



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CIVIL WORKS
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WASHINGTON DC 20310-0108

SACW

FEB 23 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

SUBJECT: Propelling Project Delivery through Early Actionable Increments for complex water resources problems

1. References:

a. SACW memorandum (Implementation Guidance for Section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, Vertical Integration and Acceleration of Studies as amended by Section 1330(b) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018), 8 March 2019.

b. Policy Memo: Prioritization of Effort in Planning, Design, and Construction of Infrastructure Across the Army Civil Works Program

c. Policy Memo: Realignment of the Investigation Phase and Federal Interest Determination to Ensure Effective Use of Federal Resources

2. Purpose: This memo provides policy direction to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for propelling overall project delivery through early actionable increments for complex water resources problems. Comprehensive solutions to complex water resources problems or large geographies can take more than a decade to study, exceeding statutory cost and limits while conditions on the ground progressively deteriorate. Studies that exceed statutory or policy limits leave communities at risk for an unacceptable period while solutions are being endlessly studied. Delivering timely solutions to communities in need, is a fundamental underpinning of the Civil works program.

a. Complex water resources problems. It is imperative that the Corps investigations, no matter the complexity or involved geography, be completed within 3 years and \$3M, to drive project implementation and realization of project benefits. Requests for additional resources beyond 3 years and \$3M should be by exception only and within the limits established by law (4 years and \$5M). To ensure resources are focused on projects that will deliver tangible benefits to the American people, it is imperative that studies are scoped to focus on solutions that can be reasonably implemented in a timely manner. While there are several criteria that can lead to a study being considered complex, it is my intent that the bar for meeting these criteria be set high and that studies that meet one or more of these criteria be few and far between. Comprehensive studies may be classified as complex but should be limited in scope such that they can be completed within 3 years and 3M unless specific language is provided by Congress.

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Before requesting additional time or funding beyond the existing legal limits, the Corps must address following factors from Section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, as amended, to be considered for additional time and money. These factors are:

1. the type, size, location, scope, and overall cost of the project;
2. whether the project will use any innovative design or construction techniques;
3. whether the project will require significant action by other Federal, State, or local agencies;
4. whether there is significant public dispute as to the nature or effects of the project; and
5. whether there is significant public dispute as to the economic or environmental costs or benefits of the project.

b. **Design Maturity.** I support LTG Graham's initiative for improving design maturity for investigations, provided the time to achieve such standards does not unnecessarily extend the timeframe for completing studies. Design maturity alone should not be considered a criterion for complexity or a reason to request additional time and/or funding.

c. **Early Actionable Elements.** In the rare circumstance that statutory time and cost limits cannot be met for complex studies, the Corps is directed to propel project delivery through identification of early actionable increments. These early action efforts should be focused on those elements that can be implemented within 3 years and \$3M and that provide the most significant benefits to communities. For example, early actionable elements may include measures to reduce risk to critical infrastructure or national defense, reduce life safety risk, and preserve evacuation routes. Early actionable elements should be identified early in the study process and coordinated with my office.

3. **Initial Implementation Meeting.** The Corps should provide me a briefing NLT 31 March 2026, addressing Corps implementation of this directive. In addition, quarterly briefings will be held thereafter to assess progress on these initiatives and ensure continued momentum on their ongoing implementation.

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4. Questions regarding this implementation guidance should be directed to Robyn Colosimo, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Project Planning and Review at robyn.s.colosimo.civ@army.mil or (703) 614-3977.



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