

## **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone**

1. SOP Purpose. This SOP describes procedures and requirements for preparing for and conducting a Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone (TSP) for feasibility and post-authorization studies. This SOP was developed to provide guidance for Project Delivery Teams (PDT) and the Vertical Team (VT) approaching the TSP Milestone. Once these procedures are finalized, they will be released as guidance in a Planning Bulletin.

2. General.

a. TSP Purpose. The TSP Milestone meeting confirms that the VT has aligned on the TSP or the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) that will be released as part of the draft feasibility study report for public and technical review and concurs with the analysis the PDT used to reach that decision.

b. Readiness for TSP. The TSP milestone builds on the Alternatives Milestone by focusing on the evaluation, comparison and selection of a TSP or LPP from the focused array of alternatives. Once the VT agrees that the decision criteria and screening mechanisms were appropriately applied to select a TSP/LPP, the district may request to schedule the TSP Milestone meeting. By this Milestone meeting, the draft feasibility report has been prepared, and if an LPP is being pursued, the district has received the waiver from the ASA(CW). Iterative DQC and MSC QA checks and VT interactions are expected to have addressed the adequacy of the screening criteria, comparison metrics, and draft report content before this Milestone meeting is scheduled.

c. Scheduling the TSP. Once the VT has confirmed that the study is ready for the TSP Milestone, the MSC will coordinate with the district and the Regional Integration Team (RIT) to select the appropriate forum and propose potential dates. The RIT will coordinate within HQUSACE to confirm the date, forum, and Washington-level participation.

d. Participation. The district, MSC, and HQUSACE will participate in the TSP Milestone meeting.

- The district planning chief will provide a brief background on the study and recommendation of the TSP or LPP, discuss significant risks being carried into concurrent review, and the path forward. This briefing may not be delegated below the district planning chief. The PDT is responsible for inviting the Agency Technical Review (ATR) team leader and Outside Eligible Organization (OEO) Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) manager. It is recommended that the PDT strongly encourage the non-federal sponsor to participate in the TSP Milestone meeting.
- MSC participation must include the MSC Chief of Planning and Policy and key

- members of the VT.
  - HQUSACE participants include the RIT and the HQUSACE policy review team (including the review manager).
  - The decision maker is the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy Division or the designated representative.
- e. Forum. The TSP Milestone meeting will be a web meeting with audio conference and/or video teleconference (VTC) capability.
- The district will reserve the web meeting and audio conference / VTC lines and ensure that adequate capacity is established to include district participants, MSC participants, non-federal sponsor, HQUSACE participants, the ATR lead, and the IEPR Manager. The district should reserve a local conference room with appropriate technology to host and participate in the web meeting/VTC.
  - At HQUSACE, the RIT will reserve a conference room for the TSP Milestone meeting, ensure that it includes all necessary equipment (speaker phone, web meeting functionality, VTC capability, projector, etc.), and that the equipment functions properly.
  - MSC participants should reserve a local conference room with appropriate technology to participate in the web meeting/VTC.

### 3. Pre-Conference Submittals and Preparations.

a. The main purpose of the read ahead submittals is to prepare the decision maker for the milestone so that he/she can make an informed decision. Read aheads will not be reviewed by the Office of Water Project Review. Since the read ahead documents should always be kept up to date, the district simply transmits them once the Vertical Team reaches alignment on the TSP and records the alignment in the Decision Log.

b. A minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the TSP Milestone meeting, the district provides the pre-conference submittals to the RIT and MSC. Following a completeness and quality check, the RIT will confirm the TSP Milestone meeting date. If the district does not submit a quality, complete read ahead package two weeks prior to the tentative TSP Milestone meeting date, the meeting will be rescheduled (and will not impact other studies' milestone schedules). All submittals must reflect any changes that occurred between the Alternatives Milestone meeting and the TSP Milestone meeting. The pre-conference submittals include:

