

# The First 90 Days of a New Feasibility Study

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US Army Corps of Engineers  
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# Learning Objectives

- Understanding the new guidance
- List the key activities to be accomplished in the first 90 days of a new feasibility study
- Identify key team members
- Describe key planning tools and how they relate to the decisions to be made in the first 90 days



# The New Single Phase Cost-Shared Feasibility Study

- WRRDA 2014 – Section 1002:  
Consolidation of Studies
  - ▶ Establishes a single phase study process
  - ▶ Applies to all feasibility studies that require specific authorization
  - ▶ Requires new reporting and notification of study schedules. (District Engineer to Non-Fed Interests, MSC to RIT, HQ to Congress)
- <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox>



# “Old Way” / “New Way”

- **“Old Way” – Two Phase Study Process**
  - ▶ First phase – Reconnaissance Phase
  - ▶ Identified a potential non-Federal sponsor who signed a letter of intent
  - ▶ First phase 100% Federally funded (initially \$100k)
  - ▶ Conduct a 905(b) study that establishes whether at least one alternative is in the Federal Interest
  - ▶ Develop a PMP
  - ▶ Negotiate & sign FCSEA to begin the second phase – Feasibility Study
- **“New Way” – Single Phase Study Process**
  - ▶ Eliminates Recon phase and need for 905(b) analysis/report
  - ▶ No Federal funds provided in advance of FCSEA execution
  - ▶ Jump right in and sign FCSEA to develop PMP (scope & schedule) for the Feasibility Study



# Getting the Non-Federal Sponsor to Sign

- “Old Way”
  - ▶ A 905(b) analysis was performed to determine Federal Interest in study prior to non-Federal sponsor signing an FCSA
- “New Way”
  - ▶ A preliminary analysis will not be performed on a study prior to FCSA
  - ▶ Need to discuss single-phase study process with non-Federal sponsor to ensure awareness and understanding of signing FCSA



# Importance of Maintaining Relationships

- It is important to develop, nurture, and maintain relationships with stakeholders and potential non-Federal sponsors
  - ▶ Need to understand our new process
  - ▶ Need to be willing to sign a “non-binding” letter of intent
- Sponsor understanding and LOI will be invaluable when you develop a “J-Sheet” for a new start feasibility study
- Both Planner & PM have a vital role and shared responsibility in relationship with Sponsor



# Tools for Getting a Non-Federal Sponsor to Commit

- If you have a relationship with a potential sponsor:
  - ▶ Understands the process
  - ▶ Signed a “non-binding” letter of intent
- Things to have in your back pocket
  - ▶ Example of completed PMP for the business line (FRM, Nav, ER); for meeting milestones.
  - ▶ Use the example PMP to discuss what “work in kind” they might want to do
    - Reminder of importance to be specific to the study – WIK will need to be decision-relevant



# The FCSA

- HQ has developed a new model FCSA. Use it!
- So now you have the FCSA signed...now what?



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# Key Activities in the First 90 Days

SMART Feasibility Study Process

Up to 36 Months

SCOPING  
3-6 months

- Identify study objectives
- Define Problems & Opportunities
- NEPA Scoping
- Inventory & Initial Forecast
- Formulate Alternative Plans
- Evaluate alternatives and identify reasonable array
- Develop PMP and Review Plan
- Initiate Exemption Process **if necessary**

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**Alternatives Milestone**  
Vertical Team concurrence on array of alternatives

ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION & ANALYSIS

**TSP Milestone**  
Vertical Team concurrence on tentatively selected plan

2

**Agency Decision Milestone**  
Agency endorsement of recommended plan

3

Release draft report for concurrent review

FEASIBILITY-LEVEL ANALYSIS

**Civil Works Review Board**  
Release for State & Agency Review

4

DE transmits final report package

CHIEF'S REPORT

**Chief's Report**  
Chief's Report Signed

5

# Key Planning Tools\*

- Charette
- PMP Template
- Review Plan Template
- Risk Register
- Decision Management Plan
- Decision Log
- Report Synopsis



\*Multiple PCoP sessions about these tools!



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# Key Activities: Scoping & PMP Development

- Use scoping to...
  - ▶ Gather as much available data and information as you can find
  - ▶ Identify significant resources and concerns
  - ▶ Define purpose & need
  - ▶ Combine or narrow problems & opportunities, measures
    - Integrate scoping with other early planning activities
  - ▶ Identify decision criteria & environmental screening criteria. Ensure significant decision making factors will be addressed and data collection/analysis not addressing criteria are avoided.
  - ▶ Think about model needs. Use certified models if possible.
- Include affected Fed, State, Local agencies, the public, tribes, and other stakeholder groups



# Vertical Team Engagement

- Important to engage subject matter experts early for data sources and potential issues
  - ▶ Internal: Vertical Team, PCX, Other Districts
  - ▶ External: Other Agencies, Industry, Academia
- Confirm assumptions made on FWOP conditions, objectives, model needs, other resources
  - ▶ Helps shape SOW, schedule & budget



# Case Study:

# Seattle Harbor Scoping

- What is required to accomplish each milestone?
  - ▶ Scope within each milestone activity using critical thinking to drive decisions
- Spend greatest energy (time/\$) to scope the highest risk items
  - ▶ What are the “must haves”
- Document risks and verify assumptions
  - ▶ Make conservative assumptions in order to keep moving forward on scope
  - ▶ Determine a timeline for revisiting assumptions to activity manage the iterative study process



