CHAPTER 9. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Chapter 8 identified the planning framework that will be used to formulate the master plans. Chapter 9 describes how these plans will be implemented through a staged approach. Staging is necessary because of the plans' likely geographic scope and because of the magnitude of the actions considered in the Comprehensive Study.

The Final Comprehensive Study Report will be a programmatic document. It will include a recommendation for programmatic authorization of the master plans similar to the Critical Projects Program authorized in Section 528(b) of WRDA 1996, and will be consistent with fiscal resources and other constraints. Implementing the mater plans will be staged. One important consideration in project staging is to maintain the integrity of the flood management system and the participation of local sponsors throughout the implementation. The need to reduce flood damages and restore ecosystems is immediate. Early in the process, projects will be recommended for immediate authorization and/or implementation.

In view of the tremendous scope and the relatively short time frame, not all elements of the master plans will be fully developed and coordinated by the end of Phase II. The more complex elements of the master plans will be developed and prioritized for implementation under a programmatic process similar to the one outlined in Section 528(b) of WRDA 1996.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

Implementing specific measures of the Comprehensive Study will require partnerships among the State, Corps, other agencies, organizations, and the public to make the best use of funds and to ensure consistency with existing programs and compliance with regulations, community plans, and public priorities. These partnerships could take many forms, such as cost-sharing, providing information, and streamlining priorities. Most of these partnerships will include at least one of the agencies or organizations identified in the Glossary. Programs and plans that may be key to initiating projects for any of these three implementation stages are discussed in Appendix G.

SPIN-OFF PROJECTS

Spin-off projects for flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, or multiple purposes will be identified throughout study Phases I and II. These projects are generally local in scope and must be consistent with the overall objectives of the Comprehensive Study. Spin-off projects are redirected from the Comprehensive Study into another Federal, State, or non-governmental program to better focus on study, design, and/or implementation. During Phases I and II, potential spin-off projects may be brought to the attention of the study team by interested public and stakeholders and by potential project sponsors. The study team may discover potential spin-off projects in existing State or Federal documents, during discussions with

stakeholders, or during public meetings. In Phase II, potential spin-off projects will also be identified at the conclusion of each of the three plan formulation steps (Step 1, Evaluate the Originally Intended Flood Management Function; Step 2, Identify System Constraints; and Step 3, Address Residual Risk). Spin-off projects will be included in Comprehensive Study documentation and analyses and will be integrated into the final report of the Comprehensive Study.

CRITERIA FOR SPIN-OFF PROJECTS

Spin-off projects must satisfy three primary criteria. These projects must: (1) meet the general planning objectives of the Comprehensive Study; (2) fit within the authority and funding of an existing Federal, State, or non-governmental program; and (3) have an identified project proponent (sponsor). Spin-offs are generally small scale, widely accepted projects which may provide local rather than system-wide flood damage reduction and/or environmental benefits. Projects may also qualify as spin-offs if they could be more efficiently and effectively implemented through a different program. Spin-off projects could include projects for which expertise is housed in an agency or organization other than the Corps or The Reclamation Board and Department of Water Resources.

PROCESS FOR INITIATING SPIN-OFF PROJECTS

Once a potential spin-off project is identified, study team members work with potential project proponents to evaluate suitable programs for studies and implementation. If the requisite programs exist within the Corps or DWR, team members provide direct coordination between those programs and project proponents. If suitable programs exist outside the Corps and DWR, the team can provide technical information to help develop the spin-off project, introduce project proponents to other potential partners, or assist with paperwork for project funding.

SELECTED SPIN-OFF PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Several possible spin-off projects were identified during Phase I of the Comprehensive Study. These projects are in various stages of coordination and development. During a Technical Support Group meeting, participants proposed a Chico Landing to Red Bluff, Section 1135 project. This project will contribute to both the ecosystem restoration and the flood management objectives of the Comprehensive Study. The project would achieve the flood management objective by eliminating the requirement to clear vegetation from banks and, thereby, reduce maintenance costs. The proposal for the University of California at Davis (U.C. Davis) river meander and vegetation model was initiated outside of the Comprehensive Study, but the scope of the proposal was developed in coordination with the Comprehensive Study and is designed to provide information of potential value to the study. These two spin-off projects are described below.

