

IV. GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. IRWM Plan Standards

IRWM Plan Standards are used to describe what must be in an IRWM Plan and can be used as criteria in Implementation Grant applications. Applicants should refer to the PSP for the specific function of the IRWM Plan Standards in each grant solicitation. The IRWM Plan Standards discuss specific aspects that must be part of an IRWM Plan. However, RWMGs are encouraged to pay attention to three concepts when incorporating plan standards into their IRWM plans:

1. **Ahwahnee Water Principles.** IRWM planning is planning that is not focused on a single use of a resource, but seeks to manage that resource based on all the ways that the resource can be used. As exhibited by the IRWM Plan Standards, many aspects of IRWM planning reflect the Ahwahnee Water Principles, http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/h2o_principles.html. Commonalities between IRWM planning and the Ahwahnee Water Principles include multi-agency collaboration, stakeholder involvement and collaboration, regional approaches to water management, water management involvement in land use decisions, and project monitoring to evaluate results of current practices. Although IRWM Plan Standards can be seen as very separate and distinct items, RWMGs should be aware of the broader overarching shift to resource planning as presented in the Ahwahnee Water Principles and the practice of IRWM planning as opposed to single planning purpose (i.e. water supply, wastewater, or watershed function).
2. **Flood Management.** Flood management should be integrated into IRWM Plans similarly to other types of water management. Integrating flood management into a regional plan, as appropriate, may increase the ways a RWMG can achieve its IRWM Plan objectives.
3. **IRWM Plan Outline.** The IRWM Plan Standards are intended to ensure IRWM Plans include specific content. Although the IRWM Plan Standards name specific topics, explanations, and descriptions, these do not necessarily constitute an outline of an IRWM Plan. An IRWM Plan can be written in a format that is logical for the IRWM region. The IRWM Plan can use different titles to sections than those offered in these standards. What is important is that IRWM plans contain the proper contents that ensure effective, implementable planning.

Guidance, including the intent of each standard and additional reference, can be found in Appendix C. The IRWM Plan Standards are as follows:

Table 2 – IRWM Plan Standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Region Description • Objectives • Resource Management Strategies (RMS) • Integration • Project Review Process • Impact and Benefit • Plan Performance and Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Management • Finance • Technical Analysis • Relation to Local Water Planning • Relation to Local Land Use Planning • Stakeholder Involvement • Coordination • Climate Change

1. Governance

The IRWM Plan must document a governance structure that ensures the IRWM Plan will be updated and implemented beyond existing State grant programs. The IRWM Plan must include:

- ✎ The name of the RWMG responsible for development and implementation of the Plan. A RWMG must meet the definition of CWC §10539, which states:

“RWMG means a group in which three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management, as well as those other persons who may be necessary for the development and implementation of a plan that meets the requirements of CWC §10540 and §10541, participate by means of a joint powers agreement, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or other written agreement, as appropriate, that is approved by the governing bodies of those local agencies.”

The IRWM Plan must include a description of the RWMG and explain how the makeup of the RWMG meets CWC §10539 and is sufficient in breadth of membership and participation to develop and implement the IRWM Plan.

- ↪ The RWMG and individual project proponents who adopted the Plan
- ↪ A description of the IRWM governance structure
- ↪ A description of how the chosen form of governance addresses and ensures the following:
 - Public outreach and involvement processes
 - Effective decision making
 - Balanced access and opportunity for participation in the IRWM process
 - Effective communication – both internal and external to the IRWM region
 - Long term implementation of the IRWM Plan
 - Coordination with neighboring IRWM efforts and State and federal agencies
 - The collaborative process(es) used to establish plan objectives
 - How interim changes and formal changes to the IRWM Plan will be performed
 - Updating or amending the IRWM Plan

2. Region Description

An IRWM Plan must include a description of the region being managed by the RWMG. This description should include a comprehensive inclusion of the following:

- ↪ A description of the watersheds and the water systems, natural and anthropogenic (i.e. “man-made”), including major water related infrastructure, flood management infrastructure, and major land-use divisions. Also include a description of the quality and quantity of water resources within the region (i.e. surface waters, groundwater, reclaimed water, imported water, and desalinated water). As relevant, describe areas and species of special biological significance and other sensitive habitats, such as marine protected areas and impaired water bodies within the region.
- ↪ A description of internal boundaries within the region including the boundaries of municipalities, service areas of individual water, wastewater, flood control districts, and land use agencies. The description should also include those not involved in the Plan (i.e. groundwater basin boundaries, watershed boundaries, county, State, and international boundaries).
- ↪ A description of water supplies and demands for a minimum 20-year planning horizon. Include a discussion of important ecological processes and environmental resources within the regional boundaries and the associated water demands to support environmental needs. This includes a description of the potential effects of climate change on the region.
- ↪ A descriptive comparison of current and future (or proposed) water quality conditions in the region. Describe any water quality protection and improvement needs or requirements within the area of the Plan.
- ↪ A description of the social and cultural makeup of the regional community. Identify important cultural or social values. Identify DACs in the management area. Describe economic conditions and important economic trends within the region. Describe efforts to effectively involve and collaborate with Tribal

APPENDIX C

GUIDANCE FOR IRWM PLAN STANDARDS

This appendix contains additional information on each of the IRWM Plan Standards. For each standard the intent of the standard is stated as well as applicable background information, legislation, examples, and references.

Governance

Governance plays an important role in determining how many organizations function. A definition of governance is the processes, structures and organizational traditions that determine how power is exercised, how stakeholders have their say, how decisions are taken and how decision-makers are held to account.

The intent of the Governance Standard is to ensure that an IRWM Plan has the structures and procedures that maximize functionality, participation in the Plan, and plan longevity.

DWR is not advocating any one governance structure or mechanism; rather it is up to the RWMG to determine what governance structure is best for the region. Existing IRWM Plans have used various governance forms, such as Joint Powers Authorities (JPA), MOU, Resolutions, and Consensus. Some governance structures are housed within a local government agency, which fulfills the coordinating role, while others are driven by committees that are comprised of individuals from multiple agencies or interests. Regardless of the governance structure configuration, participation in IRWM planning does not affect any powers granted to a local agency by any other law (IRWM Planning Act – CWC §10548). Access to contacts for IRWM Plans to examine a variety of governance models can be found at:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/fundingarea.cfm>

Clicking on a funding area label will call up a funding area map with contact information including web addresses on specific IRWM planning efforts.

Regardless of form, governance should be effective in updating and implementing the IRWM Plan, while safe guarding and supporting collaboration among stakeholders.

- ↪ **Group responsible for development of Plan:** The IRWM Plan must include a description of the RWMG responsible for the development and implementation of the Plan. RWMGs can include, but are not limited to, local public agencies, non-profit organizations, privately owned water utilities regulated by the Public Utilities Commission, tribal governments, and other stakeholders that are necessary to develop and implement the IRWM Plan. The description must include a listing of all entities responsible for development of the Plan and discuss their relationship to water management issues in the IRWM Region; in particular, the membership of the RWMG must be listed and those with statutory authority for water management (i.e. water use, water delivery, natural waters, water supply, water quality, flood waters, etc.) identified.
- ↪ **Public Notice Requirements:** A RWMG proposing to prepare or update an IRWM Plan shall publish a notice of intent to prepare the Plan in accordance with §6066 of the Government Code. Upon the completion of the IRWM Plan, the RWMG shall publish a notice of intention to adopt the Plan in accordance with §6066 of the Government Code and shall adopt the Plan in a public meeting of the RWMG governing board. (CWC §10543)
- ↪ **Plan Adoption:** The governing bodies of each agency that is part of the RWMG responsible for the development of the IRWM Plan and have responsibility for implementation of the Plan must formally adopt the IRWM Plan. Each project proponent named in an IRWM Grant application must also adopt the IRWM Plan. Project proponents are permitted to adopt the Plan after it has been adopted by the

RWMG, until the submittal of an IRWM Grant application. Proof of adoption is a resolution (or other written documentation) with signatory blocks for each governing body adopting the Plan.

