

# Feasibility Study Milestones At a Glance



## Alternatives Milestone

**Primary Decision.** The PDT has a clear and logical formulation and evaluation rationale that indicates the PDT is making risk-informed decisions and has a clear direction on steps to the next decision point milestone and a sound strategy to complete the study.

**Readiness for the Alternatives Milestone.** The District Planning Chief, in consultation with the MSC Planning and Policy Chief, determines the readiness for conducting the Alternatives Milestone meeting. The PDT has completed initial scoping, formulated alternatives, and completed an initial screening and preliminary evaluation to develop a focused array of distinctly different alternative strategies for achieving the water resources objectives in the study area. The PDT has also engaged the vertical team and completed District Quality Control (DQC) review of milestone read aheads. In a 3-year study, the Alternatives Milestone meeting would be expected within the first 3-6 months of the study.

**Decision-Maker & Lead Presenter.** The decision-maker for the Alternatives Milestone meeting is the Chief of Office of Water Project Review (OWPR). The lead presenter is the District Planning Chief.

**Read Aheads.** Read Aheads are to be provided no later than one week prior to the milestone date. Read ahead material is informational for the decision-maker. Read ahead material is not reviewed for comment and response. Expected Read Ahead materials include:

1. A Report Summary, incorporating an explicit discussion of risk drivers and consequences.
2. The Project Study Issue Checklist.
3. A final draft of District presentation slides.

**Meeting Documentation.** The decisions reached and any required follow-up actions must be documented at the Alternatives Milestone meeting and acknowledged by the decision-maker and the MSC and District Planning Chiefs before adjourning the meeting. Significant decisions made will be documented by the PDT in a Memorandum for the Record (MFR) and Decision Log.

**Participation.** Teleconference and web meeting are the preferred methods for conducting the Alternatives Milestone meeting. Invited Milestone meeting participants include representatives of the PDT and Vertical Team: District, MSC, HQ, and PCXes. The non-Federal sponsor representatives, as study partners, should participate in the meeting. Other Federal Agencies and Tribal Nations may be invited to the meeting based on the decision and the needs of the study.

### Alternatives Milestone Meeting Best Practices

- Always have a map of the project area.
- Be ready to talk about your scope to continue the study, anticipated schedule and budget to complete – and the uncertainty that remains. *Do you already know you will need a 3x3x3 exemption?*
- Tell the Planning story, including the basics: your problems, opportunities, objectives, constraints.
- What is the status of environmental compliance and coordination with other agencies?
- Do you expect to meet an IEPR trigger? Are you planning for an IEPR exemption?
- Will you be using an approved model or seek approval? Eco studies should have a discussion of potential models or selected models for ecosystem outputs.
- Decide who will capture the decisions at the meeting – the District, MSC, or RIT – so you can capture and get agreement before you leave the milestone meeting.

# Feasibility Study Milestones At a Glance



## Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) Milestone

**Primary Decision.** The District is prepared to release the draft report and draft NEPA documentation for concurrent public, technical, legal and policy review and IEPR (if applicable).

**Readiness for the TSP Milestone.** The District Planning Chief, in consultation with the MSC Planning and Policy Chief, determines the readiness for conducting the TSP Milestone meeting. The PDT has completed the evaluation and comparison of a focused array of distinctly different strategies for achieving the water resources objectives in the study area; identified a TSP and possibly a LPP to carry forward; prepared a proposed way forward to develop sufficient cost and design information for the final feasibility-level analysis and feasibility report. It is expected that a draft feasibility study report and draft NEPA documentation will be largely complete by the milestone meeting and concurrent review will be initiated within 30 days following the TSP Milestone. In a 3-year study, the TSP Milestone would be expected within the first 12-18 months of the study.

**Decision-Maker & Lead Presenter.** The decision-maker for the TSP Milestone meeting is the HQUSACE Chief of the Planning and Policy Division. The lead presenter is the District Planning Chief.

