

Quality Partnership Initiative
American Association of Port Authorities and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Communication/Collaboration Best Practices

Port Name: Port of Houston Authority

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Best Practice: Planning Charrette and mid-point update meetings

Purpose:

Develop requirements and risks for non-federal planning and supporting Corps activities in support of a non-federal channel improvement project. The meeting included agency representatives and consultants; and Corps planning, regulatory, environmental, and economists, some of whom were contracted for special services in support of the non-federal project. The charette resulted in a work plan with schedule and budget, and identification risks associated with activities. Just as important was the mid-project follow up which refined requirements, responsibilities, and priorities that led to successful completion of the various reports and eventual federal approvals.

Explanation:

The Port Authority undertook a Section 204 project to improve two channels at non-federal expense, but then entered into an agreement for expedited assumption of maintenance (204f) which included contracting with the Corps for economic studies.

Examples of Results:

The charette resulted in a team approach for the project, as the Corps was contracted to provide its analysis in support of various reports. It blended private and Corps practices to meet a common goal. When the Corps efforts stalled because of lack of data and inexperience, the mid-point update drew upon the earlier team-building to effect changes in responsibilities and tasks to move the project forward.

Why this Process is Important to the Port and the Corps:

This applied a common-place Corps process to a non-federal project in which the Corps had a prominent role. It demonstrated that analysis of task risks can result in better management of activities; that early teamwork can overcome parochial views of activities and better move the team to successful accomplishment of the major task.