

**MPS Budget Prioritization**  
**TFW Policy Subcommittee Recommendations**  
**January 31, 2018**

**Purpose:** To develop a process Policy can use to rank projects (both new and existing) and to provide feedback to the Board on changes to the MPS and the tradeoffs with accepting new projects. This process would be used to help Policy determine which projects should be added or removed from the MPS, and in what priority order the projects should be done.

**Challenges in managing the MPS priority list with the AMP Budget**

- New Projects and Priorities coming from the Board
- New Projects Proposed from within Policy or CMER
- Inaccurate estimates of project costs
- Inadequate Resources (budget and/or cooperator time)
- Failure to meet schedules used to set budgets
- Stakeholder disagreements impede projects from moving forward
- Non-priority questions and monitoring elements added to studies to get consensus

**Considerations when prioritizing projects**

- How do we deal with new priorities from within or from the Board (as far as fitting in with existing priorities)?
  - i. Policy will inform the Board of where the proposed project fits in the project prioritization schedule, and
  - ii. Considering the status of the projects and their relative ranking Policy will inform the Board on what projects would likely be dropped, and the consequences of dropping them, if the new Board request is made a top priority.
- How can we streamline projects to limit their effect on the MPS?
  - Inform CMER (study implementation) of specific priority needs (including budget limitations) to seek alternatives that meet Policy objectives.
    - As projects are initially being scoped Policy will be presented with study Purpose, Objectives, and Critical Questions. This is a key time to be clear on the priorities of what information is most important for Policy in supporting decisions.
    - Once the purpose of the study is determined, CMER will develop and present scoping document providing the best available science supporting alternative approaches to conducting the study. This is the point to determine the costs and value added for specific study parameters or methods proposed, and to understand the studies scope of inference. This is the point where Policy should express any prioritization of the

prescriptions or environmental parameters proposed for examination within the studies (which have the most important uncertainties, and which most important to support decision making).

- In trying to understanding the scope of inference for the study and the extent the results are intended to support adaptive management decision making, consider:
    - Similarity of the physical setting (geology, topography, elevation, weather, basin size) to where the prescription is typically applied.
    - The duration of study monitoring relative to the duration/cycle of natural processes that influence response metric.
    - Similarity of study treatment (size, density, structure, age composition) to real-world application of rule or prescription.
  - To better understand how a project can fit within the MPS, ask the question: Can the project be implemented in distinct phases separated by time?
- Are there new potentially higher priority issues/questions that should be considered? The following are examples of potential issues:
    - Projects coming from the Forest Practices Board
    - New Unstable Slopes Projects from strategy
    - Fire Salvage
    - Forest Health
    - Tools/alternatives to more cost-effectively implement prescriptions
    - Follow up studies needed to support action by Policy

### **Prioritization Process Criteria Considerations:**

The purpose of this ranking process is to ensure projects funded reflect priorities based on resource risk and scientific uncertainty, and will answer questions that help with AMP decisions.

Rate the following such that:

**3=Yes/High, 2=Maybe/Probably, 1=Unlikely/Low, 0=No/None/Not Applicable<sup>1</sup>**

1. Project is a CWA milestone, or its design would directly inform extent a rule prescription supports the goal of meeting the state WQS
2. Project directly tests the effectiveness of a current rule/prescription in meeting resource objectives or performance targets
3. Project designed and needed to answer a specific question with sufficient confidence to support policy decision(s) in adaptive management
4. Project and its timeline is essential to another project which is itself highly ranked (necessary pre-study)
5. Project intended to support decision on rule effectiveness

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<sup>1</sup> Alternatively consider wider range: **8=Yes/High...Maybe/Probably...4=Uncertain...Unlikely/Low...0=No/None/Not Applicable**

6. Project provides a tool to implement an existing rule
7. Project was directed by the FPB independent of TFW Policy (other than a CWA priority)
8. Project does not require a significant pre-study to design or implement
9. Perceived risk of prescriptions being tested posing a risk of not meeting resource objectives and performance targets
10. Project informs one of the 4 Goals of the FFR (other than water quality)

### **Implementation Questions**

In addition to the 10 ranking criteria, the subgroup suggests that three “yes or no” questions be asked which may help Policy apportion work over time to make the best use of projected and available budget.

- Does the project have interruptible phases?
- Has the project been completed scoping?
- Does the project have a completed study design?

These questions inform how ready a project is to use funds, and whether it can be stopped and restarted over time.

### **Potential Additions/Improvements for Listed Projects**

- The group noted that Policy can stop or modify projects at completion of study design; allowing the more costly implementation phase to proceed contingent on changes in project prioritization or budget.
- Need more detailed budgets at alternatives analysis stage so policy makers can weigh the tradeoffs. (AMPA will strive to implement this point).
- Ask CMER: based on past work and outside literature if there are some rules or response variables we do not really need to test again (e.g. build on what we have learned before)?