FEASIBILITY REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT GUIDE

Ray Wimbrough
Senior Policy Advisor
HQUSACE

02 Dec 2021

US Army Corps of Engineers

FEASIBILITY REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT GUIDE

Version 1.0 – October 2021

HAVE YOU LOOKED THROUGH THE FEASIBILITY REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT GUIDE?

Yes

Not Yet

Click on the Annotation option ✎ on the left side of your screen and then use the Pencil Tool or checkmark to mark your response.

BACKGROUND

- Currently, there is only a limited outline in the PGN to guide planners – nothing to thoroughly explain what should go in each section.

- New planners are forced to pick up older studies to follow – technical aspects can be very confusing.

- Lack of any universal starting point leads to inconsistencies across Corps.

- Numerous planners have asked for a tool to use in writing Feasibility Studies.

FEASIBILITY REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT GUIDE

- Provides a consistent starting point for planners to begin a Feasibility Report.
- Describes HOW to write the report with basic content suggestions:
  - Who is the audience?
  - Telling the story.
  - Language and writing style.
  - Number of pages.
- Provides guidance references that will save search times.

FEASIBILITY REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT GUIDE

- Based on the experience of planning experts across USACE, including districts, MSCs, and members of HQUSACE.

- Information should prove invaluable to first line supervisors and others that are mentoring new planners.

- This document is NOT guidance – it provides numerous references to guidance, but nothing is required as a result of publishing.

FORMAT

- The Guide provides a chronological list of sections and subsections for fulfilling guidance and telling the story.

- We understand that each feasibility report is unique and will differ, and that is indicated in the Guide.

- The Guide provides a suggested number of pages for each section (for a total of 100). This is a GOAL, not a requirement; however, it gives the reader an idea of the typical length of each section and subsection compared to one another.

- The Guide addresses areas such as the Executive Summary, which are highly inconsistent across the nation and even within districts.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Improve consistency across the Corps

Provide a starting point for report content and format

Set restrictions on # of pages

Help PDTs "tell the story"

Click on the Annotation option 𝒩 on the left side of your screen and then use the Pencil Tool or checkmark to mark your response.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Improve consistency across the Corps ✓

Provide a starting point for report content and format ✓

Set restrictions on # of pages 🚫

Help PDTs "tell the story" ✓

Click on the Annotation option 𝒩 on the left side of your screen and then use the Pencil Tool or checkmark to mark your response.

CONTENT

- Provides section and subsection titles and provides notes for each subsection.

- Many subsections provide the guidance (PGN) location for reference – Guide will need to be revised as guidance is updated.

- Some sections, such as Plan Formulation and Evaluation, provide additional opening notes on overall focus for writing (see example on following slide).

PLAN FORMULATION AND EVALUATION

- **Structured and Sequential** – The report must follow a planning strategy and be structured in a way that is easy to follow. Each step that is described in the plan formulation process must be connected to the next one.

- **Transparent and Understandable** – The report should be written clearly and in a manner that would allow a high school graduate to comprehend the planning process and technical aspects of the study; screening techniques, trade-off analyses, and decisions should be clearly and concisely described. A reader who is not familiar with the project should be able to "connect the dots" from problem definition to recommended solution.

- **Objective and Logical**– The plan formulation must clearly indicate that an impartial and unbiased decision is being made that is based on fact and supported by sound reason; the report will clearly describe the criteria used to make decisions and the results of the evaluation. The criteria should be based on the documented problems, opportunities, objectives, and constraints.

- **Policy Compliant and Documented** – The report must include all the requirements for plan evaluation and comparison from USACE policy as well as applicable laws and regulations. The report should only include information necessary to support the decision being made.

CONTENT

- Many reports are not in chronological order and are difficult to follow.

- Most reports have the "Environmental Effects (and Consequences)" section AFTER the selection of a Plan.

- The Guide places "Environmental Effects" after "Plan Formulation and Evaluation" but before "Plan Comparison and Selection."

- Many reports lack a Plan Comparison section, which is a ranking of plans that occurs after Plan Evaluation. The Guide clearly lays out the need to include this information.

CONTENT

- The Recommended Plan sections of many feasibility reports are highly variable. This streamlines the requirements.

- The Environmental Compliance section has been kept separate from Environmental Effects and Consequences, and, along, with the rest of the Guide, reflects current NEPA guidance.

APPENDICES

- Basic Appendices are identified with a short summary of suggested content.

- Clarifies which Environmental coordination documents need to be included and where.

- We do not want to see a repeat of the Executive Summary at the beginning of each Appendix.

WORKING FILES

- We need to avoid placing survey data sheets, Geotech borings, etc., in feasibility reports and appendices.

- Each district should maintain Working Files for each study.

- These would be available upon request (although it's highly unlikely).

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS FALSE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Reports should be in chronological order

If it's not in the main report, it must be in an appendix

Each District should maintain working files

Discussion of environmental effects should occur AFTER plan selection

Click on the Annotation option 𝒩 on the left side of your screen and then use the Pencil Tool or checkmark to mark your response.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS FALSE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Reports should be in chronological order	**If it's not in the main report, it must be in an appendix**	**Each District should maintain working files**	**Discussion of environmental effects should occur AFTER plan selection**
TRUE	**FALSE**	**TRUE**	**FALSE**

Click on the Annotation option 𝒩 on the left side of your screen and then use the Pencil Tool or checkmark to mark your response.

ROLLOUT

- PCoP Deputy distributed the guide via email.
- Also placed on Planning Community Toolbox.
- Today's webinar!
- Understood that there will need to be some updates after PGN revisions and/or WRDAs.
- We are not asking for comments/suggestions at this time:
  - ➢ There is no "perfect" format.
  - ➢ There will be a lot of opinions.
  - ➢ Use it as a tool and move forward.

QUESTIONS?