Any project found to be under construction or did not meet the minimum screening requirements was eliminated from further consideration. At the completion of the preliminary screening, **xx** projects remained for evaluation and prioritization and one project was dropped from further consideration.

It should be noted that inclusion of a project in the IRWM Plan does not reflect endorsement by any or all members of the RPC or UMRWA.

##### *Tier 1 - Screening, Step 1*

Step 1 of Tier 1 compared projects with the Statewide Priorities and the MAC Plan Update regional goals (see Section 3 of this document for more details). Projects must meet at least one regional goal and at least one Statewide Priority to move forward to Step 2.

##### *Tier 1 - Screening, Step 2*

In Step 2 of the Tier 1 prioritization process, each project was compared with the list of RMS identified for inclusion in the MAC Plan Update. Projects had to address two or more RMS's to be considered further. These strategies are discussed in Section 3 and include the following.

- Agricultural Water Use Efficiency
- Urban Water Use Efficiency
- Conveyance – Regional/local
- System Reoperation
- Water Transfers
- Conjunctive Management & Groundwater Storage
- Precipitation Enhancement
- Recycled Municipal Water
- Surface Storage – Regional/local
- Drinking Water Treatment and Distribution
- Groundwater Remediation/Aquifer Remediation
- Matching Quality to Use
- Pollution Prevention
- Salt and Salinity Management
- Urban Runoff Management
- Flood Risk Management
- Agricultural Lands Stewardship
- Economic Incentives (Loans, Grants and Water Pricing)
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Forest Management
- Recharge Area Protection

- Water-Dependent Recreation
- Watershed Management

Together, these two preliminary screening steps identified the projects that met both regional goals and objectives and the State's priorities for the IRWM planning process. Projects that met the minimum requirements of addressing at least one regional goal, one statewide priority, and two RMS were included in the MAC Plan Update and passed to Tier 2 of the project evaluation and prioritization process.

#### 4.1.3. Evaluation and Prioritization of Projects and Programs

The purpose of the Tier 2 project evaluation and prioritization process is to identify those projects with highest value to the MAC region, as defined in the MAC Plan Update. The means by which this prioritization is achieved can vary significantly, but for a process that aims to achieve integrated and regional results, the selection of projects to be implemented must ultimately be achieved through consensus. For the purposes of the MAC Plan Update, consensus is defined as the process by which agreement is reached by a group as a whole.

The Tier 2 process yielded the prioritized list of IRWMP projects by utilizing a three step evaluation process.

##### *Tier 2 - Evaluation, Step 1*

This initial step involved applying the evaluation criteria to assess each project. Evaluation criteria and the basis for scoring are described below.

**Criterion 1: Maximize economic feasibility.** Project benefits and costs were assessed at a fundamental level to develop a basic cost-benefit ratio. The cost-benefit ratio was based on the total number of goals addressed divided by a cost score of three tiers of cost ranges. The cost score of was based on: 1 =<\$2m; 2=\$2m to \$20m; 3=>\$20m. The benefit-cost ratio was calculated by dividing total goals addressed by the cost score.

Projects were rated as follows.

High = High estimated benefit – cost ratio of 2.5 or greater

Medium = Mid-range estimated benefit – cost ratio of 1.5 to 2

Low = Lower benefit – cost ratio of 0 to 1.4

**Criterion 2: Meet MAC Plan Update Goals.** The specific MAC Plan goals each project would fulfill were identified and used to determine how well each project met regional needs. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Addresses 5 or more goals

Medium = Addresses 2 to 4 goals

Low = Addresses less than 2 goals

**Criterion 3: Integrate State RMS.** In order to recognize multi-benefit, integrated projects, projects were assessed for the degree of RMS integration. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Incorporates 6 or more RMSs

Medium = Incorporates 3 to 5 RMSs

Low = Incorporates less than 3 RMSs

**Criterion 4: Provide Multi-agency/Entity Benefits.** As a regional program, the IRWM Plan promotes projects with multiple partners. A project that benefits more than one agency may benefit a larger population, utilize economies of scale, reduce regional conflicts, and may be more likely to incorporate multiple benefits in multiple resource areas. Projects were rated as follows.

