

Delta Plan Performance Measures

Summary: Today's briefing will focus on staff's updated recommendations for refinements to the Delta Plan's output and outcome performance measures as well as 7 new performance measures developed to address gaps in tracking the Delta Plan's goals and strategies. This information is contained in Attachment 1 to this report. Staff will describe the process used to develop refinements and new measures and, following this Council meeting, will request that the Delta Independent Science Board review the methodology used to develop/refine the Delta Plan performance measures, including the rationale and metrics for the 37 output and outcome measures proposed for Council approval and incorporation into a future update of the Delta Plan.

Background

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 requires the Delta Plan to include performance measures that enable the Council to track progress in meeting its objectives. These performance measures are to include quantitative or other "measureable assessments of the status and trends" of the health of the Delta, as well as the reliability of the state's water supply exported from the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds (Water Code sections 85211 and 85308). Specifically these sections state;

85211 – *The Delta Plan shall include performance measurements that will enable the council to track progress in meeting the objectives of the Delta Plan. The performance measurements shall include, but need not be limited to, quantitative or otherwise measurable assessments of the status and trends in all of the following:*

(a) The health of the Delta's estuary and wetland ecosystem for supporting viable populations of aquatic and terrestrial species, habitats, and processes, including viable populations of Delta fisheries and other aquatic organisms.

(b) The reliability of California water supply imported from the Sacramento River or the San Joaquin River watershed.

85308 – *The Delta Plan shall meet all of the following requirements:*

(a) Be based on the best available scientific information and the independent science advice provided by the Delta Independent Science Board.

(b) Include quantified or otherwise measurable targets associated with achieving the objectives of the Delta Plan.

(c) Where appropriate, utilize monitoring, data collection, and analysis of actions sufficient to determine progress toward meeting the quantified targets.

(d) Describe the methods by which the council shall measure progress toward achieving the coequal goals.

(e) Where appropriate, recommend integration of scientific and monitoring results into ongoing Delta water management.

(f) Include a science-based, transparent, and formal adaptive management strategy for ongoing ecosystem restoration and water management decisions.

In compliance with the Act, the Council's Delta Plan includes a suite of performance measures (160 total) organized by Delta Plan goal and strategy. Measures are in three types: Administrative performance measures (118) are used to track various actions recommended by the Delta Plan. Output performance measures (21) are used to track results of administrative actions. Finally, outcome measures (21) are included for tracking the impacts of those actions.

As stated in the Delta Plan, the initial set of performance measures were to be expanded and refined after adoption of the Delta Plan and considered for inclusion in subsequent updates of the Delta Plan. The Delta Plan states:

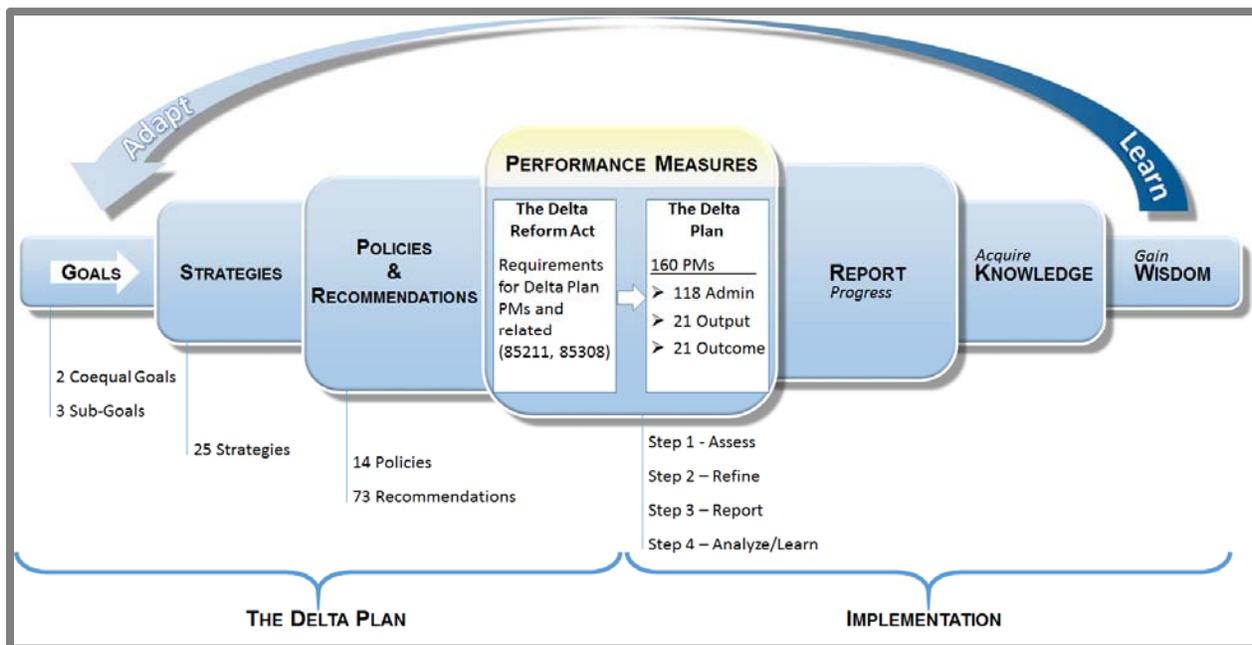
“Development of informative and meaningful performance measures is a challenging task that will continue after the adoption of the Delta Plan. Performance measures need to be designed to capture important trends and to address whether specific actions are producing expected results. Efforts to develop performance measures in complex and large-scale systems like the Delta are commonly multiyear endeavors. The Council will improve all performance measures, but will focus on outcome measures through a multiyear effort, using successful approaches for developing performance measures employed by similar efforts elsewhere...”

