



**Priorities & Metrics Workgroup Meeting No. 5  
and  
Debrief with Project Selection Workgroup**

**December 12, 2012 ○ 9:00 - 11:30 am  
San Diego County Water Authority Board Room  
4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123**

**Draft Notes**

*Action items and responses to comments are presented in italics*

**Attendees:**

Mark Stadler, SDCWA	Terrell Breaux, City of San Diego
Sheri McPherson, County of SD	Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Jeff Pasek, City of San Diego	Robin Bier, Padre Dam Municipal Water District
Cathy Pieroni, City of San Diego	Linda Flourney, SDSU Center for Regional Sustainability
Travis Pritchard, San Diego CoastKeeper	Peter Famolaro, Sweetwater AAuthority
Dave Harvey, RCAC	Rosalyn Prickett, RMC
Joey Randall, OMWD	Crystal Mohr, RMC
Cari Dale, City of Oceanside	Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Lewis Michaelson welcomed the group, who did self-introductions.

**2. Recap of Previous Meeting and Review of Notes**

Rosalyn Prickett provided an overview of the meeting purpose, noting that this meeting has three types of attendees: members of the Priorities and Metrics Workgroup, members of the Proposition 84-Round 2 Project Selection Committee, and local project sponsors that submitted projects for Round 2 funding. Ms. Prickett noted that the primary purpose of this meeting was to provide a debrief with the Project Selection Committee to help guide the Priorities and Metrics Workgroup in making recommendations for future project selection processes.

### **3. Meeting No. 5 Objectives:**

Lewis Michaelson provided an overview of the current meeting objectives, including:

- Debrief with the Project Selection Workgroup regarding the Proposition 84-Round 2 Project Selection Process
- Brainstorm improvements to the project prioritization process

### **4. Discuss Project Review Process**

Lewis Michaelson opened the conversation, asking the Project Selection Committee members to provide input on the recent selection process, and to provide general feedback to the workgroup. Below is a summary of that discussion.

- The interview process went really well – would definitely like to see this in future project selection processes. They provided a first-hand opportunity to discuss projects with proponents in an even-handed manner, as the information was coming directly from proponents.
- The workgroup members were well-balanced between different topical areas, which gave a good balance of knowledge.
- The time required to be on the workgroup is not un-substantial – thank you to all workgroup members for taking the time to work on this.
- The process was much more organized than during Proposition 50 – the interview process as well as the Strategic Integration Workshop. The process seems to be improving each round.
- Would there potentially be value to completing the “speed dating” exercise undertaken during the Strategic Integration Workshop without available grant funding? Do you think people would participate?
  - Yes, there would be value to this, although it is also difficult to encourage integration without some sort of incentive. Integration is challenging and takes a lot of work. It would be helpful to do the integration sooner, more than a month before the call for projects.
- There needs to be an emphasis on meaningful integration – we need to ensure that the integration process produces better projects. It seems as if the NGOs get somewhat used in this process – lumped into projects in an un-meaningful way to superficially increase benefits.
- There is always a concern about the grant application package recommendations, as the workgroup has historically always reduced grant funding for all projects. We need to be careful to trim project budgets without losing project purpose.
- We have improved upon the project database, but there is still a need to provide meaningful, useful information to the project selection workgroup.
- I think that the process itself needs to be improved. The first part of the process, where projects are scored and lumped to Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 is very structured. There are clear criteria, and clear scoring. The second part of the process during which the

selection workgroup reviewed projects was much less structured, with unclear criteria.

- I disagree with the above point – the second process is less structured on purpose. There are so many potential project benefits that cannot be quantified, and there are many projects that we would want to include in the package for their specific and unique benefits that will not be thought of ahead-of-time. It would be a shame to overly structure the process to the point that we would potentially exclude highly beneficial and important projects.
- We need more time for the interviews. The 10-minute presentations were not long enough. It is worth taking extra time to conduct interviews.

Lewis Michaelson asked the group, what kind of information would be useful for the project selection workgroup that is not currently captured by the project database? Below is a summary of that discussion.

- Specific scope of work details need to be included to get down to what the project will actually accomplish.
- Specific budget details are also necessary.
- We need to balance additional details with the fact that the project database submittal is already lengthy and complex – is there anything that we can remove?
- Perhaps we could add an intermediate process through which those projects included in the Tier 1 list would submit additional scope of work and budget details that are not included in the database. This way projects that will not be realistically considered for funding will not have to submit so much information to the project database.
- We could develop a template for the additional information that proponents could choose to fill out and include in the database, or wait to fill out if their project is included in the Tier 1 list.
- The reality is that many projects are in the range of 10-30% design during submittal to the project database, and realistically may not have additional details.
- The way the work plan and budget portions of the project database were structured were in the format that DWR requires for the grant application. Perhaps we re-structure these pieces to better fit our needs, which would be better-suited for workgroup evaluation. For example, the “monitoring” task in DWR’s opinion refers to post-project monitoring, which they require. This is not necessarily clear in the project database.
- In general, there just needs to be more room in the work plan section for additional text.
- Maybe it would be helpful to have a FAQ page or an instruction page to explain what is meant by each section of the project database for those who are unfamiliar with the process.

- How to we quantifiably analyze the information provided in the work plan sections of the project database? Is this just something that we evaluate as a yes or a no (included or not included)? Or is there some way to reasonably assess the quality of these items during initial project review?
- Round 2 was improved vs. Round 1. Like the idea at having a template to enter information into and explain the database questions. In general, the database was geared towards construction projects, non-construction projects did not seem to fit.
- It is very important to make sure that our process does not negate the benefits of research and development (R&D) projects. These projects are important to the Region, and we have lobbied hard to DWR to increase benefits given to these projects.
- Is there a way to pull in other IRWM regions to support and/or fund R&D projects that would benefit the state?