High= Benefits 3 or more agencies/entities

Medium = Benefits 2 agencies/entities

Low= Benefits 1 agency/entity

**Criterion 5: Maximize Benefits to Disadvantaged Community (DAC) and Native American Tribes, and Minimize Impacts to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities.** Projects were assessed to identify projects that provide targeted benefits to address the critical water supply, water quality, and resource management needs of local DACs, EJ concerns, and tribal communities. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Provides targeted benefits to one or more DAC or Native American community; does not have environmental justice impacts

Medium = Provides targeted benefits to one or more DAC or Native American community; but may have environmental justice impacts

Low = Provides no DAC or Native American benefits; may have environmental justice impacts

**Criterion 6: Ensure Technical Feasibility.** The IRWMP seeks to promote projects that are not only economically feasible, but technically feasible as well. Projects were qualitatively assessed based on implementation feasibility, given knowledge about the project, location, and whether there are data gaps. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Ample technical knowledge and supporting data to uphold claimed benefits/value

Medium = Adequate technical knowledge and supporting data to defend claimed benefits/values although some gaps may exist

Low = Insufficient technical knowledge or supporting data to sustain claimed benefits/values

**Criterion 7: Encourage Climate Change Adaptation or Mitigation Benefits.** In order to recognize the potential implications of climate change in long-term planning, projects were assessed for their contribution to climate change adaptation and / or mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Adaptation and/or mitigation benefits have been demonstrated

Medium = Adaptation and/or mitigation benefits are likely

Low = Climate change adaption and/or mitigation benefits are unlikely

**Criterion 8: Minimize Implementation Risk.** The purpose of this criterion is to identify projects that face significant implementation challenges, potentially due to negative social, environmental, or economic impacts. Projects were rated as follows.

High = Minimal implementation risk due to documented institutional barriers such as regulatory, environmental, or permitting obstacles, and low degree of controversy, potential legal challenge, or potential partners' uncertainty.

Medium = Moderate implementation risk due to documented institutional barriers such as regulatory, environmental, or permitting obstacles, and moderate degree of controversy, potential legal challenge, or potential partners' uncertainty.

Low = High implementation risk due to documented institutional barriers such as regulatory, environmental, or permitting obstacles, and high degree of controversy, potential legal challenge, or potential partners' uncertainty.

**Criterion 9: Best Project for Intended Purpose.** The IRWMP seeks to promote projects that provide the best solution to meet a regional need social, environmental, and economic perspective. Projects were rated as follows.

High= Project is the best possible alternative to meet the stated need from a social, environmental, and economic perspective.

Medium= Other alternatives exist that may be preferable from a social, environmental, and economic perspective.

Low= Other alternatives clearly exist that will be better to meet the intended need from a social, environmental, and economic perspective.

**Criterion 10: Project Status / Readiness.** The project status and readiness to proceed of submitted projects was assessed.

High = Fully ready with design and environmental documentation completed.

Medium = Advanced planning completed, final design and environmental documentation not completed.

Low = Conceptual or preliminary planning completed.

