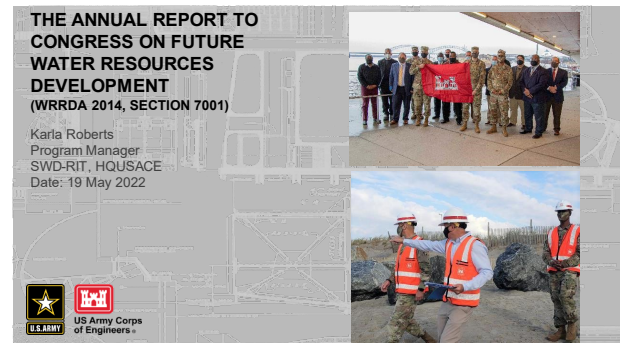


Annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development (7001 Report)

19 May 2022

Q&A Session

This webinar provided an overview of the [annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development](#), also known as the 7001 Report. The presentation addressed the entire process to complete the report, with emphasis on our outreach efforts and the proposal evaluation process. Presenter Karla Roberts (Program Manager, Southwestern Division Regional Integration Team) discussed requirements established in Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, as amended and details of the annual process, including acceptance of non-federal proposals, district, division and headquarters evaluation of proposals, and development of the Report to Congress.



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

Project Funding

How can USACE personnel explain the difference between submitting a Section 7001 proposal and going the route of a congressional earmark to non-federal sponsors?

This is a topic that Karla and her team cover and clarify during their annual public information sessions; it is important to clarify to local sponsors that both authorization and the appropriation of funds from Congress are required for Civil Works water resources project – and that these two requirements are obtained through different processes.

The 7001 process is one way to acquire authorization for a study, project, or program modification, but sponsors should understand that appropriations cannot be acquired through this process. Instead, appropriations can be acquired through the traditional budget process – or through Congressional earmarks such as Congressionally directed spending or Community Project Funding.

Section 7001 Outreach

Is there funding available to District staff for Section 7001 outreach efforts?

While there is no specific funding appropriated for Section 7001 outreach efforts, HQ Planning is reviewing remaining items funds most appropriate for general community outreach and engagement to include Section 7001 coordination. More information is forthcoming.

What is the Section 7001 social media plan and can it be accessed by staff in the field?

The Section 7001 social media plan was developed by the USACE Headquarters Public Affairs Office (PAO) and contains planned posts on various social media platform (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). The plan outlines posts approximately every two weeks and identifies what a post will say – usually short descriptions about the Section 7001 process, information about public information sessions, and deadline reminders. If a District PAO is interested in reviewing the plan, PAO staff should contact Headquarters PAO.

Section 7001 Proposal Guidance & Requirements

Will there be new water supply guidance related to the new Section 7001 water supply provision?

Section 127 of the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) of 2020 amended Section 7001 to allow placement of project proposals for municipal and agricultural water supply in the Main Report (assuming they meet all other criteria). New implementation guidance for Section 7001 is not expected based on this change as it is self-explanatory.

A new authority that is noted in the presentation is Section 155 of WRDA 2020, which authorizes the Secretary to establish a program for the study and construction of new, or enlargement of existing, small water storage projects for the purpose of flood risk management, ecological benefits, water management, water conservation, or water supply. This authority is highlighted as it may be considered an existing authority for water supply proposals that meet the criteria and therefore, may result in some water supply proposals being placed in the appendix. IG for Section 155 can be found here:

<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utills/getfile/collection/p16021coll5/id/35987>

Does the term "previously Congressionally authorized" in the Section 7001 guidance only refer to USACE study authorities, USACE project modification authorities or USACE study modification authorities? For example, would a water supply facility that was built by another agency and is in need of repair or rebuilding qualify for submittal as a Section 7001 proposal?

The restriction pertains to excluding those proposals for which the USACE has or had authority. In this example, if another agency was authorized to build a water supply project, which is then operated and maintained by a non-Federal interest, then a proposal to modify it may be considered provided the proposal meets the other Section 7001 criteria for inclusion in the annual report.

What should the resulting decision document look like for a Section 7001 proposal? Does the District need to prepare a General Revaluation Report (GRR) or a Validation Study to augment an existing authorized project (i.e., a General Investigations study)?