Performance measures are critical to implementing the Delta Plan because they allow the Council to track how well the goals and strategies in the Plan are being achieved and how conditions in the Delta are changing through implementation of the regulatory policies and recommendations within the Plan. Performance measures allow us to detect changes due to successful implementation of policies and recommendations, but also identify those policies or recommendations that require attention or revisions to be more effective and timely.

Figure 1 below illustrates the linkage between the Delta Reform Act's coequal goals as defined in the Delta Plan, with strategies for each chapter that summarize the objectives to be obtained, the policies and recommendations in the Plan developed to address these strategies and the performance measures that are directly linked to the policies and recommendations that allow the Council to track progress in implementing the Delta Plan and furthering the achievement of the coequal goals. The figure also illustrates how measures will be used in a continuous cycle of data collection, synthesis and

decision support/learning. Performance measures must be allowed to adapt as the understanding of the system, the conditions and the information changes over time.

Figure 1: Delta Plan Performance Measures and the Adaptive Management Process



Performance Measures Defined

To better facilitate understanding and discussion of the staff’s recommended refinements to the Delta Plan’s performance measures it is important to understand what is meant by a “performance measure” and the metrics that define a good measure. The Delta Plan defines a “performance measure” as:

“A quantitative or qualitative tool to assess progress toward an outcome or goal. The Delta Plan must include performance measurements that will enable the Delta Stewardship Council to track progress in meeting the objectives of the Plan. Performance measures must include, but need not be limited to, quantitative or otherwise measurable assessments of the status and trends in all of the following:

- (1) *The health of the Delta estuary and wetland ecosystem for supporting viable populations of aquatic and terrestrial species, habitats, and processes, including viable populations of Delta fisheries and other aquatic organisms.*
- (2) *The reliability of California water supply imported from the Sacramento River or the San Joaquin River watershed.”* (Delta Plan p. 314)

Inherent in performance measures is *measuring* quantitatively over time by use of a ‘metric’ (or multiple metrics). A metric defines the unit of measure and other

characteristics for tracking those units over time and ensuring progress in implementing the Delta Plan's goals and strategies. An example of a metric would be number of acres of restoration projects constructed by habitat type. This metric would be tracked quantitatively, as a trend, over time. The metric is also used to define a historical baseline, or what our starting point is and what we are comparing progress to. An example would be number of acres of restored habitat by type in May 2013 when the Delta Plan was adopted and comparing this number to current acres of restored habitat. Baselines can be established using available databases for the timeframe covered, they can be established as a reference condition or a point in time generated by some key event. Finally, the metric is used in setting a future target, or where we want to go or how we want to proceed in order to deem the action successful. An example would be restoration of 8,000 acres of tidal wetland and 17,000 to 20,000 acres of floodplain habitat. Targets can also be represented as trends (upward or down) and may not have a specific numerical value.

This use of metrics in comparing trends against baseline and targets reveals progress or lack of progress, and is critical to the implementation of a performance measure. Developing metrics is dependent, in part on, available data and information, current policy decisions or regulatory requirements, and desirable or known outcomes.

Refining the Plan's Performance Measures

Since adoption of the Delta Plan in May 2013, the Council has accomplished the following critical milestones related to assessing and refining performance measures:

- December 2013 – Staff reported to the Council that a full assessment of Delta Plan performance measures for implementation readiness was underway. A description of the assessment framework and approach was provided.
- July 2014 – Staff reported interim project status to the Council, including highlights of implementation challenges, improvements applied to online tracking tools, and opportunities/next steps.
- December 2014 – Staff provided an end-of-year report including detailed reporting status spanning all 118 administrative measures and reporting highlights of a select two output measures.
- August 2015 – Staff reported the results of a complete assessment of all 160 performance measures with expanded performance reporting by Delta Plan goal and strategy as well as proposed refinements to various existing measures, and suggestions for possible additional output and outcome measures.

