



Civil Works Transformation – Planning Modernization

"It is absolutely essential that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers transform its study processes if it is to remain at the forefront of federal agencies the Nation turns to when seeking answers for water resources challenges. The current study processes too often leave our stakeholders and the Nation waiting for critical answers."

– Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works project planning process informs Congress as it makes decisions for authorizing and funding water resources investments for the Nation. Challenges with planning capability, funding, and study duration affect USACE's ability to provide timely and reliable information to support congressional decision making. USACE's planning modernization effort is focused on improving the processes and products that support timely and sound decisions regarding our Nation's water resources needs.

USACE recently issued guidance to implement several actions that should help modernize the planning process. The new planning paradigm is focused on risk-based scoping to define the levels of risk associated with water resources alternatives. This will involve defining the appropriate levels of detail for investigations so that recommendations for authorization can be captured, succinctly documented and completed in timely manner. This scoping will rely on the current USACE planning fundamentals – ensuring the right level of quality engineering, environmental and economic analysis – and will incorporate appropriate levels of review, with the aim to be more flexible and scalable.

Planning modernization will emphasize execution, instill accountability, and improve the organizational and operational model regionally and nationally to ensure consistent quality. The effort will improve planner knowledge and experience through additional mandatory training, professional certification, and an update of planning processes and planning guidance. This new management approach to development of projects will result in improved management, performance, execution, and timely delivery of solutions to water resources needs.

Some measures under the modernization efforts include the 3x3x3 rule:

- All feasibility studies will be scoped with a target goal of completion within three years.
- The target cost for a feasibility study will be no greater than \$3 million.
- The study team will use all three levels of the vertical team.
- The target length for the main report of the feasibility study will be 100 pages or less.
- Any schedule or budget exceeding these guidelines will require Headquarters, USACE approval.

Headquarters is developing guidance and enhancing training requirements to support these efforts. A thorough review of the total number of studies in the planning portfolio will also be completed to help focus available resources on the most viable studies.

Key Messages

- USACE must modernize its study management processes to remain a relevant provider of solutions for the Nation's current and future water resources challenges.
- The revised process will ensure studies are completed in less time without jeopardizing the quality of engineering, environmental and economic analyses.
- Generally, feasibility studies will adhere to the 3x3x3 rule: not more than \$3 million, completed in less than three years, and involving the three levels of USACE.
- Authorizing reports should be no more than 100 pages in length.

Facts & Figures

- USACE is currently engaged in approximately 365 pre-authorization planning studies.
- Some pre-authorization studies currently take 7-9 years based on annual funding.
- Since the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, 14 Chief of Engineers Reports have been completed.
- For more information visit <http://www.usace.army.mil>