**Read Aheads.** Read Aheads are to be provided no later than two weeks prior to the milestone date. Read ahead material is informational for the decision-maker. Read ahead materials are not reviewed for comment and response. Expected read ahead materials include:

1. A Report Summary, incorporating an explicit discussion of risk drivers and consequences.
2. The Project Study Issue Checklist.
3. The final draft District presentation slides.

**Meeting Documentation.** The decisions reached and any required follow-up actions must be documented at the TSP Milestone meeting and acknowledged by the decision-maker and the MSC and District Planning Chiefs before adjourning the meeting. Significant decisions will be documented by the PDT in a MFR and Decision Log, clearly listing specific actions/ conditions required before the draft feasibility study report is released for concurrent review.

**Participation.** Teleconference and web meeting are the preferred methods for conducting the TSP Milestone meeting. Invited Milestone meeting participants include representatives of the PDT and Vertical Team: District, MSC, HQ, and PCXes. The non-Federal sponsor representatives, as study partners, should participate in the meeting. Other Federal Agencies and Tribal Nations may be invited to the meeting based on the decision and the needs of the study.

### TSP Milestone Meeting Best Practices

- Don't forget your map. Include the study area and key alternatives (TSP, potential LPP, etc.).
- Be ready to talk about your scope, schedule, budget to complete – and the uncertainty in that. *Do you know you will need a 3x3x3 exemption?*
- Tie the plan and its features back to the actual water resources problem.
- Include some numbers: Outputs and parametric costs should be identified for the final array, and the features of the TSP should be identified.
- What activities have been completed or are expected for environmental compliance and coordination with other agencies?
- What high/moderate risks to the study or the project are you tracking? Have there been significant changes since the Alternatives Milestone?

# Feasibility Study Milestones At a Glance



## Agency Decision Milestone

**Primary Decision.** Corporate endorsement of the recommended plan and proposed way forward to complete feasibility-level design and the feasibility study report package.

**Readiness for the Agency Decision Milestone.** The District Planning Chief, in consultation with the MSC Planning and Policy Chief, confirms the readiness for the Agency Decision Milestone meeting. The Agency Decision Milestone occurs after completion of the concurrent public, technical, legal, and policy review of the integrated draft report and NEPA document. In a 3-year study, the Agency Decision Milestone would be expected within the first 18-24 months of the study.

**Decision-Maker & Lead Presenter.** The decision-maker for the Agency Decision Milestone meeting is the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy, who will chair a HQUSACE Senior Executives Panel. The lead presenter is the District Commander. Senior Executives Panel: HQUSACE Chief of Engineering and Construction Division; HQUSACE Chief of Real Estate Division; HQUSACE Chief of Operations and Regulatory Division; and HQUSACE Director of Contingency Operations.

**Read Aheads.** Read Aheads are to be provided no later than two weeks prior to the milestone date. Read ahead material is informational for the decision-maker. Read ahead materials are not reviewed for comment and response. Expected read ahead materials include:

1. A Report Summary, incorporating an explicit discussion of risk drivers and consequences.
2. The Project Study Issue Checklist.
3. The final District presentation slides.

**Meeting Documentation.** The decisions reached and any required follow-up actions must be documented at the Milestone meeting and acknowledged by the decision-maker and the MSC and District Planning Chiefs before adjourning the meeting. Significant decisions made will be documented by the PDT in a MFR and Decision Log, including specific actions to address significant comments and specific elements of analysis to develop sufficient cost and design detail for the final feasibility study report.

**Participation.** Teleconference and web meeting are the preferred methods for conducting the Agency Decision Milestone meeting. Invited Milestone meeting participants include representatives of the PDT and Vertical Team: District, MSC, HQ, and PCXes. The non-Federal sponsor representatives, as study partners, should participate in the meeting. Other Federal Agencies and Tribal Nations may be invited to the meeting based on the decision and the needs of the study.

