Subject Matter Experts

Information and contracting guide for potential SMEs

Delta Science Program

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

What does a Subject Matter Expert (SME) Do?

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) can serve as independent peer review or advice panelists, proposal reviewers, workshop participants, report authors, and expert elicitors. SMEs support the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) efforts to advance California's coequal goals for the Delta and the mission of the Council's Science Program to provide the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Delta. This document's purpose is to provide information to people interested in contracting as an SME with the Council.

What are SME Qualifications?

SMEs are expected to possess the necessary relevant knowledge to provide input, be free of a conflict of interest,[1] and hold some familiarity with the geographic region, physical processes, policy issues, ecosystems, and species-specific aspects for which scientific review or other task is sought. The task may include scientific and technical expertise, or other ways of knowing such as Tribal knowledge and community-based knowledge. SME qualifications and conflict of interest declarations will be evaluated by the Council and Delta Lead Scientist.

[1] Review Resource E of the 2026 Delta Science Plan to understand Council's Conflict of Interest process and Resource G for peer review. To avoid financial, professional, and personal conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts, the Council selects reviewers who have no direct connections or perceived connections to the documents that they review.

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Want to be Added to Our SME Database?

The Council's Delta Science Program maintains a database of scientific experts to serve on independent review panels and other tasks. To be added, email ReviewAdvice@deltacouncil.ca.gov with your name, affiliation, email, phone number, website link, and short summary of expertise.

How do SME's Contract with the Council?

In most cases the Council enters into an agreement directly with SMEs using a consulting services contract. Contracts for SME services are usually with the SME's employer or a private business/corporation, such as a sole proprietorship or an LLC/Inc. The following information does not apply to honoraria, which are sometimes available under limited circumstances for smaller tasks.

All non-public entities (excluding sole proprietorships) must register with the Secretary of the State to do business in California. Sole proprietorships must register in the county of the business operations where applicable. Processing this registration **may take several weeks.** To learn more about the process, filing requirements, and fees please visit the Secretary of State website.

To contract with the State of California, all businesses must have insurance and must be able to show proof that their business exists. SMEs must also provide a brief (2 page) Curriculum Vitae (CV) upon request.

Council staff cannot advise SMEs on how to set up a business, determine a contracting mechanism, or register with the Secretary of State. Visit How to do Business with California State Government for business related questions.

Insurance Minimum Requirements

- Insurance must be maintained for at least three (3) years after completion of the contract work.
- Errors and Omissions/Professional Liability and Workers Compensation/ Employers Liability (if more than one person is working on project) are required.
- Further insurance details, such as minimum amount requirements, can be found here.

How to Show Proof of Business

- Business license
- Business insurance
- Tax identification/ Registration Number

Additional forms of proof requested may include:

- Business phone number (not personal)
- Business address (not home)
- Business cards