

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS AND DISTRICT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Planning Guidance Memorandum 99-01 -- Reconnaissance Phase Guidance

1. Purpose. This letter provides implementation guidance for the reconnaissance phase. The objective is to streamline procedures for completing the reconnaissance phase. This guidance will be incorporated into the next revision of ER 1105-2-100, Guidance for Conducting Civil Works Planning Studies. This memorandum supersedes Planning Guidance Letter 96-3.
2. Applicability. This memorandum applies to all reconnaissance studies initiated in or after Fiscal Year 2000 and is optional for all Fiscal Year 1999 reconnaissance studies
3. Reconnaissance Study Tasks. The Reconnaissance Study phase shall accomplish the following six essential tasks:
 - a. Determine if the water resource problem(s) warrant Federal participation in feasibility studies. Defer comprehensive review of other problems and opportunities to feasibility studies;
 - b. Define the Federal interest based on a preliminary appraisal consistent with Army policies, costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of identified potential project alternatives;
 - c. Complete a 905(b) Analysis (Reconnaissance Report);
 - d. Prepare a Project Study Plan (PSP);
 - e. Assess the level of interest and support from non-Federal entities in the identified potential solutions and cost-sharing of feasibility phase and construction. A letter of intent from the local sponsor stating the willingness to pursue the cost shared feasibility study described in the PSP and to share in the costs of construction is required; and
 - f. Negotiate and execute a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA).
4. Reconnaissance Study Requirements.
 - a. The Reconnaissance Study will address the requirements of Section 905(b) of the WRDA 86, as amended. This provision requires that the reconnaissance study will include an analysis of the

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Federal interest, costs, benefits, environmental impacts of proposed action(s); and an estimate of the costs of preparing the feasibility report.

b. The expedited reconnaissance study will generally cost no more than \$100,000 and should be completed as expeditiously and efficiently as possible. By law, the duration of the reconnaissance phase shall normally be no more than 12 months and in all cases is to be limited to eighteen months.

c. The concept of developing a project study plan (PSP) to guide the feasibility study is an essential task in the Reconnaissance Phase and is critical to cost shared feasibility study negotiations. The PSP will be the initial component of the Project Management Plan (PMP). The PSP supports the FCSA and is the district's management document. The PSP shall be developed in accordance with guidance provided in EC 1105-2-208. The requirement to submit the PSP to HQUSACE for approval as stated in Paragraph 7 of EC 1105-2-208 is rescinded. However, upon completion of the PSP, two copies shall be submitted to Headquarters, attention CECW-P for information. Divisions will ensure that the PSP receives appropriate QA/QC review.

d. Existing, readily-available data should be used during the Reconnaissance Study. Sponsor, other agency, State, and local government sources of available data will be used to the maximum extent possible.

e. The accomplishment of Tasks 3a and 3b, shall be based on professional and technical judgement, utilizing an experienced study team. Special attention will be given to identifying the problem, project purposes, types of outputs, and whether the intended project purpose and/or likely outputs are consistent with Army/Corps implementation and budgetary policies.

f. Sound judgment and limited analytical approaches should be employed during the Reconnaissance Study and the principles of Principles and Guidelines (P&G) justification will be followed. However, following the detailed procedures for conducting economic and environmental analyses, as outlined in P&G and Corps regulations based on P&G, is not required. Economic and environmental investigations should be limited to assessments of benefits and costs of a limited number of potential solutions, in sufficient detail to indicate that Corps participation is warranted. The economic assessment should describe the existing conditions, and potential magnitude and types of benefits from proposed actions. Likewise, the environmental assessment should describe existing conditions, effects of potential measures, and the likely requirement for mitigation.

g. To keep the Reconnaissance Study focused, costs low, and duration short, the following items are not required as part of the reconnaissance studies: (1) development and formalized displays of detailed cost estimates (such as MCACES); (2) detailed engineering and design studies and data gathering; (3) detailed environmental resources evaluations; (4) optimization and benefit-cost

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analyses; (5) detailed real estate information; (6) report preparation; (7) formal coordination with other Federal and state agencies; and (8) other studies not directly needed to support the essential tasks required in paragraph 2 above.

h. As part of the Section 905(b) (WRDA 86) Analysis, the district will describe the major feasibility phase assumptions that will provide the basis for the study, discussion of alternatives that will be considered, and estimate of feasibility study cost and schedule. The Section 905(b) (WRDA 86) Analysis format that is enclosed provides the minimum requirements for Headquarters review and approval, and a sample set of assumptions.

