

Role of the Lead Planner

Regional Planning and Environmental Center Plan Formulation Section

- Susan Henshaw
- Hana Schlang

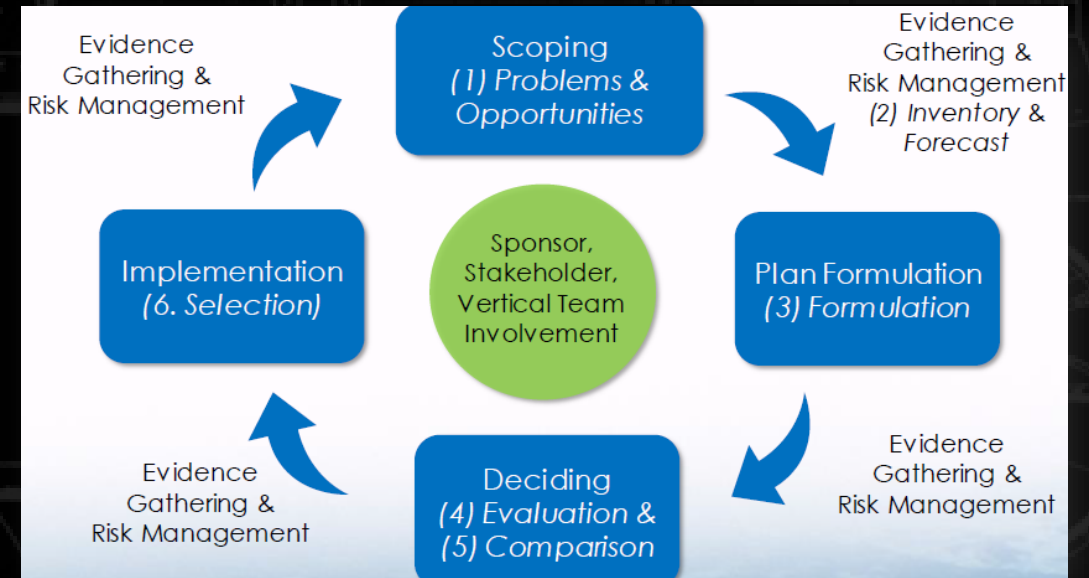
• Date: 26 October 2023



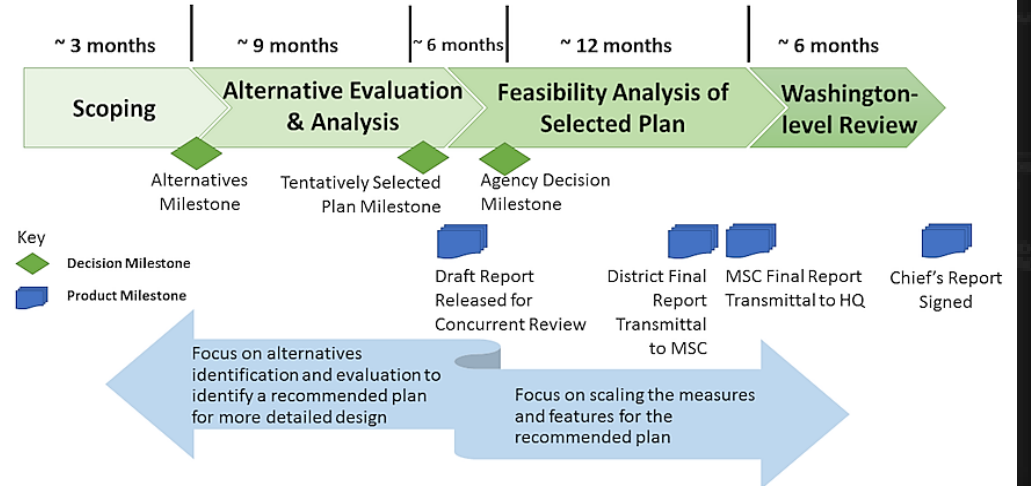
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The Feasibility Study Process: Key Decision & Product Milestones





INTRODUCTION



My name is Susan Henshaw and I'm a Regional Technical Specialist in Plan Formulation with the Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC – SWF) since May 2022. I joined the RPEC after eight years as a plan formulator for the Detroit District. Prior to joining USACE, I worked for the USDA Forest Service as a NEPA Planner.



My name is Hana Schlang and I'm a Social Scientist in Plan Formulation with the Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC – SWF) since April of 2022. Prior to joining USACE, I taught 7th grade mathematics in Galveston, TX.



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

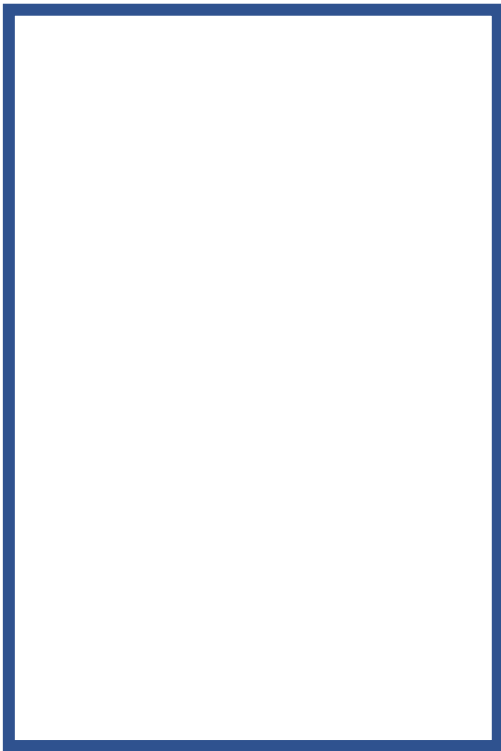
- Plan Formulation as the study lead
- Connection to recent “planning fundamental” webinars
- Planning process and roles throughout different phases
- Activities over life of the study + general information

Which most closely captures the Lead Planner role and why?

