

Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement

Project Planning Phase

May 2016



FEMA

Requirements for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) Program are specified separately by statute, regulation, or FEMA policy (primarily the Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping). This document provides guidance to support the requirements and recommends approaches for effective and efficient implementation. Alternate approaches that comply with all requirements are acceptable.

For more information, please visit the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage (www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping). Copies of the Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping policy, related guidance, technical references, and other information about the guidelines and standards development process are all available here. You can also search directly by document title at www.fema.gov/library.

Document History

Affected Section or Subsection	Date	Description
First Publication	November 2015	Initial version of new transformed guidance, derived from Operating Guidance 04-11, <u>Risk MAP Meetings Guidance</u> , dated June 30, 2011. It has been reorganized and is being published separately.
Second Publication	May 2016	This guidance document has been revised to address the requirements resulting from Section 216 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, as amended by the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014, and FEMA organizational changes, and it reflects enhanced stakeholder engagement practices in place as a result of the increased investment in Community Engagement and Risk Communication.

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Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Project Planning Phase

1.0 Introduction

This guidance document has been prepared to expand on, and therefore supersede, Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program guidance provided in Sections 1 and 2 of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Operating Guidance (OG) 04-11, Risk MAP Meetings Guidance, dated June 30, 2011. Specifically, this guidance document addresses stakeholder engagement during the Project Planning Phase (formerly referred to as the Planning and Budgeting Phase in OG 04-11) of the Risk MAP project lifecycle.

The objectives of the Project Planning Phase are to prioritize watersheds/project areas for review and to develop project budget estimates. Therefore, this phase primarily includes FEMA-only activities, with minimal Risk MAP provider participation. However, some support is provided by the Regional Program Management Liaison and other Program Management (PM) provider staff.

Therefore, the primary audiences for this guidance document are staff from the 10 FEMA Regional Offices and FEMA Headquarters (HQ). However, the guidance document could be useful for the Risk MAP providers – that is, the PM provider, Production and Technical Services providers, and Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC) provider – and Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs) that may be involved in individual Risk MAP projects.

The guidance in this document is consistent with the Risk MAP program vision. The Risk MAP program vision includes collaborating with local, State, and Tribal entities throughout a watershed to deliver quality data that increases public awareness and leads to mitigation actions that reduce risk to life and property. To achieve this vision, FEMA transformed its traditional flood hazard identification and mapping efforts into a more integrated process of identifying, assessing, communicating, planning, and mitigating flood-related risks. The goals of Risk MAP program are:

- Goal 1: Address gaps in flood hazard data to form a solid foundation for flood risk assessments, floodplain management, and actuarial soundness of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Goal 2: Ensure that a measurable increase of the public's awareness and understanding of risk management results in a measurable reduction of current and future vulnerability to flooding.
- Goal 3: Lead and support States, communities, and Tribes to effectively engage in risk-based mitigation planning that results in sustainable actions that reduce or eliminate risks to life and property from natural hazards.
- Goal 4: Provide an enhanced digital platform that improves management of limited Risk MAP resources, stewards information produced by Risk MAP, and improves communication and sharing of risk data and related products to all levels of government and the public.

- Goal 5: Align Risk Analysis programs and develop synergies to enhance decision-making capabilities through effective risk communication and management.

To achieve these goals, stakeholder coordination and engagement is necessary throughout the Risk MAP project lifecycle. “Risk MAP projects” may include conducting the Discovery process, producing or revising Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports, providing risk assessments in areas with updated engineering analysis, and/or providing Mitigation Planning Technical Assistance.

As mentioned earlier in this document, the guidance, context, and other information in this document is not required unless it is codified separately in a statute, regulation, or policy. Alternate approaches that comply with all requirements are acceptable. Each Regional Office has an Action Strategy that will inform the engagement support and activities performed during the Project Planning Phase; the FEMA Project Officer will identify the required level of support.

1.1 Project Planning Overview

As shown in Figure 1, the Project Planning Phase is the first phase in the Risk MAP lifecycle. Project Planning is an annual exercise conducted to prioritize project areas and to develop budget estimates for (1) conducting the Discovery process or (2) developing and delivering of Risk MAP program projects for areas that have already undergone the Discovery process.

