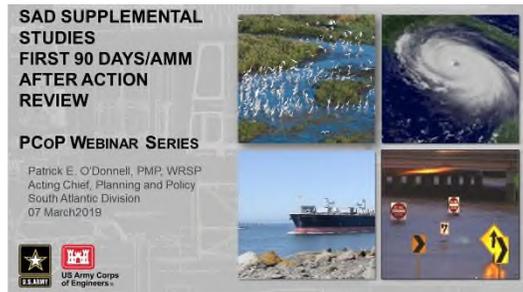


**SAD Supplemental Studies Alternatives Milestone Meetings After Action Review
Planning CoP Webinar
March 7, 2019
Q&A Session**

This webinar provided an overview of lessons learned from an After Action Review (AAR) conducted by the South Atlantic Division (SAD) on the first 90 days of and the Alternatives Milestone Meetings (AMM) for their Supplemental studies, presented by Mr. Patrick O'Donnell (Acting Chief, SAD Planning and Policy). The emphasis of the AAR was on both complying with guidance and various issues related to how guidance is disseminated and the consistency among different guidance documents. The webinar provided useful information for study teams and vertical teams on the intent of quickly starting feasibility studies, and the lessons learned from the AAR are applicable to both Supplemental studies and typical feasibility studies.



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

Planning Activities in the First 90 Days

Did all of SAD's studies conduct formal charrettes?

All of SAD's study teams held kick-off meetings with key team members and conducted focused planning iterations. However, those meetings would likely not be considered formal "charrettes."

Are plans or concepts that are screened out during the first planning iteration eliminated forever? Are SAD, the District, and non-federal sponsor on the same page about what happens to screened plans?

Plans are never screened out "forever." In planning, we can always revisit assumptions in light of new information gathered. There are many studies in which previously screened out plans are reconsidered when information collected during a site visit, for example, makes those plans potentially viable.

Sponsors can be uncomfortable seeing plans screened out early on that they believed to be good ideas. However, they may not know about the cost of the solutions they prefer. For this reason, the Districts and SAD need to do a better job of explaining the screening process to sponsors, and explaining that additional information may "bring back" previously screened out plans.

Milestone Preparation & Requirements

Did SAD receive any good suggestions about how the MSC can better support Districts in preparing for milestones? Will SAD do anything different based on the AAR as tentatively selected plan (TSP) milestones approach?

After the first couple of AMMs, it became apparent that SAD needed to look at [Planning Bulletin 2018-01: Feasibility Study Milestones](#) and consider how carefully it was being followed by Districts. To ensure other

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Districts were properly prepared for their AMMs, SAD e-mailed study leads and teams with the PB and included important language from the guidance to call special attention to the expectations for what must be completed before the meeting, and what must be discussed at the AMM. SAD will also be revising its process for review plan approval. Moving into TSP milestones, SAD will continue to engage with Districts on expectations and ensure they understand the details of the guidance and are fully ready for meetings.

Did you find that determining which models will be used in the study was a major challenge to getting the review plans completed early in the study?

All of SAD's Supplemental studies are focused on areas impacted by hurricanes so they are either flood risk management (FRM) or coastal storm risk management (CSRМ) studies. Unlike ecosystem restoration studies which make use of a variety of models, FRM generally uses HEC-FDA and CSRМ uses Beach-fx as standard models. This meant that model selection or certification wasn't a hindrance to review plan completion. The main issue related to review plans was related to confusion when review plans should be drafted vs. sent to the review management organization (RMO); Districts were under the impression that they didn't need to send the review plan to the RMO until after the AMM.

What type of district quality control (DQC) did SAD's Districts perform prior to the AMM, how was DQC documented, and if it wasn't documented, how did SAD confirm it was performed?

SAD doesn't require a signed sheet indicating that DQC has occurred; the MSC's intent is for DQC to be completed on the study draft report, not AMM documents. However, SAD found that the quality of information provided varied fairly significantly across AMMs, which led to discussions with Districts about expectations for milestone slide decks and other materials.

Some Districts did perform DQC before the AMM; for example, Jacksonville District conducted DQC on read ahead materials and documented that in Dr. Checks.

Milestone Execution and Success

Did all the SAD study teams pass their AMMs, or were some given provisional passes requiring additional information? Were all the studies confident they could finish within 3 years and \$3 million?

One study team was told it was not ready for the AMM due to the slide deck implying that the study was an ecosystem restoration study, which it isn't. Instead, an in-progress review was held, and the team was given a list of items to complete before the milestone will be considered to have been met. Several other studies met the milestone mark provisionally (i.e., it was checked as complete in P2), but were required to complete several tasks within a week of the meeting. The rest of the studies fully met the milestone requirements.

All of the study teams are confident they will meet the 3x3 requirements, with two teams required to complete their studies within \$2 million. However, one of SAD's studies is a Supplemental-funded watershed study which will be completed within 4 years and \$16 million.

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How was the HQ presence or participation in these AMMs similar to or different from past SAD milestones where HQ was the decision-maker?

Each of SAD's supplemental studies have blended review teams with members from HQ and the MSC, which means they aren't significantly different from previous studies. In general, the participation at milestone meetings by the policy review team has remained largely the same. In addition to the policy review team members, the SAD Regional Integration Team (RIT) Planner has also been in attendance at the AMMs.