



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PLANNING BULLETIN

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Subject: SMART Planning Milestones

Applicability: Guidance; this bulletin expands upon PB 2012-02.

1. The Corps feasibility study process is a progression of multiple planning decisions from study scoping through the final recommendation of the Chief of Engineers. In SMART Planning, five feasibility study milestones mark the vertical team's confirmation and endorsement of decisions (i.e., completed analysis) *and* the decisions to be made (i.e., the path forward); they are not simply the accomplishment of a series of tasks or the development of specific products.
2. The five feasibility study milestones are:
 - a. The Alternatives Milestone.
 - b. The Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone.
 - c. The Agency Decision Milestone.
 - d. The Civil Works Review Board Milestone.
 - e. The Chief's Report Milestone.
3. Alternatives Milestone: The Alternatives Milestone marks vertical team concurrence on the current and future without project conditions and the array of alternatives the Project Delivery Team (PDT) will carry forward for evaluation and comparison to identify the TSP. At this point, the PDT has completed an inventory and forecast of critical resources relative to the problems and opportunities under consideration in the planning area. The PDT has also formulated alternatives and completed an initial screening and preliminary evaluation to develop a focused array. The focused array must represent distinctly different strategies for achieving the water resources objectives in the study area. The vertical team will assess the screening and preliminary evaluation process that has been completed, as well as the criteria and process to be used for evaluation and comparison of the focused array of alternatives. Vertical team concurrence at this milestone does not reflect vertical team agreement on a specific answer or outcome, but on a clear logical formulation and evaluation rationale that indicates the PDT is making appropriate risk-informed decisions following the six-step planning process. The vertical team concurrence may be reached via teleconference, web-meeting, or during a charette or in-person meeting.
4. Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone: The TSP Milestone marks vertical team concurrence on a single plan the PDT will carry forward in the feasibility study and the proposed way forward on developing sufficient cost and design information for the final feasibility report. This does not preclude the PDT from also presenting a Locally Preferred Plan (or other plan). The District Chief of Planning will virtually brief the TSP to the HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy or their designated representative. The decision maker endorses a TSP, the proposed way forward, and the release of the draft report and draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for concurrent public, technical, legal and policy review and independent external peer

review (if applicable). If additional work is needed between the TSP Milestone and the release of the draft report, the release is contingent on District and MSC Planning Chiefs confirmation of the adequacy of the work. Because the PDT is writing the feasibility study report as it goes, and is targeting a 100-page study report, it is expected that a draft feasibility study report will be largely complete by the milestone meeting.

5. Agency Decision Milestone (ADM): After concurrent public, technical, legal and policy reviews, and independent external peer review (if applicable) of the draft report and draft NEPA documentation, the PDT addresses comments and proposes a single plan to Senior Leadership with the proposed way forward on developing cost and design information for the final feasibility study report. The ADM will include a virtual briefing conducted by the District, recommending the TSP/LPP to a Senior HQUSACE Leadership Panel (HQUSACE Chiefs of Planning and Policy Division, Engineering and Construction, Real Estate, and a Regional Integration Team Leader (not representing the presenting Division)). If the recommended plan and path forward is not endorsed, the Decision Log will identify required actions of the team and the study will not proceed into the feasibility-level analysis phase until the Panel endorses the recommended plan. If there are significant changes to the recommended plan that had been presented in the draft report during concurrent review, the public review process may need to be repeated.

6. Civil Works Review Board Milestone: Following the successful submittal of the complete Final Report package to HQUSACE, a Civil Works Review Board (CWRB) will be held a minimum of six weeks later. The CWRB briefing is the corporate checkpoint to determine if the final feasibility report and NEPA document, and the proposed Report of the Chief of Engineers, are ready to be released for State and Agency (S&A) review, as required by the Flood Control Act of 1944, as amended (33 U.S.C. 701-1). Additionally, the CWRB provides command engagement and accountability; presents the Chief's Recommendations to others attending the briefing, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and the Office of Management and Budget; and is an opportunity for HQUSACE engagement with the PDT, District Commander, MSC, and Sponsor. The CWRB is mandatory, but scalable depending on the project and risks involved.

7. Chief's Report Milestone: HQUSACE is responsible for the Chief's Report content and schedule. The S&A and final NEPA reviews are concurrent with HQUSACE's final policy compliance review. The Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) will certify policy compliance after completion of the S&A and NEPA reviews. OWPR will finalize the Chief's Report for the Chief's signature and the Record of Decision for signature by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). After the policy compliance certification has been completed, the Regional Integration Team (RIT) will process the Chief's Report for signature and will schedule briefings for the Director of Civil Works, the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations, and/or the Chief of Engineers, as needed.

8. Pre-Milestone Submittals (Table 1) will be provided to the appropriate Regional Integration Team. The purpose of read ahead material for the Alternative, Tentatively Selected Plan, and Agency Decision Milestones is to inform the vertical team; they are not intended to be submitted for a comment and response review. All significant decisions, identified at a milestone meeting or otherwise requiring vertical team input will be recorded in the Decision Log. Pre-Milestone Submittals include:

a. Report Synopsis: The Report Synopsis describes the important elements of the planning work completed to this point of the study. The synopsis highlights key areas of uncertainty and how it has been addressed in order to manage study risks. The synopsis documents the rationale for PDT decisions and is a living document intended to follow the study through the duration of the planning process. Studies early in development will not

have enough information to complete each section. (Ref. SMART Guide, <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/smart.cfm?Section=8&Part=6>)

