

Guidance for Stakeholder

Preliminary National Flood Insurance Program Map Release Phase

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Engagement

November 2015



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.

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Document History

Affected Section or Subsection	Date	Description
First Publication	November 2015	Initial version of new transformed guidance. The content was derived from Operating Guidance 04-11, <u>Risk MAP Meetings Guidance</u> . It has been reorganized and is being published separately.

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Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Preliminary NFIP Map Release 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 portions of Section 1 and Subsection 6.2 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 Preliminary National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Map Phase (formerly referred to as the Preliminary Map Release and Mitigation Planning Phase in OG 04-11) of the Risk MAP project lifecycle.

The objectives of the Preliminary NFIP Map Phase are (1) to provide communities and stakeholders with copies of the Preliminary versions of the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report, FIRM database, and Summary of Map Actions (SOMA); and (2) to initiate the planning for the Consultation and Coordination Officer (CCO) Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) during which these products – sometimes referred to as “regulatory products” – will be presented and discussed.

The primary audiences for this guidance document are staff from the 10 FEMA Regional Offices, FEMA Headquarters (HQ), and the Project Teams that are formed to carry out flood risk study projects in support of the Regional Offices. However, this guidance document is also intended for Risk MAP providers that may not be actively involved in individual flood risk studies, but may be called on to support activities during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase as “internal stakeholders.” (See Subsection 3.2.3.)

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 the 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. Engagement is important during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase to minimize problems and controversy before FEMA and the community make the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA available to the public.

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 Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase; the FEMA Project Officer will identify the required level of support.

1.1 Preliminary NFIP Map Release Overview

As shown in Figure 1, the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase is the fifth phase in the Risk MAP lifecycle.

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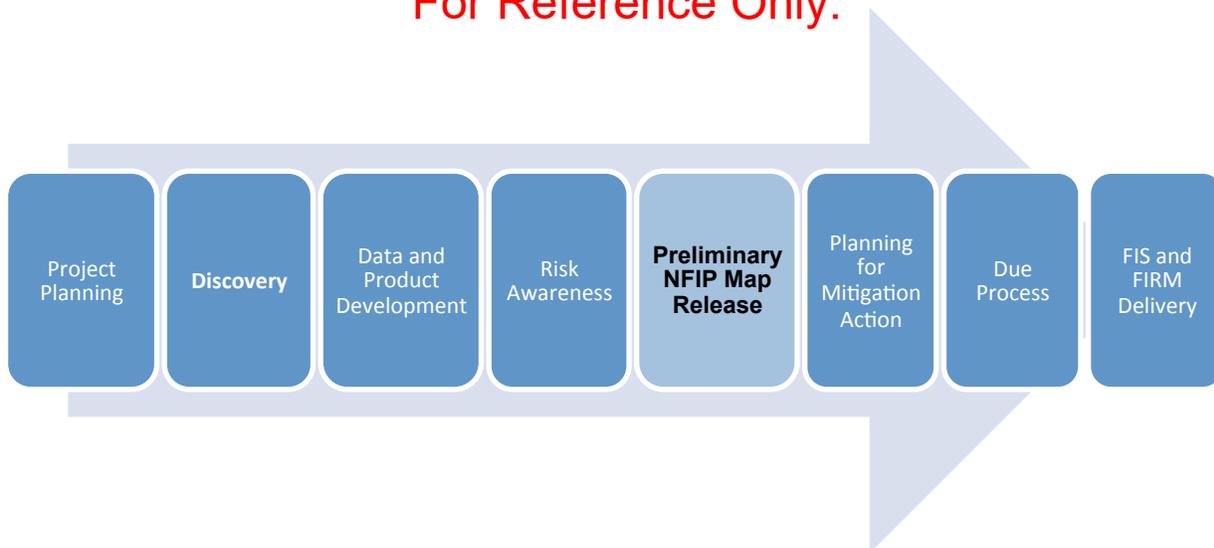


Figure 1: Risk MAP Project Lifecycle

Activities that occur during this phase of the lifecycle include the following as appropriate:

- Continue to implement the previously developed stakeholder engagement plan, refining or updating the plan as appropriate to document Project Team member and key influencer roles and responsibilities and accommodate stakeholder need for information about the Risk MAP process and outcomes.
- Complete the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA.
- Deliver the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA to community officials and other key stakeholders for review and comment.
- Solicit initial feedback from communities and other key stakeholders on the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA.
- Solicit updates on mitigation projects that communities or other stakeholders have planned or initiated.
- Initiate the planning of the CCO Meeting(s) with community officials and the Flood Risk Open House(s) for the public.