Figure 1: Risk MAP Project Lifecycle



In general, the FEMA Regional Offices use their best judgment to make decisions during the Project Planning Phase based on input obtained by engaging with internal stakeholders (see Section 2) and external stakeholders (see Sections 3 through 6), prioritization data, guidance from FEMA HQ, annual Regional budget estimates, metric targets, other resources, and their own

experience. Coordinating and confirming planned activities for the ensuing 18 to 24 months with key stakeholders before finalizing investment decisions is vital to maximizing awareness, leveraging opportunities, and optimizing return on investment.

1.2 Stakeholder Engagement Goals for Project Planning Phase

The stakeholder engagement activities that FEMA Regional Offices might conduct during the Project Planning Phase are intended to assist in:

- Hazard identification, risk assessment, mitigation planning, and associated data development efforts by Federal, State, and local government entities, Tribal entities, and private-sector organizations that may compliment Risk MAP efforts
- Understanding State preferences and priorities for Risk MAP project scopes and prioritization schedules
- Developing plans and estimates on how FEMA's Risk MAP investment may be used to identify, communicate, and/or reduce risk in a targeted location
- Maximizing awareness, leveraging opportunities, and return on investment

Engagement with both internal and external stakeholders is strongly encouraged and is necessary to achieve success during the Project Planning Phase.

1.3 Coastal and Levee Project Considerations

All newly initiated Risk MAP projects must be watershed-based, with the exception of coastal projects and small-scale projects related to levee accreditation status. Coastal projects and levee projects may have longer timelines than Risk MAP projects for watersheds, separate prioritization protocols, widely varying stakeholder audiences, as well as other differences. For example, levee projects require the formation of a Local Levee Partnership Team that includes a diverse group of stakeholders.

Regional Office staff may need to refer to separate guidance related to coastal projects and levee projects that is provided on the FEMA website. Additional resources related to coastal analyses and mapping are available from www.fema.gov/coastal-flood-risks-achieving-resilience-together. Additional resources related to levee analysis and mapping are available from the FEMA Levee Resources Library at www.fema.gov/fema-levee-resources-library.

1.4 Tribal Considerations

When Tribal lands are included in a watershed or larger geographic area, consultation with Tribal entities is coordinated with the Regional Office Tribal Liaison. Only the FEMA Regional Office Tribal Liaison or other approved Regional Office staff members are to work directly with federally recognized Tribes and Tribal entities.

The affected Tribal entities should be consulted as to whether they want to be included in other planned engagement efforts and Risk MAP meetings or if separate engagement efforts or

meetings with them would be more appropriate. This will depend on established working relationships between the Regional Office Tribal Liaisons and the Tribal entities within each Region, as well as other factors. For instance, if a Tribal entity participates in a multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plan, it might be appropriate for them to participate in a Resilience Meeting for a flood risk project. (For information on Resilience Meetings, see Guidance Document No. 63, [Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Risk Awareness Phase](#), which is accessible through the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

Even if the FEMA Regional Office determines that a Tribe does not have the land use authority needed to implement the requirements of the NFIP, the Discovery process can be an opportunity to provide the Tribe with information about the NFIP and other mitigation programs, such as the benefit of developing hazard mitigation plans. During Discovery, a final determination can be made on whether the Tribe meets the NFIP definition of a community and whether it should be included in a potential flood risk project.

When appropriate during the Project Planning Phase, Tribal entities may need to be considered as external stakeholders, and the Regional Office may need to consider the potential impacts that the additional engagement will have on project budget considerations. Within this document, the term “communities” includes Tribes/tribal entities that have chosen to participate actively in a flood risk project.

1.5 Linkages with Presidential Policy Directive-8 and National Planning Frameworks

The overall Risk MAP goal of providing quality data to increase risk awareness and lead to mitigation actions is in line with Presidential Policy Directive-8 and the associated National Planning Frameworks (www.fema.gov/national-planning-frameworks), which are referred to hereinafter as the Frameworks. The Frameworks describe how the whole community works together to achieve the National Preparedness Goal, which is “a secure and resilient nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.”