- ◆ Types of Plans: While not part of the Governance Standard, the type of IRWM Plan written is the purview of the RWMG. Typically, RWMGs either write a new IRWM Plan that is based on multiple existing local plans or choose to produce a functionally equivalent plan (FEP). A FEP is a compilation of existing local water management and related plans that contain the components of an IRWM Plan and when used in a coordinated manner, operate as an integrated plan. FEPs are recognized in Proposition 84 (PRC §75026 (a)). Both types of plans are held to the same standards. FEPs should take particular care to clearly document and communicate how the separate, single purpose plans fit together and how entities abide by each of the existing plans. For example, governance of the FEP will not typically exist in the individual plans that make up the FEP. Therefore, the governance of an FEP must be clearly documented and communicated in some manner, not only to DWR, but to stakeholders in the region. Similarly, existing plans written by a specific entity often do not address areas outside that entity's jurisdiction; yet, when applied to a FEP, the provisions of that specific plan may very well apply to another entity's jurisdiction. Such overlaps of FEP component plans need to be documented and agreed upon.

↪ Description of chosen governance structure: Because each RWMG decides on its own specific governance structure, the IRWM Plan needs to contain a description of that structure. The description needs to be detailed enough so that any stakeholder in the region understands how to communicate with the RWMG and participate in the Plan. While the mechanism of governance may be formalized in an MOU or JPA, there's more to the governance structure than formal documents. The description needs to include not only a discussion of the mechanism of relationship between entities (JPA, MOU, consensus, etc.), but also how the governance structure performs basic activities (see activities section below). This discussion should include listing of committees or groups that have focused activities within the RWMG and the description of how these groups support plan development and implementation. Additionally, describe how the group gathers the information and how the group communicates with other groups or committees. Also necessary is other participatory information, such as how does a person serve on a group or committee and for what duration, or how does the public or stakeholders talk to or interface with a specific group or committee. Regardless of form, governance should be effective in updating and implementing the IRWM Plan, while safe guarding and supporting collaboration among stakeholders, and the description of the governance structure should be used to demonstrate how that is accomplished.

↪ Description of how governance addresses and ensures various activities: A description of how the chosen governance structure addresses the following activities can be incorporated in the description of the chosen governance structure. There also may be additional activities specific to individual IRWM governance structures and IRWM plans are encouraged to include descriptions of those activities in their IRWM plans. The guidance in this section is provided to better explain DWR's concerns about each of the activities contained in the Governance Standard and are described below.

- ◆ Public Involvement Processes – The development and implementation of an IRWM Plan needs to include a public involvement process that outreaches to the public and provides an opportunity for the public to participate in Plan development and implementation. Public involvement processes should be direct to local agencies and stakeholders, as applicable to the region, including all of the following:
 1. Wholesale and retail water purveyors, including a local agency, mutual water company, or a water corporation as defined in Section 241 of the Public Utilities Code
 2. Wastewater agencies
 3. Flood control agencies
 4. Municipal and county governments and special districts

5. Electrical corporations, as defined in Section 218 of the Public Utilities Code
6. Native American tribes that have lands within the region
7. Self-supplied water users, including agricultural, industrial, residential, park districts, school districts, colleges and universities, and others
8. Environmental stewardship organizations, including watershed groups, fishing groups, land conservancies, and environmental groups
9. Community organizations, including landowner organizations, taxpayer groups, and recreational interests
10. Industry organizations representing agriculture, developers, and other industries appropriate to the region
11. State, federal, and regional agencies or universities, with specific responsibilities or knowledge within the region
12. DAC members and representatives, including EJ organizations, neighborhood councils, and social justice organizations
13. Any other interested groups appropriate to the region

↪ **Effective decision making:** Decision making occurs at different levels. The description of the governance structure should describe how decisions are made at the regional level and how decisions are made within the RWMG. In describing decision making, consider how information is collected and processed within the governance structure and how a decision is vetted with stakeholders in the RWMG.