Lewis Michaelson asked those in the room who submitted projects to the online database: what were challenges and benefits to the process, what would you change? Below is a summary of that discussion.

- The project database submittal was fairly straight-forward. The character limits forced us to concisely summarize information, which is not necessarily bad, just takes additional work.
- It was easy to get questions answered when there were questions. Although some of the terminology was difficult to understand, it was helpful knowing that support was available.
- The process was time-consuming, but efficiently executed.

Lewis Michaelson asked those in the room who were on the project selection workgroup: what were challenges and benefits to the process, what would you change? Below is a summary of that discussion.

- The facilitation was very beneficial, and helped the workgroup meetings move quickly and efficiently.
- Public voting aspect was somewhat difficult. Would like to have seen more private voting.
- Did not like the way project budgets were reduced. There needs to be a better way to quantify the minimum grant funding a project can realistically receive, and still be beneficial.
- Perhaps add the following language to the database: if you were to get less grant funding than requested, what would you do? There needs to be enough space to fully explain this.
- Perhaps we choose to only fully fund projects – and fund fewer projects. Whittling down project budgets could reduce potential benefits to the region.

- We need to determine: is it better to get more projects in the package to increase benefits, or to keep whole projects for the sake of funding better and more complete projects.
- Perhaps we should put a cap on the amount of grant funding that is available per project.
- It would be difficult to put a funding cap on projects – projects are so different with such different budgetary needs, that this seems unfair.
- Putting a maximum value on grant requests would increase transparency and save time. Perhaps choose a total number of projects that should be included in the database, and allow each project to only apply for a certain percentage of the total available funding.
- The DAC issue of directly vs. indirectly benefitting DACs needs to be clarified.
- Although it takes more time, it is better to funnel all project questions through the consultant team. This process was more transparent than during the previous project selection process.
- There needs to be a text field associated with the attachments to explain why certain attachments were included, and what they mean.
- During this round some project sponsors that were interviewed were also on the project selection workgroup. This should not be repeated in the next round, project selection workgroup members should not be allowed to be on the interview team.
- It would be highly beneficial to have project abstracts – a one-page abstract that fully describes the project. Also agree that a FAQ sheet would be helpful on the project database to explain what is meant by each tab and field.

Lewis Michaelson asked the group to look over the handouts provided during the meeting regarding the project selection criteria, project scoring, and project weighting. Below is an overview of the feedback provided by the group:

- The proposal-level criteria are difficult to apply (from a workgroup perspective), because they are so subjective.
- The proposal-level criteria are purposefully subjective to give the workgroup flexibility in choosing which projects are most beneficial to the Region.
- Should we include R&D projects in the criteria? Perhaps designate a percentage of grant funding that should be spent on R&D?
- The project-level and proposal level-criteria are already very extensive. Would not agree with adding more criteria.
- We also want to encourage new-comers to the project selection workgroup. If we substantially change the criteria and add more, we may discourage new-comers from being a part of the process.
- There really needs to be a balance of R&D projects and on-the-ground implementation projects – agree with designating a percentage to R&D.

- We used sticky notes in the Prop 50 project selection process to move projects around and create different proposal packages. This really helped to apply the proposal-level criteria – would recommend doing this during the next round.
- Consider evaluating projects without looking at the budget/grant request, then evaluating the monetary values. This helps to clearly evaluate the projects based on merit.

Lewis Michaelson then asked the group to discuss inclusion of the project-level and proposal-level criteria in the IRWM Plan Update. How specific should the IRWM Plan Update be on this topic? Below is an overview of the feedback provided by the group:

- Some form of project scoring should be in the IRWM Plan Update. Consider only including the first three columns of the project scoring and weighting table. This allows the Region flexibility to adjust the criteria based on the weighted percentage.
- Add a criterion in regarding water management research – allow the RAC to decide the applicable weighted percentage during each funding round.
- We should drop the percentages completely, and indicate that they will be determined by the RAC during each funding round.
- Need to capture the process by which the workgroup can nominate projects from Tier 1 to Tier 2.
- Need to leave some flexibility regarding the way this is described in the IRWM Plan Update – once it goes into the Plan, it becomes hard-wired. Need to leave adequate flexibility.
- It would be good to add something about greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.
- Is there any way to create a worksheet that could be used to do a quick economic analysis?
  - Perhaps we could ask those projects being interviewed to complete a worksheet that ties project metrics to economic benefits.
- Explain that the objectives get scored 0.5 points for indirectly applying and 1 point for directly applying. Fully explain the whole “ground-truthing” process where 0.5 points are applied.
- Clarify how benefits to DACs are applied.
- Add in the proposal-level criteria, that the workgroup strives to balance funding between agencies and NGOs.
- Suggest adding that the project database will only capture information absolutely necessary to assess Tier 1 vs. Tier 2, then a secondary process will take place to fully vet and score Tier 1 projects.

Further discussion points included the following:

- How do we get folks to continue to participate on the Project Selection Workgroup? We need more visibility. Perhaps present at a conference, or write a white paper?

- Send the IRWM Strategic Plan link to stakeholders so that they know about DWR's process.

## **5. Summary and Action Items**

The consultant team will make note of all project selection suggestions, and bring them to the RAC in February, at which point the RAC will discuss this further.