



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS, AND  
DISTRICT COMMANDS, DPMS, AND CHIEFS, OPERATIONS DIVISIONS

SUBJECT: WHITE PAPER – OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGERS

1. Enclosed is a White Paper from the Chief of Operations entitled, Operations Project Managers as Keys to the Future Success of our Civil Works Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Program.
2. This White Paper does an excellent job of pointing out the importance of Operations Project Managers and the necessity of using PMBP in managing all projects. I urge you to read this paper and implement as appropriate to ensure effective and consistent execution of O&M Programs.
3. My HQ POC for this issue is George Tabb, (202) 761-1228.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encl

  
DON T. RILEY  
Major General, USA  
Director of Civil Works

White Paper  
Operations Project Managers as Keys to the Future Success of our  
Civil Works O&M Program  
24 June 2005

**Background.**

These are challenging times for the Civil Works O&M program and for the Operations and Regulatory Community of Practice (CoP). With deteriorating infrastructure, decreasing appropriations, and an aging workforce, constant innovation is needed if we are to continue to accomplish our missions. Our Operations Project Managers (OPMs) are crucial, and we must ensure they are properly equipped to achieve success. This white paper outlines some considerations to accomplish that.

- Operations Project Managers – Designation and Role
- Applying PMBP to the O&M Program
- Training and Educating OPMs
  - Success stories/ Lessons Learned
  - OPM Training and Development Program
  - OPM Mentorship

**Operations Project Managers**

• **Designation as Operations Project Managers (OPMs)**

In 1994, the Chief of Engineers required the establishment of a single, fully empowered Operations Project Manager (OPM) responsible for routine O&M activities at each project (or multiple projects), to reduce management layering, delegate decision-making, improve communications, and be more responsive to customer concerns. The single OPM was reinforced in 1998 by the DCW following release of the initial PMBP guidance. These positions have yet to be implemented across the Corps.

In 2001, the Engineer Inspector General inspected the Corps Operations and Maintenance Business Process and found, generally, that PMBP was not fully implemented and that OPMs were not empowered to manage their total programs. Their findings stated, “*USACE districts do not empower OPMs and Operations Managers (OM) to manage their projects.*” Their report recommended that, “*Commanders at all levels direct an organizational review of the O&M program to ensure they comply with the imperatives of ER 5-1-11.*” Although the EIG report did not mandate single OPMs for projects, it clearly emphasized the most efficient and effective projects throughout the Corps were those with a single OPM; empowered to develop the project budget; provided the resources and held accountable for execution.

- **Role of the OPM**

- Serves as the team leader for project staff and is the single point of contact for routine O&M activities on either a single large multi-purpose water resources development project or a number of smaller or single-purpose projects.
- Is responsible for budget development at the project level in accordance with performance measures, working closely with district business line managers.
- Is the PMBP project manager for their project or projects and will generally be listed as such in P2.
- Is responsible for supervision of subordinate supervisors or leaders while some are considered first line supervisors.
- Executes the program.
  - Identifies and funds the priorities, resolving resource conflicts between functions.
  - Establishes short and long-term work plans and budget requests to support those plans.
  - Allocates funds and personnel to support the program.

### **Applying PMBP to the O&M Program**

PMBP, as the Corps corporate business process, has not been comprehensively applied to the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Program because of the ongoing or recurring nature of the program's activities. ER 5-1-11, however, defines a program as a group of projects or recurring services categorized by funding source, PMBP **should** be applied. Since the activities in an O&M Plan do not normally have individual project management plans, a Program Management Plan (PgMP) would be used for their management. (ER 5-1-11, para. 7.b.(2)(b)1) (An Operational Management Plan, or OMP, has been used for this purpose, and, along with the Master Plan and annual work plans, continues to be an integral part of any plan to guide O&M execution.)