↪ **Balanced access and opportunity for participation:** Regional planning efforts involve a diverse group of people with differing expertise, perspectives, and authority of various aspects of water management. The IRWM Plan should describe the manner in which the governance structure ensures a balance of interested persons or entities representing different sectors and interests (see Public Involvement Processes, Nos. 1-13, above), and provides them the opportunity to participate, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the IRWM Plan. Depending on the type of governance structure or mechanism in place, it is possible that a RWMG may need more than one governance type in order to be inclusive of all interested stakeholders. For instance, decision making within a JPA might function at the exclusion of non-local agencies. Therefore, it might be necessary to include additional mechanisms, such as MOU's, to reasonably accommodate other entities, such as non-profit organizations, in the decision making of the IRWM processes. In addition, the IRWM Plan should address:

- ◆ Equal distribution of power and voice among stakeholders – what structures or procedures are in place that ensure there is an equal playing field for all stakeholders involved in the plan development and implementation?
- ◆ Equal opportunity and representation of stakeholders in multiple roles (leadership, advisory) regardless of economic and power status within the RWMG – what roles are there in the governance structure and how does someone occupy that role? How does the governance structure invite participation in the workings of the RWMG?
- ◆ Terms of service for positions within the structure – what kind of time commitment do these positions require and how often do they turn over.

↪ **Effective communication – both internal and external to the IRWM Region:** Essential and inherent in any human organization is the need to communicate. In many collaborative efforts, great importance may be placed on being heard and valued in the process. Some communication efforts, such as websites, e-mails, or other distributed materials, may be one-way and not necessarily require an

interactive discussion. However, some portion of the communication must be two-way. How does the governance structure foster communication with the different functional groups within the RWMG, with project proponents, with general stakeholders, with neighboring RWMGs, government agencies, and the general public? Each of those groups may require different intensities or types of communication. What mechanisms are available to accommodate adequate two-way communication?

- ↪ **Long-term implementation of IRWM Plan:** IRWM Plans are long-term planning documents. The description of region standard refers to a 20-year planning horizon. How does the governance structure help ensure implementation of the plan in the long-term?
- ↪ **Coordination with neighboring IRWM efforts, State agencies, and federal agencies:** How does the governance structure ensure coordination with neighboring RWMGs, State agencies, and federal agencies? Does the governance structure contain appropriate region-wide roles for such entities? Do the appropriate regulatory and resource agencies have advisory roles?
- ↪ **The collaborative process used to establish Plan objectives:** Does the governance structure show that a collaborative process was used for the development of IRWM Plan objectives? The groups that were involved in the process? And how the final decision was made and accepted by the RWMG?
- ↪ **Interim changes and formal changes to the Plan:** IRWM Plans need to include adaptive management processes for updating the Plan in response to changing conditions. This may include informal changes that reflect minor process, organizational, or water management changes that occur relatively frequently and do not necessitate a decision by the governing bodies of the RWMG. Formal changes may include those which reflect significant changes to processes, organizational structure, water management conditions, or routine periodic programmatic updates of the IRWM Plan. How does the governance structure ensure the Plan is formally updated periodically and how are changes to the Plan identified and made interim to the formal update period?
- ↪ **Updating or amending the IRWM Plan:** Does the IRWM Plan indicate the process used to informally and formally update or amend the Plan? What changes to the Plan would require it to be readopted? What is the frequency to formally amend and readopt the Plan? DWR encourages use of adaptive management processes to ensure that the IRWM Plan and associated objectives are current. Formal updates to the Plan may be resource and time intensive processes, but are necessary to ensure that the IRWM Plan is not a static document and that the Plan continues to be accepted by the RWMG and those entities necessary to implement the Plan. Therefore, DWR encourages IRWM planning efforts to formally review, revise, and adopt the IRWM Plan, at a frequency of no less than every five years. In the Governance section, indicate if this information is contained in another part of the Plan, such as in the Project Performance section.

Region Description

The intent of the Region Description Standard is to document that the IRWM planning region is defined by the combination of the water systems being managed; common water issues; and that there is sufficient variety of interested parties included in the planning region. The region description contained in the IRWM Plan should closely follow the information required in the RAP whereby DWR accepts IRWM regions into the grant program.

IRWM regions vary widely in physical size for a variety of reasons. As a result, there is no single physical size definition that can be imposed on an IRWM region. However, CWC §10541(f) and PRC §75026.(b)(1) define a region as follows:

“At a minimum, a region shall be a contiguous geographic area encompassing the service areas of multiple local agencies, and shall be defined to maximize opportunities for integration of water management activities: and effectively integrates water management programs and projects within a hydrologic region defined in the California Water Plan, the Regional Water Quality Control Board region, or subdivision or other region specifically identified by DWR.”