5. Reconnaissance Phase Procedures.

a. A Section 905(b) (WRDA 86) Analysis, as described in paragraph 3 above, is to be used as the basis for making the decision to proceed or to not proceed into the feasibility phase. The Section 905(b) (WRDA 86) Analysis should be submitted to HQUSACE for review and approval as early as possible in the reconnaissance phase. The PSP discussions with the non-Federal sponsor should be initiated at the start of the study phase and should be continuous throughout the study phase.

b. After Headquarters approval of the 905(b) analysis and letter of intent and upon completion of PSP negotiation and approval of any requested deviations to the model FCSA, the district may execute the Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement, which would then conclude the reconnaissance phase and initiates the feasibility phase.

6. Cost Limits. The \$100,000 expedited reconnaissance study is an important means to initiate quality feasibility studies more quickly and at less cost. However, the \$100,000 expedited reconnaissance studies may not be the most effective means to initiate every feasibility study. Districts may request exceptions to the \$100,000 cost limit of the Expedited Reconnaissance Study. The justifications for exceptions must be submitted with the request to CECW-P for review and approval.

7. Implementation. This guidance letter is effective immediately.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

/s/

RUSSELL L. FUHRMAN
Major General, USA
Director of Civil Works

Section 905(b) (WRDA 86) Analysis

1. **STUDY AUTHORITY.** Include the full text of principal resolution(s) and/or other study authorities. Provide study funding summary including budget and appropriation history.

2. **STUDY PURPOSE.**

3. **LOCATION OF PROJECT/CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT.**

4. **DISCUSSION OF PRIOR STUDIES, REPORTS AND EXISTING WATER PROJECTS.**

5. **PLAN FORMULATION.**

a. **Identified problems:** Provide assessment of water and related land resources problems and opportunities specific to the study area. The following information is required: (1) Existing conditions; (2) Expected future conditions; (3) Planning constraints and planning objectives; and (4) Concise statements of specific problems and opportunities with emphasis on problems warranting Federal participation in the feasibility study.

b. **Alternative plans:** Description and discussion of the likely array of alternatives to be developed in the feasibility phase.

c. **Preliminary evaluation of alternatives:** Description and discussion of the likely benefits, costs, and environmental impacts and outputs for each alternative analyzed.

6. **FEDERAL INTEREST.** Define the Federal interest based on a preliminary appraisal consistent with Army policies, costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of identified potential project alternatives.

7. **PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL ANALYSIS.** The 905(b) analysis should be accompanied by a letter of intent from the local sponsor stating its willingness to pursue the feasibility study described in the 905(b) analysis and to share in its cost and the cost of project construction.

8. **SUMMARY OF FEASIBILITY STUDY ASSUMPTIONS.** The summary will describe the normal assumptions used for formulation, evaluation, coordination, and reporting procedures described in ER 1105-2-100, ER 200-2-2, and related planning phase guidance. The summary should highlight any anticipated deviations from the normal feasibility phase requirements. See Attachment I for a sample set of feasibility study assumptions.

9. **FEASIBILITY PHASE MILESTONES.** See Attachment II for a sample list of milestones.

10. **FEASIBILITY PHASE COST ESTIMATE.** See Attachment III for a sample cost estimate table.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS. Recommend whether to continue to a feasibility study or not, based on consistency with Army and budgetary policies and likelihood of a project meeting criteria for Federal participation in project implementation.

12. POTENTIAL ISSUES EFFECTING INITIATION OF FEASIBILITY PHASE. Discussion on any potential issues which may affect the initiation of the feasibility phase or project implementation.

13. VIEWS OF OTHER RESOURCE AGENCIES (if known).

14. PROJECT AREA MAP

(District Engineer Signature Block)