Five Frameworks have been established, one for each preparedness mission area identified in Presidential Policy Directive 8: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Disaster Recovery (www.dhs.gov/presidential-policy-directive-8-national-preparedness). The Frameworks that are most relevant to the Project Planning Phase are summarized below.

- **National Mitigation Framework (NMF).** The NMF establishes a common platform and forum for coordinating and addressing how the Nation manages risk through mitigation capabilities. It describes mitigation roles across the whole community. The NMF addresses how the Nation will develop, employ, and coordinate mitigation core capabilities to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Building on a wealth of objective and evidence-based knowledge and community experience, the NMF seeks to increase risk awareness and leverage mitigation products, services, and assets across the whole community.

- **National Response Framework (NRF).** The NRF is a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. It is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The NRF describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters. The NRF describes the principles, roles and responsibilities, and coordinating structures for delivering the core capabilities required to respond to an incident and further describes how response efforts integrate with those of the other mission areas.

The NRF is always in effect, and elements can be implemented at any time. The structures, roles, and responsibilities described in the NRF can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Selective implementation of NRF structures and procedures allows for a scaled response, delivery of the specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

- **National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF).** The NDRF is a guide to promote effective recovery, particularly for those incidents that are large-scale or catastrophic. The NDRF provides guidance that enables effective recovery support to disaster-impacted local jurisdictions, States, and Tribes. The NDRF provides a flexible structure that enables disaster recovery managers to operate in a unified and collaborative manner. It also focuses on how best to restore, redevelop, and revitalize the health, social, economic, natural, and environmental fabric of the community and build a more resilient Nation.

Each Framework outlines the roles and responsibilities for planning and implementation, including those of the Federal Government, and helps to document how we coordinate, share information, and work together – which ultimately results in a more secure and resilient Nation. The Frameworks are based on the Whole Community Approach (www.fema.gov/whole-community), which recognizes that everyone can contribute to, and benefit from, national preparedness efforts, including individuals and families, businesses, community and faith-based groups, nonprofit organizations, and all levels of government.

1.6 Impacts of Recent NFIP Reform Legislation

Through enactment of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (BW-12) and the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA), the U.S. Congress established a number of new mapping-related requirements. For a complete breakdown of the new regulatory requirements, visit the Flood Insurance Reform portion of the FEMA website (www.fema.gov/flood-insurance-reform). Some of the new requirements from Section 216 of BW-12 are documented in Subsections 3.2 and 4.2.

As part of the reform legislation, the U.S. Congress also required the establishment of a new Technical Mapping Advisory Council (TMAC) to advise FEMA on certain aspects of the national flood mapping program. Additional information on the TMAC is accessible through the FEMA website at <https://www.fema.gov/technical-mapping-advisory-council>.

FEMA continues to work with TMAC on fully implementing the NFIP reform legislation and the recommendations from TMAC. As new FEMA standards for the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase are established, FEMA will update and re-issue this guidance document.

2.0 Engagement with Internal Partners and Programs

In addition to coordinating with external offices, agencies, and entities as discussed in Sections 3 through 6, FEMA Regional Offices may want to engage internally with Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Headquarters offices and programs for data and information about risk identification, data development, and mitigation efforts in the Region's States and watersheds. This can help to identify which project areas have the highest risk or have other contributing factors that inform which Risk MAP program activities may be appropriate and the potential level of effort required to accomplish them.

FEMA Regional Offices may also want to engage internally with the Protection and National Preparedness (PNP) office to promote linkages with PNP community engagement efforts and the Risk MAP program. This can help encourage coordinated community conversations to promote messages about building resilience and having a more realistic understanding of the community's goals for rebuilding and how FEMA resources can be leveraged to support those goals.

2.1 Engaging with Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration Offices

FIMA is charged with integrating the efforts of individual teams who oversee individual programs within its organization to ensure that resources are better leveraged and that steps are taken to reduce duplication and better achieve complementary goals and objectives. The FIMA Risk Management Directorate (RMD), Mitigation Directorate (MTD), Federal Insurance Directorate (FID), Funds Management Directorate, Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP), Customer Experience office, and Integration Office are uniquely positioned to accomplish this because of the natural synergies among the staff and the programs, initiatives, and activities they oversee. Some of the programs initiatives, and activities overseen by the RMD, FID, MTD, FMD, OEHP, Customer Experience office, and Integration Office management and staff are listed below.

