

## **California Water Data Consortium Pilot Project Selection Criteria**

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**Introduction.** This document establishes a process and set of criteria for selecting pilot projects to be undertaken by the California Water Data Consortium (Consortium). Developing a selection process and criteria to support it is essential for transparency in decision-making and increasing the likelihood of project success. Projects must be aligned with the Consortium's mission and priority areas and be clear on the resources being requested and/or provided.

The Steering Committee (SC) and Working Group Co-chairs bring a significant pool of expertise, relationships, resources, and the potential for in-kind support to the Consortium. The Board strongly encourages these individuals to leverage existing relationships and resources to maximize resources and ensure the long-term success of all Consortium projects.

Pilot projects may originate from a number of sources, including from Consortium working groups, external parties, Consortium staff, Working Group Co-chairs, SC members, or Board members. While not required, time spent developing the project in the working group setting is strongly encouraged and is likely to increase the viability of a project. All potential projects are subject to the process outlined below and summarized in Figure 1. The Consortium encourages the use of working groups for project development.

**Project Submittal.** Parties interested in working with the Consortium on a project that fulfills the goals of the Consortium should reach out to staff, SC, or one of the Working Group Co-Chairs to initiate discussion about the project concept, and to complete the project overview (Appendix A). The project overview will serve as a communication tool between the various Consortium bodies, to communicate with external parties, and to ensure the project falls within the Consortium mission.

**Consortium Staff/Working Group Co-Chair Pre-Screen.** Consortium staff and Working Group Co-chairs will prioritize the projects to be advanced based on the selection criteria and considerations contained in Appendix B. Consortium staff and Working Group Co-chairs will work with project proponents to gather additional information necessary to determine whether to recommend advancing the project.

- Consortium staff, in consultation with the Consortium Board, retain the discretion to determine whether projects are within the Consortium's core mission and priority areas.
- Projects that are deemed to be within the Consortium's core mission and priority areas will be prioritized by Consortium Staff and Working Group Co-chairs. This prioritization will result in the pilot projects selected for advancement.
- Consortium staff will use the information provided by project proponents to complete a project rubric. The project rubric is advisory.

- Prioritization of projects will not involve numeric scoring. It is a process that holistically considers the selection criteria to advance projects that best fit the current programmatic goals of the Consortium, including the range of existing projects, and Consortium resources at the time of project submission.
- In some cases, projects that are not initially recommended for advancement may still be presented by Consortium staff to the SC as informational. These projects may be prioritized for advancement in future approval cycles.

**Working Groups.** Working Group Co-Chairs and Consortium Staff will work with project proponents to develop the projects in the Working Groups. This work can be technical, building additional partnerships, identifying leverageable resources, or the like. It could also be simply a presentation by proponents where Consortium Staff and the Working Group Co-Chairs concur that the project is ready to advance.

This step can be short or long, depending on the project needs.

The ongoing efforts by the Working Groups will be reported to the Steering Committee on a routine basis by Consortium Staff or the Working Group Co-Chairs. Often, SC members will participate in Working Groups. In this way, the projects under development will be informally known to the Steering Committee.

**Steering Committee Process.** When Consortium Staff and Working Group Co-Chairs agree a project is ready to advance to the SC (based on criteria in Appendix B), an informational presentation of the project will be given to the Steering Committee. Projects advancing to the Steering Committee will commonly be requesting resources in the form of financial support or Consortium staff time. However, some projects may just request letters of support or other means of support from the Consortium.

Staff and/or Working Group co-chairs, in partnership with the proponents, will be responsible for the informational presentation, which will be accompanied with discussion. SC members will have an opportunity to ask questions about the project and provide feedback to inform the decision whether to advance the project. Consortium staff and Working Group co-chairs should be present for this discussion. However, SC Co-Chairs will determine whether project proponents should be present during the SC's deliberations and/or decisions about the project.

If during this discussion the SC has encouraged further development, projects can return to the Working Groups for additional effort. If the Steering Committee is supportive of the project advancing, a decision can be proposed. This decision will most commonly be scheduled for the subsequent Steering Committee meeting to provide SC members a chance to consider the project. However, in some circumstances, SC members may choose to move to a decision within the same meeting.