- Draft TSP Milestone meeting Agenda (ref. Appendix);
- Report Synopsis with one page abstract;
- Decision Management Plan;
- Risk Register, with summary page of significant risks to be discussed including those that changed since the Alternatives Milestone meeting and the high risks that are expected to be carried forward;
- Project Study Issue Checklist, to be used as a guiding document to determine what

major issues must be communicated to the VT and what policy risks must be in the Risk Register;

- Decision Log that identifies the date and forum that VT alignment on the TSP was reached;
- The district's briefing slides.

c. Examples of the pre-conference submittals are located on the SMART Planning website.

d. The PCoP and IWR are developing an automated workflow in SharePoint to track read ahead and MFR submittals. Further information and guidance on the submittal and tracking of read aheads and MFRs will be provided soon. Note that the Office of Water Project Review only logs in the draft and final reports for studies; they will not log in read ahead material, nor review it and provide comments. It is expected that the VT has been engaged in the development of the read ahead material and that there is corporate agreement on the presented materials.

#### 4. Conference.

a. Presentations will follow the template agenda and will be in the following order:

- Study Purpose/Authority
- Evaluation and Comparison that led to TSP
- TSP/LPP and associated risks
- Path forward (review, budget, schedule)

b. Questions and Discussion. After the presentation has been concluded, the decision maker may ask questions and discuss the project, plan formulation policy issues, national considerations, risk, and the schedule, scope, and cost of the feasibility level analysis phase.

c. Confirmation of the Recommendations.

- A successful TSP Milestone meeting ends with the decision maker endorsing the TSP (or LPP) and recommending the draft report be released for concurrent review. This occurs during the meeting and is documented in the Decision Log. If the decision maker does not endorse the TSP and state that the plan may be released for concurrent review, another TSP Milestone meeting must be scheduled.
- The district will update the Decision Log and write the draft Memorandum for Record (MFR) throughout the meeting. The MFR is simply a written outline of the main points discussed in the meeting and the decisions made. Before the meeting adjourns, the VT and the decision maker will concur on the Decision Log and draft MFR.

#### 5. Actions Subsequent to the TSP Milestone Meeting.

a. Documentation of the TSP Milestone meeting. The district is responsible for documenting the discussions and decisions made at the TSP Milestone meeting. The district will

finalize the MFR within one week of the milestone and submit the signed MFR through the MSC to the 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.

b. Finalizing the draft report. With VT concurrence with the recommendation, it will be a relatively small effort to finalize preparations to release the report for public comment. If additional work is needed between the TSP Milestone meeting and the release of the draft report, the release is contingent on district and MSC Planning Chiefs confirmation of the adequacy of the work. The PDT will be required to provide a level of detail of documentation on the TSP that is commensurate with other alternatives analyzed during this phase. It is expected that limited additional TSP detail will be included for this public draft report. Details related to the selected plan will be developed and evaluated as part of the next phase of the study.

c. Concurrent Review. The PDT will obtain a legal sufficiency review of the draft report prior to release for public, technical and policy review. The MSC is accountable for quality assurance of the entire process. The District Commander is responsible for District Quality Control (DQC) and the technical quality of the draft report before release. Following approval to release the draft report and supporting materials to the public, the District Commander will circulate the draft report and preliminary draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), as appropriate, to agencies, organizations and members of the public known to have an interest in the study. The draft report will simultaneously be released for ATR, IEPR (if applicable), and HQUSACE policy review.

**Appendix: TSP Agenda Template**

PROJECT NAME  
TENTATIVELY SELECTED PLAN MILESTONE - DATE  
AGENDA

\*Audio or Video Conference / Web meeting Information\*

Welcome and Introductions *HQUSACE Chief of Planning & Policy*

Presentation of the TSP (20 minutes) *District Planning Chief*

- Study Purpose/Authority
- Evaluation and Comparison that led to TSP
- TSP/LPP and associated risks

Path forward (review, budget, schedule) (5 minutes) *District Planning Chief*

Comments and Discussion *HQUSACE/MSC/PCX/District*

Endorsement Decision/Release of the Report *HQUSACE Chief of Planning & Policy*

Adjourn