# Case Study:

# Seattle Harbor PMP Development

- Prioritize activities based on risk
  - ▶ Seattle Harbor: Sediment sampling analysis & econ data collection needed to start right away
- Leverage Sponsor's expertise
  - ▶ Seattle Harbor: Graphics, printing, sediment sampling analysis
- Contingency managed at project level by PM
  - ▶ Ensure technical disciplines are not putting contingencies on their estimates



# Key Activities: NEPA & Environmental Compliance (Applies to all Studies)

- Scoping meeting
  - ▶ NEPA scoping and project scoping should be a shared activity.
  - ▶ Scoping meeting(s) should serve dual purposes in study development.
- Initial interagency & tribal coordination
  - ▶ ESA and NHPA coordination is initiated through letters to the Agencies and Tribes.
  - ▶ FWCA Coordination is initiated with negotiation of a scope of work and transfer of funds.
- Environmental screening criteria is developed.
- Environmental models are selected for restoration or mitigation.
- Certification and data needs are identified.



# Key Activities: Initial Plan Formulation

- Identify study objectives
- Define problems & opportunities
- Initial inventory & forecast
- Formulation of initial array of alternatives
- Evaluate alternatives & identify a reasonable array

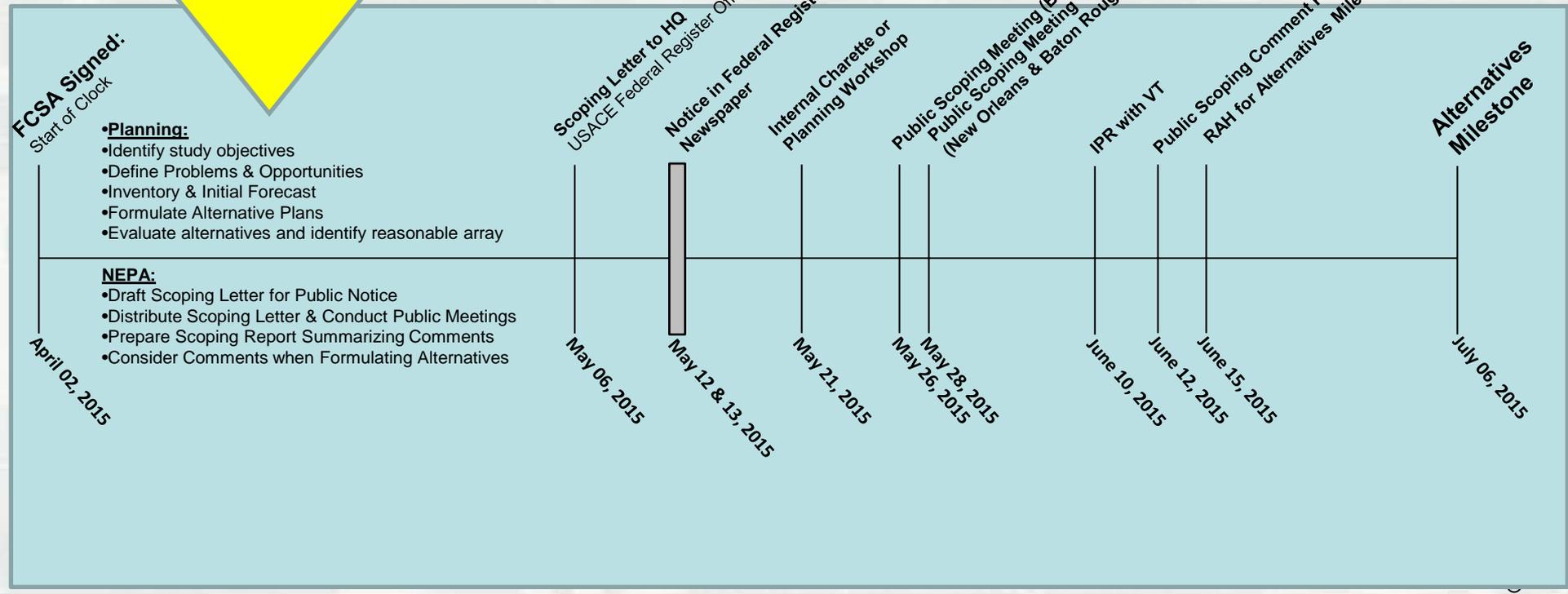
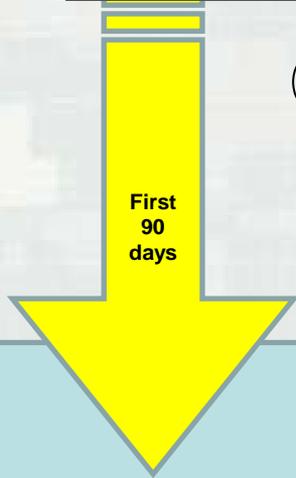


# Alternatives Milestone: Supports Four Assertions

- There is Federal Interest in the problem
- Future without-project conditions are understood
- A representative array of distinctly different solutions has been formulated and will be evaluated
  - ▶ To identify the Tentatively Selected Plan before the next milestone
- The study is likely/unlikely to be compliant with the 3x3 rule (develop a PMP)



# CASE STUDY: Mississippi River Ship Channel - Gulf to Baton Rouge, LA Alternatives Milestone Schedule



# Questions / Discussion

Thank You!



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