Water Management Effectiveness Framework Overview

The Water Management Effectiveness Framework can serve as a foundation for guiding investments in water management and tracking their effectiveness, with sustainability as the ultimate goal. The Framework will require water managers, and related resource and land use planners, to change the way they think, plan, implement, operate, and maintain water management systems. It will also require the removal of institutional and governance barriers, changes to legislation and funding, and a long-term view of the future. In the Framework, effectiveness is determined by the degree to which actions taken help bring about outcomes that are consistent with intent.

The Framework has five key components:

- **Societal Intent** – Societal Intent is the most important aspect of determining the extent to which the water management system in California is performing effectively.
- **Appropriate Functional Geographical Extent or Scale** – The geographical extent being considered when making management decisions matters because actions taken in one geographic area can affect the outcomes produced by actions taken upstream or downstream of that area. This in turn can result in resource conflict, unintended consequences, and increased risks.
- **Levels of Outcomes** – An outcome is an observable state or condition within the water management system. There is a distinction between intended outcomes (intent) and actual outcomes (the current or historical observable results). Effectiveness of State government actions can only be determined by observing and reporting actual outcomes, and comparing those outcomes to intended outcomes. The Framework defines four levels of outcomes that offer useful distinctions for managing water and related resources sustainably in California. Outcomes can be sorted into these levels based on sequential dependencies and their relative significance to society. The four levels used in the Framework are shown in the adjacent figure.

Levels of Outcomes

The higher level outcomes (Levels 3 and 4) represent outcomes with the most tangible value to society. They are more complex to measure and more challenging to achieve than lower level outcomes (Levels 1 and 2). However, outcomes in Levels 1 and 2 are crucial to the overall effectiveness of the system because they are necessary to achieve the intended higher level outcomes.

- **Enabling Conditions (Level 1) –** Intended outcomes at Level 1 provide the foundation for outcomes at other levels.
- **Physical Assets and Behaviors (Level 2) –** Intended outcomes at this level reflect how people manage water and the physical changes that result from their decisions.
- **Resource and Societal Benefits (Level 3) –** Outcomes at this level are tangible changes to the natural resource conditions and benefits to society that are important for long-term sustainability.
- **Sustainability (Level 4) –** Outcomes at this level are defined and tracked to assess whether societal goals are being fulfilled in a way that results in a dynamic balance between the four societal goals. *Sustainability is the ultimate goal*.

- **Scales of Actions** – There are three categories of actions based on the scale that it takes place.
  - o *Policy Scale* – actions taken to set vision, create laws and institutional authorities, and direct and fund thematic-scale programs.
  - o *Thematic Scale* – actions that focus and translate outcomes produced by policy-scale actions into a more detailed format that can be applied in a coherent way.
  - o *Applied Scale* – actions that implement tangible physical, social, or biological changes to land or water resources and infrastructure.
- **Cyclical Implementation, Learning and Adapting** – Learning and adapting can be enhanced if planning and implementation are carried out in cycles. As learning improves, each future implementation cycle (e.g., each Water Plan Update) will benefit from previous cycles.

Water Plan Update 2018 Process for Implementing the Effectiveness Framework

California Water Plan Update 2018 is implementing the Water Management Effectiveness Framework, and the Water Plan Team will perform the following activities to develop the Framework:

1. **Set the Level 4 Outcomes as the four societal values described in the Water Sustainability Brochure** – These societal values (Public Health & Safety, Healthy Economy, Thriving Ecosystems, and Enriching Experiences) or intended outcomes, were presented to the State Agency Steering Committee (SASC), Policy Advisory Committee (Policy AC), and during the Tribal Advisory Committee (Tribal AC) Orientation Webinar. Recordings of these meetings are available on our Meeting Materials webpage.
2. **Identify Level 3 Outcomes and define Indices for Level 4 and 3 Outcomes** – Identify Level 3 Outcomes for each Level 4 Outcome, and their corresponding Level 4 and 3 Indices. Indices (indicators) can be used to track and compare actual versus intended outcomes. These indices will be used to assess how effectively Level 4 Outcomes are achieved.
3. **Develop a Water Management Effectiveness Assessment Survey** – Based on the Level 4 Indices, the Water Plan Team has developed survey questions for a Water Management Effectiveness Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of current water programs and projects at achieving the Level 4 Outcomes.
4. **Prepare a Water Sustainability Outlook report** – Using the survey results and other information, the Water Plan Team will prepare a draft Sustainability Outlook– a narrative of the current status, trends, and gaps for each of the Level 4 Outcomes, along with a summary matrix/dashboard.
5. **Develop recommendations to overcome gaps and implementation challenges** – Gaps and implementation challenges that were identified from the Water Management Effectiveness Assessment will inform our recommendations, including strategies to align and improve water governance, finance, and regulations.
6. **Present assessment results and draft recommendations** – In preparation for the Update 2018 engagement meetings in early 2017, the Team will present early assessment results and preliminary work on recommendations to the SASC, Policy AC, Tribal AC, and interested public.