1.2 Stakeholder Engagement Goals for Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase

As with earlier project phases, stakeholder engagement during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase should be flexible and may not look the same for all projects, as each FEMA Regional Office, each watershed or study area, each Project Team, and each stakeholder group to be engaged will vary. The stakeholder engagement activities that FEMA-led Project Teams might conduct during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase are intended to accomplish the following:

- Clarify how the flood hazard information shown on the Preliminary FIRM and FIS report is different from the flood hazard information shown on the effective FIRM and FIS report.
- Continue to build community officials' understanding of, confidence in, and ownership of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA.
- Improve key stakeholders' knowledge about and acceptance of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA.
- Enhance and expand the relationships with stakeholders developed during earlier project phases.
- Maintain clear roles and responsibilities for all Project Team members.
- Establish clear role(s) for previously established and newly identified key influencer(s).
- Continue to provide transparency into the Risk MAP process.

Engagement with both internal and external stakeholders is appropriate during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase and will be needed to achieve success.

1.3 Coastal and Levee Accreditation 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.

Please refer to separate guidance related to coastal projects and levee projects in the Project Delivery portion of the FEMA Knowledge Sharing Site, which is accessible online through the password-protected Risk MAP Program Portal at <https://riskmapportal.msc.fema.gov/kss/>. Individuals who do not have access to the Risk MAP Program Portal should contact their Regional Office for assistance.

1.4 Tribal Considerations

When Tribal lands are included in a watershed/project area, consultation with Tribal entities may be appropriate and is to be coordinated with the Regional Office Tribal Liaison. During the Discovery Phase, the affected Tribal entities should have been consulted by the Regional Office Tribal Liaison on whether they wanted 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 and other factors. For instance, if a Tribal entity participates in a multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, it might be appropriate for them to participate in the Resilience Meetings held for the entire watershed or geographic area that is the focus of the flood risk project. (For information on Resilience Meetings for flood risk projects, see Guidance Document No. 68: Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Risk Awareness Phase, which can be found on the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.)

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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 might have provided an opportunity to inform the Tribe about the NFIP, Risk MAP program, and other mitigation activities, such as the benefit of developing Hazard Mitigation Plans. During the Discovery Phase, the Regional Office should have made a final decision, in coordination with Tribal entity, on whether the Tribe meets the NFIP definition of a community and how the Tribal entity should be included in the flood risk project.

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. Therefore, if a Tribal entity contacts a Project Team member about participation in the NFIP or participation in the ongoing project, that Project Team member is to notify the FEMA Regional Office Lead for the project and the Regional Office Tribal Liaison immediately.

As during earlier phases of the project lifecycle, FEMA and the Project Team may need to consider Tribal entities as external stakeholders during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase; therefore, the Regional Office may need to consider the potential impacts that 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 study.

1.5 Key Terms Defined

The terms listed below are key terms that will be used in this guidance document and other stakeholder engagement guidance documents.

