



SMART Planning & Feasibility Study Implementation

The following talking points are provided to help U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel at all levels respond to questions about Planning Modernization and feasibility study execution via SMART Planning. This information can also be helpful when preparing for speaking engagements, community and school presentations and other USACE activities in your communities.

For more information, please see the Planning Community Toolbox SMART Guide: <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/smart.cfm>. POC is Sue Hughes.

- “SMART” planning – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Risk-Informed, and Timely – supports the Corps of Engineers Planning Modernization goal of completing high quality feasibility studies with shorter timeframes and lower costs.
- The 8 February 2012 [Memorandum](#) signed by the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations (DCG-CEO) directs all feasibility studies that have not reached the “Feasibility Scoping Meeting” (FSM) milestone to follow a 3x3x3 rule: be completed in a target goal of 18 months but no more than three years; cost no greater than \$3M; and require three levels of vertical coordination. Feasibility studies will be a reasonable report length, with a target length of 100 pages or less for the main report. SMART Planning processes and tools are the means by which the Corps will achieve these goals.
- SMART Planning maximizes use of existing and relevant information first, requires teams to apply decision-focused critical thinking and use the appropriate level of detail to support decisions.
- The Corps’ Planning process and outputs are decision-focused, rather than task-focused. This emphasis on decision-making is from the beginning of the study, and relies on early engagement and accountability of each level of the vertical team (District, Division and Headquarters).
- Successful planning requires documenting decisions from the beginning to form the framework of the report, adding to it over time, moving through iterations of the planning process.
- Feasibility Studies and other USACE planning efforts acknowledge and manage risk and uncertainty associated with decision-making throughout the study process. USACE will focus data collection and analysis on what is needed to make a planning decision and recommendation.
- Early engagement on critical decisions from all levels of USACE, including the District, Division, and Headquarters, will result in more timely and cost efficient delivery of decision documents to address the water resources needs of the Nation. Vertical team engagement early and throughout the study allows a study team to make a planning decision and move on to the next decision.



- The Non-Federal Sponsors is a key member of a feasibility study's Project Delivery Team, and their engagement in the study remains critical. In addition to their role as a member of the team, the sponsor may have real estate, topographic, environmental, geological, hydrological and hydraulic, and other data and information useful for screening or evaluating measures or plans.
- The major National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) milestones complement the development of feasibility studies in the SMART Planning approach. SMART Planning offers opportunities to encourage efficient, thorough, environmental reviews that will result in quicker and better- informed decisions. This approach falls in line with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) steps to modernize and reinvigorate NEPA.
- Targeted total costs of \$3 million, including Non-Federal Sponsors' cost share, for most feasibility studies improves the ability of USACE and Non-Federal Sponsors to estimate future budgetary needs.
- As part of a deliberate portfolio management approach, reexamining the scope and path to completion for active feasibility studies has reduced future estimated feasibility study costs for the Federal government and Non-Federal Sponsors by over \$70M.