The "decision document" column contained for proposals included in the main Section 7001 Report does not denote anything new that a District must conduct any new effort for a proposal; USACE personnel should continue to follow the normal USACE planning and decision document process. This column is intended to clarify that that authorization of a project is subject to the submission of an appropriate decision document through the administration (e.g., a Chief's Report or Director's Report). This decision document must be submitted and approved before USACE can seek funding to construct that project.

Additional Q&A – Annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development (7001 Report)
29 July 2021 PCoP Webinar

Non-federal Sponsor 7001 Proposals

Are there any references or guidance available for non-federal sponsors preparing a 7001 proposal? Non-federal sponsors should be able to find needed information and answers to frequently asked questions on the [Headquarters Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development website](#). Non-federal sponsors with specific questions can also email wrrda7001proposal@usace.army.mil or speak with their respective District. Additionally, non-federal sponsors can [review submissions from prior years](#).

Section 203 submissions, which are studies conducted by non-federal sponsors, are submitted directly to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Sponsors working on such studies should reference [Engineer Regulation 1165-2-209: Studies of Water Resources Development Projects by Non-Federal Interests](#).

Can a non-federal sponsor include qualitative benefits from all of the benefit categories, such as life safety, in its proposal?

A non-federal sponsor can include qualitative benefits in its proposal. Please note that the benefits and costs of the study / project submitted as part of the proposal are neither evaluated nor verified during the proposal evaluation process. That information is only passed on to Congress in the report as it was submitted.

Do non-federal sponsors who may be able to obtain expert advice (i.e., through consultants) as they draft their 7001 proposals have an advantage over non-federal entities with fewer resources who may not be able to afford to bring in outside expertise?

Sophisticated proposals or outside consultants are not necessary for the completion or strength of a 7001 proposal. Proposals are only evaluated against the five criteria to qualify for addition to the Report to Congress: Does the proposal fit in a USACE mission area? Does it need an authority? Does it have a preexisting authority? Has it been in a previous report? And, could USACE implement the proposed study/project?

If the non-federal sponsor is unsure if an authority is needed to conduct a study, they are invited to work with their local District to determine the answer before submitting a proposal. Note: some non-federal sponsors will choose to submit a proposal for a study/project with existing authority that they know will be placed in the appendix to raise visibility or demonstrate interest in and commitment to a specific study/project.

For new proposal categories, such as Environmental Infrastructure, how can smaller non-federal entities or those with fewer resources ensure their proposal makes a successful case for meeting the criteria for the Report, particularly if they are unlikely to know they can request USACE support?

Outreach to non-federal sponsors and potential non-federal sponsors to inform them about the annual proposal process for this Report should be part of the District's standard talking points when engaging with communities. If there is a potential need for a USACE water resources study, project, or technical assistance, and authority is needed, Districts should always communicate that inclusion

in the annual Report to Congress for Future Water Resources Development is one path to alerting Congress of the need for authorization or modification of an existing authorization.

WRDA 2020 Pilot Studies

How do pilot studies authorized by WRDA 2020 fit into the 7001 Report process? (Note: WRDA 2020 [authorized a pilot program that allows USACE to conduct 10 projects with federal costs of \\$10 million or less for small and disadvantaged communities.](#))

The 7001 Report process is intended for proposed studies that need a new authority or require a change to an existing authority. The WRDA 2020 pilots would therefore not need to submit proposals via the 7001 process, unless no study authority is already in place. *Note: Implementation Guidance for Section 118 has not yet been published. At this time, it is unclear if Section 118 provides study authority for the selected pilots, or if the selected pilots must have existing authority (specifically authorized, Continuing Authorities Program, Tribal Partnership Program, etc.). Interested non-federal sponsors that need may need study authority have nothing to lose by submitting a proposal via the 7001 process. When published, the implementation guidance will be available on the [HQUSACE website](#).*

In addition, it should be noted that the 7001 Report to Congress is only one route to obtaining study authority; Congress can establish new specific authorities without a proposal having been submitted through this process.

Stakeholder Communication

Is there an example email package or template that is available to share with stakeholders regarding the 7001 process?

There is no formal email package; however publicly-available information from the Headquarters 7001 website, including the [7001 fact sheet](#) and information about public information sessions, can be shared with stakeholders.