- RMD
 - CTP Program
 - Data Warehouse, Flood Mapping Information eXchange, and Information Technology management
 - Multi-hazard risk assessment
 - National Dam Safety Program
 - National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
 - National hazard mitigation planning
 - National Levee Safety Program
 - Risk MAP Program

- MTD
 - Community Assistance Program
 - Community Assistance Program–State Support Services Element program
 - Community Rating System (CRS)
 - Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
 - Floodplain management
 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
 - Interagency Floodplain Management Task Force
 - Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program
- FID
 - FloodSmart
 - NFIP
- FMD
 - National Flood Insurance Fund
- OEHP
 - Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation program
 - Unified Federal Review
- Customer Experience Office
 - NFIP customer experience strategy
 - Customer experience change management
- Integration Office
 - Congressional inquiry tracking and analysis
 - Regional engagement coordination
 - Facilitation of oversight agency (e.g., Government Accountability Office, Inspector General) reviews and implementation of strategic recommendations

2.2 Engaging with Office of the Flood Insurance Advocate

Section 24 of HFIAA directed the FEMA Administrator to establish a Flood Insurance Advocate to advocate for the fair treatment of policyholders under the NFIP and for property owners in the mapping of flood hazards, the identification of risks from flood, and the implementation of measures to minimize the risk of flood. To provide advocacy assistance to policyholders and property owners, the FEMA Administrator designated a Flood Insurance Advocate, who, in turn, established the Office of the Flood Insurance Advocate (OFIA).

The OFIA staff includes program professionals who are experts in all aspects of the NFIP, including claims processes, map review and amendment processes, floodplain management, and flood mitigation techniques and resources. The Advocate is also working with the Regional FEMA Offices to refine the long-term regional mapping outreach and education support strategy, as well as monitor the fair treatment policyholders and property owners under the NFIP, identify trends, and make recommendations to the FEMA Administrator.

As a result of their day-to-day activities, the Advocate and OFIA staff may have information and documentation that may help to identify problem areas in the national flood mapping program and identify specific watersheds or communities with mapping needs that should be considered for prioritization. Therefore, Regional Offices are encouraged to engage with the Advocate and OFIA staff. The two-way communication that takes place during engagement may be equally beneficial to the Advocate and OFIA staff as they will receive information on planned Risk MAP projects for areas that may be the subject of, or pertinent to responding to, a particular inquiry.

2.3 Possible Inputs from Internal Partners and Programs

As FEMA Regional Offices compile information to inform assessments of watersheds for review, they will want to consider the following potential inputs from RMD, MTD, FID, OEHP and OFIA sources:

- Key Decision Point information
- Planning and funding memorandums released by RMD/FEMA HQ, including metrics and areas of focus
- Coordinated Needs Management Strategy (CNMS) data and New, Valid, and Updated Engineering (NVUE) forecast/projection data
- Project Planning and Purchasing Portal (P4) data
- Mitigation Action Tracker data
- Available risk data (e.g. Atlanta Factors) or prioritization algorithm data (previous version available in P4 as a reference layer)
- Population data from the FEMA Community Layer
- Mitigation Planning Portal data, such as Mitigation Plan Cycle information to help synchronize timing of plan updates with Risk MAP projects
- CRS information
- Community Information System (CIS) data
- Information on communities' potential for taking mitigation actions, which could be in the form of a database or spreadsheet and could include an assortment of community information, hazard information, insurance and NFIP-related information, planning and grant information, and mapping information

- Internal records that can help identify congressional, regional, and local priorities, including:
 - Congressional and Freedom of Information Act correspondence
 - Other correspondence exchanged between FEMA and affected communities and other stakeholders
 - Email messages and telephone records from the FEMA Map Information eXchange, other FEMA call centers, and OFIA
- Lessons learned/institutional knowledge that may not be documented in the Knowledge Sharing Site
- New tools, such as the CERC Playbook (see Section 7 for more information), which offers tools to help decision-makers think strategically and consistently about community engagement

3.0 Engagement with Other Federal Agencies

Coordination with existing Federal partners and other Federal agencies may include discussions of the watersheds in the FEMA Region and priority project areas based on their local knowledge and their planned or in-progress risk mitigation activities. Regional Offices may want to consider all such Federal agencies as partners in the Risk MAP program because they may be able to support the development of hazard information as well as help to communicate flood risk and support flood risk reduction activities.