b. Decision Management Plan: The Decision Management Plan is a strategic document that describes the work that will be done by the PDT in reaching the next significant planning decision. Vertical team concurrence is vital on the Decision Management Plan. Each Decision Management Plan clearly describes how decision information will be used in the planning process, before the work is actually completed. (Ref. SMART Guide, <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/smart.cfm?Section=8&Part=5>)

c. Risk Register: The Risk Register is an important tool for identifying and managing risks. The risk register is used to assess risks in the specific strategy outlined in the Decision Management Plan, so that the vertical team can make decisions on how those risks are to be managed, during the study and throughout the project life-cycle. The risk register should be used as a guide for decision-making in a timely manner, making and accepting decisions based on information available to the PDT at that time. (Ref. SMART Guide, <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/smart.cfm?Section=8&Part=4>)

d. Decision Log: The decision log is a way for the PDT to document the decisions made to reduce the chances of a dispute arising from unknown decisions and to easily identify decisions that may need to be reevaluated. Vertical team members must sign or initial the Decision Log before an In Progress Review (IPR) or Milestone is concluded. (Ref. SMART Guide, <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/smart.cfm?Section=8&Part=2>)

e. Project Study Issue Checklist: This item is used as a guiding document to determine what major issues must be communicated to the vertical team and what policy risks must be in the Risk Register and Decision Log. This can be found in Exhibit H-2 in ER 1105-2-100, Appendix H.

9. During each milestone meeting, the District will update the Decision Log and write the draft Memorandum for Record (MFR). The draft MFR is simply a written outline of the main points discussed in the meeting and the decisions made. Before the meeting adjourns, the vertical team will concur on the Decision Log and MFR. The District will finalize the MFR within one week of the milestone and submit the signed MFR through the MSC to the Headquarters Regional Integration Team (RIT), along with the supporting Decision Log. If the RIT deems the MFR an accurate representation of the milestone decisions, the RIT will distribute the MFR to all meeting participants.

10. Supersedence: This PB supersedes ER 1105-2-100 Appendix H exhibits H-3, H-4, H-5, H-7, and H-11.

Table 1: Pre-Milestone and Report Submittals

Milestone	Milestone Purpose	To Be Completed Prior to the Milestone	Pre-Milestone Submittals
1. Alternatives	Vertical team concurrence on evaluation criteria and focused array of alternatives.	Study Scope	Report Synopsis
		NEPA Scoping	Decision Management Plan
		Publish NOI ¹	Risk Register
			Decision Log
		Project Study Issue Checklist	
2. TSP	Vertical team concurrence on the TSP/LPP; Chief, Planning and Policy endorsement of TSP/LPP and path forward.	IEPR Exclusion request ¹	Report Synopsis
		DQC of Draft Report	Decision Management Plan
		LPP Waiver ¹	Risk Register
		Legal Sufficiency Review of Draft Report ²	Decision Log
Project Study Issue Checklist			
Required Draft Report Submittals		Draft report/draft NEPA document	
		Decision Log	
		DMP	
		Risk Register	
		Report Synopsis	
		Project Study Issue Checklist	
		Environmental Compliance Status	
		Documentation and certification of peer review	
		District Legal Sufficiency Review	
		M-CACES cost estimate summary, cost risk analysis, and project risk management plan	
3. Agency Decision	Senior HQUSACE leader panel endorsement of the recommended plan that will be the focus of an increased level of design	ATR of Draft Report	Report Synopsis
		Public/Agency Review of Draft Report	Decision Management Plan
		IEPR of Draft Report ³	Risk Register
		Policy Compliance Review of Draft Report	Decision Log
			Project Study Issue Checklist
			Review Summary
		Briefing Presentation	
Required Final Report Submittals		Division Engineer's Transmittal Letter	
		Final report with EIS or EA and appendices	
		Draft ROD or draft FONSI (see Exhibit H-8)	
		Report mailing list	
		Risk Register	
		Decision Management Plan	
		Report Synopsis ⁴	
		Project Study Issue Checklist	
		Documentation and certification of peer review	
		District Legal Sufficiency Review	
		Value Engineer (VE) Statement ⁵ (see ER 11-1-321)	
		Sponsor's signed letter indicating support for the recommended plan	
		Non-Federal Sponsor's Self-Certification of Financial Capability for Agreements	
		Draft Proposed Report of the Chief of Engineers	
		PGM Compliance Memorandum	
M-CACES cost estimate summary, cost risk analysis, and project risk management plan			
Schedule			
ASA (CW)/OMB Briefing Slides (see Exhibit H-10)			

4. CWRB	DCG-CEO releases Final Report for S&A review	Final Integrated Report with Appendices and Supporting Documentation	Cover Page
			Table of Contents
			CWRB Agenda
			List of Expected Attendees
			Project Map
			Decision Log
5. Chief's Report	Chief of Engineers approval of Final Report and signature of Chief's Report.	State & Agency Review Final NEPA Review OWPR Documentation of Review Findings Final HQUSACE Legal Certification Final Policy Compliance Review Chief's Responses to IEPR Comments ¹	Project Study Issue Checklist
			Chief's Report Submittal Package (H-6)
			Final Integrated Report with Appendices and Supporting Documentation

Notes

1. If applicable.
2. Reference 11 Feb 14 memo from Chief Counsel
3. The IEPR panel has up to 60 days after the end of the public review of the draft to submit its report, and longer at the discretion of the Chief. Final IEPR report may not be completed yet.
4. Replaces the Report Summary from Appendix H. An example of the Report Synopsis at this stage can be found on the SMART Guide
5. Reference ECB 2013-21

11. For questions about SMART Planning Milestones, please contact your Regional Integration Team to coordinate with the Planning Community of Practice.



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