### Agency Decision Milestone Meeting Best Practices

- Don't forget your map. Include the study area and recommended plan (and potential LPP, etc.).
- Be ready to talk about your scope, schedule, budget to complete – and the uncertainty in that. *Do you know you will need a 3x3x3 exemption?*
- Tie the plan and its features back to the water resources problem. What do you know, so far, about costs, outputs, and BCR if applicable?
- Discuss all reviews: public, policy, technical. What sorts of comments were received and how will they be resolved? How will you resolve significant comments before finishing the study?
- What activities have been completed or are expected for environmental compliance and coordination with other agencies?
- What high/moderate risks to the study or the project are you tracking? Have there been significant changes since the TSP Milestone?

# Feasibility Study Milestones At a Glance



## Civil Works Review Board (CWRB) Milestone

**Primary Decision.** At the CWRB Milestone meeting, the DCG-CEO approves the release of the proposed Report of the Chief of Engineers, the accompanying final decision and NEPA documents for State and Agency review and final NEPA reviews. The DCG-CEO also accepts that the identified study and project risk at the Agency Decision Milestone meeting has been satisfactorily addressed, and acknowledges the project risk and uncertainty being carried forward into Pre-construction Engineering & Design (PED). In those situations where the CWRB provides a contingent approval and identifies additional work or clarifications that are needed prior to releasing the report for the S&A review, the District will address the concerns and make any necessary changes to the report and submittal materials. The S&A review will not be initiated until the Chief, OWPR concurs that the Board's requirements have been met. Subject to the significance of the panel's concerns, the Chair has the prerogative to require a subsequent CWRB briefing, virtual or in-person, prior to the proposed Report of the Chief of Engineers being released.

**Readiness for the Civil Works Review Board Milestone.** Once a complete MSC Final Report Submittal Package is logged for HQUSACE review, a tentative CWRB date will be identified within 60 days of the log-in date. The HQUSACE team will complete its assessment and resolution of any identified issues within 42 days of the log-in date, unless exempted by the Director of Civil Works (DCW) due to excessive work load. If issues are not resolved by the completion of the assessment, the report will be returned to the MSC for additional work and revision. The CWRB date and time will only be confirmed after the HQUSACE policy assessment is complete and the CWRB Panel have been pre-briefed and concur with finalizing the schedule for the CWRB. In a 3-year study, the CWRB meeting would be expected within the last 3-4 months of the study.

**Decision-Maker & Lead Presenter.** The decision-maker is the DCG-CEO, who will chair the CWRB. The lead presenter is the District Commander. The CWRB consists of five (5) members from HQUSACE and the MSCs.

**Read Aheads.** Using the final report package (ER 1105-2-100, Exhibit H-7), the RIT will prepare and provide a read ahead package for the CWRB members two weeks prior to the CWRB meeting.

**Meeting Documentation.** The RIT, in cooperation with the District PDT, will be responsible for documenting the discussion during the CWRB meeting. A draft MFR of the meeting is expected to be distributed to the HQUSACE policy review team and the MSC for comment no later than one (1) week following the CWRB action and finalized by the RIT and provided to meeting attendees no later than two (2) weeks following the CWRB meeting.

**Participation.** Milestone meeting participants include: the Civil Works Review Board Panel; the District Commander (lead presenter) with support from the District Planning Chief, the project manager, and/or the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management; the MSC Commander (quality assurance brief) with support from the MSC Planning and Policy Chief and/or the MSC Director of Programs; the HQUSACE Review Manager (policy and independent reviews); the Chief, OWPR; and a representative from the HQUSACE Chief Counsel's office. All panel members and presenters are expected to participate in person unless approved by the DCG-CEO. Office of the ASA(CW) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) representatives will be invited to attend in person. Attendance by non-federal sponsor and/or Tribal Nation representatives and other federal agencies may be in-person or virtual at their discretion. Other supporting staff and interested observers, with virtual attendance expected, include the District Lead Planner and other members of the PDT; members of the MSC quality assurance team; the ATR Team Lead and members of the ATR team; PCX representative(s); relevant USACE Communities of Practice; and the IEPR manager (if applicable).