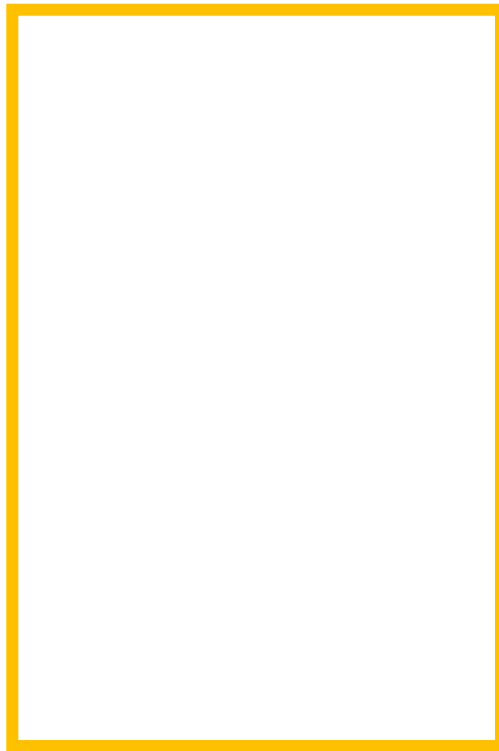


Participant Info – Place a check as appropriate

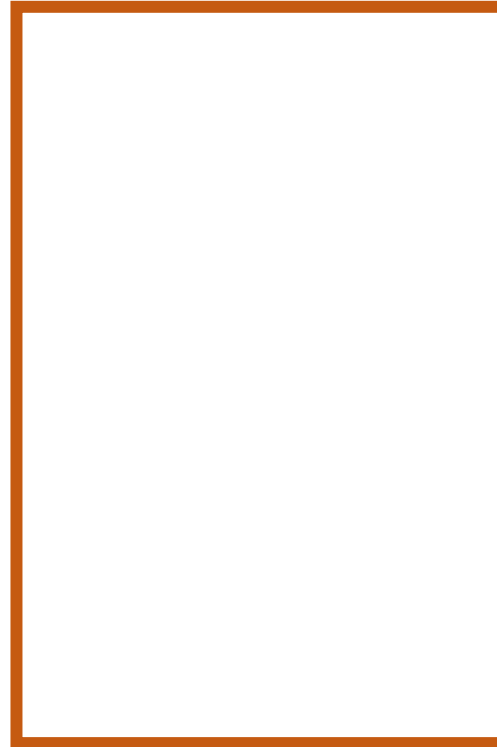
Help! What am I doing?



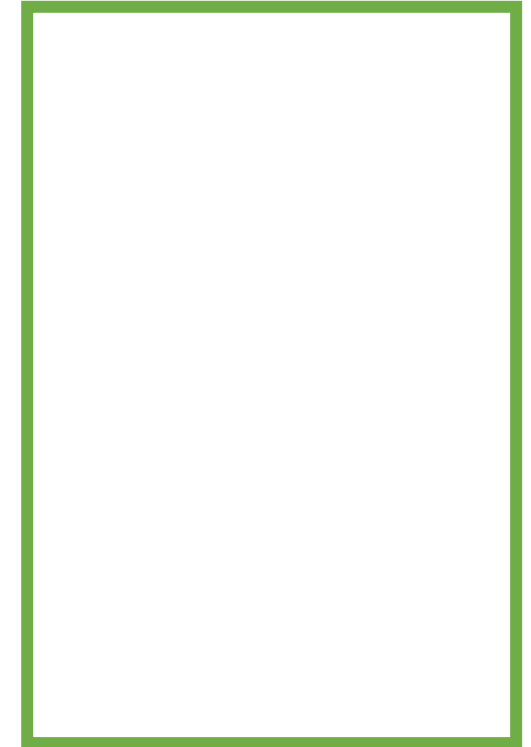
I've been a planner for a little bit - this is starting to make sense.



I feel pretty savvy about planning, but there's still so much to learn!



In case you don't know – I'm kind of a big deal.





PLAN FORMULATORS

Leader of the study team through the **six-step Corps planning process** with a focus on the third step (formulate alternative plans).

Recent planning fundamentals webinars walked through the six-step planning process (POOCs, P&G Criteria, and plan form strategies)

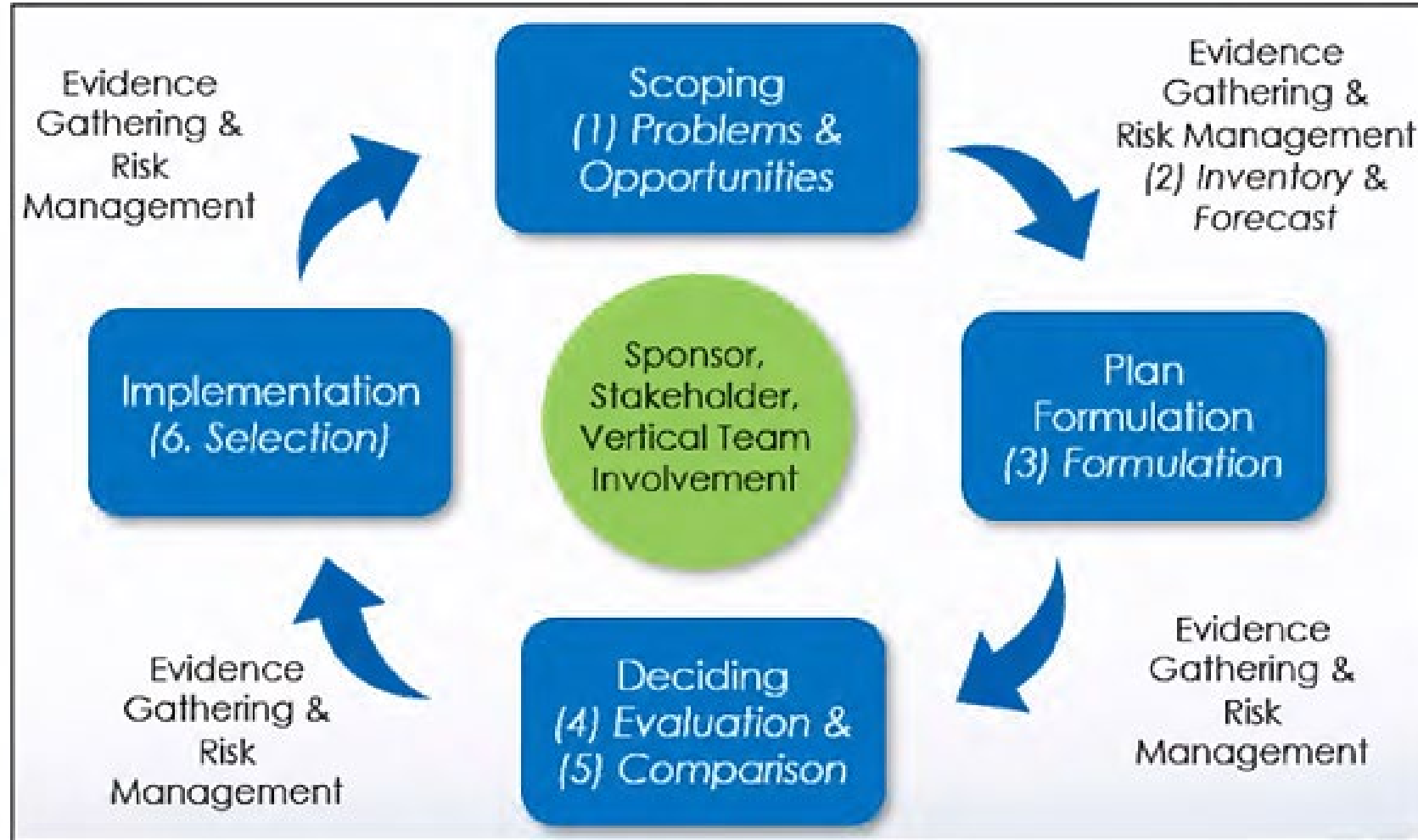
Often, plan formulators function as the **study lead** – wide variation in roles depending on the District and its practices. In some districts:

- PM and Lead PL are the same
- There is a Lead and Junior PL
- The environmentalist is also the Lead PL



