

Project Review Process

The following outlines the process for reviewing and ranking projects in the Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan.

1. Initial Project Review

The first step in the project review process is ensuring that projects meet the minimum standards to be included in the IRWM Plan. Minimum standards consist of the following:

1. The project must be located within the boundaries of the Greater Monterey County IRWM region, or otherwise directly benefit the region.
2. The project must be an “eligible project” per Proposition 1 IRWM Grant Program Guidelines. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following elements (Water Code §79743 (a – j)):
 - Water reuse and recycling for non-potable reuse and direct and indirect potable reuse
 - Water-use efficiency and water conservation
 - Local and regional surface and underground water storage, including groundwater aquifer cleanup or recharge projects
 - Regional water conveyance facilities that improve integration of separate water systems
 - Watershed protection, restoration, and management projects, including projects that reduce the risk of wildfire or improve water supply reliability
 - Stormwater resource management, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Projects to reduce, manage, treat, or capture rainwater or stormwater
 - Projects that provide multiple benefits such as water quality, water supply, flood control, or open space
 - Decision support tools that evaluate the benefits and costs of multi-benefit stormwater projects
 - Projects to implement a stormwater resource plan developed in accordance with Part 2.3 (commencing with Section 10560) of Division 6 including Water Code §10562 (b)(7)
 - Conjunctive use of surface and groundwater storage facilities
 - Water desalination projects
 - Decision support tools to model regional water management strategies to account for climate change and other changes in regional demand and supply projections
 - Improvement of water quality, including drinking water treatment and distribution, groundwater and aquifer remediation, matching water quality to water use, wastewater treatment, water pollution prevention, and management of urban and agricultural runoff
 - Regional projects or programs as defined by the IRWM Planning Act (Water Code §10537)

According to Proposition 1 IRWM Program Guidelines, eligible projects must also:

- Provide multiple benefits
- Advance the purpose of Proposition 1 Chapter 7, Regional Water Security, Climate, and Drought Preparedness (Water Code §79707 (c) and §79740), which are, as follows:
 - Assist water infrastructure systems adapt to climate change
 - Provide incentives for water agencies throughout each watershed to collaborate in managing the region’s water resources and setting regional priorities for water infrastructure
- Be consistent with Division 7, commencing with Section 13000 of the Water Code (Water Quality) and Section 13100 of the Government Code (Infrastructure Plan)
- Promote State planning priorities and sustainable community strategies, consistent with

- Government Code §65041.1 and §65080 (Water Code §79707 (i))
- Wherever possible, preserve California’s working agricultural and forested landscapes (Water Code §79707 (j))

3. The project must address IRWM Plan objectives.

After projects are reviewed for minimum standards, the Project Review Committee conducts a more thorough review to identify potential problems or conflicts (either with IRWM Plan objectives or with other projects), to identify possibilities for integration with other projects, and finally, to assess each project according to the project ranking criteria (see below). In addition, all projects, including concept proposals, are screened for potential environmental justice impacts or impacts to disadvantaged communities. The following section describes the process for prioritizing projects in the IRWM Plan.

2. Project Ranking Process

All implementation projects included in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Plan are ranked. Concept proposals are not ranked (and are not eligible for grant funding). It is important to keep in mind that *the final ranked Project List does not necessarily dictate which projects get submitted for funding through the IRWM Grant Program or through other funding sources* but is merely a tool to help the RWMG and the State evaluate the many projects within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region.

The project ranking process takes into consideration the following factors:

1. *Goals and Objectives*: How well a project addresses the goals/objectives of the Greater Monterey County IRWM Plan. The IRWM Plan has seven goal categories and a total of 60 objectives. A project can receive a total of four points for each goal category addressed, according to the number of objectives addressed and the extent to which the project addresses those objectives within that goal category. The maximum number of points possible is 28. Projects can receive points as follows:
 - 4 = strongly addresses that goal category
 - 2 = moderately addresses
 - 0 = slightly addresses, or does not address at all
2. *Resource Management Strategies (RMS)*: How well a project contributes to diversifying the region’s portfolio of RMS. The maximum number of points possible in this category is 4. Projects can receive points as follows:
 - 4 points = addresses 11 or more RMS
 - 2 points = addresses 5 – 10 RMS
 - 0 points = addresses 0 – 4 RMS
3. *Climate Change Adaptation*: How well a project contributes to climate change adaptation. This includes consideration of the following:
 - To what extent does the project contribute to climate change adaptation?
 - Does the project specifically address adaptation strategies outlined in the Climate Change chapter (i.e., contribution of project to adapting to identified system vulnerabilities to climate change effects in the region)?
 - Does the project consider the effects of sea level rise on water supply conditions and identify suitable adaptation measures?
 - Does the project take into consideration changes in the amount, intensity, timing, quality and variability of runoff and recharge?

