

**SAN FRANCISCO ESTUARY INSTITUTE**

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To:            Steering Committee

From:        Meg Sedlak and Jay Davis

**Re:            RMP Review Process**

At the October 2014 meeting, the Steering Committee (SC) requested that staff articulate the review process for RMP documents and the process for determining the format of reporting (e.g., a document report versus a manuscript).

#### Review of RMP Documents

The RMP strives for excellence and relevance. To meet these objectives, it is imperative that our documents undergo a critical and thorough review process. RMP documents typically undergo a sequential series of reviews, which are articulated below.

- Stakeholder input on document scope. This occurs through workgroups, the TRC, and the SC. At this stage an initial decision is made on the ultimate form of the document (e.g., SFEI technical report, journal publication, or other format).
- Stakeholder review of document outline. Major reports include this step, which often occurs through a workgroup or strategy team.
- Internal review. All of our documents are reviewed by the Program Directors of Clean Water – either Jay Davis or David Senn. Staff work in close consultation with the Program Directors to develop and write RMP reports.
- Once the comments from Drs. Davis and Senn have been incorporated, the report is sent to the appropriate peer reviewers (usually including workgroup members, the TRC, and the SC) for review. Just as our proposals for study ideas begin with guidance from the workgroups which consist of regulators, managers, and stakeholders, it is important that our review process include these respective workgroups. Equally important for the review are the external science advisers who serve on these workgroups. This assures that the documents are based on sound science and are addressing the highest priority management needs. SFEI tracks the review of documents by our workgroups, TRC and SC.

- Manuscripts produced for journal publication are reviewed by RMP stakeholders and peer reviewers before the manuscript is submitted to the journal. The manuscript then receives additional anonymous peer review by the journal.
- Once comments from the peer review have been addressed, the document is assigned a report number, posted on our web site, and distributed to stakeholders.

### Process for Determining whether the Project Deliverable will be a Report or Manuscript

The proposal for a special study typically specifies the type of deliverable. In most instances, the deliverable is a technical report that, depending on the outcome of the study, may be turned into a manuscript. In some instances, the deliverable may be just a manuscript. The decision to prepare a manuscript lies with RMP management, the workgroups, the TRC, and the SC. In some cases, the results of the study may be such that it is of little use to the larger scientific community and therefore it is of little value to embark upon the development of a manuscript. In other cases, the findings may be so novel or important that it would be useful to have a manuscript in the larger scientific realm. In addition, it is often valuable in the regulatory process for studies to have been subject to the additional review and acceptance by the scientific community that comes with journal publication. Below are several examples of reports that have become journal articles or instances in which the final deliverable was a journal article.

- PBDE Summary. An RMP report summarizing 10 years of data collection has been prepared. Because the results of this study have broader implications to the management of chemicals, a manuscript will be prepared using RMP funds. Becky Sutton will work on this starting February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Mercury Synthesis. This project synthesized our current state of knowledge about mercury in the Bay and set the stage for the next phase of the mercury TMDL. A journal article was prepared (Reducing methylmercury accumulation in the food webs of San Francisco Bay and its local watersheds [Davis et al. Environmental Research 2012]) as part of a broader effort to synthesize information on mercury in coastal environments worldwide. Concurrently, a RMP technical report was prepared.
- Brominated Flame Retardants. The RMP has had a number of publications on contaminants of emerging concern, particularly the flame retardants. RMP staff were involved in a special study of brominated/chlorinated flame retardants. This study was summarized directly in an article titled Brominated and Chlorinated Flame Retardants in San Francisco Bay Sediments and Wildlife (Klosterhaus et al., Environment International 2012).
- Perfluoroalkyl compounds in wildlife. Very few studies exist of perfluorinated compounds in apex predators. As a result, the two PFC studies have had manuscripts as their final deliverables. A manuscript was prepared based on the 2010 results from the

seal and bird studies (Sedlak and Greig 2012 Journal of Environmental Management). A second manuscript summarizing the more recent findings in 2012 is currently under way.

All of the RMP studies are publicly available, which means that there is a potential that other researchers may use our data to develop articles. As a recent example, researchers at Rutgers have mined RMP data to develop a manuscript on the debromination of PBDEs.

- Evidence for photochemical and microbial debromination 1 of polybrominated 2 diphenyl ether flame retardants in San Francisco Bay sediment (Rodenburg et al 2014 Chemosphere).