3.1 Potential Federal Agency Partners to Engage

Potential Federal agency partners include HQ and division, district, state, or local offices of the following agencies:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), including the National Weather Service (NWS) and Office for Coastal Management (OCM)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), including the Flood Risk Management Program office
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), when Tribal lands/entities may be affected
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Others, as appropriate, for the watershed or geographic area being considered

3.2 Possible Inputs from Federal Agency Partners

Several types of data and information are available through coordination with Federal partners, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Flood Risk Data** - USACE, NOAA, NWS, OCM, EPA, USGS, USBR, NRCS, BIA, and others have programs that support communities in reducing their flood risk. Some of these programs include the development of hazard data or inputs to hazard analysis, increasing community awareness for natural hazards, and building understanding of flood risk to spur mitigation planning and action, which is also a goal of the Risk MAP program.
- **Coastal Inundation Information** – In Section 216 of BW-12, the U.S. Congress directed FEMA to include any relevant information from the following in updating flood hazard maps: (1) an applicable inundation map prepared by USACE; and (2) NOAA data related to storm surge modeling.
- **Information on Streamflows and Watershed Characteristics** – In Section 216 of BW-12, the U.S. Congress directed FEMA to include any relevant USGS information on streamflows and watershed characteristics that is useful in identifying flood hazard areas for updating flood hazard maps.
- **Information on Land Subsidence, Coastal Erosion Areas, Changing Lake Levels, and Other Flood-Related Hazards** – In Section 216 of BW-12, the U.S. Congress directed FEMA to include any relevant information on land subsidence, coastal erosion areas, changing lake levels, and other flood-related hazards in updating flood hazard maps. Federal agency partners would be the primary sources of this information.
- **Availability of high-quality topographic information** - An important input from USGS and other Federal partners is the availability of pertinent data, such as high-quality elevation and topographic data. This allows projects to be initiated more quickly without having to wait for further data acquisition. In addition, knowledge of disparate efforts to obtain topographic data can lead to partnerships that combine these efforts with a potential Risk MAP project.
- **Mapping Needs** - In addition to mapping needs data captured by FEMA, the district offices of some Federal agencies have mandates to provide various forms of nonstructural and structural flood protection and floodplain management planning. Before undertaking such projects, these agencies typically prepare a planning or reconnaissance report, flood damage assessment, or some other type of pre-project planning report. A review of these reports on a FEMA Region or State-by-State basis may be helpful in identifying map update needs and other risk-related information.

These partners may have watershed-wide or statewide data available. Regional Offices will want to collect the data and information at one time on a state or regional level, when possible, to assist in project sequencing. Because it is costly and inefficient, collecting the same information from

these organizations separately for each watershed should be avoided. As stated above, collecting and assessing this information during the Project Planning Phase may help to identify which project areas have the highest risk or have other contributing factors that inform which Risk MAP activities may be appropriate and the potential level of effort required to accomplish them. The detailed evaluation of information for a particular watershed or project area would, of course, take place during the Discovery Phase, as documented in Guidance Document No. 5, [Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping: Discovery](#). Guidance Document No. 5 is accessible through the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

4.0 Engagement with State Partners

Engagement with State CTPs, State NFIP Coordinators, State Hazard Mitigation Officers (SHMOs), and other State agency officials may include discussions of the watersheds in the FEMA Region and priority project areas based on their local knowledge. State CTPs, State NFIP Coordinators, and SHMOs are already considered partners in the Risk MAP program. Regional Offices may want to consider some other State agencies as partners because they also may be able to support the development of hazard information and help to communicate flood risk and support flood risk reduction activities.

