

ATTACHMENT C

Guiding Principles for Priority Setting

One of the key issues/concerns identified by stakeholders and agencies regarding CALFED Program implementation involves the question of how to set ecosystem restoration priorities and select specific ERP actions, both in the near-term (Restoration coordination Program actions and Stage 1 and 1a actions) and over the long-term.

The Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) and the Multi-Species Conservation Strategy (MSCS) identify hundreds of programmatic actions to be implemented throughout the Bay-Delta System¹ over the 30-year implementation period of the CALFED Program. In addition, there are numerous other programs and regulatory actions that overlap with the CALFED Program that offer opportunities for synergies.

In evaluating the issue of priority setting, the ERP Focus Group concurred that priority setting and funding decisions regarding ERP implementation could be aided by establishment of a clear set of consensus based policy principles. The following is a list of five consensus principles developed by the ERP Focus Group to guide prioritization of ecosystem restoration activities. These guiding principles are intended to establish fundamental ground rules for ongoing and future priority setting and funding decisions related to ERP implementation. The principles specifically address the following:

- The process for developing near- and long-term ERP actions;
- The role of science-based adaptive management; and
- Parameters for determining the balance of funding priorities and allocation.

These guiding principles would be used in combination with project selection criteria (as described in the ERP Strategic Plan and in Attachment E) to determine priorities. The principles would apply in moving from programmatic actions to regional implementation plans (or Ecological Management Zone Plans), as well as in moving from regional implementation plans to project-specific actions. The principles, in and of themselves, do not establish implementation strategies or priorities, but rather, as noted above, are intended to be used in concert with more detailed selection criteria and statutory responsibilities to facilitate an integrated and transparent decision making process for program implementation.

Decisions related to selecting/prioritizing ERP actions and ensuring compliance with state and federal endangered species laws will be integrated to the maximum extent possible to promote one consistent and efficient approach to ecosystem restoration, in accordance with a single blueprint.

¹ The term Bay-Delta System as used herein refers broadly to the estuary, its watershed, and factors within the defined geographic scope that influence the health of this ecosystem.

Consensus Principles

1. **Basis for ERP Implementation Priorities:** The development of annual, near-term and long-term ERP implementation priorities and strategies will be based on the goals and objectives of the ERP Strategic Plan, MSCS, ESA recovery plans, and implementation plans developed for specific ecological management zones, and informed by a science based adaptive management process.
2. **Role of Science:** A science based adaptive management process will be used to review and advise on ERP strategies and priorities. This process will include adequate monitoring, research, and performance assessment activities, and an independent Ecosystem Science Board. CALFED is committed to using the best available science for ERP implementation in accordance with a single blueprint.
3. **Setting Priorities:** Final decisions regarding ERP implementation strategies, priorities, and funding allocations will be made by the CALFED Policy Group or its successor entity, based on recommendations developed through a collaborative effort involving the CALFED Science Program (including an Ecosystem Science Board), CALFED agencies, stakeholders, and the public.
4. **Funding Priorities:** ERP implementation will include strategies to address the immediate needs of species and other ecosystem components at highest risk; and comprehensive measures to protect and restore habitats, rehabilitate ecological processes, and reduce stressor impacts. The initial funding allocation between these strategies is intended by CALFED to be balanced so that the total allocation provides for a comprehensive restoration approach. Adequate funding will be provided to fully support the science-based adaptive management process and the administration and management of the ERP.
5. **Use of ERP Funds:** ERP funds will be used to implement management measures identified in the ERPP, non-mitigation measures identified in the MSCS, and/or measures developed under the ERP adaptive management process.