

Procedure for Review and Selection of Projects/Programs for the Mokelumne/Amador/Calaveras Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

The project review process developed for the Mokelumne/Amador/Calaveras Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Update 2013 (MAC Plan Update) implements a two-tiered approach of screening followed by evaluating projects, as depicted in Figure 1. The order of prioritized projects does not reflect the recommended implementation order or priority of projects to individual agencies and organizations, but rather to the region.

Tier 1 - Screening, Step 1

Step 1 of Tier 1 compared projects with the Statewide Priorities and the MAC Plan Update regional goals. 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. In order to move forward and be included in the IRWMP, each project must incorporate at least two of the RMS listed in the project information form.

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 evaluation and prioritization process.

Evaluation and Prioritization of Projects and Programs

Tier 2, Step 1 - Apply Evaluation Criteria

Step 1 of the Tier 2 process involves assessment of project benefits in several areas. Due to the conceptual nature of many of the projects and incomplete data, these projects were evaluated qualitatively. This evaluation focused on the following ten evaluation criteria.

Criterion 1: Maximize Economic Feasibility. Project benefits and costs were qualitatively assessed to establish a high level determination of economic feasibility. Projects were rated as follows.

Low = Lower benefit-cost ratio

Medium = Mid-range estimated benefit-cost ratio

High = High estimated benefit-cost ratio

Criterion 2: Address MAC Plan Goals. The specific goals each project met were identified to determine how well each project met regional needs. Projects were rated as follows.

Low = Addresses less than 2 specific regional goals

Medium = Addresses 2 - 4 specific regional goals

High = Addresses 5 or more specific regional goals

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

Low = Incorporates 2 RMS

Medium = Incorporates 3 - 5 RMS

High = Incorporates 6 or more RMS

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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.

Low = Benefits 1 agency/entity

Medium = Benefits 2 agencies/entities

High = Benefits 3 or more agencies/entities

Criterion 5: Maximize Benefits to Disadvantaged Community (DAC) and Native American Tribes, and Minimize Environmental Justice (EJ) Impacts. 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.

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

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

High = Provides targeted benefits to one or more DAC or Native American community; does not have EJ 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.

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

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

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

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.

Low = Climate Change Adaptation and/or Mitigation Benefits Are Unlikely

Medium = Adaptation and / or Mitigation Benefits Are Likely

High = Adaptation and / or Mitigation Benefits Have Been Demonstrated

Criterion 8: Minimize Implementation Risk. To help identify projects that may have significant challenges achieving successful implementation and conversely, identify projects that have minimal institutional, political, and legal obstacles, this criterion was applied to the projects. Projects were rated as follows.

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

Medium = Moderate 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

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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

Criterion 9: Best Project for Intended Purpose. This criterion was applied to the projects to recognize that sometimes projects that may have the greatest likelihood of being realized to achieve a specific purpose may not always be the best projects from an economic, environmental, or social perspective. Projects were rated as follows.

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

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

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

Criterion 10: Project Status / Readiness. This criterion evaluates the status of a project and its proximity to construction and/or implementation. Projects were rated as follows.

Low = Conceptual or preliminary planning completed

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

High = Fully ready with design and environmental documentation completed

Tier 2, Step 2 - Prioritize Projects

In Step 2 of the Tier 2 process, the projects were prioritized based on their overall scores. The projects received a final score of High, Medium, or Low, which were determined as follows.

High = Received 5 or more Highs on evaluation criteria

Medium = Received 1 to 4 Highs on evaluation criteria

Low = Received no High scores on evaluation criteria

Figure 1: Project Review and Prioritization Process

