

ATTACHMENT 2. SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Selection Process and Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed using a multi-step, qualitative evaluation process. The [California Bay-Delta Authority](#) (Authority) will be relying on many scientific experts to assist in the review of proposals. Individuals assisting with reviews of proposals will be selected based on their expertise in the proposed areas of study. Individuals assisting in the final selection process will represent diverse scientific and technical fields including academic, government, and private interests.

General Selection Process

All complete proposals will undergo administrative review and external scientific peer review prior to consideration by a Technical Synthesis Panel (Technical Panel). The Technical Panel will use the external peer reviews and provide an unambiguous recommendation regarding the technical quality and likelihood of success of every proposal. Those proposals recommended as “fundable” by the Technical Panel will be forwarded for further consideration. Proposals for collaborative studies recommended for funding whose proponents wish to be considered for a special category of funds set aside to promote multi-institutional and multidisciplinary studies will then be reviewed by the [San Francisco Bay-Delta Science Consortium](#) (Consortium). Recommendations from the Consortium and the Technical Panel will then be provided to a Selection Panel. The Selection Panel’s charge is to make preliminary recommendations on funding those proposals forward by the Technical Synthesis Panel based on [California Bay-Delta Program’s](#) (CALFED’s) overall information needs and balances between short-and long-term- and species-specific and ecosystem-based approaches. The Selection Panel’s initial funding recommendations, the executive summaries, and all review comments (anonymous) will be sent out for public comment. The Selection Panel will meet again after close of the public comment period to consider the comments and make a final recommendation to the Authority and the other funding agencies. The process is outlined in [Figure 3](#).

More details about the nature of each review step are described below.

Administrative Review

Science Program staff will review all proposals to ensure compliance with requested information such as budgets, appropriate subcontracting mechanisms, and other project information and report their findings to the Selection Panel.

External Scientific Review

Three external independent reviewers will be selected for each proposal based on expertise in the specific subject area of the proposal. External scientific reviewers will specifically be asked to evaluate proposals based on the scientific review criteria in Table 1; make overall recommendations as to whether proposals are excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor; and explain their recommendations.

Table 1. Scientific Evaluation Criteria

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

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?

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

Feasibility. Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? What is the likelihood of success? Are the scale and budget of the project consistent with the objectives and within the grasp of the authors?

Monitoring. If applicable, is monitoring appropriately designed (pre-post comparisons; treatment-control comparisons)? Are there plans to interpret monitoring data or otherwise develop information?

Products. Are products of value likely from the project? Are contributions to larger data management systems relevant and considered? Are interpretative (or interpretable) outcomes likely from the project?

Capabilities. What is the track record of the authors in terms of past work? 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?

Technical Synthesis Panel

The role of the Technical Panel is to evaluate and provide unambiguous ratings of each proposal's technical quality to the Selection Panel. The Technical Panel will consider all external reviewer comments in their overall technical evaluation of the proposals. The result of these discussions will be a panel rating of fundable, fundable with modifications, or not fundable along with clear evaluation statements for each technical review criterion in Table 1. In summary, this panel provides information on the scientific quality of each proposal to the Selection Panel.

San Francisco Bay-Delta Science Consortium Panel and Collaboration Review

The Consortium (<http://www.baydeltaconsortium.org/>) is an organization formed to promote collaboration among researchers from agencies and academic, nonprofit, and local institutions in the region. Most of the CALFED agencies are also signatories of the Consortium Memorandum of Understanding.

A subgroup of the Consortium steering committee, comprised of senior members of the CALFED management community, academic institutional administrators, and nonprofit research program managers will be reviewing a special subset of proposals against the collaboration review criteria outlined in Table 2. Proposals that undergo this special review must have indicated they are seeking additional funds set aside for multi-institutional, multidisciplinary projects and have received a ranking of fundable or fundable with modifications from the Technical Synthesis Panel. The Consortium review committee will rate only the collaborative elements of each proposal (Table 2. Collaboration Evaluation Criteria) as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor and explain their rating. The results of the Consortium review will be provided to the Selection Panel.

Table 2. Collaboration Evaluation Criteria

Collaboration. Will the results of the collaborative effort be greater than the sum of its parts? Is it clear why the subprojects are part of a larger collaborative proposal rather than several independent smaller ones?