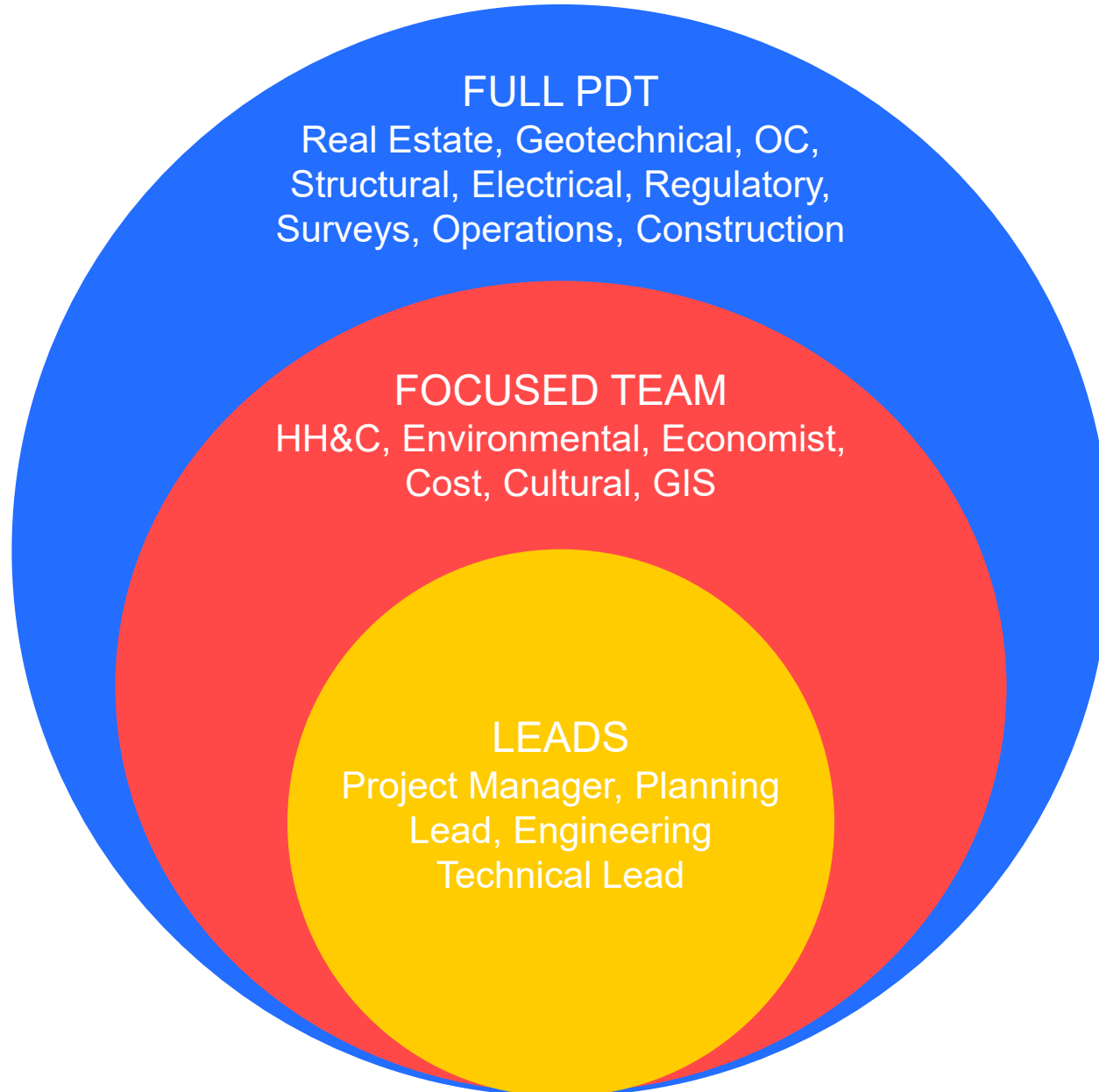


RISK INFORMED PLANNING PROCESS





CORE STUDY TEAM





CORE TEAM'S ROLE

PM	Environmental Lead	Technical Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main point of contact with the non-Federal sponsor - Responsible for upward reporting - Responsible for overall scope, schedule, budget management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for all environmental coordination and compliance activities - Ensures environmental documentation integrated into feasibility report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help determine project justification - Ensure plans meet all engineering requirements - Technical analysis of the alternatives developed
<p>Director's Policy Memorandum: Operationalizing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Project Management (Planning Phase), 02 July 2019</p>	<p>ER 200-2-2 Procedures for Implementing NEPA</p>	<p>Planning Guidance Notebook (ER 1105-2-100)</p>



ROLE SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE

- There is no single piece of guidance that defines the Lead Planner's role
- Some roles are specified in multiple pieces of guidance:
 - How is a lead planner selected EP 1105-2-61
 - DPM CW 2018-05 for focused team process
 - Role of Engineering Technical Lead ECB 2018-15
 - USACE Business Process PM Roles and Responsibilities ER 5-1-11
 - Planner Role ER 1105-2-100



PLANNING LEAD

- “Glue” that keeps the team together so the study can progress
- Report responsibility – Quality, Completeness, Cohesion
- Guide PDT through study process & staying within policy
- Assist PDT with critical thinking & decision making to develop justifiable recommendation
- PDT meetings – Facilitator
 - Circulate agenda to team prior; Circulate meeting minutes for team review
- Communicating key uncertainty and associated risks
 - The PDT produces the Risk Register (new e-risk register tool!)
 - <https://err.sec.usace.army.mil/>
- Leader on planning team may change from time to time based on:
 - Familiarity with the people and places of the study area, or type of project
 - Technical expertise and skillsets
 - District practices



PLANNING LEAD

- Responsible for six step planning process
- Document with risk informed planning support tools!
 - Decision Logs, Risk Register, Review Plans, Decision Management Plans

Decision Log

- Track & document key decisions made, rationale, associated risk / implications
- General decisions or specific to discipline
- VT comments and outcomes

Risk Register

- eRisk Register
- Assess & manage project risks
- Risks to cost, schedule, performance, etc.

Review Plan

- Documents project requirements to provide high-quality products
- Identifies review steps to produce a credible work product
- Part of the PMP

Decision Management Plan

- Outlines planning decisions to be made, criteria, event sequence, & scope of decision making

Project Management Plan

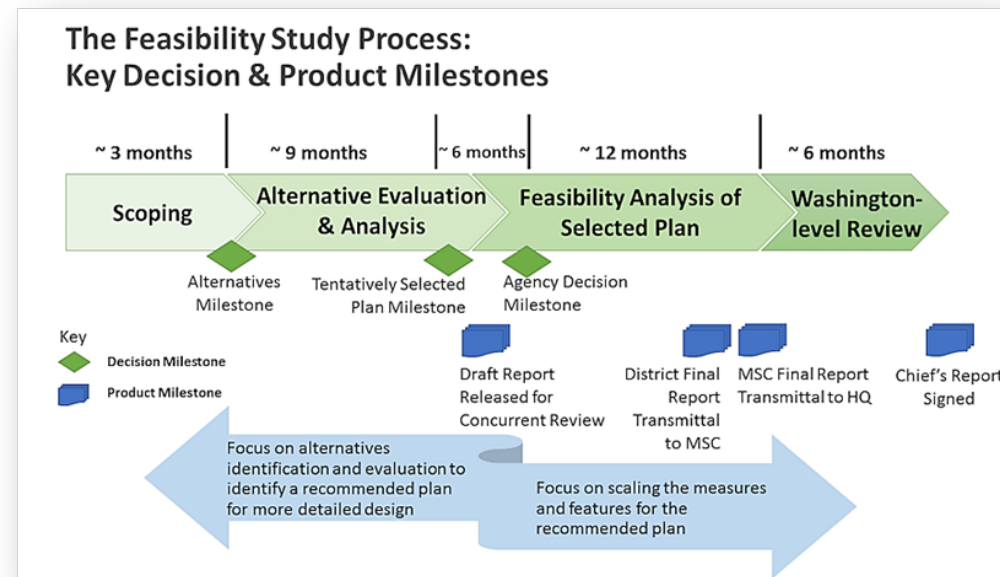
- Documents project requirements to provide high-quality products
- Identifies project scope, intent, and objectives



FEASIBILITY STUDY PROCESS (WITH STANDARD APPROXIMATE DURATIONS)



Risk-Informed Planning Process



Feasibility Study Milestones

The USACE uses a system of milestones to manage and monitor the progress of studies.

