

**IWR Planning Suite II
Planning CoP Webinar
July 26, 2018
Q&A Session**

Ms. Laura Witherow (Institute for Water Resources) and Ms. Monique Savage (St. Paul District) provided information on the IWR Planning Suite II, the latest certified version of the IWR Planning Suite software used to conduct Cost-Effectiveness and Incremental Cost Analyses and Annualize Ecosystem Outputs for ecosystem restoration, impact analysis, and mitigation planning. They were joined by Ms. Erin Rooks (IWR Planning Suite PDT) for the Question and Answer session. The webinar highlighted the new capabilities of IWR Planning Suite II, including new modules for multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA), uncertainty, and watershed wizard. Additional topics included how the software is used in planning, a brief review of each module within the software, and instructions on downloading the software.



Email help for IWR Planning Suite is available at: DLL-CEIWR_IWR-PLAN@usace.army.mil; more information and resources, including the link to download the software, can be found at: <https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Economics/IWR-Planning-Suite/>. In addition, training materials that highlight IWR Planning Suite’s capabilities, improvements, and case study applications are available online at the IWR Planning Assistance Library: <https://library.planusace.us/#/login>. Customized or study-specific training is also available upon request. For additional questions or assistance, contact Laura Witherow, IWR.

This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Use of the Planning Model

Comment: It was helpful that the presenters pointed out that project delivery teams (PDTs) should not be relying exclusively on IWR Planning Suite exclusively for plan formulation and selection; reviewers have noticed instances where the PDT had no strategy for plan selection other than to use the best buy graph. PDTs should be explicit about whether there are foundational components necessary for success, or minimum targets that must be met (e.g., restoration is needed in all four hydrogeomorphic reaches, maximize tributary connections, or we need to stop the head cut first). These can all be reasons why a certain alternative becomes the minimum "worth it" alternative. Essentially, PDTs should be marrying the tool’s abilities with the team’s expertise and the planning objectives. (Leigh Skaggs, HQ Office of Water Project Review and former IWR Planning Suite PDT member)

Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) Module

Comment: The new multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) module can be used to help the PDT weight different types of variables, or to pick the best habitat type. In particular, it's a useful tool to see how the weighting of different variables impacts different decisions. The MCDA module could be used to develop combined metrics, which can then be run in the cost effectiveness and incremental cost analyses (CE/ICA). For example, you can show decision-makers how results would vary if you changed the weights for different outputs. (Eric Rooks, IWR Suite PDT and Leigh Skaggs)

Annualizer Module

Can the new annualizer module import benefit data for multiple plans at once (e.g., as a CSV or Excel file) and annualize all benefits simultaneously?

You can only enter in one plan at a time to the annualizer, because each plan has different cost and benefit outlays. You can enter in multiple plans and save them individually, but you can only run them one at a time to see the results.

Uncertainty Module

Do we really have enough information to pick a distribution or uncertainty limits? Will guidance be developed on what distribution to use or what uncertainty values we should use as a default; is there a plan to collect empirical data to help define those value?

First and foremost, you should work with your PDT to figure out how much information you have and how comfortable you are with that information to choose a specific distribution. You *can* create multiple planning sets with different distributions and information, so you can see how sensitive the CE/ICA is to how you're defining the variables within each plan – if it really matters and how it affects it.

From my understanding, no guidance on which distribution to use is forthcoming because each project is different. I think the key is for your PDT to be mindful; make sure you're complete and are thinking about things into the period of analysis to make sure your benefits are still valid even if there are changes in what you projected your future without project conditions to be.

If you have existing data, you can find the appropriate distribution by using chi-squared analysis. You can use that distribution going forward. The @Risk application usually does it for me.

Installing and Uninstalling IWR Planning Suite

How do you uninstall old versions of the IWR Planning Suite?

Users need to go through ACEIT to uninstall previous versions of IWR Planning Suite (submit a ticket).