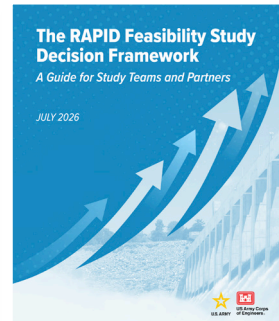


RAPID Feasibility Study Decision Framework

QUICK GUIDE FOR STUDY TEAMS & PARTNERS

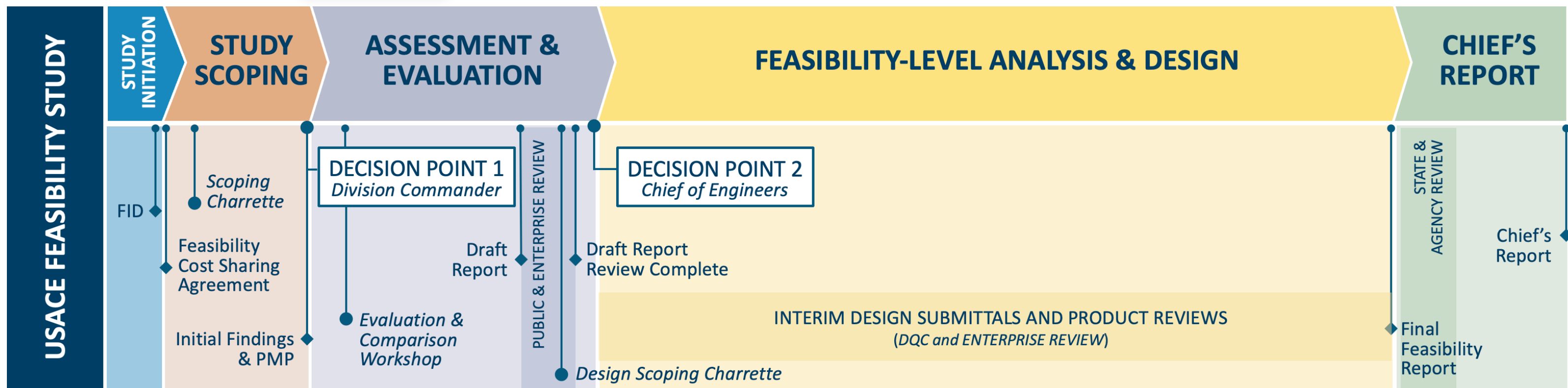
ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This quick start guide pairs with the “*The RAPID Feasibility Decision Framework: A Guide for Study Teams and Partners, July 2026*” handbook, which can be referenced for additional details.



INTENT OF THE RAPID FRAMEWORK TO DELIVER STUDIES

The **RAPID feasibility study decision framework** is the direct response to the call for the Army Corps of Engineers to deliver high-quality and implementable solutions to the nation’s pressing water resources challenges to Congress in a timely manner.



STUDY INITIATION

- » The USACE project delivery team has \$100K of federal funding and 45 days to aggressively leverage existing data to answer the question: “Is there sufficient federal interest to justify a full feasibility study?”
- » The **Federal Interest Determination (FID)**, signed by District Commander, requires ASA(CW) concurrence before the study moves forward.
- » The signed **Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement** with the non-federal sponsor and receipt of study funds starts the feasibility study’s scoping phase.

STUDY SCOPING

- » A **scoping charrette** focuses collaborative discussions on the key drivers of problems for a shared understanding of objectives and potential path forward.
- » The plan formulation process identifies a focused array of alternatives that can address the water resources problem.
- » At **Decision Point 1**, the Division Commander endorses the focused array of alternatives and the path forward for the study team to evaluate and compare those alternatives.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

- » An **evaluation and comparison** workshop is held for collaborative discussions on screening and decision criteria.
- » With the non-federal sponsor, the study team evaluates and compares the alternatives based on agreed-upon screening and decision criteria, identifying the tentatively selected plan (TSP).
- » The study team produces the draft feasibility report and releases it for public and agency review.
- » A **design scoping charrette** is held to identify the actionable elements of the TSP to recommend for authorization.
- » This phase concludes with **Decision Point 2**, when the Chief of Engineers endorses the TSP as the recommended plan and supports the identified actionable element(s).

