

Category III Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

Eligible Proposals

Funding from Category III is availability for a broad range of actions. Eligible proposals include projects and programs which (1) are in different stages of the planning process, (2) have different levels of scientific certainty, and (3) use a variety of approaches ranging from standard to highly innovative. Proposals for projects that are ready for construction or restoration will be funded as well as proposals for planning studies, feasibility and preproject design and planning. In addition, proposals which are designed to reduce scientific uncertainty, such as pilot/demonstration projects or research projects, will be eligible for funding. All proposals must address one or more priority species, habitats, or stressors to be eligible for funding. Table ?? Includes a list of priority species, habitats, and stressors.

Funds cannot be used (1) to replace existing funding sources for on-going programs, (2) for political advocacy or for an applicants' litigation costs, and (3) for projects or programs that the applicant is already legally required to perform. Funding for fish screens is an exception because it is specifically authorized in the Bay Delta Accord Attachment C and in Proposition 204 by reference.

Types of projects and programs that are eligible for funding are:

- Watershed Management Planning and Restoration. Proposals are encouraged for development of watershed management plans for streams and rivers that support those priority species identified for this Category III funding cycle (listed on page xx of the RFP). The plans should be developed in coordination with local landowners and other interested parties. Funds will also be available for implementation of local watershed projects.
- Construction-- Proposals are encouraged for construction projects and the associated preplanning such as feasibility, design, permits which address ecosystem stressors. For example, planning studies and projects that address removal of fish migration barriers, reducing fish entrainment, and restoration of habitats are encouraged.
- Land acquisition. Proposals are encouraged for land transactions such as easements, fee acquisition or other land transactions that address one or more of the priority stressors

habitats, or species. Funding will only be available for land transactions involving willing landowners. Funding will be available for single parcel acquisitions and transactions or for larger geographic areas under a "block grant" approach. Block grant funding will be transferred to the applicant after the lands for acquisition have been identified, it is determined that the land transaction meets specified criteria, and the land purchase is in escrow. Long term management for the property needs to be identified in order to proceed with land transactions.

- Aquatic and terrestrial habitat restoration. Proposals are encouraged for restoration of aquatic and terrestrial restoration that address one or more of the stressors, species, or habitats. Emphasis will be on restoration of instream, wetland, riparian, and floodplain habitats.
- Water Quality. (May add section on water quality proposals)
- Education. Proposals are encouraged for education programs aimed at addressing one or more of the ecosystem stressors. For example, education programs designed to reduce sources of non point pollution, or reduce introduction of introduced species would be eligible for funding. Generally, in-class education programs aren't eligible for funding.
- Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting. Proposals are encouraged for monitoring, assessment and reporting activities related to ecosystem stressors and related restoration activities. Some examples of activities include fishery, habitat, and water quality monitoring assessment and reporting, development of models, and new monitoring techniques.
- Operations and maintenance Proposals are encouraged that provide one time endowments for ongoing operations and maintenance responsibilities for restoration actions that address ecosystem stressors. **(This issue is still being evaluated by legal staff)**
- Research Proposals are encouraged that address the scientific uncertainty related to the following areas: (1) will restoration of ecological functions and processes, given the highly modified ecosystem, result in restoration of aquatic and wetland habitats, and will the priority species populations respond favorably to those increases in habitats, (2) will reduction of stressors in the ecosystem result in increased populations for priority species, (3) will restoration of ecological processes in the uppermost areas of the Bay-Delta watersheds result in measurable benefits in the tributaries to the Delta and the Delta itself, and (4) what is the ecosystem significance of water quality problems (such as, but not limited to pesticides, agricultural drainage, metals, salinity, nutrients). Research projects adopting a comparative analysis approach between two or more types of restoration actions are encouraged. This information will support the adaptive management approach promoted by CALFED.