### *Tier 2 - Evaluation, Step 2*

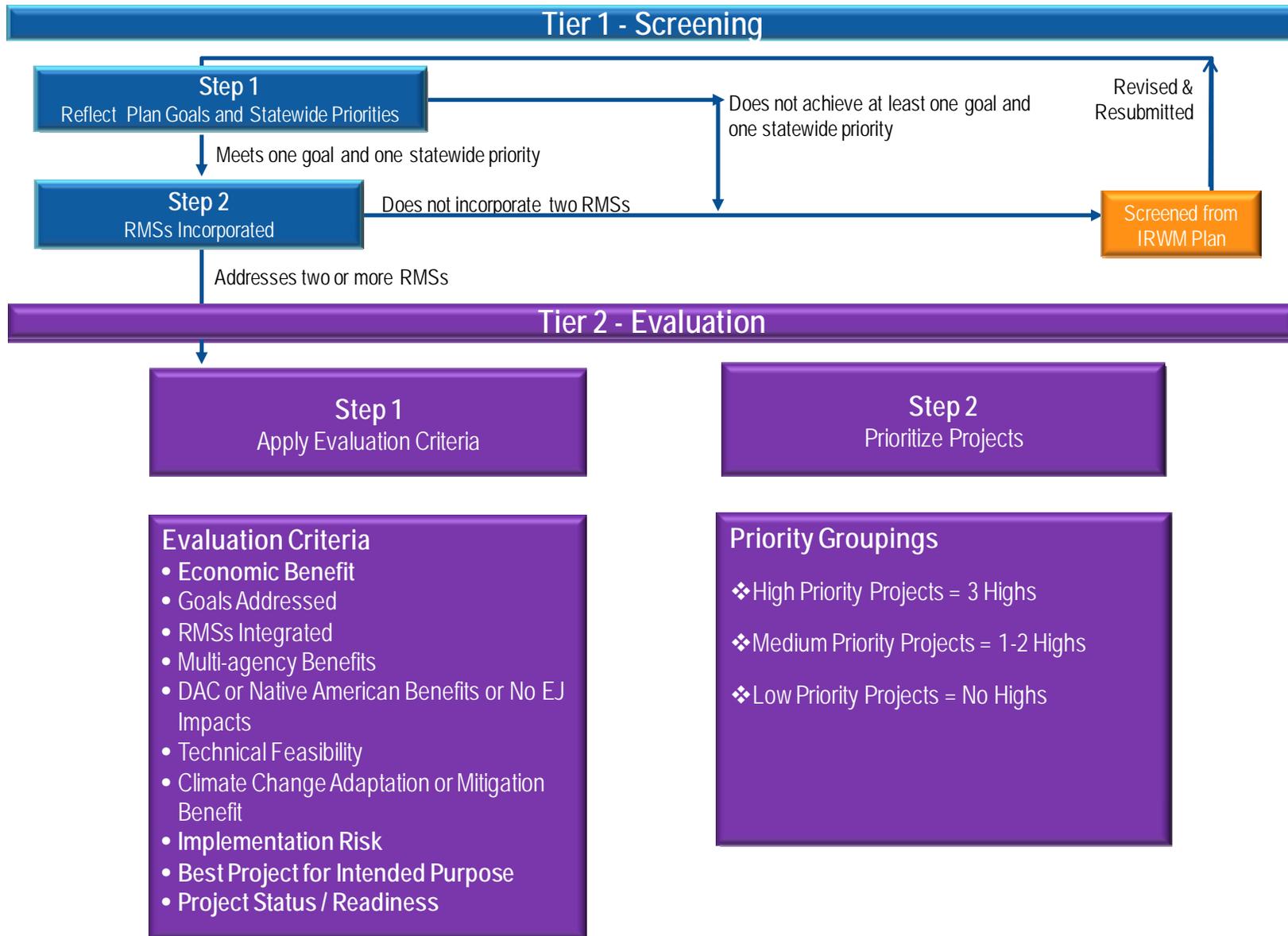
In Step 2 of the Tier 2 process, projects were organized into groupings, based on the number of "High" scores received in the assessment performed in Tier 2, Step 1. Projects were organized into High, Medium, and Low priority groupings as follows.

High Priority: 3 or more High scores

Medium Priority: 1 or 2 High scores

Low Priority: 0 High scores

**Figure 4-1: Project Review and Prioritization Process**



*Results*

Describe the prioritization of the projects submitted during the project solicitation and evaluation period.  
To be completed after project evaluation.

4.1.4. Project Integration

Describe opportunities and examples of project-level integration. To be completed during project evaluation (potential to increase project efficiencies and maximize benefits).

4.2. Coordination with Water Agencies

*Previously completed as part of Task 1.1 Section Update*

4.3. Impact and Benefit Analysis

To be completed

4.4. Financing Plan

To be completed

4.5. Technical Analysis

To be completed