

BPA Criteria for Ranking Critical Elements for Biological Opinion Projects in the Mainstem/Systemwide Province

June 2, 2003

BPA developed, in coordination with NMFS, a list of projects identified as “Critical Elements for Biological Opinion,” with priority placed on those projects necessary for successful achievement of objectives at the 3-year and 5-year check-ins. This product was provided to the NPCC in February, 2003. Since that time, BPA, in coordination with the NPCC and NMFS, has focused on the projects that specifically address urgent research, monitoring, and evaluation; most of these projects are included in the mainstem/systemwide province.

In light of the NPCC adjusted allocation of funds for the mainstem/systemwide province, BPA categorized the critical element projects into phase 1, 2 and 3 to provide some additional indication of relative priority. Our approach in developing our recommendations for these projects was to identify the most urgent of those projects (Phase 1), which would total approximately \$31 million, equal to the funds available under the NPCC amended funding allocation for the mainstem/systemwide province.

Several steps are needed to facilitate the accomplishment of objectives associated with projects in phases 2 and 3 beginning in FY04, as these projects remain critical for the implementation under ESA and to retain the benefit of ongoing projects that BPA and the region have invested. Many projects included in phase 1 (phases 2 and 3, as well) provide opportunity for cost savings either through efficiencies or refinement of scope to better address priority needs.

Phase 1 Criteria:

- Constitute a significant or primary response to requirements of the 3- or 5-year check-in of the Biological Opinion and received a “fundable” determination by the Independent Scientific Review Panel
- Core projects for Program implementation

Phase 2 Criteria:

- BiOp critical projects not included in phase 1 that provide data to support decision making
- BiOp critical projects that received “do not fund” designation which are undergoing continued review/development in coordination with ISAB/ISRP

Phase 3 Criteria:

- Projects that did not meet phase 1 or phase 2 criteria