



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PLANNING BULLETIN

No. PB 2015-01

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Subject: Vertical Team Alignment in Study Scoping

Applicability: This guidance is effective immediately and applies to all feasibility studies including general re-evaluation reports, post authorization studies requiring Washington level review and watershed studies.

1. **Background.** A key component of the SMART planning process requires active communication and integration of key vertical team members prior to key study decisions, focusing on the decisions made to move the study ahead. To meet this requirement a coordinated USACE District, Division, and Headquarters vertical team will be deployed throughout the project development process in a one-Corps approach to identify and resolve policy, technical, and legal issues early in the process. Vertical team coordination and alignment on each study's progress and continued advancement is intended to make better use of appropriate Corps personnel and resources throughout a study.
2. **Scoping.** Whether a study is an existing feasibility study that needs to rescope to be policy compliant, a new start feasibility study, or a watershed study, the main information identified during the scoping phase remains the same:
 - Agreement on the problem to be addressed, the Corps' authorities and role, and conceptual agreement on the scale of the project.
 - Preliminary inventory and forecast of future conditions with readily available data and information.
 - Identification of key areas of uncertainty that will impact the study and the project formulation.
 - Initial identification of the decision criteria that will be used to formulate, compare and select alternatives.
 - Initial formulation of alternative plans based on critical thinking and professional expertise.
3. **Feasibility and Watershed Studies.** Since the District Quality Control (DQC) team and the MSC are engaged in the development of the scope for feasibility studies, and responsible for ensuring that a policy compliant scope of work is developed, participation by the HQUSACE policy review team in scope development is redundant. Instead, vertical team alignment on these study scopes of work will be attained through coordination among the Chief, Office of Water Project Review (OWPR), the Regional Integration Team (RIT) Planner, and the District and MSC Planning Chiefs. The results of the coordination will support the Compliance Memorandum required by PB 2014-01 and signed by the MSC Chief of Planning & Policy.
4. **Read Ahead Materials.** In advance of the coordination, the MSC Chief of Planning & Policy will provide a read ahead package to the RIT. For feasibility studies, the read ahead material will confirm that the PDT has developed an acceptable study scope that

can be completed within schedule and budget restrictions. For watershed studies, the read ahead material will confirm that the PDT has developed an acceptable study scope that applies the right level of detail and the current planning principles to the watershed study. The read ahead package is logged in with OWPR (electronic is acceptable) and will include: 1) a short background on the need for the study and the sponsor support. A Report Synopsis will suffice if available; 2) a project management plan (PMP) that describes the path to completion of the study; 3) a table that displays the study budget; 4) a table that displays the study milestones; and 5) a Risk Register or similar tool identifying and evaluating the potential risks of the study plan. It is expected that these materials are readily available.

5. **Exemptions.** All studies requiring an exemption to the 3x3x3 rule must submit a request as outlined in PB 2012-04 (11 January 2013 Reissue).
6. **Legacy studies.** Following the Legacy Summit of 26-27 August 2014, any change to the agreed upon scope and schedule of a Legacy study must be approved by the DCW and DCG-CEO. Approval for change will be requested in writing by the District Commander and endorsed to the Senior Leaders Panel by the MSC Commander. The request is provided through the Regional Integration Team (RIT) to the DCG-CEO and DCW with a copy to CECW-P.

Point of contact for vertical team alignment is Ms. Sue Hughes, 202-761-4121.



THEODORE A. BROWN, P.E.
Chief, Planning and Policy Division
Directorate of Civil Works