



PLANNING MODERNIZATION

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG.®

Planning Modernization

Planning Modernization is a central component of the Corps' Civil Works Transformation efforts, building a sustainable Civil Works Planning Program that delivers sustainable solutions to America's water resources challenges. This will be achieved by:

- **Actively Managing the Planning Portfolio:** Focusing available funding on the most credible and viable project recommendations for congressional authorization and engaging across the lifecycle of Civil Works projects to ensure projects continue to meet their authorized objectives.
- **Transforming Planning Processes:** Bringing increased efficiency and efficacy to the processes the Corps uses to make decisions and produce planning decision documents.
- **Executing Planning Projects:** Meeting our commitment to the nation and our non-federal sponsors by delivering technically sound and policy compliant recommendations for federal and local investment in water resources solutions.
- **Investing in our People:** Improving planner knowledge and experience through training and other opportunities, and supporting a sustainable national and regional planning organization.

Actively Managing the Planning Portfolio

In 2012, the Planning Community began a review of more than 600 feasibility studies in its portfolio to focus available funding on the most credible and viable projects for Congressional authorization. As a result, 34 studies were completed and included for authorization in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA). Since WRRDA was signed into law, the Chief of Engineers has signed an additional 22 Chief's Reports, recommending specific water resources projects for Congressional authorization. The Corps is actively managing 128 feasibility studies to completion, as part of a broader planning portfolio that includes changes to authorized water resources projects (re-evaluation studies) and studies conducted under the Corps' Continuing Authorities Programs. New start navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration feasibility studies initiated each year ensure the Corps continues to meet the nation's future water resources management needs.



The Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Study is one of nine feasibility studies begun in 2014.

Transforming Planning Processes

The Corps' feasibility study process has been transformed with a focus on decision-making earlier in the study process and using a progressive and iterative planning process to address key areas of uncertainty. The active studies in the planning portfolio are being executed based on "SMART Planning" milestones – key decision points to ensure accountability and successful study execution.


In addition, since 2012, Districts have been directed to complete all feasibility studies within a target timeline of three years, at a total study cost of no more than \$3 million, and engaging all three levels of the Corps – the District, Division, and Headquarters - in a collaborative vertical teaming approach to resolve project issues when they arise. Exemptions to this approach, known as the "3x3x3 Rule," are considered based on an evaluation of the proposed scope and scale of the study, the effort taken to meet the 3x3x3 Rule, and the tasks/decisions that are the high risk schedule and budget drivers.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

WWW.CORPSPLANNING.US

Updated January 2016

A series of Planning Bulletins provide interim guidance that establish key decision-based milestones for feasibility studies, elaborate on the role of the Vertical Team throughout a study, and establish additional planning and decision-making tools that study teams can use during the development of feasibility study reports. As the processes in the Planning Bulletins are implemented in Districts and Divisions across the nation, lessons-learned are being incorporated into upcoming revisions of Corps guidance, including in Engineering Circulars and the Planning Guidance Notebook (ER 1105-2-100) – the core guidance for Corps planning activities.



PLANNING BULLETIN

**US Army Corps
of Engineers.**

No. PB 2015-02
Issuing Office: CECW-P
Issued: 7 May 2015

Subject: Single Phase Planning Studies

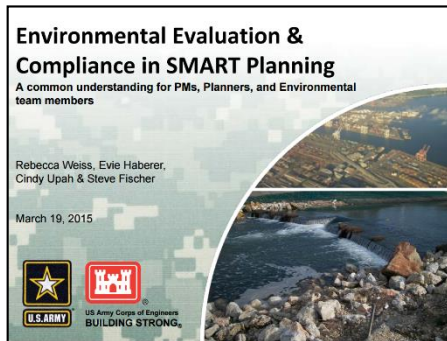
Applicability: Additional Guidance

1. This Planning Bulletin provides additional guidance on the planning studies that must be conducted in a single phase, without a separate Federally funded reconnaissance or initial assessment phase. This Planning Bulletin incorporates guidance from the FY 2017 Civil Works Program Development Policy Guidance (EC 11-2-208).
2. Section 905(b) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (WRDA 1986) provided for a reconnaissance study of a water resources problem at full Federal expense and no cost to the State.

Since the SMART Planning process was implemented, Planning Bulletins provide interim and timely guidance to planners.

Executing Planning Projects

Corps Project Delivery Teams are being held to a high standard of study execution. The constraints of the 3x3x3 Rule require consideration of how to allocate limited time and study resources to reach a technically sound and policy compliant planning recommendation. Study teams must be cohesive and dedicated to a study; study resources must be identified and available; communication – internally and with non-federal sponsors – is more important than ever; and decisions, once made, must be documented and acted on.



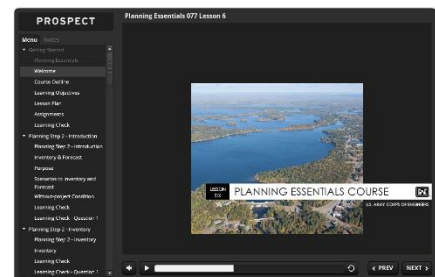
Biweekly webinars share lessons learned and new information across the organization.

Bi-monthly webinars foster communication on the processes and tools that support Planning Modernization and SMART Planning. New tools to identify and communicate planning analyses and decisions help teams identify, evaluate, manage, and communicate uncertainty within the planning process. Sharing lessons learned and advice – internally and externally – strengthens teams and their project execution.

Investing in Our People

The Planning Community of Practice maintains a comprehensive training strategy to equip Corps planners with the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to solve the Nation’s complex water resources problems.

The “Planning Core Curriculum” – required Corps training for all planners – continues to undergo changes to meet the needs of planners today and into the future. The training courses of the Core Curriculum have been completely revised to meet the needs of adult learners, and include alternative methods of delivery to traditional face-to-face classroom training.



Technology such as virtual classrooms enable greater participation and reduce training costs for Corps planners.

The four Planning sub-communities (Plan Formulation, Cultural, Environmental, and Economics) have identified criteria for planners to be certified to conduct internal Agency Technical Review (ATR), based on technical and policy subject matter expertise. Nearly 250 planners are certified in ATR in one or more sub-community.

For More Information

For more information on processes and tools being used to develop and deliver quality products and decisions, please see the Corps’ Planning Toolbox at www.corpsplanning.us.