Following the August Council meeting, staff used a multi-step approach to further prepare recommended refinements to performance measures and in developing several new measures. Staff focused on identifying and refining metrics, wording changes for

clarification, and developing new measures where gaps had been identified in the August report.

These additional steps included:

- Internal Subject Matter Expert Review – Recommended refinements presented in August underwent iterative reviews and refinement, through a series of internal meetings with planning and science staff including the Lead Scientist. These meetings resulted in many clarifying updates to the existing Delta Plan performance measures including improved metrics for some measures and identification of baselines and targets for the majority of existing measures. These revisions are reflected in Attachment 1 to this report.
- External Subject Matter Expert Review and Online Survey – Updated recommendations were then provided to a select subset of 65 external subject matter experts representing state and local agencies, stakeholders, and others who were invited to review and comment on the recommended revisions. These interactions included meetings, conference calls, and the use of a tailored online survey to solicit input on individual output and outcome measures. Information received from these interactions was incorporated, as appropriate, into updating the performance measures and are reflected in Attachment 1 to this report.
- Public Comment Period and Workshop – Refined recommendations were then made available online for public comment from November 5-19. During this time a public workshop was held on November 9 to review staff recommended revisions to performance measures and to solicit input from stakeholders and the public. Public comment was provided in writing primarily through the use of the online survey.
- Science Consultation – Refinements to the Delta Plan's performance measures were developed in coordination with or reviewed by the Delta Science Program's Lead Scientist and staff to ensure appropriate metrics and the incorporation of best available science and information.
- Preparation for the December Council Meeting – Comments that were received internally and externally (within the public comment period) - were evaluated and incorporated, as appropriate in developing the information in Attachment 1 presented today.

Today's Briefing

Today's briefing will focus on staff's updated recommendations for refinements to the Delta Plan's performance measures as well as on nine new performance measures developed to address gaps in tracking the Delta Plan's goals and strategies.

Attachment 1 contains information on 49¹ output and outcome performance measures and is organized by Delta Plan chapter, strategies within each chapter, and performance measures in numerical order. Chapters 3-7 are included because they contain output or outcome measures. Key information related to each performance measure includes:

- Delta Plan strategy(ies) tracked by the specific performance measure
- Delta Plan policy or recommendation related to the performance measure
- Type of performance measure (e.g. output or outcome)
- Existing Delta Plan performance measure language
- Staff-recommended language to update the existing Delta Plan performance measure (with notes as needed for context)
- Metric, baseline or reference point, target, and data source information

Refinements suggested by staff and included in this report fall into the following categories:

- Refined performance measure language to provide clarity to and purpose for the measure
- Refined metrics or newly identified metrics as needed to clearly link the performance measure with the Delta Plan goal and strategy it will track
- Baseline, target, and data source information identified for each measure
- Nine new output or outcome measures developed to fully track Delta Plan goals and strategies

Several output or outcome measures have been identified as administrative measures and staff recommend reclassifying these for implementation purposes

For the December meeting, staff will present the latest version of Delta Plan output and outcome performance measures warranting Council review and discussion. Staff will describe the process utilized to develop refinements and new measures since August. Subsequent to the December meeting, staff will request that the Delta Independent Science Board review the methodology (approach) used to develop/refine the Delta Plan performance measures including the rationale and metrics for the 37 output and outcome measures proposed for Council adoption and incorporation into an update of the Delta Plan.

Next Steps

Staff recommends the following next steps for performance measure review, Council approval of refined measures and implementation of refined performance measures;

¹ The number 37 output and outcome performance measures differs from the 42 mentioned during the August Council meeting due to staff's ongoing refinement effort. The 37 number is a result of 7 new measures being added to the original 42 and then subtracting 6 to be reclassified to administrative performance measures and subtracting another 6 for removal from the Delta Plan.

1. Request Delta Independent Science Board review of methodology and proposed measures (December 2015 – January 2016)
2. Council review and adoption of refined measures (January – February 2016)
3. Complete detailed specifications for all approved refined and new performance measures (completed summer 2016)
4. Data collection and reporting (ongoing since 2013 for administrative measures, ongoing for all output and outcome measures starting summer 2016)
5. Continue to provide regular reporting to the Council and stakeholders (ongoing, approximately 6-month intervals)
6. Begin developing public reporting tools such as online dashboards, scorecards, etc. (spring 2016)

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Delta Plan Performance Measures – Staff Recommendations

Attachment 2: Delta Plan Policies and Recommendations

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