



**US Army Corps  
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# **DIRECTOR'S POLICY MEMORANDUM**

## **CIVIL WORKS PROGRAMS**

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**SUBJECT:** Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness in USACE Civil Works Project Delivery (Planning Phase and Planning Activities)

**CATEGORY:** Directive and Policy

1. **Purpose.** This Memorandum covers the actions that must be taken within the planning phase of the USACE Civil Works project delivery process in order to embrace and operationalize risk informed decision making to make initial project delivery processes, as well as the full project lifecycle processes, more efficient and effective.

2. **Applicability.** This Memorandum is applicable to all Headquarters USACE (HQUSACE) elements, Divisions, Districts, laboratories, and field operating activities related to USACE Civil Works projects. The actions and policies in this memorandum will also be applied in the execution of studies funded by the 2018 Disaster Relief supplemental appropriations (P.L. 115-123).

3. **Direction.** Effective immediately, as part of USACE Enterprise Risk Management, we will incorporate risk informed decision making in project development. This policy acknowledges risk management is paramount to all USACE activities and requires transparency and collaboration with our sponsors and internal and external stakeholders. My intent is to provide quality products while accepting appropriate levels of risk in order to improve project delivery timeliness and cost effectiveness. Enterprise Risk Management explicitly assesses and manages risk, improving timeliness of our project development and delivery process by focusing on the most critical analyses, acknowledging uncertainty of decisions, and providing consistent visibility of common risk elements for decisions during the entire lifecycle of any project.

4. **Implementation.** Risk informed decision making in the planning phase is a shared responsibility. It is mandatory that all USACE elements involved in the Civil Works planning process and planning activities be responsive to this direction and put guidelines in place to support Civil Works project delivery. Not later than 90 days from the date of this memo, and through collaboration of its Planning, Engineering and Construction, Operations, Programs, Project Management, Real Estate, and Counsel organizations, HQUSACE will develop an implementation plan for operationalizing risk informed decision making during project development and lifecycle management to include developing interim guidance and updating permanent guidance, workforce training, etc.

5. **Risk Informed Planning.** The approaches and techniques described in the Planning Manual Part II: Risk Informed Planning (IWR 2017R03) provide project delivery teams (PDTs) with tools to efficiently reduce uncertainty by gathering only the evidence needed to make the next

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planning decision, and to manage the risks that result from doing so without more complete information. This is the way we must be planning, and serves as the basis for our transformed approach to project delivery.

**6. Decision Making Under Uncertainty.** Effective immediately, all decision meetings during project development and lifecycle management will be framed around risk informed decision making principles and discussion, with representatives from appropriate technical disciplines present. There must be a transparent discussion between PDTs and decision makers in order to successfully communicate and manage risks, and make decisions that accept risks when appropriate.

**7. Delegate Feasibility Milestone Decision Making.** For all feasibility studies, decision making authority for the milestones is delegated from HQUSACE to Major Subordinate Commands (MSC) as outlined in Table 1. In all cases, submittals will go from the District to the milestone decision making authority without an intervening review. HQUSACE may delegate its milestone meeting decision making authority to the MSC. The MSC cannot delegate its milestone meeting decision making authority. If the study meets any of the three criteria listed below, the milestone decision making authority will reside at HQUSACE:

- a. The draft feasibility report has already been released by the date of this memo, or
- b. A policy waiver from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) is needed to complete the study, including ASA(CW) approval to exceed 3 years or \$3 million federal, or
- c. The vertical team makes a mutual decision based on the study complexity and risks.

Table 1: Milestone Decision Making Delegation Criteria

<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Feasibility Decision Milestone</b>	<b>Decision Making Delegated to MSC</b>	<b>Decision Making Resides at HQ (ref. paragraph 7)</b>
Vertical Team Engagement	Alternatives Milestone	MSC Planning & Policy Chief	MSC Planning & Policy Chief
	Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone	MSC Planning & Policy Chief	HQ Planning & Policy Chief
	Agency Decision Milestone	MSC Programs Directorate Chief (SES)	HQ Director of Civil Works

**8. Feasibility Study Agency Decision Milestone (ADM) meeting.** The ADM meeting is a critical decision point in the project delivery process. The ADM serves as a risk acceptance decision point where the agency accepts the risks and uncertainties as outlined by the PDT and supports the risk management plan moving forward. The outcome of the ADM is an agency decision on the Tentatively Selected Plan for feasibility design in the final feasibility report, and the scope and scale of design/analysis for the final feasibility report/decision document.



