

Making the Most of the Planner Database

March 19, 2020

Q&A Session

This webinar focused on the PCoP's Planner Database, which stores and reports the knowledge, skills, and abilities of USACE planners. This tool has an easy-to-use web interface with information organized by sub-Community of Practice (sub-CoP), and many other ways of filtering and retrieving data. The Planner Database is a part of the PlanUSACE suite of tools that also includes the Planning Assistance Library (PAL) and Assistance to Planning Teams (APT). Sara O'Connell (hydraulic engineer and Planner Database lead, HEC) provided an overview of how to easily navigate the website and input and retrieve the data planners need – including registering a planner in different sub-CoPs, looking up information on other planners, and applying for Agency Technical Review (ATR) Certification.



Additional tips and information on the Planner Database:

- *Planners don't have to be on VPN to use the Planner Database – only an internet connection is needed.*
- *Plans are underway to make the Planner Database CAC-enabled once USACE approves a cloud presence and the database can be migrated.*
- *Any suggestions for improvements to the Planner Database or additional fields should be sent to the relevant Sub-CoP lead(s) with a copy to planningonline@usace.army.mil.*
- *Planners should update their profiles at least once annually. Even if the information is still correct and doesn't need to be changed, the Planner Database team will see a new date stamp and know that the information has been reviewed.*
- *The Planning Assistance Library (PAL) uses information from Planner Database profiles to provide custom recommendations to planners – another benefit to keeping your profile up to date!*

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

Is there any way for planners to add experience categories for support to preconstruction engineering and design (PED)/construction projects? Many planners are working on such projects, supporting things like design documentation reports (DDRs), engineering documentation reports (EDRs), and integral determination reports (IDRs).

The profiles in the database are already connected to planners' recorded studies in the IWR-Assistance to Planning Team (APT) tool. With the expansion of IWR-APT to include the Enterprise Risk Register, it will be easier to automatically add projects not under planning to Planner Database profiles. Any additional information, including experience you'd like to showcase, should be added to the **Additional Information** field which is available on the **More Info** tab of the planner's profile.

Is it possible to connect the Planner Database to ATR and Water Resources Certified Planner (WRCP) applications so that information related to experience gets automatically populated within the application?

The Planner Database is already capable of automatically pushing relevant fields to ATR and WRCP applications; however, some application questions and database/profile fields do not line up one to one, which means applicants need to modify some of their responses in the ATR and WRCP applications for completeness and accuracy.

Is there a plan to add a notification feature to the Planner Database that will alert a user when a certification is about to expire?

The database is capable of sending notifications to all planners regarding expired or expiring certifications, but this functionality has not been put into practice yet. The Planner Database team is determining the best distribution and frequency of notifications, given that applications for some types of certification are only considered during specific open periods.

Which inputs to the Planner Database require validation from MSC sub-CoP leads? Is it only information related to ATR lead experience?

There are several different fields that can be validated within Planner Database profiles. Currently, ATR lead experience is the only field that *must* be validated – by the relevant Planning Center for Expertise (PCX) lead. The Knowledge, Skills, and PROSPECT courses section of profiles can also be validated by the relevant MSC sub-CoP lead(s), but this validation is *optional*. Some sub-CoPs may choose not to require validation of this section (i.e., the Plan Formulation sub-CoP).

In addition, when a planner completes an ATR or WRCP application through the Planner Database, their supervisor must “validate” or approve that he or she supports the application, or otherwise send the application back for changes. Finally, when a new planner self-registers to the database, the appropriate MSC sub-CoP lead must verify that the person is indeed a planner before the profile is published in the database. The verification of new self-registrants does not require validation of any other elements of their profile.