



## **ACTION ITEM**

Consideration and Possible Approval of a Contract with the Regents of the University of California San Diego (UCSD), California Sea Grant (Sea Grant), for the Delta Science Program 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation

### **Summary**

Council staff request approval to: 1) issue a 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation not to exceed \$6,000,000 for awards for selected projects; and 2) for a new contract with the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), California Sea Grant (Sea Grant), for services related to facilitation of a competitive solicitation, review of submitted proposals, and award administration, including potential post-award contract administration of selected projects as sub-contracts. The 'not to exceed contract amount' for UCSD, Sea Grant would be \$1,037,224 for services related to the administration, coordination, and support for the solicitation and \$6,000,000 for awards for selected projects, should UCSD, Sea Grant administer the selected projects, for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$7,037,224. The initial term of the agreement is anticipated to be five years.

### **Requested Action**

Council staff request that the Council approve Resolution 2023-04 (Attachment 1 to this staff report) granting authority to the Executive Officer, or delegee, to issue the 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation for Delta science research not to exceed \$6,000,000 and to execute an agreement with UCSD, Sea Grant. The agreement would be for an amount not to exceed \$1,037,224 for services related to the administration, coordination, and support for the 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation and \$6,000,000 for awards for selected projects, should UCSD, Sea Grant administer the selected projects as part of the services provided, for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$7,037,224. Staff anticipates that the initial term of the agreement would be five years. The Resolution also authorizes the Executive Officer, or delegee, to execute any contract for the selected projects, as

well as any amendments to any of the contracts authorized by the Resolution, which do not increase the total authorized not to exceed amounts. The Executive Officer has delegated authority to execute agreements up to \$750,000. Because the total exceeds the delegated amount, Council approval is required.

## Background

[The Science Program is Charged with Funding Research in the Delta](#)  
Pursuant to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 (Delta Reform Act; Cal. Wat. Code 85000, et seq.), the mission of the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) is to further the coequal goals for the Delta of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem, to be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place (Cal. Wat. Code 85054.). The mission of the Delta Science Program is “to provide the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Delta ... [to] be carried out through funding research, synthesizing and communicating scientific information to policy-makers and decision-makers, promoting independent scientific peer review, and coordinating with Delta agencies to promote science-based adaptive management.” (Water Code section 85280(b)(4)).

### [Competitive Proposal Solicitations for Delta Research](#)

As these mission statements make clear, funding science in the Delta directly supports the coequal goals and the implementation of the Delta Plan (the long-term management plan for the Delta) by leading to the development of management tools, advancing the state of knowledge, and providing the best possible science to inform decisionmakers. One critical pathway across a portfolio of investment options is a recurring competitive research solicitation conducted by the Delta Science Program, in partnership with UCSD, Sea Grant. The most recent call for research proposals in 2020 was conducted in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, with a subsequent contribution from the State Water Contractors. The 2020 solicitation resulted in the Council funding 16 high-priority research projects (<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/council-meeting/meeting-materials/2021-06-24-item-8-attachment-2-proposal-solicitation-notice-2021->

[information-sheet.pdf](#)). The Council received 99 applications, which demonstrated a clear need in the Delta science community for science funding and signaled the need for competitive processes to elucidate the top-quality management-relevant projects.

#### Collaboratively Developed Research Priorities

The Delta Science Program is now poised to issue another solicitation for research proposals. The proposed 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation would call for proposals responsive to the specific science actions within the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda, and would prioritize projects with a social science component. Successful projects funded through this solicitation would be required to demonstrate a substantive connection with local Delta communities and/or a strong application to natural resource decision-making. For a high-level overview of the 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation, see Attachment 2.

#### Partnership with UCSD, Sea Grant

The 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation would not be possible without our partnership with Sea Grant, which has facilitated the previous two Delta science solicitations in 2018 and 2020 with the Delta Science Program. Sea Grant strives to harness the power of research and outreach — while remaining a neutral broker of scientific information — to inform a healthy future for all Californians. Under the proposed contract, Sea Grant would perform any or all of the services related to the solicitation, including facilitating advertisement of the solicitation, providing access to an existing and successful proposal application portal, facilitating a thorough, external, technical, and expert review of submitted proposals, and communicating outcomes from funded work in tandem with the Delta Science Program. Sea Grant has been a trusted, reliable partner for the Delta Science Program on many projects over the last several decades. Sea Grant has been and continues to be an indispensable partner for solicitation and award administration due to its expertise based on a long, successful track record of administering and coordinating science-specific research solicitations and subsequent awards. Sea Grant's national platform would also raise the visibility of this opportunity and solicit broader interest and proposals from the scientific community.

Sea Grant is administered by the University of California and is based at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla. It receives and administers federal and state funding from the National (federal NOAA) Sea Grant program, the California Resources Agency's Sea Grant Advisory Panel, and the California Environmental License Plate Fund. Sea Grant sponsors and administers scientific research, fellowships, and panels of scientific advisors that contribute to the growing body of knowledge about coastal and marine resources and help solve contemporary marine- and estuarine-related problems. California Sea Grant is the largest of the 35 Sea Grant programs nationwide and draws on the talents of scientists and engineers at public and private universities throughout the state. The staff at Sea Grant have significant expertise in administering research solicitations and agreements and have conducted the Delta Science Fellows program since 2003, managing the selection of awards and work of many classes of fellows.

### Fiscal Information

The 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation would result in up to \$6 million of Council funds awarded to selected projects. Up to an additional \$1,037,224 would be for UCSD, Sea Grant services related to the solicitation.

Estimated Budget Summary:

Category	FY 23/24 Year 1	FY 24/25 Year 2	FY 25/26 Year 3	FY 26/27 Year 4	FY 27/28 Year 5	Total:
UCSD, Sea Grant Services	\$234,930	\$214,457	\$149,776	\$289,375	\$148,686	<b>\$1,037,224</b>
Awards	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$0	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$234,930</b>	<b>\$2,014,457</b>	<b>\$2,249,776</b>	<b>\$2,389,375</b>	<b>\$148,686</b>	<b>\$7,037,224</b>

### List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Resolution 2023-04

Attachment 2: 2023/2024 Delta Research Proposal Solicitation Information Sheet

## Contact

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