

## Civil Works Review Policy Update – EC 1165-2-217

### Planning CoP Webinar

May 3, 2018

### Q&A Session

*The 3 May 2018 Planning CoP Webinar addressed updates to the Civil Works review guidance recently published in [EC 1165-2-217](#), which was released on 1 May 2018. Ms. Karen Miller, a Plan Formulation Regional Technical Specialist and Planner from the Huntington District, provided an overview of the updated guidance, which supersedes expired EC 1165-2-214, Civil Works Review. During the Q/A Ms. Miller was joined by Mr. John Clarkson from the Risk Management Center, and Mr. Eric Thaut, Flood Risk Management Planning Center of Expertise Technical Director.*



*Most content areas of the EC have not been significantly changed, with the exception of District Quality Control. The webinar highlighted the major changes and reminded everyone of the major elements of responsibility for ensuring quality products are being produced throughout the Civil Works program.*

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

### ***District Quality Control***

#### **Who ultimately decides the adequacy of the DQC review? Does the ATR Lead make this decision?**

Karen Miller: The ATR lead should bring up any issues regarding the DQC to the Review Management Organization (RMO), and the RMO will make a decision. Due to the requirements in Chapter 8 of EC 217, there should be fewer and fewer issues with DQC as project delivery teams (PDT) should be working consistently with their DQC lead throughout the study process, not just before the study is sent to the ATR team.

#### **Is the DCQ certification form intended to be completed for each technical appendix, or can one certification form be used for the entire study document?**

John Clarkson: A DCQ certification form must be completed for each individual work product and is the responsibility of the team lead.

Karen: The purpose of the certification form is to help promote ownership and accountability for work products.

#### **Can you explain the difference between DQC and Quality Check for Investigations studies?**

Karen: The Quality Check is conducted within the DQC and applies to elements of the study such as calculations.

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**Can PDT supervisors be assigned the role of DQC reviewer if they are certified?**

Karen: This is something that should be discussed in your MSC Quality Management Plan; EC 217 doesn't get that specific.

***Agency Technical Review (ATR)***

**How do you become ATR certified if it is required to conduct ATRs in order to become certified?**

Karen: Several of the Planning Centers of Expertise (PCXs) have recognized this dilemma and have developed informal mentoring programs through which an uncertified reviewer can conduct an ATR under the supervision of a certified reviewer. This allows uncertified reviewers to build up ATR experience on their resumes.

Jodi Creswell: The Planning Environmental Sub-CoP does not require prior ATR review experience for certification. Those with relevant study experience and knowledge can work under an ATR-certified mentor during their first few reviews. However, the details of the mentor program are still under development.

**Can CAP studies use non-certified reviewers on their ATR team?**

Karen: EC 217 requires certified reviewers for all studies. However, it's possible that an exception could be granted with MSC Commander approval within the study's Review Plan.

**If a certified ATR reviewer from outside the home District participates on the District Quality Control (DQC) team, can that discipline be removed from the ATR team?**

Eric Thaut: No; the discipline must also be represented on the ATR team. The focus and purpose of DQC and ATR are different: DQC is an ongoing review during product development, while ATR confirms adequacy of the DQC.

***Review Plan***

**Does the new Review Plan template apply to existing studies, and if so by when will they need to be reapproved using the new template?**

Eric: The template is just that – a template. Its purpose is to help you prepare a Review Plan; it's not a strict requirement so current study Review Plans will not need to be reapproved. However, I would encourage you to look at the template and make the appropriate changes to your Review Plan to make sure it reflects the current policy.

**Several MSCs have requested that the names of ATR team members be listed in the Review Plan before the plan is formally approved. Is this a new requirement in EC 217?**

Karen: No; this is not a requirement in the EC. It makes sense to reach out and find an ATR lead and name that person in the Review Plan, but it is generally difficult to finalize a team until much closer to the time period of the review.

**The Review Plan requests information contained in other documents (e.g., project descriptions). Why can't the RMO and ATR team use the Summary Risk Register and Decision Management Plan to understand the scope of the study, and let the Review Plan focus on review charges?**

Eric: One simple reason is that the Review Plans are stand-alone public documents. Plans do not need to go into great detail about project descriptions, they just need to provide enough information so that the public can understand the context of the decisions being made, as well as the rationale for those decisions.

### *Independent External Peer Review*

**Once the District E&C Chief has determined that there is no threat to human life, why do PDTs still need to go to the MSC to get the Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) exclusion approved?**

Eric: For Type I IEPRs, the higher level of review is required because the IEPR exclusion is an agency decision.

Andy MacInnes: IEPR became legally required under the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, so while District Chief determinations on IEPRs will be considered, the decision itself must be made at a higher level.

Karen: I want to point out that one delegation that's new in EC 217 is the MSC Commander's ability to delegate approval of the Review Plan to either the Programs Directorate Chief or the Regional Business Director (both Senior Executive Service members). In addition, as in EC 214, the approval for all Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) studies is at the MSC level vs. at Headquarters.

**We've received guidance indicating that we should use ATR and IEPR reviews for only the most critical part of the study analysis. Can you provide more information on using a scaled review approach to limit the number of involved reviewers?**

Karen: Using a scaled down review approach isn't meant to cut out key decision makers within the study. You can work with your RMO to appropriately build your ATR team, but EC 217 generally doesn't take away the requirement that your ATR team should mirror your DQC team.

Eric: On the other hand, if you feel a certain discipline doesn't warrant ATR, the best thing you can do is draft a good justification and rationale in your Review Plan for your RMO to review.

### *Other Questions*

**Are CERCAP (Corps of Engineering Reviewer Certification Access Program, which catalogues E&C certified reviewers) and the Planner Database (certified ATR reviewers in the planning disciplines) currently integrated?**

Jodi: No, not at this time. Links to CERCAP, the Planner Database, and other disciplines' ATR Rosters  are available on the [Planning Community Toolbox](#).

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**Can a product developed by a Center of Expertise (CX) be reviewed by someone from that CX?**

John: It's generally frowned upon for someone from a CX to review work conducted by another CX staff member. If necessary, we can go outside of the Corps to another federal agency to provide a reviewer.