- *Chief Executive Officer* – The official of a community who has the authority to implement and administer laws, ordinances, and regulations for that community.
- *CCO* – The individual on the FEMA Regional Office staff who is responsible for coordinating with a community on activities related to the NFIP.
- *CCO Meeting* – The term used to describe a formal meeting with community officials and select stakeholders for flood risk studies carried out under the FEMA Risk MAP program. The CCO Meeting focuses on the release of the Preliminary version of the FIRM and FIS report and the process for reviewing and adopting the FIRM before the FIRM effective date.
- *Floodplain Administrator (FPA)* – The community official who is responsible for operating a floodplain management program in a community in accordance with NFIP regulatory standards.
- *Flood Risk Open House* – The term used to describe the public open house held after the CCO Meeting with community officials and select stakeholders, to familiarize the public with the flood risk study and resulting FIRM and FIS report.
- *Key Influencers* – The term used to describe public- or private-sector organizations and individuals who have direct or indirect power to affect the decisions of others because of their real or perceived authority, knowledge, position, or relationship.
- *Mitigation* – A sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from flood hazards and their effects. Mitigation distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those more closely associated with preparedness for, immediate response to, and short-term recovery from specific events.
- *Outreach* – The activity, process, or channel used to engage or communicate to others.
- *Project Charter* – A document, usually produced during the Discovery process for a flood risk project carried out under the Risk MAP program, that summarizes the watershed/project area vision; the products that each affected community will receive; mitigation technical assistance to be provided; roles and responsibilities for all parties involved; data to be provided with associated deadlines; projected timeline for the project; and an explanation of what is expected from partners at each milestone on the project timeline.
- *Project Management Team* – The term used to describe the individuals who will manage a project for its entire lifecycle. The Project Management Team includes: FEMA Risk Analysis Branch staff member who is the FEMA Project Officer for a project; project manager or senior-level staff from the Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs) and/or Risk MAP providers who are participating on the Project Team; the State NFIP Coordinator; and the FEMA Regional Office Contracting Officer.

- *Project Team* – The term used to describe the team of individuals and organizations who will execute a project over its lifecycle. In addition to the FEMA Project Officer for the project, the Project Team can include management and staff from the CTP(s) and/or Risk MAP provider(s) who are participating in the project; the State NFIP Coordinator and State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO); other Federal agencies; and others, such as regional planning agencies and water management districts.
- *Regulatory Products* – The term used to collectively refer to the FIRM, FIS report, and FIRM database.
- *Risk MAP Providers* – The term used to collectively refer to the teams of private-sector companies that support the Risk MAP program under contract to FEMA; i.e., the Customer and Data Services (CDS), Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC), Production and Technical Services (PTS), and Program Management (PM) providers.
- *Stakeholder Engagement* – The process by which an organization involves people or organizations that may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of those decisions.
- *Summary of Map Actions (SOMA)* - A list, generated by FEMA and delivered to the community, that summarizes the Letters of Map Amendment, Letters of Map Revision Based on Fill, and Letters of Map Revision that are or will be affected by the physical update to the effective FIRM that results from the performance of a flood risk study.

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1.6 Potential 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 has placed a number of community/stakeholder engagement and outreach requirements on FEMA. 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).

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>. Because of the breadth and depth of the new statutory requirements, FEMA established the Flood Mapping Program Integrated Program Team (IPT) to review each requirement and to make recommendations for implementation.

As the TMAC and Flood Mapping Program IPT participants continue their deliberations and issue interim and final recommendations or guidance on how FEMA should address the requirements, and new FEMA standards for the Project and Planning Phase are established, FEMA may find it necessary to update and re-issue this guidance document.

2.0 Documenting Outreach and Engagement Activities

To ensure a clear understanding on the part of all Project Team members, all outreach and engagement activities should have been documented in an implementable written plan earlier in the project lifecycle. Such plans are required for all Risk MAP projects.

The plan may have been referred to as a communications plan, outreach plan, or community engagement plan. For the purposes of this document, the plan that will be used to document activities during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase will be referred to as a stakeholder engagement plan.