Minimum Requirements

Projects and programs must meet the following requirements, where appropriate:

- Comply with all relevant laws and regulations. Applicants should indicate how this requirement will be met and can request funding to cover these costs,
- Include a monitoring program which includes a method of quantifying the results of the project, and an integral data analysis and reporting program.
- Should not prejudice the ultimate decision on the CALFED long term program. Programs and projects are not eligible for funding if they are determined to limit the choice of a reasonable range of alternatives, affect the selection of alternatives, and affect the selection of the preferred alternative in the Programmatic EIR/EIS. Ecosystem restoration actions that are considered to be common to all the proposed CALFED alternatives are not considered to be prejudicial of the ultimate decision.
- Only involve willing sellers or landowners. Proposals which involve actions involving private or public lands must identify that the landowners is a willing participant in the action. No land acquisition will be done under condemnation.

Criteria for Proposal Evaluation

Proposals for projects/programs which meet the above requirements shall be evaluated considering the following criteria. Only projects and proposals that address the priority species, habitats, or stressors will be considered for evaluation. Proposals that are determined to have zero biological benefit will be eliminated from further evaluation. Cost sharing is not a requirement for funding.

1. Biological benefits
2. Applicant's ability
3. Technical feasibility and timing
4. Cost sharing and local involvement
5. Compatibility and benefits to non-ecosystem CALFED objectives
6. Cost effectiveness
7. Monitoring, assessment, and reporting

1. **Biological Benefits**

- What is the biological effectiveness of the proposal in addressing a stressor and benefiting priority species and habitats?
Biological effectiveness of a proposal will be evaluated based on factors identified by the review panels and CALFED. The following questions are examples of how biological effectiveness may be determined:
Aquisition and restoration proposals. Is the proposal consistent with the principles of ecosystem restoration such as connectivity, diversity of habitat and patch size?
Fish screens. What size diversion is the screen for and is the screen for a diversion in a sensitive fishery habitat?
- Are there multiple benefits to species, habitats or stressors?
- To what extent does the proposal use natural processes and functions as a means of resortoration?
- Does the proposal provide long term ecological benefits?
- What priority species does the proposal address?
While all species listed are considered important and eligible for Category III funding, relative ranking of species has been established to guide allocation of funds in this funding cycle.
- What priority stressor does the proposal address?

2. **Applicant's capabilities, experience, and record of past performance as well as experience and qualifications of key personnel.**

- Does the applicant's experience, education, or background indicate they are capable of implementing proposal?
- If applicant has received grants or contracts previously, what is the applicants past record of performance in meeting the objectives and conditions of those grants and contracts?

3. **Technical Feasibility and Timing**

- Is the proposal sound in its technical approach, including but not limited to hydrological modeling where appropriate?
- Have all reasonable options been evaluated?

- Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of the problems?
- Is the proposal ready to be funded or are there actions that the applicant must complete prior funding? For example, if funding is requested for construction, have all permits, design work been completed? .

4. Cost sharing and Local Involvement

- Is the applicant sharing in the cost of the project?
- Are other programs sharing in the cost of the project?
- Does the proposal “leverage” other funding sources to support this or other restoration actions?
- When in-kind service are proposed for cost sharing, does the proposal include a method of documenting in-kind services?
- Is the proposal coordinated with other ecosystem restoration programs and projects in the area?
- Is there local support or involvement for the proposal?
- Is the proposal supported by a local watershed management plan?
- Have all affected or relevant landowners in the area been contacted?
- Does the project have potential for significant local benefits or impacts including activities related to flood control, water diversions, local economy, and/or local landowners?

5. Compatibility with other non-ecosystem CALFED objectives for water quality, water supply reliability, and system integrity.

- Does the proposal have multiple benefits related to the other CALFED objectives?
- Are there conflicts with other CALFED objectives?
- Does the project have the potential for significant adverse or beneficial impacts to third parties?

6. Cost effectiveness

- How does the cost of the proposal (including direct, indirect, and ongoing operations and maintenance costs) compare to other similar proposals currently being reviewed or which have been funded previously by Category III or other programs?
- Does funding requested for the proposed activity appear reasonable?
- Do the overhead costs appear reasonable?

7. Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

- Does proposal provide adequate requirements for accounting, auditing, monitoring and reporting?
- Is the monitoring component of the proposal coordinated with existing monitoring programs and with CALFED's proposed monitoring plan for the ERPP?
- Does the proposal have performance standards and indicators to determine success?
- Are the indicators by which the project/program is being evaluated consistent with the ERPP indicators of success?
- If it is a watershed management project , is volunteer monitoring being used?