4.1 Potential State Partners to Engage

Potential State partners for FEMA Regional Offices to engage include, but are not limited to, the following:

- State CTPs
- State NFIP Coordinators
- SHMOs and State mitigation planners
- CRS coordinators and Insurance Services Office specialists
- State agencies that own and/or operate levees or dams
- State historic preservation offices
- State dam safety officials
- State transportation departments
- State housing and economic development authorities
- Others, as appropriate for the watershed or geographic area being considered

4.2 Possible Inputs from State Partners

Several types of data and information are available through engaging with State partners, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Flood Risk Data** – Some States have programs that support communities in reducing their flood risk. Some of these programs may include the development of hazard data or

inputs to hazard analysis, increasing community awareness for natural hazards, and building understanding of flood risk to spur mitigation planning and risk-reduction action.

- **Information from Community Assistance Visits (CAVs), Community Assistance Contacts (CACs), or Community Technical Assistance** – In some cases, CAVs, CACs, and technical assistance may have been conducted by the State, but not entered into the CIS.
- **Information on Land Subsidence, Coastal Erosion Areas, Changing Lake Levels, and Other Flood-Related Hazards** – In Section 216 of BW-12, the U.S. Congress directed FEMA to include any relevant information on land subsidence, coastal erosion areas, changing lake levels, and other flood-related hazards in updating flood hazard maps. Some State agency partners may be good secondary sources of this information.
- **Availability of High-Quality Topographic Information** – An important input from State partners is the availability of pertinent topographic data, such as high-quality elevation data. As mentioned above, this allows projects to be initiated more quickly without having to wait for further data acquisition. In addition, knowledge of separate efforts to obtain topographic data can lead to partnerships that combine these efforts with a potential Risk MAP project.
- **Mapping Needs** - Some State agencies are undertaking special efforts to identify mapping needs for areas with a history of recurring flooding. Before undertaking such projects, these agencies may prepare a planning or reconnaissance report, flood damage assessment, or some other type of pre-project planning report. A review of these reports on a FEMA Region or State-by-State basis may be helpful in identifying map update needs and other risk-related information. Engagement with State partners may also reveal mapping needs based on completed mitigation or risk-reduction projects and activities that have not yet been recorded in CNMS. Likewise, State partners may have information on mapping and/or mitigation needs based on planned and in-progress projects and activities that need to be considered.

These partners may have watershed-wide or statewide data available. Regional Offices will want to collect the data and information at one time on a State or Regional level to assist in project sequencing. Because it is costly and inefficient, collecting the same information from these organizations separately for each watershed should be avoided.

As stated above, collecting and assessing this information during the Project Planning Phase may help to identify which project areas have the highest risk or have other contributing factors that inform which Risk MAP activities may be appropriate and the potential level of effort required to accomplish them.

The detailed evaluation of information for a particular watershed or project area would, of course, take place during the Discovery Phase, as documented in Guidance Document No. 5, [Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping: Discovery](#). Guidance Document No. 5 is accessible through the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

5.0 Engagement with Local Partners

Given the emphasis placed on community outreach and engagement, both by the Risk MAP program and by the U.S. Congress in BW-12 and HFIAA, it would be appropriate for Regional Offices to engage with communities, counties, and other local entities regardless of whether the watershed or project area has already undergone the Discovery process. Timely, appropriate, and comprehensive engagement with local partners before Discovery or before a Risk MAP project is started will also help Regional Offices establish solid foundations on which to build relationships later in the Risk MAP lifecycle.

5.1 Potential Local Partners to Engage

Potential local partners for FEMA Regional Offices to engage include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Community Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and other elected officials, floodplain administrators (FPAs), emergency managers, planners, Geographic Information Systems managers/coordinators, and hazard mitigation planners and officials involved in implementation
- County CEOs and other elected officials, FPAs, emergency managers, planners, Geographic Information Systems managers/coordinators, and hazard mitigation planners and officials involved in implementation
- Regional planning entities
- Metropolitan planning and transportation entities
- Flood control, water management, and water conservation entities
- Others as appropriate for the watershed or geographic area being considered