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9. **Delegation of Policy Review.** Policy and legal compliance reviews for draft and final planning decision documents are delegated to the MSC. Regardless of the decision making authority as required by paragraph 7 or the report approval authority, policy and legal compliance reviews for draft and final planning decision documents will be conducted using a review team approach to enhance knowledge management by taking full advantage of the breadth of experience available to the review teams. The policy review team, identified through the collaboration of the MSC Chief of Planning and Policy and the HQUSACE Chief of the Office of Water Project Review and documented in the Review Plan, will draw from HQUSACE, the MSC, the Planning Centers of Expertise, and other review resources as needed.

10. **Review Roles and Responsibilities.** For most planning documents, the appropriate Planning Center of Expertise or the MSC will serve as the Review Management Organization. The Review Plan encompasses all appropriate levels of review, including District Quality Control (DQC), technical review (Agency Technical Review and Independent External Peer Review), and policy and legal review. For each type of review, the review team and scope must be documented in the Review Plan and will reflect the needs of the study and the risks identified. Well-documented and robust DQC will ensure that MSC quality assurance processes do not result in redundant document reviews.

11. **Final Report Approval.** Final submittals will go from the District to the report approval authority without an intervening review. If the study meets any of the three criteria listed in Paragraph 7, the final report will be approved at HQUSACE by the Director of Civil Works. If the study does not meet any of the three criteria listed in Paragraph 7, the final report will be approved at the MSC by the Division Commander. This approval authority cannot be delegated.

12. **Vertical Team Engagement.** During Civil Works project development and lifecycle management, vertical team engagement remains a vital necessity in ensuring all USACE responsibilities are met. The vertical team will stay engaged with the decision making process, but will not add redundant review or intermediate decision making. The vertical team members, with representatives from the District, MSC, and HQUSACE, will be explicitly identified in the Review Plan.

13. **Resource Management.** All studies will focus resource allocation of personnel and funds more efficiently in order to improve timeliness of project delivery. Study scoping is not a separate action but is integral to the study process; a cross-discipline approach in study scoping is essential. Risk management tools, including the risk register and decision management plan, are required tools to build the Project Management Plan (PMP). Each iteration of the risk register and decision management plan are reflected in updates to the PMP, progressively developing the scopes of work that take the PDT from decision milestone to the next milestone with the appropriate level of detail necessary. This will ensure that the level of detail and analysis is not excessive and remains focused on the immediate decision and its risks, while also scoping the appropriate level of detail necessary for project delivery.

a. Active studies will proceed per the approved PMP, while seeking opportunities to improve timeliness and efficiency of project delivery. Per USACE project management business processes, the PMP must be kept up to date and revised when necessary.

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b. All feasibility studies that begin after the date of this Memorandum will be executed based on a standard range funding stream. The scope, funding allocation, and resourcing requirements will expand and evolve after each iteration of the planning process. Each iteration reduces the uncertainty and allows the PDT to refocus scoping for future risk informed decision making.

c. In resourcing new studies, the lead planner should be a USACE Water Resources Certified Planner, or equivalent in experience, and experienced in the type of study being conducted. The District is encouraged to utilize PDT resources outside of the District and MSC, including subject matter experts from the Planning Centers of Expertise, to ensure sound judgment and decisions are made throughout the risk informed decision making process. The Planning Centers of Expertise are the primary resource for technical and policy advice and can also assist with identifying production resources.

d. For all studies that begin after the date of this Memorandum, the District will identify resources for a focused team within the PDT, appropriate to the business line, to complete the first iteration of the risk informed planning process and develop the initial PMP that establishes the study's roles, scope, and funding. The focused team disciplines will be determined in an initial meeting led by the Project Manager. These team members must have previous planning study experience in the same type of project and can represent several subordinate disciplines. Targeted engagement of other disciplines within the PDT including Counsel, Real Estate, Cultural Resources, and specific engineering disciplines must occur early in the planning process; however all efforts must be made to achieve efficient and effective use of resources. The focused team will continue to develop the level of detail in the evolving PMP as it progresses through each iteration of the risk informed planning process and decision milestones, including funding, personnel, and time allocations. Risk informed decision making analysis, captured in the risk register and decision management plan, must focus the PDT to determine the importance of reducing risks and uncertainty in association with the decision at hand, and identify the necessary actions and personnel (study team).

**14. Feasibility Study 3x3 Policy Exemptions.** Time and funding exemptions and extensions must be considered as part of the feasibility milestone meetings where scope, schedule, and funding to get to the next decision milestone are discussed. Exemptions should be few, and only required for the most complex studies. Prior to requesting an exemption, a PDT must seek vertical team alignment and have developed a scope that reflects the risks, uncertainties, and details for how the study will be completed if the exemption is not approved. When an exemption has been approved, the milestone decision making and report approval authority reverts to HQUSACE.

**15. Proponent.** The proponent for this memorandum is Ms. Noel Clay, Acting HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy, at 202-761-0115.



James C. Dalton, P.E.  
Director of Civil Works