ANALYSIS & DESIGN

- » The study team develops sequence of actionable elements of the recommended plan.
- » The study team develops the first actionable element to 35% level of design in all technical areas and develops a Class 3 Cost Estimate for project construction.
- » The study team produces final report. Chief’s Report is drafted.
- » The final feasibility report is signed by the District Commander and sent to Headquarters.

CHIEF'S REPORT

- » The Chief’s Report undergoes State and Agency Review.
- » The Chief’s Report is signed by the Chief of Engineers and transmitted to Congress.
- » The Chief’s Report is submitted to ASA(CW) for Administration review.

KEY NOTES

Timelines for each phases are flexible within the overall study timeline.

Bold black denotes a key decision or meeting.

Bold blue denotes a collaborative and progress-focused meeting.

ASA(CW) = Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

DQC = District Quality Control

FID = Federal Interest Determination

HQ = USACE headquarters

PMP = Project Management Plan

TSP = Tentatively Selected Plan

USACE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

WHAT IS RAPID?

R

RISK-INFORMED *Making decisions with minimum required data, not waiting for perfect information.* Identify the specific uncertainties that pose the greatest threat to project success. Weigh the risk of study investment against the potential return, the cost of project delay against the benefits of early action, and the risk of a flawed decision against the cost of perfect information. Focus on the data needed to manage the most critical risks.

A

ALIGNED *Ensuring teams are integrated and communicating from day one.* Ensure vertical and horizontal integration across the project delivery team, District leadership, and the “vertical team” from day one. Active and continuous engagement ensures technical and policy issues are addressed quickly, reducing the likelihood of later changes. Aligned is about involvement, communication, and shared understanding—not about demanding 100% consensus on every technical detail.

P

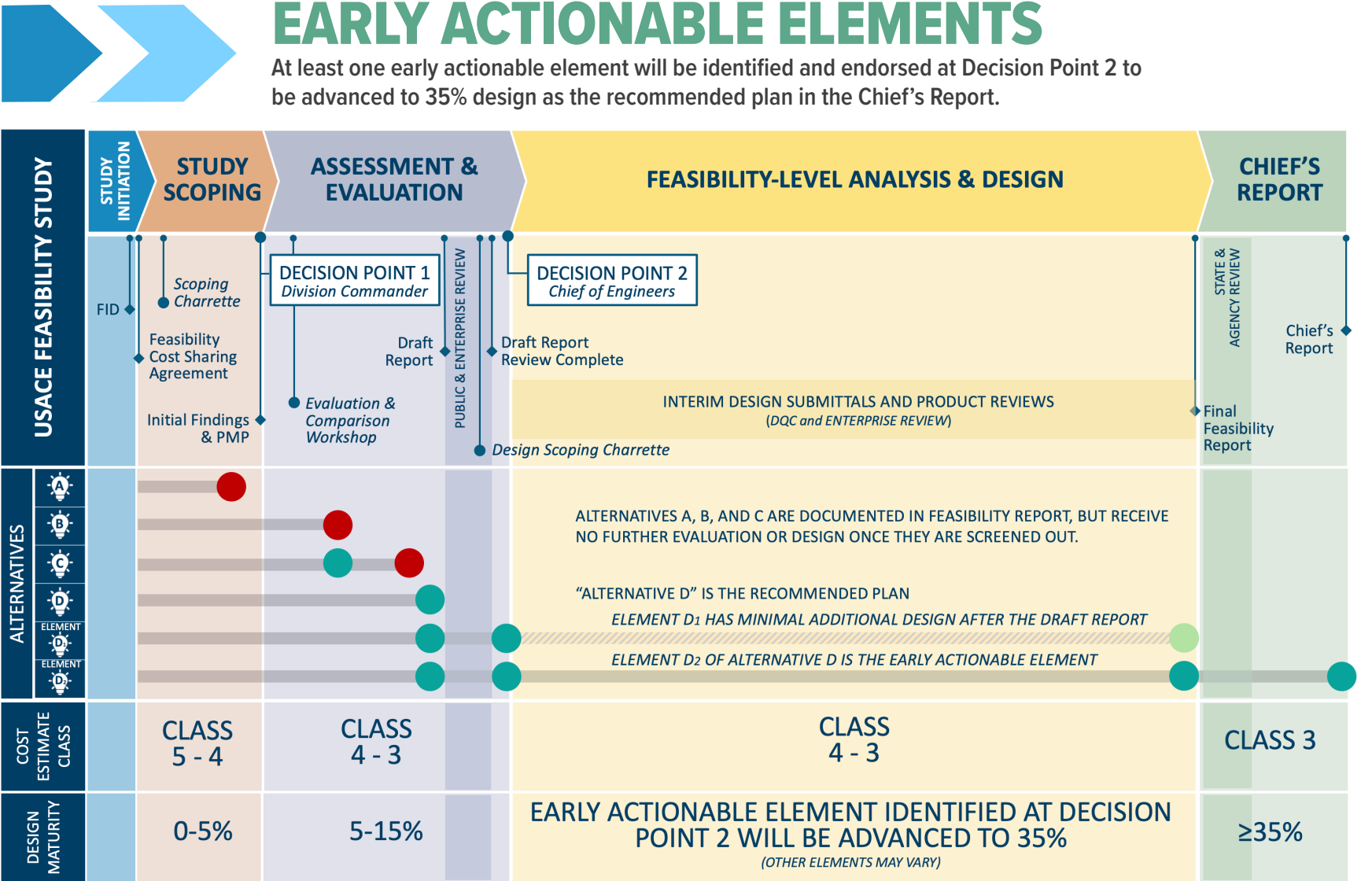
PROPORTIONAL *The level of detail in the analysis will match the cost and scope of the project.* Be prudent in how much is analyzed. The RAPID approach emphasizes focusing on the most viable alternatives and developing only the information needed to select a sound plan, while reserving detailed refinement for feasibility-level design of the recommended plan.