2.1 Reviewing and Updating the Plan

At the beginning of the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase, Project Team members will need to review the existing version of the stakeholder engagement plan to determine whether it is accurate based on contractual arrangements made with CTPs and Risk MAP providers. They also will need to determine whether the plan is consistent with the latest guidance from the Flood Mapping Program IPT and FEMA HQ. Project Team members also will need to verify that the plan includes information on the following, at a minimum:

- Environment/background in which the outreach and engagement will take place
- Engagement goals and objectives
- Roles and responsibilities of Project Team members, which will include some combination of:
 - FEMA Risk Analysis Branch, Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch, and Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch staff
 - CTP staff
 - State NFIP Coordinator
 - SHMO
 - PTS provider staff
 - CERC Liaison (CERC-L) and other CERC provider staff
 - CTP contractor staff
 - Other Federal agency staff
- Roles and responsibilities of non-Project Team members, such as staff from:
 - Regional Office of External Affairs
 - Other FEMA Regional Offices and HQ offices
 - CTP(s)
 - Risk MAP providers
 - Other Federal agencies
- Audiences to be engaged, including external (public- and private-sector) stakeholders, internal (FEMA and Risk MAP provider) stakeholders, and key influencers
- Outreach and engagement strategies and tactics
- Key message content and format
- Engagement tools and techniques to be used

- Activities timeline
- Expected outcomes
- Potential barriers to success
- Monitoring plan and proposed solutions

If specific information had been included in the existing stakeholder engagement plan regarding Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase activities, the Project Team should verify that the information is still correct and make appropriate changes to ensure the document continues to be useful to the team. This should be done at the beginning of the phase. If no information has been provided for the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase, the Project Team should amend the plan to include appropriate information.

Given the engagement and communication responsibilities of the CERC provider, the CERC-L would likely be the appropriate Project Team member to lead the effort to update the stakeholder engagement plan. However, this assignment will be made by the Project Management Team.

Once the plan has been updated, it would likely be beneficial for the Project Management Team to distribute the updated plan and emphasize to Project Team members the importance of carrying out the documented activities and responsibilities. It also may be beneficial for the Project Management Team to establish or reiterate the process for amending the plan later in the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase should amendments become necessary to meet the changing needs of the project. The stakeholder engagement should be considered a “living” document.

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2.2 Using Multiple Stakeholder Engagement Levels

When developing the original stakeholder engagement plan, the Project Management Team and other Project Team members may have determined – based on the size of the project, the complexity of the project, and the number of stakeholders identified – that it would not be possible or appropriate for the Project Team members to carry out a robust or comprehensive engagement effort with every stakeholder/stakeholder group. Therefore, they may have determined that it would be appropriate to establish multiple levels of engagement.

Based on their subsequent experience during the earlier phases, the Project Team members may choose to continue this approach or to amend the approach entering the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase. If appropriate, the Project Team should update the stakeholder engagement plan to document the changes in the approach.

2.3 Documenting Key Influencer Roles and Responsibilities

During the earlier phases of the project lifecycle, Project Team members may have identified organizations or individuals that are, or have the potential to be, key influencers. For the purposes of this document, key influencers are public- or private-sector individuals or organizations who have the direct or indirect power to affect the decisions of others because of

their real or perceived authority, knowledge, position, or relationship. These individuals or organizations are trusted sources of information. Additional information on key influencers is provided in Subsection 3.2 of FEMA Guidance Document No. 61, Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Data and Product Development Phase, which can be found on the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

The names or titles of the key influencers and their roles and responsibilities should have been included in the stakeholder engagement plan. If appropriate information on key influencers was not included, the Project Team should determine who the key influencers are moving forward and update the plan to include the information. The Project Team may also determine that information on key stakeholders has been included in the existing stakeholder engagement plan, but must be updated based on their more recent experience with these individual and organizations or their knowledge about the individuals' or organizations' roles in the watershed.

3.0 Engaging Stakeholders

Engagement with a variety of stakeholders – both external and internal – at each phase of a flood risk project is vital for a project to be completed successfully. Information on potential external stakeholders to be engaged during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase is provided in Subsection 3.1, while information on potential internal stakeholders (i.e., FEMA HQ, FEMA Regional Offices, Risk MAP providers not represented on Project Teams) to be engaged is provided in Subsection 3.2.

