

**New Guidance: Implementing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Civil Works
Planning CoP Webinar
October 4, 2018
Q&A Session**

Ms. Karen Miller (LRH), Mr. Eddie Douglass (HQ RIT), and Mr. Aaron Hostyk (HQ Office of Counsel) discussed recently signed guidance developed in response to the Implementation Plan for the Director's Policy Memorandum Civil Works 2018-05 SUBJECT: Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness in USACE Civil Works Project Delivery (Planning Phase and Planning Activities). DPM CW 2018-05 provided direction to incorporate risk-informed decision making in project development. A cross-discipline Civil Works Implementation team has been working together to provide additional CoP-specific guidance to further assist PDTs to improve efficiency and effectiveness in project delivery. This webinar focused on the 31 August 2018 Office of Counsel memo, The Role of Counsel in Operationalizing Risk-Informed Decision Making During Project Development, and the recently signed Planning Bulletin 2018-01, Feasibility Study Milestones.



The new guidance can be found on the Planning Community Toolbox:

- [Director's Policy Memorandum Civil Works Programs 2018-05 SUBJECT: Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness in USACE Civil Works Project Delivery \(Planning Phase and Planning Activities\)](#)
- [Planning Bulletin 2018-01: Feasibility Study Milestones](#)
- [The Role of Counsel in Operationalizing Risk-Informed Decision Making During Project Development](#)

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

Clarifications on Planning Bulletin Language and Intent

Paragraph 5 of the Planning Bulletin states that there will be a Division transmittal for the Final Report "when applicable." In what cases will the Division transmit the Final Report?

If feasibility study review has been delegated to the Major Subordinate Command (MSC), the Final Report will be approved by the MSC Commander, who will then be responsible for transmitting the approved report with a letter to Headquarters. If the study is held at Headquarters for approval, the Final Report will be transmitting directly from the District to Headquarters.

In Table 1, "To be completed before Alternatives Milestone," what is meant by "Draft" Review Plan? Are the Policy, District Quality Control (DQC), and Agency Technical Review (ATR) teams identified in this draft? As specified in [EC 1165-2-217](#), Review Policy for Civil Works, draft Review Plans should be presented at the Alternatives Milestone. The Review Plan will then be endorsed by the review management organization (RMO) and sent to the MSC for approval. Draft Review Plans should include the identified

New Guidance: Implementing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Civil Works Planning CoP Webinar Q&A

DQC and Policy review teams as well as ATR disciplines and the ATR Lead, and if appropriate, the full ATR team.

Section 7 states that milestone submittals will go from the District to the decision-making authority and Regional Integration Team (RIT) without an intervening review “beyond what is outlined in the quality management plan.” Is this plan the District / MSC quality management plan, the study's review plan, or something else?

The quality management plan (QMP) is part of the study’s project management plan (PMP). MSCs are responsible for quality assurance, but this does not generally include intervening reviews such as review and comment on PowerPoint decks to be used at the milestone meetings where they are not the decision maker. We are trying to keep those types of “intervening” reviews out of the process. A study’s review plan may call for reaching out to experts on a specific topic to request review and comment.

Table 1, “To be completed before Final Report Package,” mentions District Quality Control of Final Feasibility Report / National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document must be complete, but does not mention ATR of the Final Report Package being complete. Has there been a change in policy requirements with regard to ATR?

There is no policy change; the Final Report Package should undergo ATR in accordance with the review plan and [EC 1165-2-217](#).

How should the review summary that must be completed before the Agency Decision Milestone (ADM) be incorporated into the read aheads? Should this be a part of the presentation, a separate document, or not submitted?

Over the past year, we’ve been asking for the review summary to be provided, but haven’t specified the format. Some teams have done a very good job of providing it in the presentation, while others gloss over the summary in their presentation and then provide it separately. Regardless of how the review summary is shared, the policy review team needs to see how the comments have been assessed, so that we can understand what feedback you received in all of your reviews. It is important for us to see this assessment of the comments – whether they are significant or not.

Impacts of Delegation

What percentage of 3x3x3 studies have not required a waiver? It seems like delegation of study review to the MSCs will be the exception.

Delegation of study decisions and reviews should not be the exception; there are more 3x3x3 compliant studies to date than studies requiring waivers. All new feasibility studies that fall under the Emergency Supplemental are required to comply with the 3x3x3 rule – unless there is an agreement from the outset of the study that a waiver is needed – which means that the number of exemption requests should be decreasing.

What are some of the expected or observed benefits of delegating milestone approvals?

New Guidance: Implementing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Civil Works Planning CoP Webinar Q&A

Delegation of milestone approvals aligns with Mr. Dalton's intent to get decision making authority where it needs to be, which is the level at which the technical experts reside (the MSCs). Mr. Dalton's perspective is that with few exceptions – the MSCs should be responsible for determining and making recommendations.

With the new process, what mechanism(s) is (are) in place to ensure consistency in decision making criteria across MSCs?

Headquarters will be conducting quality assurance on studies and milestone decisions to make sure that one part of the organization isn't taking on more risk than another, and to make sure we are generally acting similarly as an agency.

What are the expectations for the content of the memorandum for record (MFR)? Do you expect the District or the MSC to generate the MFR if the approval authority rests with Headquarters?

The MFR should address the path forward for key planning decisions made by the project delivery team (PDT); acknowledgement and acceptance of identified study and implementation risks and uncertainties and the strategies to manage those risks including the PDT's proposed path forward; and confirmation of the scope, schedule, and budget to complete the feasibility study. The process we've been following is that the District prepares the MFR, circulates it for comments, and then has it signed by the MSC Planning Chief and the milestone decision maker before it gets distributed.

Related Guidance Updates / Issuance

Has guidance been issued on the One Headquarters Review Team process yet?

Guidance on the "One Headquarters" Policy Review Team has been developed and is undergoing final review. It will be sent out to the functional area chiefs and then signed within the next six weeks or so. In the interim, a process has been worked out in which the Acting Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) Chief, Jeremy LaDart, is working directly with MSC Planning Chiefs to identify effective policy review teams.

Will the September 2015 [USACE SMART Planning Feasibility Studies - A Guide to Coordination and Engagement with the Services](#) be updated, including flowcharts?

At a minimum, we are looking at updating the example timetables and flow-charts showing how the environmental coordination tasks fall within a 3x3x3 SMART study with respect to the new [One Federal Decision implementation guidance](#) and the removal of the Civil Works Review Board. There will be a PCoP webinar on 1 November focusing specifically on the EIS process impacted by the "One Federal Decision" guidance.

Miscellaneous

Who from the Headquarters Engineering & Construction (E&C) functional area can we (MSC E&C) talk to regarding our MSC E&C involvement in the policy review process?

**New Guidance: Implementing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Civil Works
Planning CoP Webinar Q&A**

Bob Banks, Sean Smith, Tracy Lesser, Taylor Canfield, and Jen Kline have all been involved from the E&C CoP and reviewed the policy guidance as part of their participation on the Implementation Plan team. More specifics on the role of E&C will be discussed in the E&C-specific guidance to be released soon.

Where will the interim and final planning documents be stored? ProjectWise?

Districts should be using ProjectWise to store all planning documents.

What's the determination on placemats? Some vertical team levels want them, and some don't. Are they required for milestone meetings?

Placemats have proven to be an effective communication tool and are required by guidance for the Final Report Submittal Package.