The maximum number of points possible in this category is 2. Projects can receive points as follows:

- 2 points = fully addresses
- 1 point = partially addresses
- 0 points = inadequate consideration of climate change impacts

4. *Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction:* How well a project contributes to the reduction of GHG emissions. This includes consideration of the following:

- To what extent does the project help reduce GHGs, compared to project alternatives?
- To what extent will it help the region reduce GHGs over the next 20 years?
- To what extent does the project help reduce energy consumption, especially the energy embedded in water use, and ultimately reducing GHG emissions?

The maximum number of points possible in this category is 2. Projects can receive points as follows:

- 2 points = fully addresses
- 1 point = partially addresses
- 0 points = inadequate consideration of GHG emissions reduction

The following table summarizes the project ranking criteria and scoring (with 36 being the total maximum number of points possible):

Table 1: Project Ranking - Summary of Points

Criteria	Explanation of Scoring	Maximum Potential Points
Addresses Goals and Objectives	For each goal category (there are 7 goals): 4 = strongly addresses that goal category 2 = moderately addresses 0 = slightly addresses or does not address	28
Addresses RMS	4 points = 11 or more RMS 2 points = 5 – 10 RMS 0 points = 0 – 4 RMS	4
Contributes to climate change adaptation	2 points = fully addresses 1 point = partially addresses 0 points = inadequate consideration	2
Contributes to reduction in GHG emissions, compared with project alternatives	2 points = fully addresses 1 point = partially addresses 0 points = inadequate consideration	2
TOTAL		36

The result of this process is a ranked Project List, which is then approved by the RWMG and officially incorporated into the IRWM Plan.

3. Selecting Projects to Include in an IRWM Grant Application

Whenever an IRWM grant solicitation is announced, the RWMG must decide which projects to put forward in a grant application package on behalf of the Greater Monterey County region. Only a limited

number of projects can be submitted in any one round. To help make this decision, the RWMG has established the following procedures.

Rules of the Game

1. *Project Selection Committee:* The entire RWMG will act as the “Project Selection Committee.” To avoid a conflict of interest, no project proponent who is also a RWMG member will be allowed to vote on their own project when selecting projects for an IRWM Grant application.
2. *Deadlines:* During the grant application process, internal deadlines will be established for submitting various pieces of the application (e.g., Work Plan, Budget, Schedule, Cost Effectiveness Analysis, Physical Benefits, etc.). If a project proponent does not meet a deadline, that project will be disqualified.
3. *Presentation of Projects to the RWMG:* All project proponents wishing to have their projects considered for inclusion in an IRWM grant application will be required to attend the RWMG meeting in which their project is discussed in order to answer questions and/or present additional information, as needed.

Call for Projects

When DWR releases a Draft PSP, the RWMG will ask project proponents whether they are interested in applying for IRWM grant funds in that round. Eligible projects include:

- Projects that are ready to proceed.
- Projects that are eligible for that particular funding opportunity.
- Projects whose project proponents have adopted, or have expressed a commitment to adopt, the IRWM Plan (the IRWM Program Guidelines stipulate that each project proponent named in an IRWM Grant application must adopt the IRWM Plan).

Project proponents will have 4-6 weeks to submit a detailed project proposal for the RWMG to review. The intent is to obtain this information ahead of the Final PSP being released. The application will include:

- Work plan
- Budget, with documented basis of cost estimates
- Schedule
- Project status, in terms of CEQA/NEPA, permitting, feasibility/engineering/design percent complete
- Annual physical benefits (quantified in table format)
- Technical analysis of physical benefits claimed
- Whether the project has multiple benefits
- Whether or not the project addresses disadvantaged community needs, and/or the Human Right to Water Policy
- Whether or not the project addresses nitrate, arsenic, hexavalent chromium, and/or perchlorate contamination (per AB 1249)
- Project Performance Monitoring Plan (in table format)
- Cost/benefit analysis (or economic screening tool)
- How the project assists in meeting the IRWM Program and Statewide Preferences

In addition, project proponents will be asked to score themselves using the evaluation criteria provided in the Draft PSP.

Project Selection

As part of the project selection process, the RWMG will take into consideration the following criteria:

1. How well the project addresses specific criteria/preferences of that particular funding opportunity
2. How well the project addresses IRWM Plan objectives, resource management strategies, and climate change (i.e., how it ranks in the IRWM Plan Project List)
3. Project cost, and how projects can be combined within the grant funding limit
4. Benefits to disadvantaged communities, or the extent to which a project addresses environmental justice concerns
5. The extent to which the project benefits are regional, or have broad impact (e.g., by population affected, geographic area restored, etc.)
6. Results of a cost/benefit analysis
7. Project need/urgency
8. Amount of match available (unless waived due to disadvantaged community status, projects are required to have 50% non-State match)
9. How well a project scores against DWR's evaluation criteria

The RWMG will take all of these factors into consideration when selecting projects to put forward in the application package, though the exact method by which they do so will be decided at that time. The RWMG may opt to assign points to each of these criteria, or to weigh these factors in some other way. The end result will be a mix of projects that help carry out IRWM Plan objectives, provide multiple benefits, are cost effective and technically feasible, and that address IRWM Program preferences and statewide priorities.