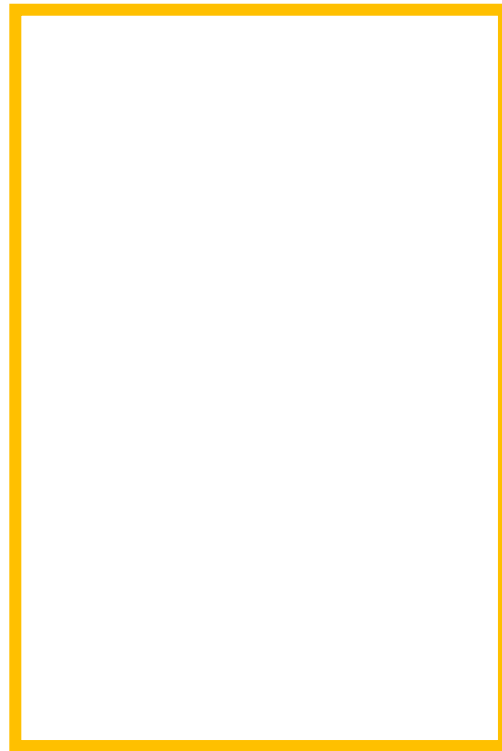
Planning iterations occur in between milestones, where their outcomes are discussed.

Participant Info – Place a check as appropriate

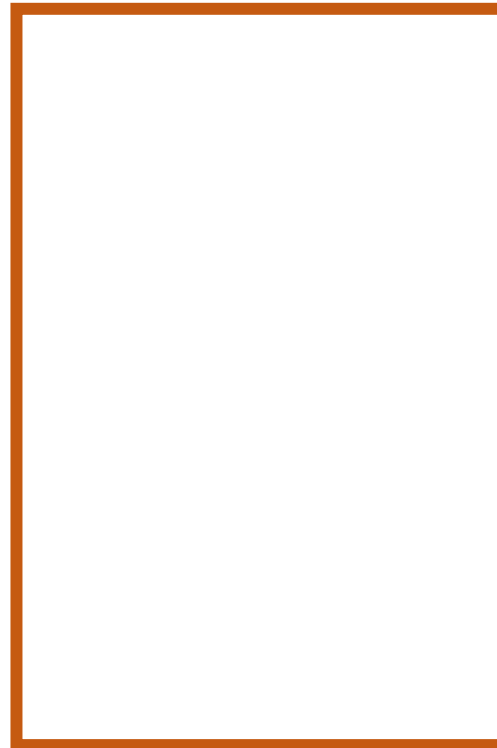
Process? Policies?
Procedures? Oh My.



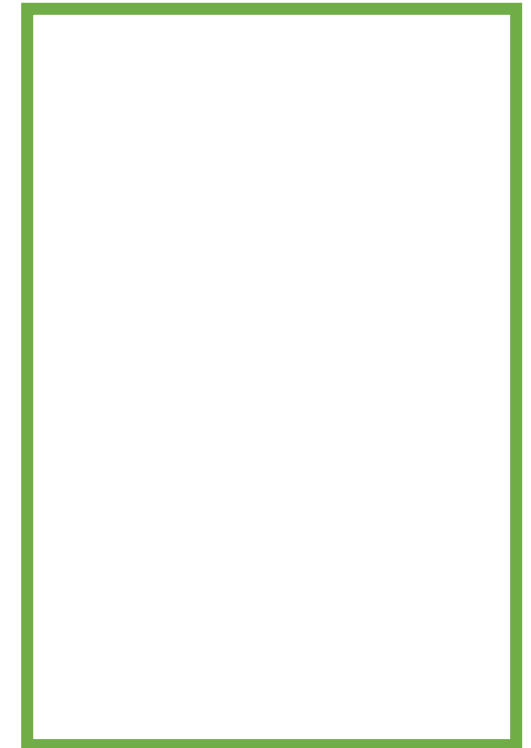
I'm familiar with the
planning process
and with planning
policies – I think.



I'm tracking planning
process, policies,
and procedures –
there's still so much
to learn!



I pretty much make
the policies and
procedures.





SCOPING

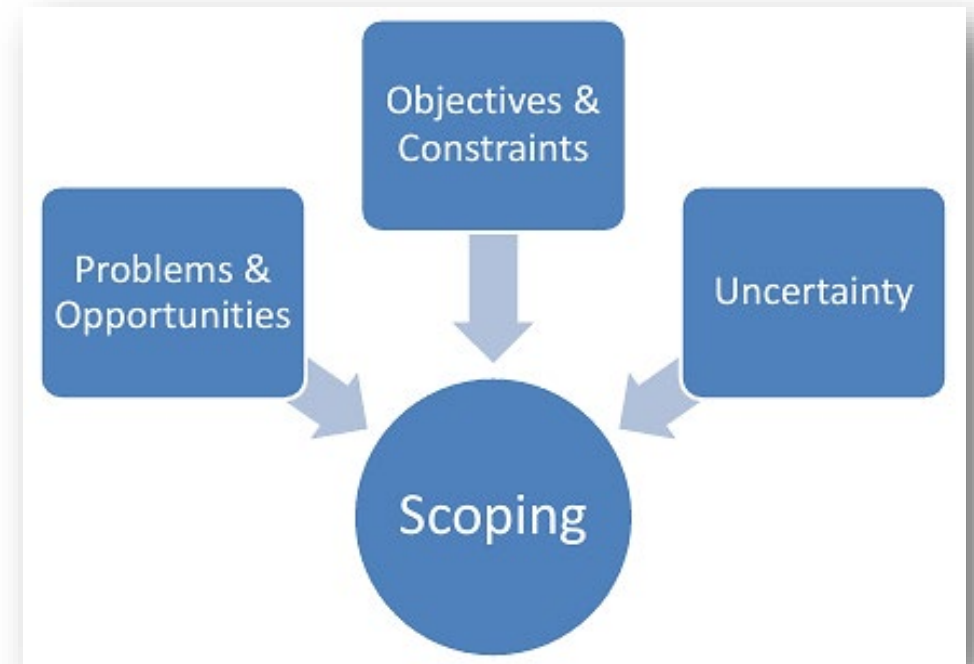
Road map for the study

Provides first formulation of risks to be managed

Describe data needs from each discipline. Answer what is and is not included in the study. Determine what data is available and what data is needed.

