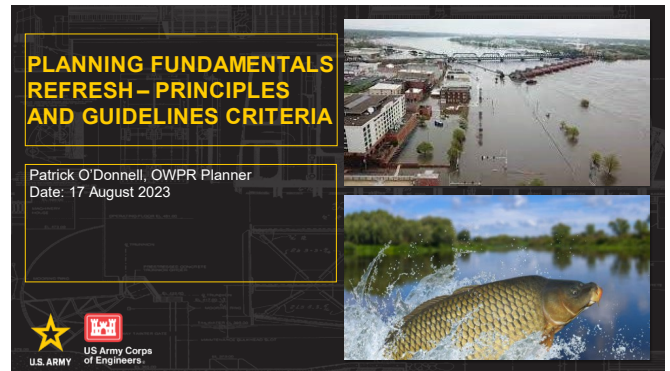


*This webinar is part of the Planning Fundamental Series and offered an overview of the four criteria of Completeness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Acceptability defined in the [2013/2014 Principles, Requirements and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies \(PR&G\)](#), their incorporation into the new [Policy for Conducting Civil Works Planning Studies \(Engineer Regulation 1105-2-103\)](#), and how to apply them. Presenter Patrick O'Donnell (Water Resources Planner, HQUSACE Office of Water Project Review) discussed the application of these criteria in feasibility reports and similar decision documents. The presentation aimed to improve understanding and application of the four criteria, which are fundamental to plan formulation.*



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

### **Interpreting Completeness and Acceptability**

**How does the definition of Completeness in the PR&G affect the "piecemealing" of studies and projects? For example, how would the idea of "Completeness" impact multiple environmental studies along the same waterway?**

In short, it wouldn't. Completeness is defined as "the extent to which an alternative provides and accounts for all features, investments, and/or other actions necessary to realize the planned effects, including any necessary actions by others. It does not necessarily mean that alternative actions need to be large in scope or scale." This definition of "completeness" is independent of the idea of "piecemealing." Completeness doesn't dictate that all our objectives are met, it's about whether the Tentatively Selected Plan has all the measures and features it needs to function in the defined study area. There could be many reasons to conduct multiple environmental studies along the same waterway or within the same basin, but each one of the projects could be considered "complete."

**The current Planning Guidance Notebook ([Engineer Regulation 1105-2-100](#)) defines "Acceptability" as "workability and viability of the alternative plan with respect to acceptance by Federal and non-Federal entities." However, the PR&G definition describes "Acceptability" as only being concerned with federal laws, authorities, and public policies. Is non-federal "acceptance" (i.e., complying with state or local laws or policies) no longer a concern for alternative plan viability?**

First and foremost, plan alternatives must comply with federal regulation, law, and policy to be considered acceptable. Plans developed by a federal agency are not required to comply with local ordinances or state laws to be considered acceptable. If a non-federal sponsor expresses an inability to implement a plan (e.g., the National Economic Development [NED] plan) that may violate local or state laws, the sponsor will need to request the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP). What study teams *can* do is incorporate state or local ordinances and laws that the sponsors must comply with into the planning process. This sets the foundation for an LLP.

### **Non-Federal Sponsor Cost Considerations Impacting “Acceptability”**

**How should study teams incorporate non-federal sponsor cost-sharing limitations into consideration of plan “acceptability,” for example, if a sponsor requests a plan that is less costly than the identified NED plan? What if the non-federal sponsor later supports the NED plan?**

Acceptability is not concerned with local preferences. An NED plan is considered acceptable even if the non-federal sponsor prefers a less expensive version of the plan. In that case, the team can propose a less expensive plan as an LPP.