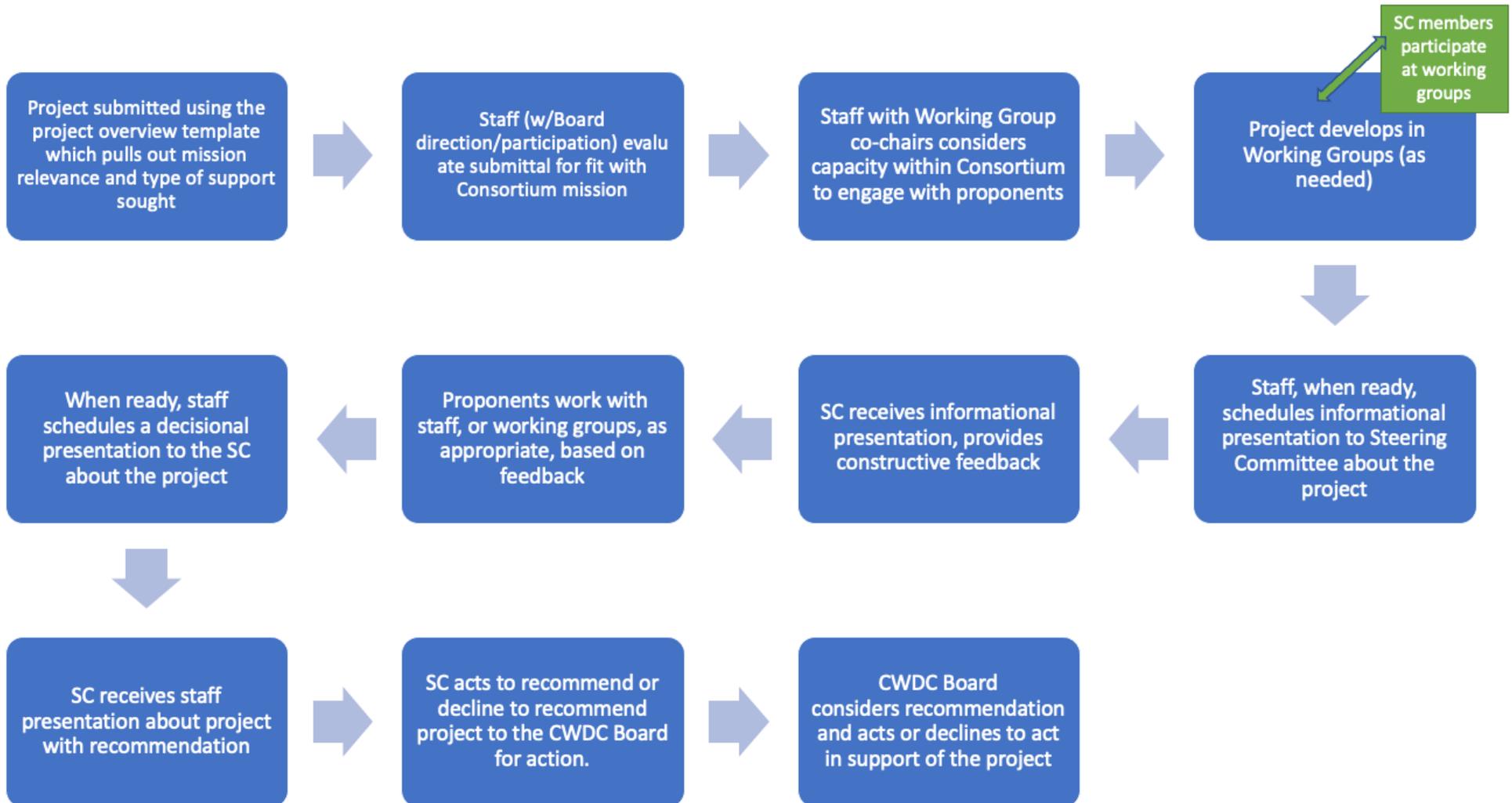
During a decisional agenda item, SC members will vote on whether to recommend that the project be advanced. For projects recommended for advancement that require approval by the Consortium Board, the SC Co-Chairs will present the Steering Committee's recommendation to the Board.

**Types of Support for Approved pilot projects.** Projects can seek and be granted support of many different kinds. Below is listed those expected to be most common. This list is not exhaustive, and proponents seeking a different type of support should make that clear in the submittal

1. Pilot projects not requiring Consortium staff or financial resources: This type of project may be requesting letters or other means of support. Pilot projects recommended by the SC for advancement that do not require either use of Consortium financial or staff resources may be advanced upon approval by the Consortium CEO.
2. Pilot projects fitting within the Consortium’s programmatic budget: Pilot projects recommended by the SC for advancement can be funded within the Consortium’s programmatic budget and managed with current Consortium resources. For projects that fall within the Consortium CEO’s spending authority, the CEO may approve the project.
3. Pilot projects requiring additional resources: Pilot projects recommended for advancement by the SC that require financial or personnel resources beyond the Consortium’s programmatic budget or resources will be presented to the Consortium Board for consideration for partial funding, fundraising support, or other strategies.