Essential to have Vertical Team and stakeholder alignment

Key Documents: **Project Management Plan** and **Vertical Team Alignment Memo**





SIX PIECES OF PAPER

1. Problems and opportunities statement
2. Narrative description of without project condition
3. List of planning objectives and constraints
4. List of decision criteria to be used for formulation, evaluation, and comparison
5. List of questions decision makers would like to have answered
6. List of most significant uncertainties in study

What else?

Looking for more info on six pieces of paper? Check out Risk Informed Planning Manual II page 12.



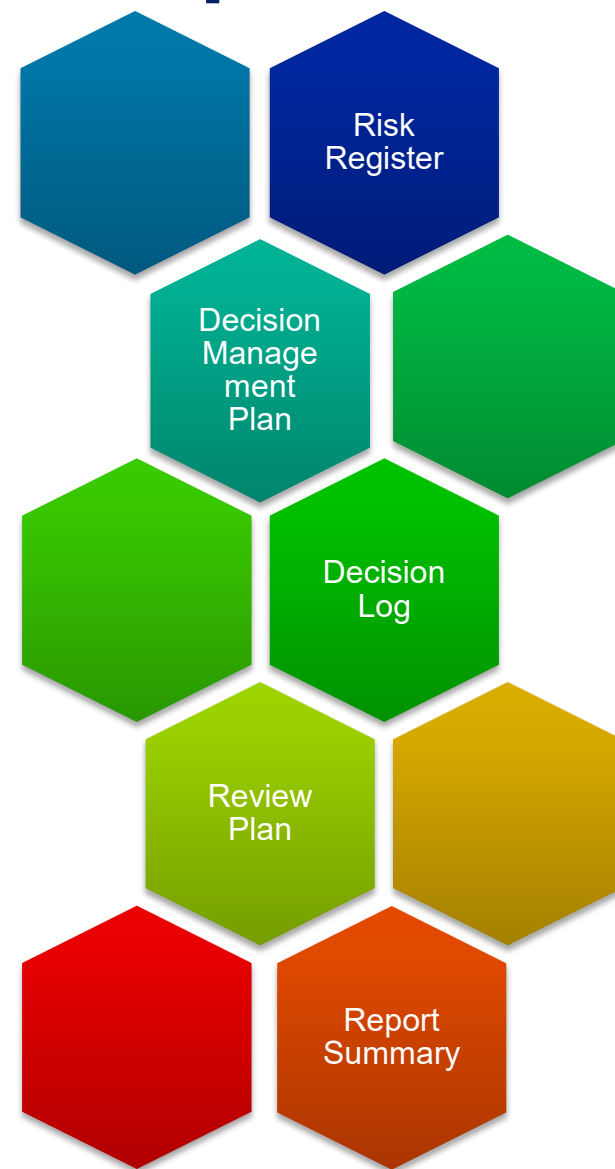
Project Management Plan (PMP) Development

ER 5-1-11 USACE Business Process

- Each project is managed under a PMP
- Living document that is updated as conditions change

Support PM function – PDT members should know how their work will be used by other disciplines to shape its level of detail, format and delivery date.

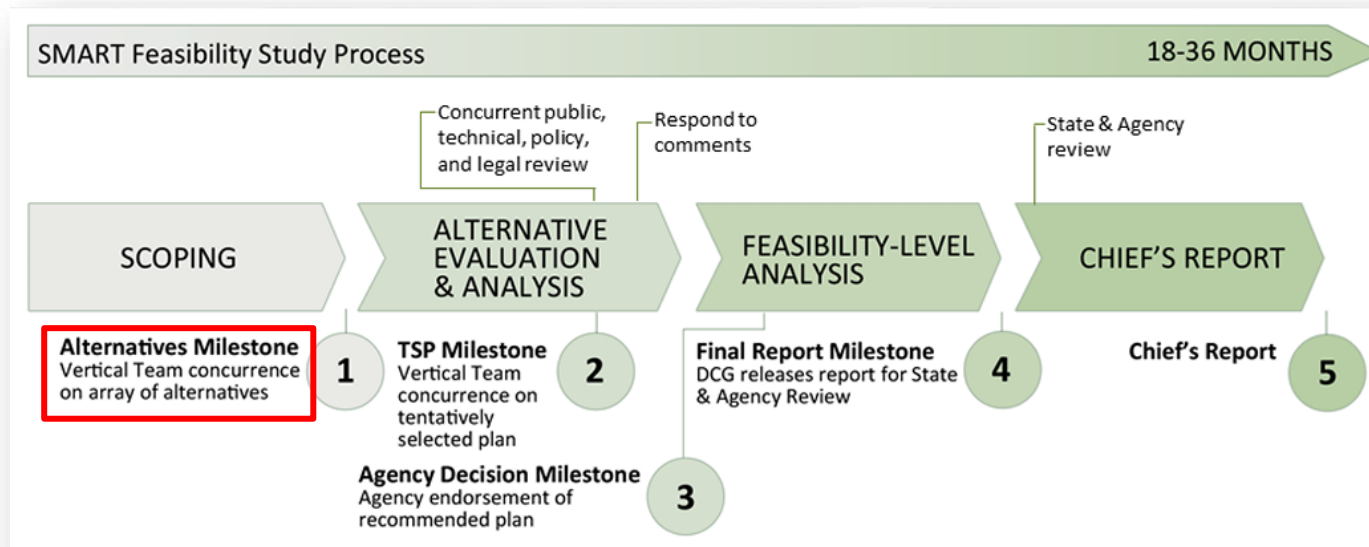
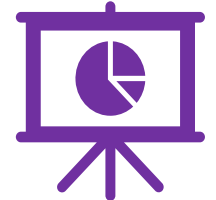
Critical role for planner – Utilize Risk Informed Planning to clarify risks and uncertainties for prioritizing schedule and budget





Preparing for Alternative Milestone Meeting (AMM)

- Obtain PCX endorsement of the Review Plan (RP should not be approved until after AMM)
- Ensure all requirements of EP1105-2-61 are followed
- Submit Read Ahead Materials (RAHMs) for AMM one/two week prior:
 - Report Summary
 - Study Issue Checklist
 - Slide deck
- Hold AMM





VERTICAL TEAM ALIGNMENT MEMO (VTAM)

VTAM purpose

- Ensure develop of adequate study scope
- Establish a realistic schedule and budget early in the study process
- And actively manage towards achieving the schedule and budget
- PMP integral part of VTAM package
- Vehicle for 3x3x3 waiver request

Lead planner works with PM and MSC point of contact



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WASHINGTON, DC 20314-1000

DPM CW 2019-02

02 July 2019

DIRECTOR'S POLICY MEMORANDUM FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2019

SUBJECT: Operationalizing Risk-Informed Decision Making in Project Management (Planning Phase)

