

# DRAFT

## Prospectus for Assessment of Delta ISB Recommendations

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### Background

The 2009 Delta Reform Act (DRA) charged the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB, board) to provide oversight of the scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs that support adaptive management of the Delta. The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) appointed the inaugural 10-member board in June 2010, and the board had its first meeting in September 2010. Since then, the board has developed (a) *thematic reviews* addressing the DRA charge, (b) *specific document reviews* requested by the Council and other agencies, and (c) *letters* to agency heads with calls to action, e.g., regarding integrated modeling and science to address rapid environmental change.

The Delta ISB reached its 10-year anniversary in September 2020. In June 2020, the Council appointed six new members to replace those whose terms ended in August 2020. The timing is appropriate for doing a retrospective assessment of previous reviews and making recommendations for improvements for future reviews.

The Delta ISB performed self-assessments in June 2015 and July 2017 and instituted changes in how it approaches reviews based on the outcomes of those evaluations. In 2015, the board started developing a prospectus describing the approach for each thematic review prior to initiating reviews and invited public comment on the prospectus. In 2017, the board launched the creation of summary sheets for each review to improve communication and outreach.

### Purpose of Review

The purpose of the Assessment of Delta ISB Recommendations is to (1) document the evolution of the Delta ISB's approach to planning, implementing, and doing outreach for its thematic and requested reviews, (2) assess impact of Delta ISB reviews and memos including implementation status of recommendations and outcomes of recommendation implementation, and (3) develop recommendations for assuring relevance and increasing value of current and future Delta ISB recommendations to target audiences.

These recommendations will serve continuing board members as well as new members who will start their work on the Delta ISB with the benefit of this retrospective assessment of Delta ISB review recommendations. The recommendations will also serve Delta Science Program and Council staff.

**The expected outcome is that implementation of recommendations identified by this assessment will result in improved processes by the Delta ISB, Delta Science Program**

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**(DSP) staff, and Council Executive and Communications staff that will increase awareness, usability, and use of the Delta ISB reviews by target audiences.**

## **Product and Audiences**

The assessment report will have four parts: (1) *description of processes* used to develop and provide outreach for Delta ISB reviews including role of DSP staff and fellows as well as process evolution since 2010, (2) *inventory table* of ISB reviews and recommendations developed between September 2010 and Spring 2020, along with outreach strategies employed and *implementation status*, (3) retrospective account of Delta ISB reviews and recommendations with an *assessment of their value and impact*, and (4) *recommendations* for improving preparation, delivery, and outreach for future Delta ISB reviews and recommendations, including roles of DSP and Council staff.

The intended audiences include Delta ISB members (ongoing and new appointees), Delta Stewardship Council and Delta Science Program staff, and target audiences for Delta ISB reviews including State, local and federal agency staff and stakeholders, as well as state legislators and staff.

## **Approach**

**Part 1** of the assessment will be documenting Delta ISB review and outreach *processes* based on information in the reviews themselves, meeting materials, and personal communication with Delta ISB members and DSP staff familiar with the reviews. In addition, we will ask ISB members involved in reviews for lessons learned and potential process improvements. We will use the same sources to develop an *inventory* of Delta ISB review recommendations and specific outreach performed for each review.

**Part 2** of the assessment will be determining which recommendations have been *implemented* in what way by whom. Finding this information may be challenging. We will start with examples of which we are already aware, primarily those implemented by the Council or DSP. We will seek other examples through online citation searches, along with personal communication with DSP and Council staff and Delta ISB members.

**Part 3** of the assessment will be getting qualitative feedback from target audiences on the *value and impact* of Delta ISB reviews, along with suggestions for improvement. This will be an additional opportunity to learn about examples of implementation of Delta ISB review recommendations.

We plan to do the qualitative assessment through a combination of surveys, along with individual or group interviews.

Based on the findings in Parts 1 through 3, **Part 4** of the assessment will be to develop *recommendations* for improved processes by the Delta ISB, Delta Science Program (DSP)

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staff, and Council Executive and Communications staff that will increase awareness, usability, and use of the Delta ISB reviews by target audiences.

We will collate and synthesize the information from the four parts into the overall Assessment Report, targeting a full draft report by February 2021 and final draft by April 2021.