

Corps of Engineers moves ahead on new organization plan

The US Army Corps of Engineers is moving ahead with its new organization plan, USACE 2012. The plan will reorganize the internal workings of the headquarters and regional elements of the organization from a functionally-oriented model into highly integrated teams.

“We have been working many of these principles for some time now,” Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers said. “Now it is time to integrate these concepts into the organization and align ourselves for a new way of doing business. We’re moving from a hierarchical government agency with a wiring diagram to a matrixed, more business-line approach. This will streamline our internal processes and reduce the delivery time when compared to our past business practices. Organizing into teams provides the opportunity to offer more robust, efficient services and products to the American people and the Armed Forces.”

The Corps will also implement the concept of Communities of Practice, which brings together people, from within and outside the Corps, who practice and share an interest in a major functional area or business line. These communities will focus on strengthening and maintaining the expertise needed to solve the complex engineering problems the Corps faces in meeting the nation’s needs.

“By making our Communities of Practice more visible in the organization, we will be able to locate the experts that we need to solve problems and we will be able to better capture lessons learned,” Lt. Gen. Flowers said.

One of the main concepts of the plan is the actualization of Regional Business Centers, which foster Districts working together, under the Division, to operate more as a regional unit.

“Of course, we aren’t a business,” Lt. Gen. Flowers said, “but this concept allows us to operate in a more business-like, efficient manner providing better products and services at a lower cost to our customers, the American taxpayers.”

The final plan has eliminated two recommendations from a draft version of the report that are currently based in law and would require legislation to change. Those recommendations proposed changing the funding for Corps studies. “Those recommendations aren’t in our prerogative to pursue. It is more in the realm of those we work for in the Administration and Congress. We want to focus on our internal reorganization and on the processes over which we have control,” Lt. Gen. Flowers said.

While there will be employees moving to new jobs or teams within their current geographic location, the Corps does not anticipate moving employees to different geographic locations. “We will take advantage of some of the tools we have in the human resources system for restructuring organizations, but we do not anticipate a large reduction of staff. We are currently operating at the Washington and division levels with

about 2,100 people and anticipate that we may have 1,970 people in those organizations at the end of our reorganization.

The next step in the process is to get approval from the Department of the Army, but implementation planning is beginning immediately. There will be no change in the current number of division or district offices.