1. References.

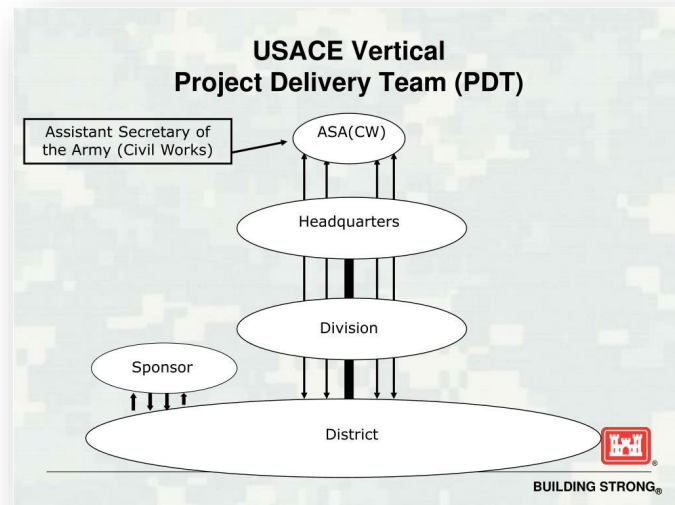
- a. Engineer Regulation (ER) 5-1-11, USACE Business Process
https://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Users/227/19/2019/ER_5-1-11.pdf?ver=2018-09-27-142333-540
- b. ER 1105-2-100, Planning Guidance Notebook
https://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Publications/EngineerRegulations/er_1105-2-100.pdf
- c. ER 1165-2-131, Appendix B, Example of Federal and Non-Federal Allocation of Funds
https://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Publications/EngineerRegulations/ER_1165-2-131.pdf
- d. Director's Policy Memorandum (DPM) Civil Works 2018-05, Subject: Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness in USACE Civil Works Project Delivery (Planning Phase and Planning Activities)
https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/library/MemosandLetters/DPMCW201805_ImprovingDelivery.pdf
- e. Engineer Construction Bulletin 2018-15, Technical Lead for E&C Deliverables
<http://www.wbdg.org/ffc/dod/engineering-and-construction-bulletins-ecb/usace-ecb-2018-15>
- f. Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration
<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll5/id/1375/>



Vertical Team Engagement

SMART Planning: 3x3x3 Rule

Complete feasibility studies within 3 years, at a cost of no more than \$3M, and with all 3 tier levels of the Corps engaged:



VTAM [PCX also part of VTAM engagement]

In Progress Reviews (IPRs)

Tier meetings (Mega Study Projects)

- Tier 1, 2, and 3 Panels
- Monthly Tier 3 meetings

White papers

Memorandums for Record (MFRs)

- Record of decisions made, study risks, guidance needed

Coordination for Review Teams



AMM to Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)

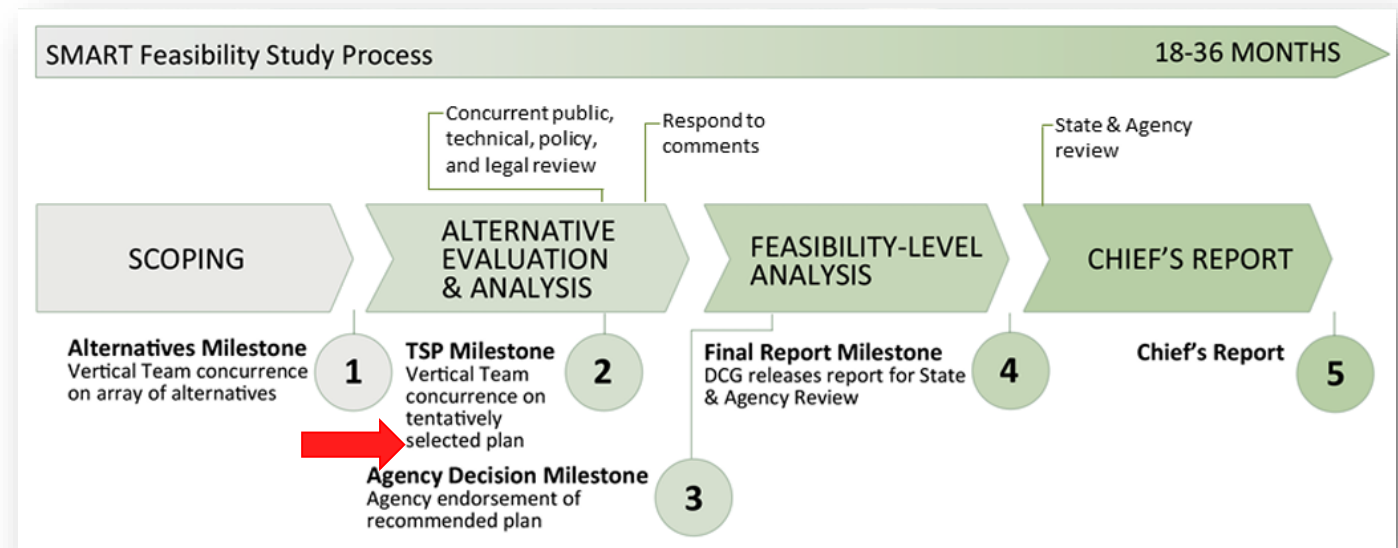
Continue with scoping / Updating POOCs / and updated PMP

Assist with **connecting PDT members** so folks understand how others use their work

Report Production – Support and guide technical team, include tools to maximize efficiency and meeting schedules, to support how the PM manages schedule

Required materials for all milestones (one/two week prior to milestone meeting):

- Report Summary
- Study Issue Checklist
- Final Draft District slide deck





REPORT PRODUCTION TIPS AND TRICKS

Main Report Consistency

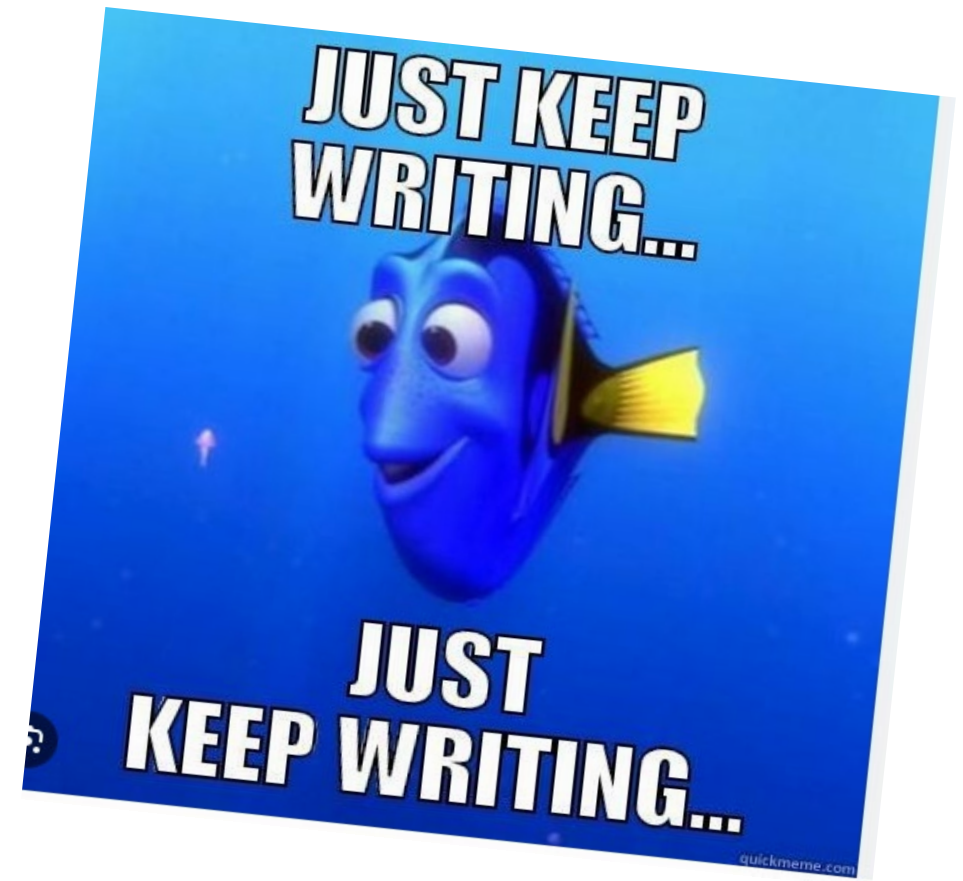
- Assign a LEAD writer – consolidator (the lead planner)
- Get organized up front – annotated outline
- Edit! (and time for editing!)
- Tell the story!
- Use visuals

