

Project Review Process

The following outlines the process the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) will follow for reviewing and ranking projects in the Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan, and for selecting projects for inclusion in an application for State IRWM Implementation Grant funds.

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)
3. The project must address IRWM Plan objectives.

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). 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 can receive up to two points for each goal category addressed. The maximum number of points possible in this category is 14.
2. *Addresses Climate Change*: The extent to which a project contributes to climate change adaptation and to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The maximum number of points possible in this category is 8. This includes consideration of the following:
 - 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)?
 - To what extent does the project help reduce energy consumption and help reduce GHG emissions?
3. *Urgent Need*: A project can receive up to 8 “bonus” points to the extent that it addresses an urgent need.
4. *Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities*: A project will receive 4 points if it provides direct benefits to an area that is defined as at least 75% disadvantaged community.
5. *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
 - 3 points = address 8 – 10 RMS
 - 2 points = addresses 5 – 7 RMS
 - 1 point = addresses 2 – 4 RMS
 - 0 points = addresses 0 – 1 RMS
6. *Leverages Other Non-State Funds*: A project can receive up to 4 points to the extent that it provides more than the required 50% non-State match requirement.
7. *New or Innovative Technology*: A project can receive up to 4 points to the extent that it employs new or innovative technology or practices, including decision support tools that support the integration of multiple jurisdictions, including, but not limited to, water supply, flood control, land use, and sanitation.

The following table summarizes the project ranking criteria and scoring:

Table 1: Project Ranking - Summary of Points

Criteria	Maximum Potential Points
Addresses IRWMP Goals and Objectives	14
Addresses Climate Change	8
Urgent Need	8
Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities	4
Addresses Resource Management Strategies	4
Leverages Other Non-State Funds	4
New or Innovative Technology	4
TOTAL	46

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

When an IRWM Implementation 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. To help make this decision, the RWMG has established the following procedures.

Ground Rules

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 inclusion in 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). 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 must be available to present and/or discuss their project at an RWMG meeting, if requested.

Project Selection

The RWMG will consider three “levels” of criteria when selecting projects for inclusion in an IRWM Implementation Grant application:

1. **Eligibility Requirements:** The first level consists of basic eligibility requirements: If a project or project proponent does not comply, the project is not eligible.
2. **Application-Level Considerations:** The second level considers the Region’s application as a whole, e.g., ensuring multiple benefits, adjusting individual project budgets to achieve a fair distribution of funds, ensuring that certain IRWM application-level requirements are met.

3. **Project Ranking:** The third level consists of how well individual projects ranked in the ranking process (described above). The RWMG will take project ranking into consideration along with the other criteria when selecting projects for a regional IRWM Grant application.

Eligibility requirements and application-level considerations are described in more detail below.

Eligibility Requirements: Basic eligibility requirements include the following:

- **Statewide Priorities:** Each project must be consistent with at least one Statewide Priority.
- **CEQA and Permits:** A project must have CEQA and permits necessary to begin construction acquired within 12 months of final award.
- Each project must have an expected useful life of at least 15 years.
- **Cost Share:** A project must have at least 50% non-State match, unless DAC (varying waivers).
- The project must be ready-to-go, and able to be completed within a specific timeframe.
- **Storm Water Resource Plan Requirements:** If project is a storm water or dry weather runoff capture project, it must be included in a Storm Water Resource Plan.
- **Groundwater Sustainability:** If a project affects groundwater levels or quality, it must be approved by the Groundwater Sustainability Agency.
- Urban Water Management Compliance
- Agricultural Water Management and Measure Compliance
- Surface Water Diverter Compliance
- Each project proponent must adopt the IRWM Plan.
- Each project must have a quantified primary benefit that addresses the critical water management needs of the Region unless the project is a Decision Support Tool.

Application-Level Considerations: This level considers factors related to the Region's application as a whole including:

- **Lead Applicant:** A project may be more competitive if the project proponent is willing to act as Lead Applicant for purposes of submitting and administering the IRWM Grant application.
- **Budget:** This includes consideration of the total amount of funding available in the funding round in relation to individual project budget requests. Which budgets can be adjusted to allow for other projects? What's a fair allocation of funds?
- **Multiple Benefits:** The application must include multiple benefits. The RWMG will try to achieve a balance of benefits.
- **AB 1249 Requirement:** If an area experiences nitrate, arsenic, hexavalent chromium, and/or perchlorate contamination in drinking water supply (which the Greater Monterey County region does), the application must include projects that address such contamination, or must explain why not. The RWMG will strive to include at least one project that addresses contamination.
- **Climate Change:** The application as a whole must help water infrastructure systems adapt to climate change. The application must include at least one project that directly responds to climate change by mitigating the potential impacts of climate change, including but not limited to: sea level rise, reduced snowpack, increase in rainfall precipitation, sea water intrusion, etc.

- **Other Grant Funding Opportunities:** The RWMG might take into consideration the extent to which a project may be eligible and competitive for other grant funding opportunities.

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 may vary. 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 goals and objectives, provide multiple benefits, and that address IRWM Program preferences and statewide priorities in a cost-effective and technically feasible manner.