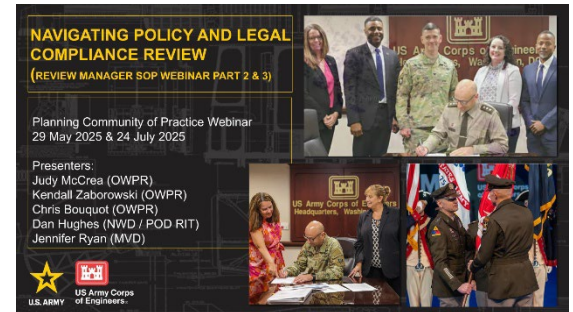


Dive into the New Review Manager SOP: Roles and Responsibilities & Navigating Policy and Legal Compliance Reviews
13 February, 29 May, & 24 July 2025
Q&A Summary

This PCoP webinar mini-series covered the Policy & Legal Compliance (P&LCR) Review Manager SOP released in November 2024. The first webinar provided a breakdown of the SOP and went over the roles and responsibilities of the P&LCR review manager throughout the duration of a feasibility study. It also addressed the State and Agency Review process and report log-in procedures. The second webinar provided a deeper dive into topics described in the SOP. The third webinar covered details on the review process from the Final Report Policy review through the Chief's Report and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) review, as well as additional tips and MSC perspectives.



This summary of the Question/Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Review Manager Resources:

- [Policy and Legal Compliance Review Manager Roles and Responsibilities](#) (Review Manager SOP)
- [Review tools, processes, training, and best practices](#) on the Planning Community Toolbox
- [Independent External Peer Review \(IEPR\) SOP](#)

General

What are the key changes to the new Review Manager SOP from the prior version?

There are no substantial changes to the roles and responsibilities documented in the SOP; however, the updated SOP provides greater detail on review manager roles and responsibilities, the specific steps involved with each role/responsibility, and the overall study process. This update also includes expanded guidance on the State and Agency review processes and report logging, as well as the integration and consolidation of the older and previously separate vertical team responsibility document. Additionally, the SOP has been refined for improved readability and clarity, making it more user-friendly.

Are Type I & Type II reviews still valid terminology?

The terms "Type I" and "Type II" are no longer used. Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) applies only to feasibility studies and is required under one of three conditions: (1) the recommended project cost exceeds \$200 million; (2) the governor of an affected state requests it; or (3) there is significant public controversy. Even when one of these conditions is met, a waiver may be requested during the Review Plan approval process. Safety Assurance Review (SAR) is an assessment of the critical decisions and criteria of the pre-construction engineering and design (PED) or construction activities prior to initiating physical construction and periodically thereafter until construction activities are completed, when there are concerns about life safety—either from the project itself or the construction activities.

Review Manager Responsibilities and the Role of the Office of Water Project Review (OWPR)

There seems to be a trend of the P&LCR team reviewing documents such as the Project Management Plan (PMP), Review Plan, and Vertical Team Alignment Memorandum (VTAM) that would be better reviewed by the MSC. How should review managers handle these types of requests?

Review managers are often asked to review documents that fall outside their purview. A common misconception is that the P&LCR team should review everything produced by a study team or reviewed by the MSC; certain required study documents, like the Review Plan, should be redirected to the MSC for review. Review managers should be aware of this issue and inform teams of the appropriate review when necessary. However, policy-related study documents, such as white papers and the VTAM, do fall within the P&LCR team's scope and should be reviewed accordingly. In such cases, the review period and how comments will be processed should be coordinated with the review manager.

Is HQUSACE rethinking the requirement for an OWPR advisor if there are no other OWPR Policy & Legal Compliance Reviewers on the team?

No, despite the recent reductions in staff, HQUSACE will retain the OWPR advisor assignment for P&LCR teams lacking an OWPR reviewer. OWPR will maintain a presence on every team to help the team move forward. That said, there may be only one OWPR representative per team, and they will either be an advisor or a reviewer rather than multiple OWPR reviewers on a single team.

Practically speaking, who is drafting the Chief's Reports (CRs) and Director's Reports (DRs)?

While the current SOP states that the review manager is responsible for drafting the CR and DR, the Chief of OWPR has clarified that the study team should provide a draft CR or DR. OWPR is ultimately responsible for finalizing the report in coordination with the district and the P&LCR team. This updated expectation will be reflected in the next SOP revision. The review manager "owns" the CR/DR as a product, but its development remains a collaborative effort.

Who is responsible for ensuring that MSCs use the four-part comment structure and that comments are limited to policy and legal issues (vs. editorial or personal wording preference comments) during P&LCR reviews?

The review manager is responsible for ensuring the proper comment structure and scope when producing the policy guidance memorandum (PGM) that compiles the P&LCR comments. In coordination with the P&LCR team, the review manager should edit, combine, categorize, or filter the comments as needed to meet the standards described in the review manager SOP and [PGM template](#). This includes sending comments back to reviewers to convert to a four-part comment structure, providing editorial comments in a separate document from the PGM, and using discretion in filtering out style preferences. In addition, PGM transmittal memos are signed by either the appropriate OWPR team lead (plan formulation for CSRM / FRM; economics for DDN / IN; environmental for AER) for non-delegated studies or the MSC Planning Chief for delegated studies. These individuals are responsible for ensuring the quality of the P&LCR comments before they sign the transmittal memo and provide the PGM to the Regional Integration Team (RIT)/MSC for distribution to the District.

Feasibility Study Document Development Process & Timing

Is there a general cutoff point when the final report must be revised versus when an errata sheet may be used to address late-breaking review comments?

All revisions or edits must be completed before the Chief signs the report. If necessary, this may include having the District Commander re-sign the document. The Chief should not be asked to sign a Chief's Report referencing a feasibility report that contains known errors or unresolved comments.

How should cost updates be handled for reports finalized near the end of the fiscal year? Should these be included in an errata sheet or as a separate memo?

The approach depends on the scope and timing of the changes. Errata sheets are typically used after a report has been completed and the CR, DR, or DM signed. When comments are received from the ASA(CW) or the Office of Management and Budget, an errata sheet is used to indicate changes the reader should know about that are not in the report. If the report is still in process, minor updates may be handled through changes to the Executive Summary or a memo rather than needing to update the economics appendix. If updates are interrelated or more substantial, a revised final report with a new date may be appropriate. The revision should occur after HQUSACE review is complete and should be labeled as a "revised" final report. Any cost update changes should be coordinated with OWPR.

In general, the use of errata sheets should be considered on a case-by-case depending on the timing and extent of changes, and should be coordinated with the RIT and OWPR.

Which briefings are typically required for a Chief's Report or a Validation Report?

Attachment B of the Review Manager SOP outlines the required briefings and identifies who leads or supports each one. The next SOP update will reflect changes stemming from the May 2025 [Feasibility Study Vertical Team Alignment and Command Validation memorandum](#).