

## V. Staging and Linkage Plan

### A. Introduction

An important aspect of an integrated program is to determine the order in which elements and actions are implemented and how they should be staged and linked to other elements and actions. Staging and linkage mechanisms are critical to the fundamental program premises that (1) all sectors must "get better together" and (2) irreversible commitments of resources will not be made in one problem area without corresponding levels of commitment to another problem area.

In addition, the program likely will require a number of funding, legislative, regulatory, contractual and institutional changes. These will take time to bring about. Furthermore, the sheer size and number of Program elements and actions makes it impossible to implement the entire program simultaneously. Indeed, the complexity of the program, uncertainty about how the environment will respond to the ERP, uncertainty about future drinking water standards and future drinking water treatment technologies (to mention only a few such issues) suggest that the CALFED managers cannot determine in advance the endpoints of the program. Thus, the program will have to consist of a set of staged actions, integrated over time and linked in multiple ways.

The challenge in implementing a program in stages is to allow actions that are ready to be taken immediately to go forward, while assuring that each interest group has a stake in the successful implementation of the entire program over the implementation period. A staging plan, therefore, should have the following characteristics:

- each stage should be completed before the next stage can begin;
- each interest group should have strong inducements to support the completion of each and every stage;
- no single interest group or entity should be vested with the power to prevent the Program from proceeding to the next stage;
- program elements which are outside of the control of the CALFED agencies should be implemented as early as possible to reduce the risk that outside actors may affect implementation.
- cost estimates for each stage should be included with uncertainty about the need for expenditures reduced to the extent possible before major investments are made.

In addition to chronological schedules and sequences, staging can include benchmarks or milestones for a specific program element and the consequences of a failure to meet a benchmark or milestone. The staging plan should also be defined in terms of linkages and triggers for activating the contingency response process.

B. A possible staging plan

A simple example of possible staging and linkages is given below. Not all elements in this example have been agreed to by the CALFED agencies or the BDAC Assurances Work Group.

1. Planning Stage (Completion of Phase II) - Activities occurring between the present and certification of the final Programmatic EIR/EIS (Late 1998).

- a. Refinement of common program elements and selection of preferred alternative.
- b. Draft individual implementation plans for each program component including:
  - a detailed and complete description of the actions in the element;
  - the goals, objectives and targets of the element actions;
  - the relative priority of actions;
  - a schedule for implementing actions;
  - a description of necessary monitoring;
  - descriptions of the measures of success;
  - cost projections as a function of time;
  - and any other necessary information.
- c. Draft program implementation strategy (plan or agreement) and circulate for agency and public review and comment. The document will be a compilation of all the actions necessary to carry out and assure program implementation, including descriptions of:
  - governance of the program
  - staging of the program
  - the contingency response process
  - the conservation strategy
  - Clean Water Act compliance and other permitting issues
  - financing
- d. Describe how the Program is to be managed in the near term, including responsibilities, authority, and funding.
- e. Required Milestones - Stage I (Transition) could not begin until a final programmatic EIS/EIR is certified.

2. Stage I (Transition to Implementation) - The first five years can be considered as a transitional stage during which the Program moves from planning to implementation. This stage is projected to occur from January 1999 to January 2004. As soon as possible following certification of the Programmatic EIS/EIR, the following would begin:

- a. Introduce state and/or federal legislation necessary to implement the long term program. For example:
  - new legislation to create or modify entities, their authority or relationships;
  - federal funding authorization and appropriations;
  - state authorization to sell bonds; and
  - new legislation or amendment of existing state and federal law on water transfers rules or processes, water use efficiency criteria, CVPIA restoration fund expenditures, use of CVPIA fish and wildlife water, etc.
- b. Draft contracts and agreements to govern implementation. This would include:
  - joint powers authorities, MOUs, MOAs, or other forms of agreement among the CALFED agencies; and
  - contracts between agencies and stakeholders.
- c. Sign and execute a conservation strategy agreement to address federal and state endangered species.
- d. Establish a forum for meaningful public and stakeholder involvement.
- e. Finalize the process to address circumstances which prevent key program components from being implemented or operated as agreed (contingency response process).
- f. Establish long-term implementation authority and responsibility.
- g. Begin Program implementation:
  - Begin implementing the levee integrity, water quality, water use efficiency, transfers, and watershed management elements;
  - Construct, install and begin operation of South Delta improvements;
  - Construct, install and begin operation of North Delta levee improvements;
  - Begin site-specific feasibility, environmental analysis and permit processes for new conveyance and storage facilities (if included).

- Begin implementing ERP:
- Implement comprehensive monitoring and research program.

h. Required Milestones - The end of the first five year "transition to implementation" stage is a major benchmark/milestone checkpoint. The program could not proceed to Stage II until findings were made that various milestones had been reached. The following milestones are currently under consideration:

- Have Stage I ERP milestones been reached as measured by acres, miles, dollars, institutional development and/or other measures?
- Have the conditions for a robust water transfer market been established as measured by legislation, volume of transactions, the success of test transactions and or other measures?
- Have specified Stage I water efficiency milestones been met as measured by legislation, certification levels, implementation of BMPS/EWMPS, and/or other measures?
- Have specified Stage I water quality milestones been met as measured by dollars expended, programs completed and/or other measures?
- Have specified Stage I levee maintenance and enhancement milestones been met as measured by completed upgrades of certain (e.g., western) islands, number of miles upgraded, dollars expended and/or other measures?
- Have specified Stage I watershed management milestones been met as measured by programs completed, dollars expended and/or other measures?

i. Contingency Response Process - If Stage I cannot be completed as set forth within a specified time, then the contingency response process would be initiated. Minor deviations from the milestones would require relatively minor adjustments to the Program. More substantive deviations might require significant rebalancing of the Program. Problems which bring the viability of the entire program into question might require the initiation of a new planning process.

j. Branch Points - Does adequate information exist to determine whether or not to proceed with certain elements of the solution? Branch points do not necessarily need to coincide with consideration of required milestones. The default actions will need to be determined as part of the staging and linkage plan. Similarly, the consequences of not proceeding along the default branch will need to be defined in advance. For example, if conveyance is part of the preferred alternative, will it be constructed unless a decision is made to cancel? Will it be constructed only if certain conditions are met?

What happens to the rest of the program if the facility is or is not constructed? For example, if an isolated system is discarded because it is determined that entrainment is not a serious problem, then presumably limits on exports could be relaxed. Examples of branch points and the criteria that might be used to select the appropriate branch follow:

- Storage: Has site specific environmental analysis been completed? Are project specific permits attainable? Do funding commitments for the cost of the project exist? Have efficiency and market transfer milestones been achieved?
- Conveyance: Has site specific environmental analysis been completed? Are project specific permits attainable? Do funding commitments for the cost of the project exist? Does enough information exist to conclude that the facility is or is not needed to allow for recovery of fish populations? Does enough information exist to conclude that the facility is or is not needed to allow for the cost-effective production of healthy drinking water?

4. Stage III - Second and subsequent 5 year plans - These stages would follow Stage II and continue for the life of the program. If all program components are not being implemented substantially as agreed, the process to address these circumstances (contingency response process) would be triggered.

- a. Construct new conveyance and storage facilities and implement new operational rules and criteria, if these are part of the preferred alternative and these branches are selected.
- b. Execute modified coordinated operations agreement governing new and existing facilities and operations.
- c. If all program components are being implemented substantially as agreed, all funding would be available to complete all program components.
- d. Continue implementing the levee integrity, water quality, water use efficiency, transfers, and watershed management elements.

#### VI. Contingency Response Process

[Incorporate memo on contingency response process in next draft.]