Chico Landing to Red Bluff, Section 1135 Project Proposal

The Chico Landing to Red Bluff Section 1135 Project Proposal entails modifying the Corps/State flood damage reduction project authorized by Congress in 1958. The purpose of this modification is to improve ecosystem resources in the project area. Only portions of the original project have been constructed (see Appendix A), and these sections consist of rocked, non-leveed reaches of right and left banks of the Sacramento River. Under the WRDA 1986 Section 1135 authority, the Corps and the non-Federal project sponsor, The Reclamation Board, will explore opportunities to improve the riverine ecosystem by modifying the structural and/or operational aspects of the originally authorized project.

This project modification meets several general planning objectives of the Comprehensive Study, such as restoring riparian and riverine habitat in the Sacramento River flood management system. As required under the 1135 authority, the modification will be consistent with the authorized purpose of the original project.

In a 1998 letter to the Corps, The Reclamation Board formally requested the Chico Landing to Red Bluff Project modification. The proposal is supported by the Sacramento River (SB1086) Advisory Council, which includes appointees from Federal and State agencies, local government, and landowner and public interest groups.

U.C. Davis River Meander and Vegetation Model

The U.C. Davis Center for Integrated Watershed Science and Management developed a proposal for a "Geomorphic and Habitat Model for Visualization and Feasibility Assessment of Setback Levees: Lower Sacramento River." They recently submitted this proposal for funding under the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program. The model would benefit restoration projects intended to improve the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The feasibility assessment would evaluate the hydraulic, geomorphic, habitat, and land use impacts of setback levees designed to restore natural floodplain functions.

Although the primary purpose of setback levees may be to restore environmental resources and natural processes, this assessment will provide valuable flood damage reduction information for the Comprehensive Study. The findings will help the study team determine the feasibility of non-traditional flood damage reduction strategies, such as increasing the width of the floodway (through setback levees or back-up levees), relocation of facilities out of the floodplain, and acquisition of flood-prone property. The CALFED proposal will provide information on river planform changes and riparian and floodplain ecosystem responses to setting levees back. This information will the Comprehensive Study team refine and expand the hydrologic and hydraulic modeling performed under the study.

Studies by U.C. Davis are joined by proposals from the Wildlife Conservation Board, FWS, and The Nature Conservancy to restore natural floodplain processes. Several proposals are under consideration by the CALFED Integration Panel for restoration program actions for 1999 and 2000.

EARLY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Early implementation projects comprise the second stage of the implementation strategy to reduce flood damages and integrate ecosystem restoration for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins. These projects will address the planning objectives of the Comprehensive Study. Early implementation projects will be identified and developed to feasibility level detail during Phase II. The study team will encourage the public, stakeholders, flood management agencies, participants in other projects, and other government entities to propose early implementation projects. Where appropriate, the study team will assist project proponents to develop feasibility level detail for proposals. These projects will be clearly identified in the final report of the Comprehensive Study.

CRITERIA FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

During Phase I, the study team developed preliminary criteria for early implementation projects. These projects must: (1) provide significant system flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration benefits; (2) not preclude other options in the flood management system; (3) have broad acceptance among the resource and flood management agencies; and (4) have willing and financially capable cost-sharing sponsor(s) with the necessary authorities. Early implementation projects will require Congressional authorization, however, they will most likely be consistent with existing Corps and State authorities. Partnerships will be encouraged with other Federal, State and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, including those discussed in the Glossary.

PROCESS FOR INITIATING EARLY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Early implementation projects will be identified, developed, and recommended for authorization and implementation in the final report. Developing and implementing projects that meet multiple objectives of the related, ongoing programs in the study area may require Federal authorization of innovative funding arrangements because of multi-agency involvement.

FULL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Phase II of the Comprehensive Study will produce a final report in 2002. This report and supporting environmental documentation will be programmatic in nature, and will include a recommendation for programmatic authorization of the master plans. Early implementation projects will be recommended for immediate authorization and implementation. Other priority elements of the plan will be recommended for immediate follow-up planning or design studies. These elements will be identified during Phase II based upon technical studies and proposals from interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public. Remaining elements will be finalized and implemented once proponents are identified and funds are made available. The framework outlined in Chapter 8 will guide development of the master plans. The master plans will guide future project development and decisions about emergency response activities. They will ensure that site-specific projects and actions are fully coordinated and integrated.