



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
441 G STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20314-1000**

CECW-ZA (1105-2-10a)

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Water Resources Certified Planner Requirements for Feasibility Studies

1. Reference.

a. Memorandum for See Distribution, Subject: Civil Works Transformation Planning Modernization: USACE National Water Resources Certified Planner, 7 April 2016

b. National Water Resources Certified Planner Program, Planning Community of Practice, January 2022

c. Memorandum for See Distribution, Subject: Interim Guidance for Civil Works Mega Studies, 15 October 2021

2. Purpose. The purpose of this memorandum is to improve the quality and consistency of plan formulation (including economic analysis and environmental compliance) conducted for USACE studies by establishing requirements for assigning Water Resources Certified Planners (WRCPs) as Planning Technical Leads (PTLs) and/or Planning Mentors to ongoing and future feasibility studies, including General Reevaluation Reports (GRRs).

3. Background.

a. In 2016, USACE established the National WRCP program (Reference a). The WRCP program established an internal means of certification for USACE planners, requiring a high level of training, experience, knowledge, and leadership skills (Reference b). While external certification programs are mainly focused on general education and training, the WRCP program is heavily based on direct experience and leadership on USACE-specific planning studies. Information regarding the WRCP program is available on the Planning Community Toolbox. Also, the Civil Works Planning and Policy Division page for the WRCP program is located at the following link: <https://usace.dps.mil/sites/KMP-PLAN/SitePages/Water-Resources-Certified-Planner-Program.aspx>.

b. Currently, only Mega Studies require a PTL to be a WRCP (Reference c). There are no WRCP requirements for other feasibility studies, including GRRs. The WRCP database has mainly been utilized by districts and divisions to assign planners to a study based on background experience and has proved advantageous in that regard;

however, the WRCP program has not been fully utilized to ensure that USACE is assigning its most experienced and knowledgeable planners to lead the development of feasibility studies.

#### 4. Discussion.

a. Numerous legislative and policy requirements have substantially increased the scope and complexity of work to be performed for feasibility studies. Civil Works planners must be proficient in formulating and evaluating nature-based solutions, evaluating the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, and applying the principles of Environmental Justice to avoid disproportionate effects on underserved communities. In addition, USACE planners must be prepared to implement the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines (PR&G). Implementation of the PR&G will require planners to fully grasp the principles of SMART planning and the overall planning process.

b. A certification requirement for PTLs on feasibility studies will ensure that USACE is assigning its most knowledgeable and experienced planners to leadership positions. The WRCP program has been established for over eight years, allowing adequate time for the workforce to obtain the necessary requirements for certification.

#### 5. Requirements.

a. All Feasibility studies, including GRRs, initiated beginning Fiscal Year 2023, must have a PTL assigned that is certified in the WRCP program. MSC Planning Chiefs will confirm the assignment of a WRCP.

b. In order to provide opportunities for non-certified planners to gain critical leadership skills, knowledge, and experience, they may be assigned as a PTL on feasibility studies with a formal mentor that must be a WRCP. Districts will be responsible for the level of mentor involvement, which will depend on factors such as study complexity, prior planning knowledge, and experience of the non-certified planner.

c. This guidance supplements the Interim Guidance for Civil Works Mega Studies (Reference c.) requirement that allows for the Senior Study Executive to assign a non-certified planner as a PTL to a Mega Study with concurrence from the HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy Division. Divisions are strongly encouraged to assign a WRCP as PTL or as a mentor to the study team.

d. Division Planning Chiefs will review the number of certified PTLs in their area of responsibility and develop an Action Plan to certify those that currently have the necessary level of training, experience, knowledge, and leadership skills but remain

uncertified. Each Action Plan will be endorsed by the Division Planning Chief and submitted to the HQUSACE Deputy Chief, Planning Community of Practice, through the appropriate Regional Integration Team.

e. Exceptions to the requirement for assignment of a WRCP to a feasibility study, including GRRs, either as a PTL or as a mentor, must be requested by the District Commander, endorsed by the Division Commander, and submitted to the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations, for approval.

f. The WRCP leadership requirement will not apply to the Continuing Authorities Program or Planning Assistance to States.

6. Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to Susan Werning, Deputy Chief, Planning Community of Practice, at 202-510-1701 or Ray Wimbrough, Senior Policy Advisor, HQUSACE Planning and Policy Division, at 202-699-2961.



WILLIAM H. GRAHAM, JR.  
Major General, USA  
Deputy Commanding General  
for Civil and Emergency Operations

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