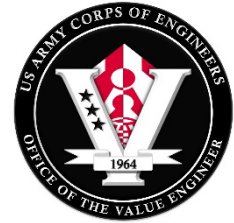




**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Headquarters**



**COVE POLICY LETTER # 2022-02**

**April 1, 2022**

**SUBJECT:** Virtual Studies

- 1) **PURPOSE:** Provide updated guidance on the use of Virtual Studies. This COVE supersedes COVE 2020-04 in its entirety.
- 2) **BACKGROUND:** The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) impacted businesses around the world, including how USACE Value Studies were conducted. At the onset of the travel restrictions, a major shift occurred in the way Value Studies were conducted by industry; they moved from in-person workshops to a virtual platform. As this type of effort was unprecedented on a large scale, USACE mandated tracking and data collection on the quality of virtual studies to determine if this type of format would be a viable long-term solution. After two years of data collection, the results support the decision to implement this strategy as a new tool in the USACE Value Program's toolbox.
- 3) **POLICY:** In addition to in-person workshops, virtual and hybrid workshops are now permitted as a part of doing business moving forward. However, in-person workshops are still the default and preferred format. Decision on this aspect is part of the overall VE strategy determined by a qualified District Value Officer (DVO) in accordance with COVE Policy Letters 2020-03 (Value Program Warrant Authority) and 2021-01 (VE Screening and Strategy Selection Tool).
- 4) **LESSONS LEARNED:** As the DVO makes their determination on in-person, virtual, or hybrid format, considerations should be given to differences between these options. Collected data does not indicate that virtual studies cost less than in-person; the savings of travel funds appears to often be allocated elsewhere. There is often a substantial benefit to having the entire team participate in a pre-workshop meeting to orient everyone to the virtual software and establish ground rules and expectations for virtual participation. Said participation in is more taxing than in-person, and as such the virtual format benefits from more days with a shorter agenda per day (e.g., a six-hour day instead of eight hours). Cameras should be turned on for the duration of the workshop to enhance team building, communication, and limit distractions.
- 5) **IMPLEMENTATION:** This guidance is effective immediately. Any questions should be directed to the undersigned through the OVx at [CDL-All-OVx@usace.army.mil](mailto:CDL-All-OVx@usace.army.mil).

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