Study Issue Checklists (planning toolbox)

Report Tracking sheet

Formatting

508 Compliance



What else?



TSP to Agency Decision Milestone

TSP: PDT presents tentatively selected plan and obtains VT concurrence

Public review

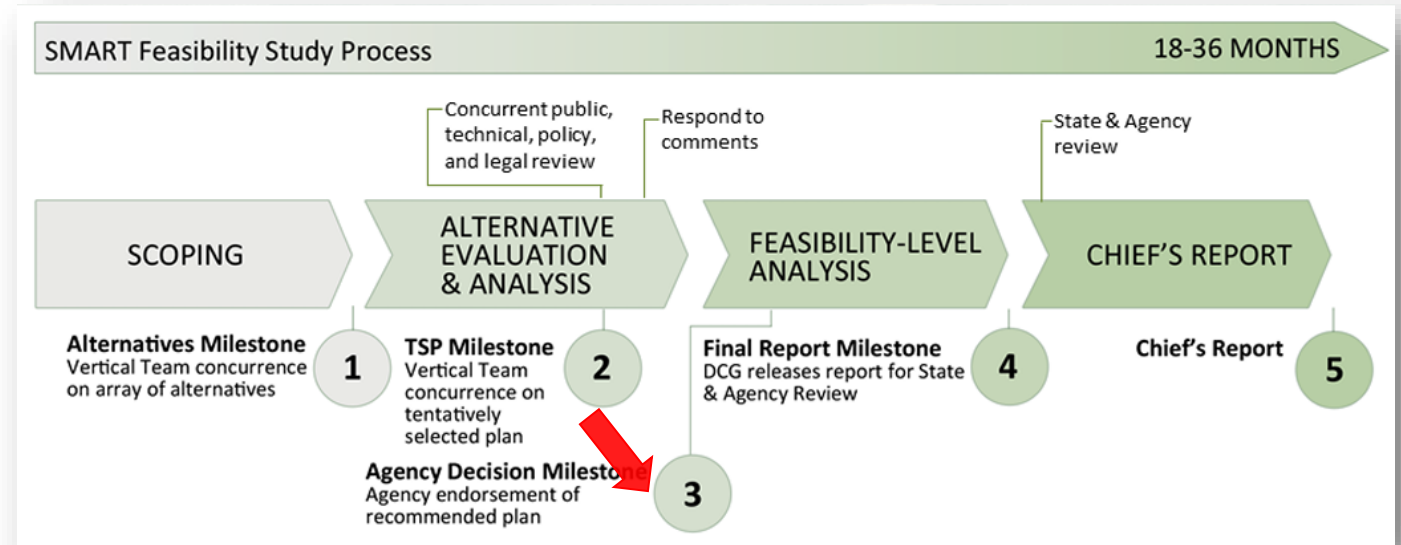
Review champion! Ensure successful reviews. Close coordination with DQC lead / ATR lead / Review Manager /IEPR team

Updating documents based on review comments

- Ensuring teammates recognize when their updates impact others
- Consistency / cross check appendices with main report
- Helpful to ask for teammate's changes with one "clean" version and one "tracked changes" version

Public meetings / support public comment response

Prep for ADM





ADM to Final Report Submittal

Endorsement of recommended plan; discussion of Risks

Document management

- Back up copies of main report and appendices received from team
- Dates of document versions – tracked changes is key
- Limit number of people working on one document at the same time for version control

Submittal package

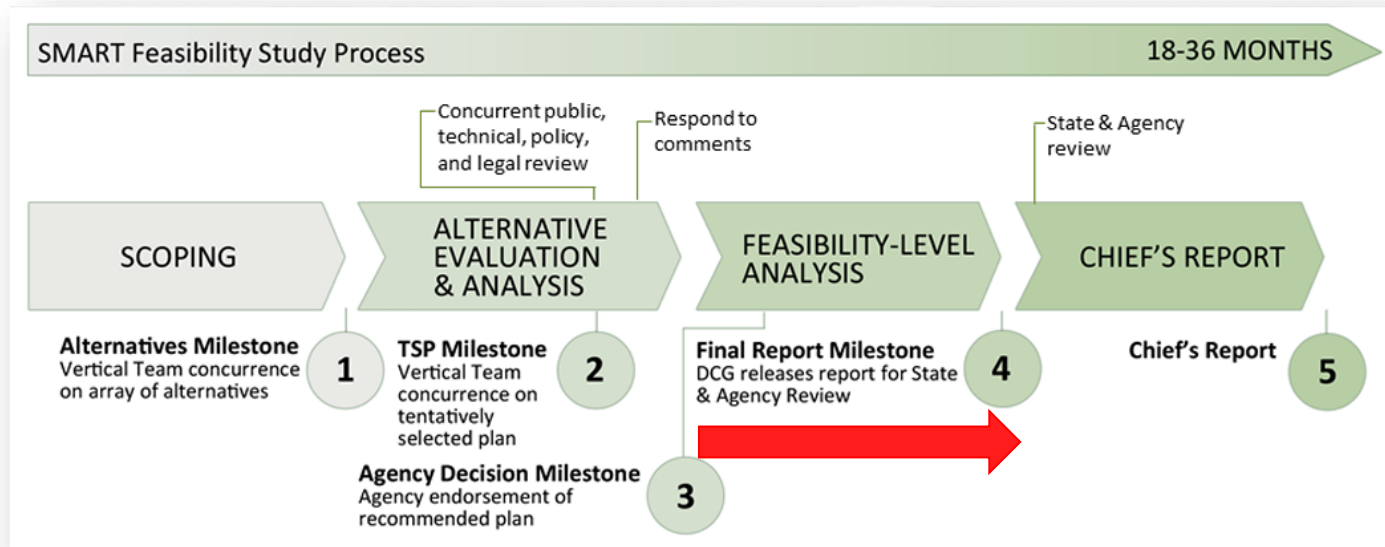
- Checklists

Track final updates

- Any changes from one team member can have a trickle effect. Ensure proper dissemination of data and cross check.

