

Delta Science Program
Policy and Procedures for Independent Scientific Peer Review
25 October 2011

Background

As part of its mission to provide the best possible scientific information for decision making in the Bay-Delta system, the Delta Science Program promotes and provides independent, scientific peer review of processes, plans, programs and products. These policies and procedures describe how independent scientific peer review provided by the Delta Science Program will be conducted.

Decision to Provide Review

Independent scientific peer review may be requested by any agency or interested party. The review must be centered on written documents. The Delta Science Program's decision to provide a review will depend on funding for the review, the due date requested for the review, other commitments of the Delta Science Program, the readiness of the document for review, and the importance of the review with respect to the goals and objectives of the Delta Stewardship Council. The ultimate decision to provide a review rests with the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program.

Planning Meetings

Periodic planning meetings are held with members of the requesting party, authors of the document and interested agency/stakeholder representatives prior to the review. Planning group participants are expected to communicate their party's expectations for the review, provide input on the Charge to the Panel, review schedule and panel members, and transmit review and background materials to the Delta Science Program.

Charge to the Panel

- Charge questions are developed with input from the planning group, but the Lead Scientist has the final say on the panel charge
- Charge questions are technical, not policy questions
- The scope of work and charge to the panel will include background information, questions for the panel, role of the panel, and a schedule of deliverables.

Independent Review Panel Members

- Selection of panelists – input from review planning group is considered, but the Lead Scientist has the final say on panel membership
- Panelist selection criteria– standing in the scientific community, expertise relevant to the documents being reviewed, and free of conflict of interest

Materials for Review

- Grouped into two categories: Materials to be reviewed (Primary document or documents) and Background materials

- Other information provided/suggested during the panel meeting can be used at the discretion of the panel
- Final decision on materials to be provided to the panel rests with the Delta Science Program and Lead Scientist

Communication with the Panel

- No communication with the panel without the knowledge and consent of the Delta Science Program
- The panel will be asked to disregard any communication received without the knowledge and consent of the Delta Science Program

Public Meetings

- To the extent possible, the review process will be open and transparent
- Unless there are compelling reasons, every review will have a public meeting component
- The panel will deliberate in private to develop their recommendations
- The opportunity for public comment will be provided as a part of the public session of every review

Public Communication

- A webpage containing background information, the meeting agenda, panel membership, review materials and products will be developed and hosted by the Delta Science Program and Delta Stewardship Council's website
- To the extent possible, materials for panel review will be posted to the web at the same time that they are provided to the panel, at a minimum, 10 days in advance of the review meeting
- Information about upcoming public reviews and review products will be sent to the Delta Stewardship Council's list serve.

Panel's Report

- The Delta Science Program may suggest grammar or formatting edits on the draft report to improve the quality of the Panel's report
- The content, substance, and recommendations contained in the Panel's report are those of the panel, not the Delta Science Program or Delta Stewardship Council
- The Delta Science Program will post the report after approval of the panel along with a response from those being reviewed if they choose to respond.