5.2 Possible Inputs from Local Partners

Inputs that engagement with local partners may provide include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Updates to information collected during an earlier Discovery process, where applicable
- Flood risk data
- Information on availability of high-quality topographic information (completed or planned)
- Updates to hazard mitigation plans
- Information on mapping needs that are not included in CNMS
- Mapping needs based on completed mitigation/risk-reduction projects/activities
- Mapping and/or mitigation needs based on planned and in-progress mitigation/risk-reduction projects/activities

6.0 Engagement with Professional Associations and Nongovernmental Organizations

Regional Office engagement with professional associations that may have ongoing or planned flood risk identification, mapping, mitigation, and other initiatives to advance community resiliency, as well as with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on land or water conservancy on a State or Regional level, are often beneficial. Regional Offices also may want to consider individuals in these organizations as potential key influencers who can help to communicate flood risk and support flood risk reduction activities in project areas.

FIMA communication and outreach staff, with support from the CERC provider, formulated a National Partnership Network as a platform for thought leaders who have a complementary disaster resiliency perspective. NGOs, OFAs, and other organizations in the National Partnership Network may be leveraged to support Regional Office efforts throughout the project lifecycle. In particular, local or regional branches of member organizations may be contacted to provide input and to participate in activities. To engage with the National Partnership Network, Regional Offices may want to coordinate with their local CERC provider representatives, referred to as CERC Liaisons, or other CERC provider staff members.

6.1 Potential Professional Associations and NGOs to Engage

The following national groups – and their regional, State, and local affiliates – may have data or other contributions that might be worth considering:

- American Planning Association
- American Red Cross
- American Rivers
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- American Public Works Association
- American Water Resources Association
- Association of State Floodplain Managers
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies
- National Emergency Management Association
- National Flood Determination Association
- National League of Cities
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Association
- Nature Conservancy
- Others, as appropriate for the watershed or geographic area being considered

6.2 Possible Inputs from Professional Associations and NGOs

Inputs from these stakeholder groups will vary by State and organization. These associations and organizations may have ongoing projects that relate to flood risk identification, mapping, mitigation, and other initiatives to advance community resiliency. Examples include:

- The Association of State Floodplain Managers has developed a standard process to support State floodplain management programs in long-range strategic planning and annual work plan development. The association developed this collaborative strategic planning process between FEMA and States that compares flood risk and State capacity with performance and funding.
- The American Planning Association's research on coastal zone management, drought mitigation, Great Lakes coastal hazards, hazards planning, planning for post-disaster recovery, and other projects may be of interest to FEMA Regional Offices during the Project Planning Phase.
- Through the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association Resilient Neighbors project, research and information may be available on specific communities that may be slated for Discovery or a Risk MAP project.

7.0 Potential Techniques and Tools to Support Stakeholder Engagement Effort

FEMA Regional Offices may want to consider a number of techniques and tools when determining how to engage effectively with both internal and external stakeholders. Several potential techniques and tools that FEMA Regional Offices may consider are listed below.

- **Face-to-Face Meetings:** Ongoing periodic engagement can be accomplished via face-to-face meetings with both internal and external stakeholders/partners who are actively involved in the delivery of Risk MAP projects and initiatives, who may have valuable insights to offer, or who support the overall success of the Risk MAP program. Although face-to-face meetings are resource intensive, they are valuable for developing relationships, especially among new partners, and fostering trust among parties.
- **Facilitated Conference Calls:** Ongoing periodic engagement with both internal and external stakeholders/partners that are actively involved in the delivery of Risk MAP projects and initiatives and that support the overall success of the Risk MAP program can be accomplished via facilitated conference calls.
- **Facilitated Webinars:** For engagement opportunities that involve the delivery of a volume of information, that require attendees to see materials being discussed, or that require orientation and training, professionally facilitated webinars using Adobe Connect or similarly capable platform can be very effective. Depending on the platform used, these sessions can also be recorded, allowing participants to review sessions at a later date or to direct other stakeholder staff to listen to the recording.