Interdependence and Integration. Does the proposal have an example that clearly articulates the conceptual model of each subproject and how they link together as a whole? Are the boundaries of the study plans focused and cohesive, yet well delineated? Is there a plan for potential differences in the stages of subproject completion times? Are there clear plans for analyses and interpretations which seek to identify and quantify relationships among the data collected in various subprojects rather than separate analyses for each subproject?

Project Management. Is it clear who will be performing management tasks and administration of the project? Are there resources set aside for project management and time given for investigators to collaborate? Is there a process for making decisions during the course of the project? Are there acknowledgments of potential barriers to collaboration and explanations of how team members will overcome barriers particular to their institutions?

Team Composition. Does the lead principal investigator have successful management history and experience leading collaborative teams? Is it clear that all key personnel are committed to making significant contributions to the project? Do team members have complementary skills?

Communication of Results. Is there a clear plan for comprehensive and cohesive reporting of project progress to the CALFED community?

Selection Panel and Initial Funding Recommendations

The primary purpose of the Selection Panel is to make strategic funding recommendations on proposals based on the following criteria:

- Does the proposal support CALFED's broad information needs?
- Does the proposal meet one or more of the priorities described in this solicitation?
- How feasible is the proposal given funding availability and constraints?
- What was the performance of authors on other CALFED or CALFED-related projects (if applicable)?; and
- Does the overall set of recommended proposals represent a balance between short-term and long-term benefits and species-specific versus ecosystem process approaches?

The Selection Panel will make preliminary recommendations for funding based on the evaluations conducted at all previous levels. Recommendations will consist of ranking proposals as fund, fund after modifications now, fund with potential future dollars (with or without modifications), and do not fund. Proposals that received a ranking of "not fundable" from the Technical Synthesis Panel will not be considered by the Selection Panel.

The Selection Panel will be comprised of technical and resource-management experts covering a broad range of expertise. The CALFED Lead Scientist will determine panel membership and will create a balance on the panel of practicing scientists, science managers, and advisors with expertise in agency and stakeholder concerns.

The Lead Scientist, or designate, will serve as a nonvoting director for the panel with the primary responsibility for assuring that the discussion is balanced, fair, and comprehensive. As a body, the

Selection Panel should be well known and experienced, well connected with others in their respective fields, representative of different specialties within these fields, and familiar with the issues and ongoing activities in one or more of the regions of the Bay-Delta System.

Public Nature of Review

After the Selection Panel has made its preliminary funding recommendations, all review comments (without reviewers' names or affiliations), the executive summary, basic project information (e.g., title and authors), and panel recommendations will be made available to the public for comment. Written comments submitted to the Science Program will be compiled and presented to the Selection Panel at the close of the public comment period. Only written comments will be accepted. The public comment period will last 4 weeks.

Final Selection Process

The Selection Panel will meet to consider comments received during the public comment period and, where appropriate, revise the preliminary recommendations. This panel will submit final recommendations to the Authority and other appropriate funding agencies.

California Bay-Delta Authority

The Authority has the ultimate discretion to choose to award a package of grants 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. Due to funding constraints, all high quality proposals will not necessarily receive funding. The Authority will be asked to make a decision on recommendations from the Selection Panel. Upon a final decision by the Authority, staff will directly notify all applicants of the final outcome of the process, post the full text of funded proposals on the Science Program website, and begin working with funded applicants to prepare grant agreement documents.