The OPM CoP has reviewed ER 5-1-11 and finds the regulation adequately addresses the role of the OPM. Like a Project Manager (PM) on a construction project, the OPM of an operational project is the team leader; ultimately responsible for the execution of the O&M program at his/her project(s). The OPM is responsible for preparing the PMP/PgMP, in coordination with respective branch/division chiefs, assembling the PDT, and assigning roles and responsibilities. Team members may come from any element with a substantial stake in the O&M program, such as Real Estate, Dam Safety, Design, Water Quality, Reservoir Control, Planning, etc. In many districts, it is likely that team members will serve on more than one project team. Effective application of the PMBP process to the O&M Program will be largely dependent on sound working relationships among the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management (DPM), the Chief of the Operations Division, and the Chiefs of other district technical divisions. This relationship must permeate these organizations at all levels. The Corps Integrated Strategic Plan published in February 2004 discusses the necessity of "Transforming the Corps of Engineers". Particularly applicable is the following quote: *"One of our top priorities in this transformation, like that of the overall Army, is to continue to develop leaders who can operate as part of a joint team, supporting a campaign-quality Army with a joint expeditionary mindset (attitude, culture, behavior). Such leadership will continue to be needed in all of our mission areas.*

*By the same token, we will continuously improve project management and other business processes (PMBP) and how we work throughout all of our mission areas.*

*In our Civil Works mission, where our projects can extend over decades and even centuries, we must ensure that these projects perform not only as designed but also in ways that meet changing conditions.”*

Many districts have already implemented these principles successfully and are also using P2 to successfully manage their program. I am calling upon our entire Operations and Regulatory Guiding Coalition to considering learning from these districts to duplicate this success wherever applicable. This will entail empowering our OPMs to function as PM for all routine or “below the line” activities at the field project and as customer on “above the line” PDTs. Admittedly, these are significant responsibilities for an OPM. The OPM CoP is attempting to provide as many resources as possible to assist them.

### **Training and Educating OPMs**

- **Success stories and Lessons Learned**

We currently have a PDT composed of twenty OPMs from around the Corps working on the development of a comprehensive CoP to facilitate OPM learning. We are using tools like an OPM Gateway website and an OPM workspace in Groove to give very busy people an easy method to get help with significant challenges and share success stories when they have overcome hurdles or gained efficiencies.

OPMs are encouraged to take advantage of these tools and to explore the OPM CoP website at the following address: (<http://operations.usace.army.mil/projmgrs.cfm>) for success stories, training opportunities, and examples of appropriate plans. Erik Peterson, Operations Project Manager, Portland District, is leading this CoP effort and I recommend you contact him with any questions.

I have established an OPM CoP Advisory Board to keep me apprised issues, concerns and to recommend new directions. Members consist of OPMs and District Chiefs of Operations. The membership is as follows.

OPMs:

Erik Petersen, NWP, Chair  
Dwight Beall, NAB  
Greg Pope, SWF  
Jonathan Davis, SAM

Operations Chiefs:

Dennis Norris, MVK  
Susan Shampine, SPA  
Mike Enschede, LRN  
Tom Fleeger, SWF

- **OPM Training and Development Program**

The OPM CoP has a two-pronged approach to OPM training and development – opportunities for existing OPMs and ones for those who aspire to the OPM position. For current OPMs, the PDT is organizing conferences and seminars to bring them into contact with Corps senior leaders and national business line managers. The goal is to facilitate discussions that will enhance consistency and help us corporately address the challenges ahead.

For aspiring OPMs, we envision a Career Assignment Program (CAP) much like the one used in HQUSACE to provide five-month developmental opportunities on-the-job. We are seeking to fund this through the HQ Central Funding Account. The CoP PDT has also undertaken a thorough revision of the OPM PROSPECT course to focus on preparing students to take on demanding management and supervisory roles in changing and challenging times. Lastly, a career guide for OPMs is in development that will function as a roadmap for our people to achieve their career goals.

This PDT is also working on an OPM classification guide that can bring additional consistency to OPM grades and series designations.

- **OPM Mentorship**

As is the case with many groups of Corps employees, the average age of our OPMs is increasing. It is absolutely necessary that our senior OPMs train and develop their successors by sharing their experiences, expertise and lessons learned. Senior PMs and the District DPMs should also consider mentoring current OPMs to help them develop their own leadership skills. Encourage these people in such vital roles to mentor others.



MICHAEL B. WHITE  
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Community of Practice  
Directorate of Civil Works