Enclosure

Sample Assumptions Pertaining to an Environmental Restoration Feasibility Study

1. The resulting document will be a combined EIS/EIR prepared by the local sponsor combined (but not integrated) with the Feasibility Report prepared by the Corps. The Feasibility Report will rely heavily on the NEPA/CEQA document as a reference.
2. The document will address the project as an independent project that does not rely on other projects (describe), but which could benefit from other projects through an accelerated realization of the anticipated environmental outputs.
3. The schedule assumes that ongoing activities (describe) will result in a clean enough site for R/E to assign a land value appropriate for some type of highest and best use in order to predict how the properties will ultimately be zoned.
4. The schedule assumes that the property will be available for wetland restoration (as scheduled) by January 2000.
5. The Feasibility Report will be based on a package of engineering information provided by the Local Sponsor. An Engineering Appendix will not be prepared by the Corps. The engineering information provided by the Local Sponsor will be reviewed by the relevant district sections. The schedule assumes that no additional engineering analysis will be necessary, and that no major revision to the engineering package will be needed.
6. A Draft Coordination Act Report may not be ready by August 1. The Fish and Wildlife Service may be able to prepare a Planning Aid Letter, in which F&W issues and concerns are identified, in time for circulation with the draft report. A HEP analysis will be conducted by FWS and the resulting Habitat Units will be used by the Corps to quantify the environmental output of the proposed project.
7. An MCACES will be performed on the selected plan providing an analysis suitable for a feasibility level study.
8. An approved real estate gross appraisal will not be required for the draft feasibility report.
9. There will be only one conference before the AFB. Due to the need for expedited reviews. The AD FR/EIS/EIR will be provided to HQ before the District and sponsor completes their review of the documents. Issues from the conference will be provided to HQ before the AFB.
10. QC certification of the AFB package (AD FR/EIS/EIR) will not be provided prior to the AFB conference, but will be provided at the conference.
11. The FCSA will be signed after the Public Meeting.

12. There will be no AFB Decision Conference as the decision to have an AFB conference has already been made.
13. An incremental analysis of some sort will be performed by the Corps on information provided by the local sponsor in order to display cost vs. ecological output (benefits). The Feasibility Report will not contain a detailed economics analysis as there are no traditional economic outputs anticipated.
14. Four increments will be analyzed:
 - a. Wetland restoration without the use of dredged material.
 - b. Placement of dredged material to accelerate wetland restoration.
 - c. Wetland restoration at the project site and State Lands properties without the use of dredged material.
 - d. Placement of dredged material at the State Lands property using dredged material to accelerate wetland restoration.
15. All alternatives except the no action alternative will have a goal of creating a mix of 20 percent seasonal wetland and 80 percent tidal marsh. This ratio is a result of interagency input.
16. The report will assume that construction will last a maximum of ten years, after which the levee will be breached regardless of remaining capacity.
17. The report will not address the costs or impacts of the transportation of dredged material into the site. Those costs will be addressed for specific dredging projects. Because the cost of transportation to the site (including unloading) will be less than the cost of ocean disposal, the transportation and unloading costs will be funded by the specific dredging projects. The report will address the site preparation, placement of material, and the levee breaching, as well as O&M and monitoring of the completed project.
18. The schedule assumes that the local sponsor is willing to go along with it and they do not have their own list of conditions that conflict with ours. Discussions on this issue are currently underway.
19. The schedule assumes that the FCSA will be signed prior to HQ approval of the PSP. We need to have HQ concurrence on this ahead of time. The local sponsor is willing to sign the FCSA at this stage provided they agree with the conditions of the draft PSP. At this time we are requesting permission to proceed in this manner.

Sample Environmental Restoration Feasibility Study Milestones

Notice of Intent/ Notice of Initiation of Feasibility Study	February 20
NOI published in FR/Public Notice NOP circulated	February 27
Preliminary draft PSP	March 6
Supervisory and QC review of PDPSP	March 9 - 11
Joint EIS/EIR Scoping Meeting - Public Workshop	March 18
PDPSP reviewed and approved by sponsor Response to QC comments.	March 18 - 20
FCSA signed	March 24
ADFR and ADEIS complete	June 1
Read ahead info for AFB (including admin documents*) to HQ	June 2
M7/M8 - Pre-AFB Conference with sponsor	June 11
Alternative Formulation Briefing	June 25
ADFR and ADEIS review/comment/revision	June 1 - July 24
Print DFR and DEIS	July 27 - 31
Transmit DFR and DEIS to HQ and mail to public/M11	August 3
District submits final report to Division	Jan 99
Division Commander's public notice. Final report submitted by Division to HQ. Initiation of Washington level review.	March 99

*Admin documents made available to HQ; QC and identification of issues to be developed after 11 June pre-AFB meeting between District and sponsor.

FEASIBILITY STUDY COST ESTIMATE EXAMPLE

MAJOR WORK ITEMS	STUDY COST
COST SHARING FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY	
TOTAL STUDY COSTS	
50% FEDERAL SHARE	
Public Involvement	
Environmental Studies	
Economic Studies	
Project Management	
Engineering	
Real Estate Studies	
Model Studies	
Review Contingency	
TOTAL FEDERAL SHARE	
50% SPONSOR SHARE	
IN-KIND SERVICES	
Public Involvement	
Environmental Studies	
Economic Studies	
Project Management	
Engineering	
Real Estate Studies	
Model Studies	
Review Contingency	
Subtotal	
CASH FUNDS	
TOTAL SPONSOR SHARE	