

## ACTION ITEM

### Receive and Consider Acceptance of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda

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**Summary:** The Delta Science Program distributed the final 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda (SAA) to the public on April 22. Updated every four to five years, the SAA prioritizes and aligns science actions to address management needs in the Delta. This iteration was developed by and for the Delta science community, beginning in 2020. The SAA: (1) serves as a roadmap for science investments; (2) identifies current, persistent, and emerging management challenges; and (3) promotes scientific collaboration.

Delta Science Program staff will present an overview of the Top 25 Science Actions, and Six Management Needs included in the final 2022-2026 SAA, and request that the Council receive and consider acceptance of the 2022-2026 SAA.

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#### BACKGROUND

The SAA is one of three core components of the Delta Science Strategy (<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/delta-science-strategy>), which establishes a foundation for achieving the vision of *One Delta, One Science*—an open Delta science community that works together to build a common body of scientific knowledge to inform management. The purpose of the SAA is to prioritize and align science actions to inform management decisions, identify critical knowledge gaps, build science infrastructure, and foster coordination to address current, persistent, and emerging challenges in the Delta. The SAA also guides decisions about allocating funds for critical science investigations in a four- to five-year timeframe. The 2022-2026 SAA is built upon a vision of integration, recognizing that addressing complex management needs in the Delta requires integration across social and biophysical disciplines, geographic boundaries, and topics.

Co-production in natural resources management is the utilization of multiple different knowledge sources and stakeholders to co-create knowledge and information. The draft was co-produced with members of the Delta science community, including members of federal, State, and local agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and interested parties. The process involved a nearly 18-month, multi-phase, and collaborative effort led by the Delta Science Program, which began in early 2020. The Delta Science Program provided numerous opportunities for agency partners and those interested in the Delta to provide input at every stage of the process. The development of the 2022-2026 SAA was also informed by an assessment of progress made on the Science Actions in

the 2017-2021 SAA (<https://scienceactionagenda.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/SAA-Progress-Summary.pdf>).

### ***2022-2026 SAA***

The SAA connects Science Actions with Management Needs, informed by Management Questions. The top 25 Science Actions included in the draft 2022-2026 SAA are responsive to six integrative Management Needs and 65 Top Delta Management Questions that reflect the complexity of social and environmental challenges and knowledge gaps in the Delta. These Science Actions focus on both: (1) generating new information or tools; and/or (2) improving or enhancing the use, and reach of, existing scientific information, tools, or knowledge.

Developing the 2022-2026 SAA began with crowdsourcing a list of Management Questions relevant to the Delta, a feature new to this iteration of the SAA. The addition of Management Questions was suggested by the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee's 2019 Delta Science Funding and Governance Initiative and aimed to enhance coordination across the Delta science enterprise and ensure that Science Actions directly inform policy and management.

Given that the SAA represents the shared science priorities of the Delta scientific community, it provides a valuable framework to guide science planning and funding by the Council and its partners (<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/research-funding-and-fellowships>). For example, the 2022-2026 SAA is already being used as a guiding framework for the 2022 Delta Science Fellowship program, jointly run by California Sea Grant and the Delta Science Program.

### *Public Review*

The draft 2022-2026 SAA was released for public review from November 18, 2021, through January 21, 2022. The Delta Science Program considered the feedback from fourteen individual comment letters, including the Delta Independent Science Board, to develop the final SAA. Noteworthy revisions that were made in response to public comments include:

- Text revisions to the Science Actions and the addition of clarifying language to the Context section for each Science Action;
- Elaboration of linkages between the SAA and existing or planned regulations, mandates, and programs; and
- Language to further promote human dimension aspects in Science Actions.

Additionally, the theme of integration—in reference to the various disciplines, geographies, and topics that transcend the Science Actions—was expanded upon in the Foreword and throughout the report.

*Next Steps*

The Delta Science Program looks forward to using the SAA to guide fellowship and research opportunities (e.g., the 2022 Delta Science Fellows and 2023 Proposal Solicitation Notice), enhancing progress tracking and information sharing, such as through the Delta Science Tracker, and leveraging partnerships to address the collective and integrative priorities identified in the SAA.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Not applicable.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda – Final Draft

<https://scienceactionagenda.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/2022-2026-science-action-agenda.pdf>

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