



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
441 G STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20314-1000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CECW-ZA

24 February, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR Major Subordinate Commanders

SUBJECT: Planning Study Policy Compliance

1. References:

- a. ER 1105-2-100, Planning Guidance Notebook
- b. EC 1165-2-214, Civil Works Review

2. The Civil Works Program is undergoing a transformation initiative to better align our project development processes with national priorities in order to optimize how we address the water resources challenges and needs of the Nation. The demands on the Nation's water resources are growing much faster than the availability of financial resources to address these needs and thus delivering quality products and services that appropriately address these needs in a timely and cost-effective manner is vital to the Corps ability to properly execute our responsibilities. As a result, we are compelled to focus on the highest performing programs and projects within the most important water resource missions of the Corps: commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, and aquatic ecosystem restoration, as well as hydropower. This must be accomplished in concert with the creation of savings, efficiencies and the reduction of duplicative and lower-priority programs.

3. The Corps of Engineers has made great progress in our efforts to improve and execute a reliable and responsive Investigations program via Planning Modernization. A key reason that Planning Modernization was developed is that our partners, stakeholders, and policy makers had lost confidence in the ability of the Corps to deliver on its planning commitments. We have multiple instances of planning studies lingering on indecisively for multiple decades and costing tens of millions of taxpayer dollars, with no confidence in our ability to bring these long-enduring studies to a clear conclusion – either a Chief's Report recommending consideration for construction authorization and budgeting, or termination.

4. As we work together to advance implementation of the Planning Modernization component of Civil Works Transformation, it is important that all USACE Leaders involved in producing planning studies understand that strictly adhering to Civil Works policies, procedures and standards is critical to developing a technically sound, policy compliant basis for making recommendations that support the national interest. Many recent study coordination and completion efforts have made it clear that such an understanding has not completely penetrated throughout the USACE enterprise.

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5. The purpose of Corps Planning studies is simple: to develop the data and information associated with water resource problems to a sufficient level of analysis that the Chief of Engineers can make supportable investment recommendations to the Administration and the Congress. In essence, all studies must comply with key planning modernization principles across the entire USACE enterprise at all echelons, at all times. Those principles include clearly defined objectives; well understood and risk-informed schedule commitments that are confidently executable; well followed Program Management Business Process principles; well defined and executed Quality Assurance roles and responsibilities; and consistent application of Planning Modernization principles across the entire enterprise. Lastly, consistent and policy-compliant communication with stakeholders, partners, and policy makers in both Congress and the Administration is imperative in order to ensure our reputation as an agency that is reliable and trustworthy. It is only by rigorously applying these principles that we can serve the Nation and justify the purpose of the Corps of Engineers' Study Program, so it is essential that all Corps leaders strictly adhere to each of these principles at all times.

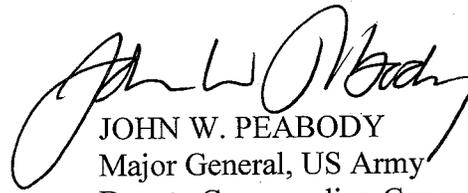
6. It is especially essential that division and district commanders, as well as their senior staff fully apply and rigorously enforce established Civil Works policy and procedures in order to align expectations between sponsors, USACE Headquarters, Division and Districts.. Over the past several years, we have seen multiple instances where division and district leaders – in a well-intentioned effort to support the desires and opinions of local sponsors, stakeholders, or political leaders, attempt to add on additional requirements to planning studies after the final report has been completed. Even more concerning, there have been a few instances where division or district leaders have advocated deviating from study objectives, or advocated study alternatives unjustified by objective data and analysis, due to political pressure. While political realities are an inherent part of the environment in which the Corps operates, no person assigned to the Corps has the authority to make policy judgments outside the realm of technical competencies and authorities specifically delegated to the Corps.

7. In order to address these concerns, I am directing that each MSC Commander review internal guidance related to planning study completion, institute appropriate mechanisms to ensure compliance with all study policy standards, and not later than 1 April 2014 provide me a written summary of those actions. In addition, I would appreciate any specific recommendations from MSC Commanders on how Headquarters Planning and Policy staff can improve current study completion support practices and / or Planning Modernization as part of that written summary. By the end of April, we will hold a virtual meeting with all MSC Commanders or their designated representatives (no lower than SES grade) to discuss best practices to implement this directive and ways to further improve Planning Modernization. The quality of your MSC study plans and execution, just as the quality of the vertical team policy integration review, directly affects how well we achieve USACE-wide success in Civil Works Transformation and Planning Modernization. In order for us to successfully transform Civil Works, it is imperative that we all work together in complete compliance with policies and business standards, and that we hold each other “360 degrees accountable” to implement this significant paradigm shift.

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8. I am honored to be the DCG-CEO during this challenging period in the Corps Civil Works Program history. I look forward to your support and collaboration in keeping the Civil Works Program focused on viable investigations and the delivery of quality projects that are objectively justified on their technical merits. The point of contact for this directive is Mr. Theodore Brown, Chief of Planning and Policy, who can be reached at 202-761-0115 or Theodore.A.Brown@usace.army.mil.

Building Strong!



JOHN W. PEABODY
Major General, US Army
Deputy Commanding General
for Civil and Emergency Operations

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