**Consortium Board Process.** The Board retains responsibility for validating that all pilot projects approved for advancement by the SC are within the Consortium’s mission. The Board shall consider recommendations by the SC to advance pilot projects that require additional resources beyond the programmatic budget or staffing capabilities and coordinate with the SC on designing a funding plan to support implementation of these projects. The Board Chair or his or her delegate will attend Steering Committee meetings whenever possible and provide updates to the Steering Committee on Board activities.

Figure 1. Pilot Project Selection Process



## **Appendix A. Pilot Project Submission Materials**

Parties interested in working with the Consortium on a project should contact Consortium staff with the following information:

A 300-word overview of the project, including the project goals and objectives and how those goals align with the Consortium’s mission; the legal and regulatory context; proposed role of the Consortium; existing or proposed data sources and/or requirements; information on the work done to date and expected next steps.

In addition to the project overview, please provide the following information in short-answer format:

- Project lead, key decision-makers and project champions, as well information on other individuals involved in the project and their current or intended role in the project. Letters of support from state and non-state agency partners and champions are highly encouraged.
- Description of the project beneficiaries, as well as the individuals, communities or sectors that may be impacted by the project.
- Potential project barriers and a description of how those barriers will be mitigated.
- Project timeline and phases.
- Proposed project budget and existing financial and personnel resources.
- Required or proposed financial and personnel resources (e.g., are you asking for financial resources or personnel time?).

For additional insights and framing, please see:

<https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DFWD-Use-Cases.pdf>

## Appendix B. Pilot Project Selection Criteria

**Selection Criteria.** Pilot projects selected for advancement must meet elements of each of the following four categories. To advance, projects must provide clear responses and value in the asterisked categories.

### 1. **Potential Impact**

- a. Improved outcomes. (\*) Potential to improve water management outcomes in CA. Clearly articulates project benefits and beneficiaries.
- b. Streamlining need 1. Evaluation of current reporting redundancies. (*Only applies to data streamlining efforts*).
- c. Streamlining need 2. Evaluation of regulatory streamlining to deliver tangible benefits to stakeholders and/or the state. (*Only applies to data streamlining efforts*).
- d. Project impact. (\*) Value to broader data effort/community. Who is likely to be impacted by this project? Ability to scale pilot to other high priority topics/areas. Compelling success story.

### 2. **Potential for Success**

- a. Level of coordination/complexity. Extent to which different stakeholders need to be coordinated. Includes state agencies, water authorities, NGOs, communities, academia, etc.
- b. Political will. Project is likely to be successful given existing human and political factors.
- c. Willing champion. (\*) Identified state and non-state agency representatives who will champion and advance the project. Letters of support from project partners and champions are highly encouraged.
- d. Legal/policy tools. There are legal or regulatory actions/tools in place to support this effort.
- e. Risk Mitigation. (\*) The project has identified and mitigated potential barriers to the project's success.

### 3. **Fit**

- a. Role of the Consortium. (\*) The project clearly articulates the role that the Consortium will play in the project and that role is aligned with the Consortium's priorities.
- b. Advances Consortium Goals and Value. The project provides is likely to demonstrate the Consortium's value long-term.
- c. Fit with priorities. (\*) Aligns with Consortium programmatic focus and Board/SC priorities.
- d. Diversity of projects. Aligns with Consortium programmatic focus and Board/SC priorities across a range of projects.

**4. Funding and Capacity**

- a. Budget/resources. Well-developed budget. Budget sufficient to successfully execute the project.
- b. Co-funding. Project is supported with adequate partner co-funding and in-kind services.
- c. Capacity. Project proponent has the expertise and capacity to complete the project.

**Additional Considerations**

Projects will also be selected across a range of interests related to both water supply and quality, including:

- Data streamlining
- Agricultural water management
- Urban water management
- Tribal water management
- Disadvantaged and/or water-insecure communities
- Advancing new technologies and/or data-enabled insights
- Safe and affordable drinking water
- ....

Not all projects will be advanced, however the Consortium Board and Steering Committee are committed to developing a pipeline of projects across sectors and interests.