Final Policy Review

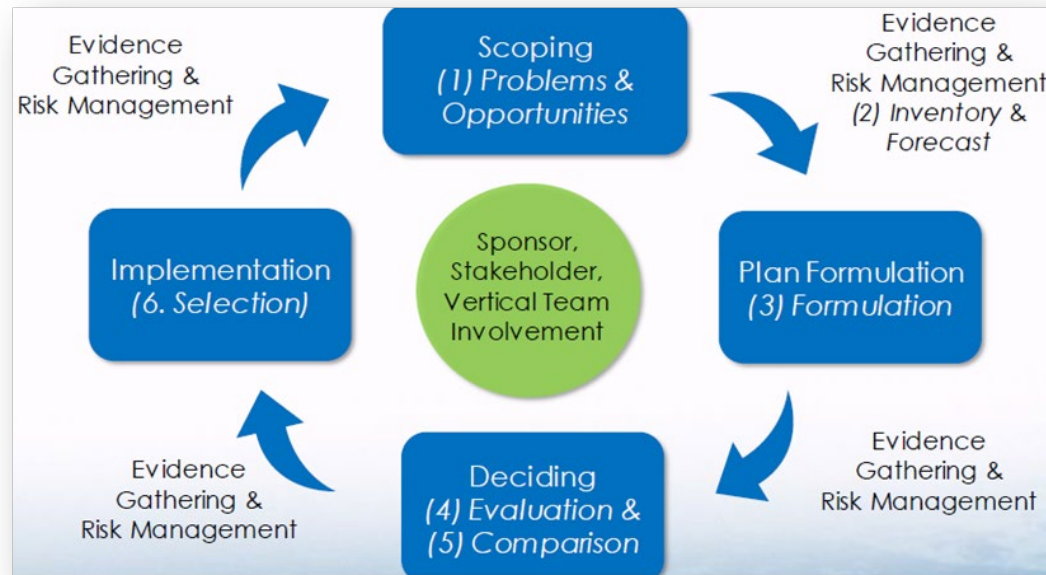
- Policy Guidance Memorandum comments and edits



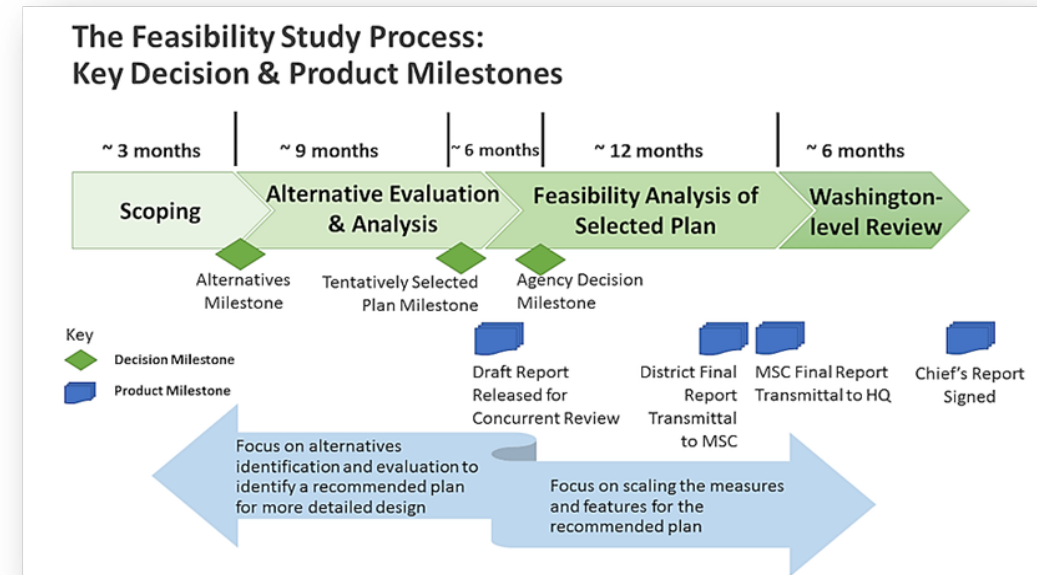


SUMMARY

- Leader of the study team through the **six-step Corps planning process** with a focus on the third step (formulate alternative plans).
- Guide team through the planning process and navigate the planning policies and procedures



Planning Process



Feasibility Milestones



ROLE OF THE LEAD PLANNER – SUMMARY

- Plan Formulators:
 - Lead the study team through the six-step planning process
 - Need to be experts in the overall process and knowledgeable about the specifics of each step
- A Lead Planner, in general, will:
 - Write the main report & oversee the writing of the appendices to ensure consistency
 - “Process” the report through the policy-review process
 - Prepare for the scoping meeting, AMM, TSP, ADM briefing and other related checkpoints
 - Prepare for public meetings and many other forms of public involvement
 - Coordinate with other agencies, including environmental agencies, public interest groups and local officials
 - Ensure a multidisciplinary look at potential measures and plans while ensuring planning guidance is followed
 - Ensure that laws that give authority for each purpose are followed
 - Prepare necessary Congressional testimony about the study and recommended project

Questions?



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References

1. Planning toolbox
2. Planning Primer (add links)
3. Planning Manual
4. IWR Planning Manual Part 2
5. Final Report Submittal PCoP Webinar
6. Planning Guidance Notebook ER 1105-2-100 – new EPs
7. **Acronyms:** [extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://planning.erd.c.dren.mil/toolbox/library/Misc/plan_acro.pdf](https://planning.erd.c.dren.mil/toolbox/library/Misc/plan_acro.pdf)



PLANNING STUDY TASKS

Planning Study Tasks	Planning Lead	PM	Tech Lead
Draft FCSA	X	X	
Determine organizational structure of documents	X	X	
Identify steps that inform budget and schedule - to include critical items such as ROE, surveys, permits, etc. Life safety risk analysis	X		X
Facilitate rapid iteration	X		
Create Risk Register and document decisions	X	X	X
Ensure consistency with naming convention between disciplines	X	X	X
House master spreadsheet for footprint, quantities, access, LERRD			X
House master sheet for authority, location, POOCs	X		
Set up agenda and organize scoping charrette	X	X	
Organize public Scoping Meetings	X	X	
Facilitate public scoping meeting	X	X	
Identify purpose and PDT members for site visit	X	X	
Create meeting agendas	X	X	
Create meeting notes and due outs	X	X	
Create PMP	X	X	X
Create RP	X		X
Route PMP		X	



PLANNING STUDY TASKS CONT.

Planning Study Tasks	Planning Lead	PM	Tech Lead
Identify DQC team with lead	X	X	X
Identify ATR team with lead	X	X	X
Identify PL&C lead	X		
Coordinate RP with RMO	X		
Set up Dr. Checks		X	
Evaluate existing and FWOP scenarios and identify unknowns	X		X
Set up AMM meeting, ensure correct people are on call		X	
Create AMM RAH	X		
Facilitate alternative creation	X		
Design and analyze alternatives			X
Ensure engineering requirements are met for design, cost, climate, HTRW, H&H, WQ, survey, life safety, cost			X
Ensure requirements are met for cultural, tribal, EJ, NEPA, economics	X		
Identify benefits from all accounts of alternatives	X	X	X
Collect, organize information for report	X		
Conduct PDT/Editorial Review	X	X	X
Create charge/slides for DQC/District Legal Review	X		
Communicate with DQC/Legal to close comments and certify		X	