I

ITERATIVE *Treating planning as a flexible cycle that adapts to new information.* Embrace feedback loops. Planning is not linear; it is a cycle of analyzing, learning, and refining. Expect to revisit and adjust assumptions as you gain new information. Use each cycle to systematically screen out non-viable options and converge on a sound, defensible plan.

D

DECISIVE *Committing to a path forward once sufficient data is available.* Commit to a path forward once a decision is reached. All are called on to avoid the familiar traps of requests for greater detail or more information if the request is not critical to a decision. Acknowledge that while more data could be gathered, the current evidence supports a defensible decision. A streamlined path to the decision maker is essential to ensure decisions are made promptly and the study remains on track.





FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

HANDBOOK

The RAPID Feasibility Decision Framework, A Guide for Study Teams and Partners, July 2026

WEBSITE

www.planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox

POINT OF CONTACT

HQPlanning@usace.army.mil

DESIGN MATURITY AND COST CONFIDENCE

IN 2025 the USACE Chief of Engineers committed to presenting recommended projects to Congress for authorization with a minimum 35% level of design, in addition to meeting USACE’s existing Class 3 Cost Estimate certification requirements, to gain more confidence in project costs prior to construction authorization. All existing and new start feasibility studies will need to ensure all required analyses, surveys, and data collection is complete to the appropriate level to establish the basis of design during the feasibility study. Feasibility study costs will need to be budgeted and allocated to accomplish these tasks, and study time frames will need to accommodate the time required to achieve this level of design. Focusing on design maturity throughout the study ensures the recommended plan provides value to our partners and the nation and cost fidelity in the plan recommended to Congress.

FEASIBILITY STUDY >

PRECONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING AND DESIGN >

35%
PRELIMINARY DESIGN



Preliminary Design Analysis
Field Investigations Complete

65%
INTERMEDIATE DESIGN



Design Analysis Complete
Ready to Finalize Engineering Details

95%
FINAL DESIGN



Complete Design, Plans, and Specs
Ready for Final Reviews