- **Social Media:** For interim contacts that do not require real-time exchanges of information, to issue updates, and to remind invited participants about upcoming events (e.g., conference calls, webinars, conferences, workshops), Regional Offices should consider using social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to their advantage.
- **Newsletters, Listservs, or Other Means of Maintaining General, Ongoing Engagement:** Regional Offices could employ the use of newsletters, ListServes, or other means of monthly or bimonthly engagement with Federal and State partners, regional entities, and local communities. While not specific to the Project Planning Phase activities, this kind of ongoing communication encourages relationship-building with these partners.
- **Regional Websites:** Where Regional Offices already have established websites, these also could be effective for communicating with partners and for facilitating the submittal of the inputs discussed in Subsections 3.2, 4.2, 5.2, and 6.2. For new websites, Regional Office staff will want to confer with the FEMA HQ Office of External Affairs.
- **State/Regional Conferences, Meetings, and Workshops:** Participation in State and Regional conferences, meetings, and workshops sponsored by key professional associations and NGOs, when possible, can be an effective way to engage with multiple entities and individuals directly. Likewise, Regional Office-led workshops can be value mechanisms for ongoing relationship building and information sharing.
- **Templates:** To facilitate engagement with Federal and State partners, professional associations, and other NGOs, FEMA Regional Offices and FEMA HQ have developed templates for letters, email messages, newsletter articles, and communication tracking purposes. These template materials have been, and can continue to be, modified to fit Regional Office needs. FEMA Regional Offices should continue to use these methods of communication during the Project Planning Phase and all other phases of the Risk MAP lifecycle.
- **Online Tools:** Online tools developed by FEMA are also available to assist Regional Office staff and select stakeholders during the Project Planning Phase, including the following:
 - The GeoPlatform provides a way to spatially store and display information to facilitate ranking and prioritizing potential projects.
 - The P4 provides Regional Offices and other authorized stakeholders with information related to planned projects and scope activities. The P4 also offers users other metric-related data that may be used for prioritization.
 - The CIS provides Regional Offices and other authorized stakeholders with information on CAVs, CACs, and technical assistance opportunities that might prove useful in identifying areas for potential projects or in prioritizing projects.
 - The CNMS facilitates the review and evaluation of mapping needs requests by authorized officials, and it enhances data-driven planning activities for map update prioritization. In fact, the CNMS database is considered the sole authority for reporting flood map update needs, and Regional Office decisions to prioritize, assess, and perform engineering analyses along various flooding sources are to be supported by the data contained in CNMS.

- The CERC Playbook is a resource for those tasked with leading or participating in community engagement and risk communications during any given phase of the Risk MAP lifecycle. The Playbook offers tools, not rules, which can help decision-makers think strategically and consistently about how to adapt and apply community engagement resources and best practices effectively. The Playbook is a living document that will be developed and evolved over time as the environment changes and new or unanticipated needs and opportunities arise. The CERC Playbook can be accessed through the password-protected Risk MAP Program Portal.
- The Building Science webpages provide technical support and mitigation guidance with links to publications, training courses, and workshops for natural hazards.

8.0 Outcomes from Stakeholder Engagement Effort

Stakeholder engagement during the Project Planning Phase should be flexible and scalable, and it will not look the same in all areas, as each FEMA Regional Office, each watershed or study area under review, and each stakeholder engaged will vary. For these reasons, it is not feasible to compile a comprehensive list of all possible data and information that may be collected, reviewed, or leveraged through stakeholder engagement and coordination activities during this phase. However, successful stakeholder engagement during the Project Planning Phase should result in the following outcomes:

- Clearer understanding of which Risk MAP project activities a watershed or other geographic area may benefit from most
- Clearer understanding of State preferences and priorities for Risk MAP project scopes and prioritization schedules
- Strengthened relationships, a sense of partnership, and shared objectives between FEMA and community officials
- Information that FEMA Regional Offices can use to prioritize project areas for Discovery or for Risk MAP projects and to develop project plans and budget estimates
- Elimination of duplication of effort among Federal, State, and regional entities
- Better compliance with the requirements of Section 216 of BW-12, as amended by HFIAA
- Plans and estimates on how the FEMA Risk MAP investment may be used to identify, communicate, or reduce risk in a targeted area
- Information that may help Regional Offices meet other Risk MAP metrics as they are identified