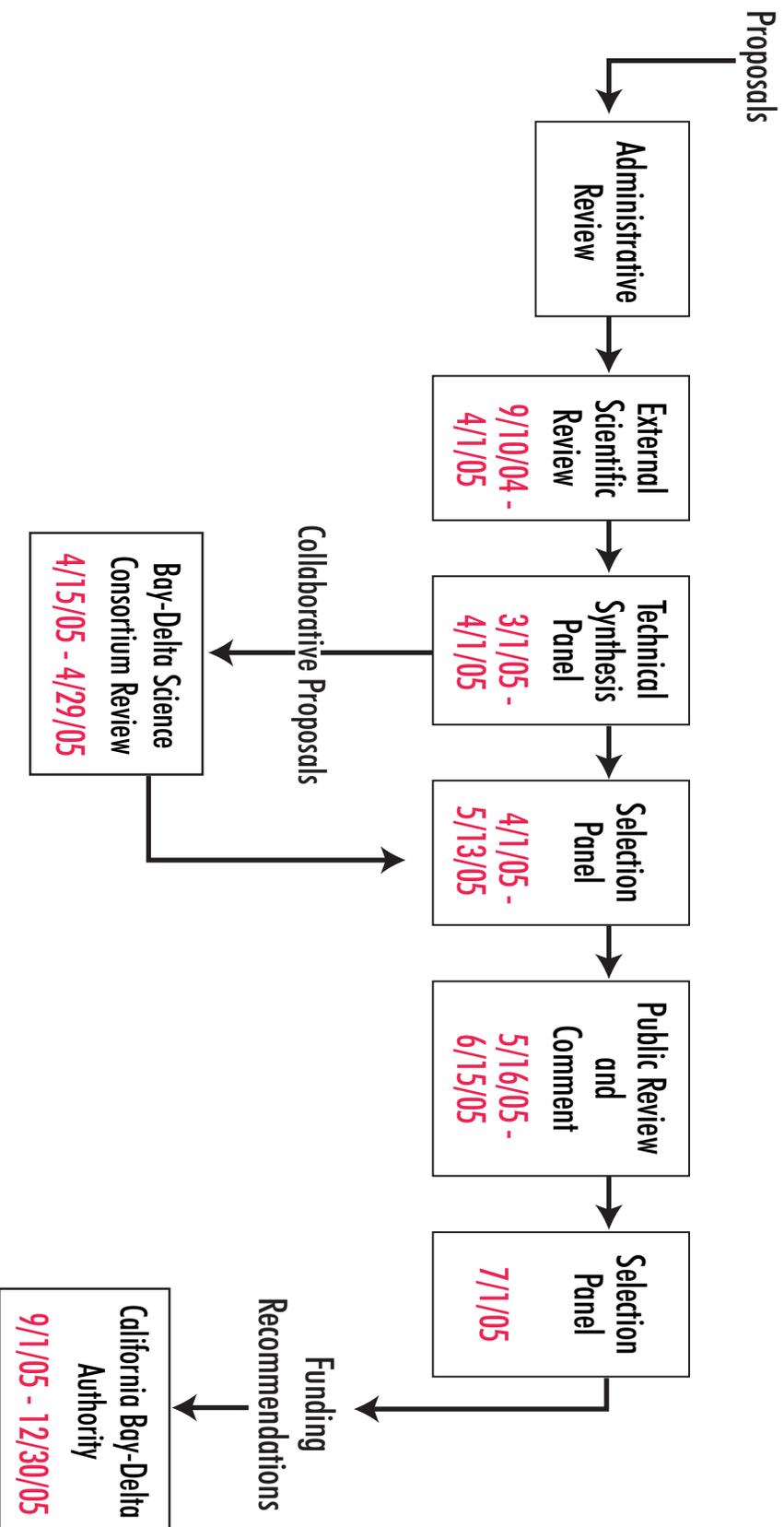
Conflict of Interest Rules for Participants in Proposal Review Process

The California Bay-Delta Authority will manage potential conflicts of interest by selecting reviewers who have no financial connection to the proposals they are reviewing. The participants in the proposal review process have been selected based on their scientific and technical expertise, not the agency or organization they work with. Individuals participating in each step of the review process must comply with federal and State conflict of interest laws. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to, Government Code section 1090 and Public Contract Code sections 10365.5, 10410 and 10411 for State conflict of interest requirements.

Reviewers who have assisted in the development of a proposal, will receive a financial benefit from the funded project, or have a financial interest under State conflict of interest laws will not be allowed to conduct reviews.

Reviewers who have a connection with the applicants or the submitting entity must reveal their connections prior to performing the review. Such connections will not necessarily disqualify the reviewer, so long as legal conflict of interest requirements are met. A connection to an applicant exists if any of the following relationships were applicable during the past 4 years: client/consultant; collaboration on research, pilot, or implementation proposal or project; co-authorship; thesis or postdoctoral advisorship; supervisor/employee relationship. An institutional connection exists between employees and their employers when, for example, a reviewer and an applicant are employees of the same State or federal

agency even if they are in different divisions of the agency. Similarly, a university faculty member will have an institutional connection with a proposal submitted from that university, even if the applicant is in a different department of that university campus ([Figure 3](#)).



CALFED Science Proposal Solicitation Package