3.1 Engagement with Communities and Other External Stakeholders

Engagement with a variety of external stakeholders will enable the FEMA Project Officer and other Project Team members to do the following:

- Further educate community officials and other key stakeholders about the flood hazard information shown on the Preliminary FIRM and FIS report and how that information may differ from the information shown on the effective FIRM and FIS report.
- Encourage and support communities' taking ownership of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, database, and SOMA in anticipation of making this information available more widely during the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s).
- Continue to build on community officials' and other stakeholders' understanding of, and support for, local flood risk reduction activities.
- Maintain relationships with stakeholders and partners that participated during the earlier phases of the project and whose participation during the release of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, database, and SOMA may be important.

The following stakeholder groups, which could be engaged by the Project Team during the Data and Document Production Phase, are discussed in Subsections 3.1.1 through 3.1.6:

- Local community officials
- Regional entities
- State partners and other State agencies
- Federal agency partners and other Federal agencies

- Federal and State elected officials
- Private-sector organizations, including the media

3.1.1. Engaging Local Community Officials

Through the earlier phases of the project, the Project Team should have established and maintained a consistent level of engagement with local officials in the watershed or geographic area that is the focus of the project. Potential local officials (county and community) with whom the Project Team may want to engage during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CEOs
- FPAs
- Emergency managers
- Engineers
- Planners
- Building officials and other code enforcement officials
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) managers/coordinators/specialists
- Hazard mitigation planners and officials involved in implementation
- Metropolitan planning and transportation entities

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3.1.2. Engaging Regional Entities

Representatives of some regional entities in the watershed or geographic area may already be active Project Team members. Potential regional entities with whom the Project Team may want to engage during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase are listed below. Engagement with regional entities is particularly true if representatives of any of these entities have been identified by the Project Team as key influencers

- Planning districts and authorities
- Flood control, water management, and water conservation districts and authorities
- Economic development commissions, councils, boards, authorities, and agencies
- Transportation planning organizations

3.1.3. Engaging State Partners and Other State Agencies

State CTP(s), State NFIP Coordinator(s), SHMO(s), and their staff will likely already be active Project Team members. Project Teams may want to engage, or continue engagement with, the State agencies listed below and other State agencies because they also may be able help to communicate about flood risk and support flood risk reduction activities in the watershed. As with regional entities, this is particularly true if representatives of any of these agencies have been identified by the Project Team as key influencers.

- State agencies that own and/or operate levees or dams
- State historic preservation offices
- State dam safety officials
- State departments of environmental protection
- State transportation departments
- State housing and economic development authorities

3.1.4. Engaging Other Federal Agencies

Some existing Federal agency partners and their staff also may be active Project Team members. Depending on the participation of the Federal agency partners in previous phases of the project, Project Teams may want to continue to engage with the agencies listed below because they may be able help to communicate about flood risk and support flood risk reduction activities in the watershed. As with regional entities and State agencies, this is particularly true if representatives of any of these agencies have been identified by the Project Team as key influencers.

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including the National Weather Service and Office for Coastal Management
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, including local extension offices
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, including the Flood Risk Management Program office
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, when Tribal lands/entities may be affected
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

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3.1.5. Engaging Federal and State Elected Officials

Engagement with the following elected officials and their staff may have proven to be beneficial during the earlier project phases to minimize disruptions in the flood risk study process, to obtain support for products, or to obtain support for mitigation projects.

- U.S. Senators
- U.S. Representative(s) for the watershed
- State Senator(s) for the watershed
- State Representative(s) for the watershed
- Governor

Some notification of U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives is required by HFIAA as discussed in Section 6. Any other engagement with these elected officials would need to be carried out by, or with the approval of, the Regional Office of External Affairs.

3.1.6. Engaging Private-Sector Organizations and the Media

The Project Team also may have initiated engagement activities with state and local affiliates of the professional associations and organizations listed below as well as other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) during earlier phases of the project. This may have been done because the members of these organizations, by and large, are embedded in the community; have routine interactions with, and often can influence, Federal, State, and local elected officials and other decision-makers; and have daily interactions with local citizens and the media. The Project Team may have already identified representatives of these organizations as key influencers.

Professional Associations

- American Congress of Surveying and Mapping
- American Planning Association
- American Public Works Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- American Water Resources Association
- Association of State Floodplain Managers
- Association of State Wetland Managers
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies
- National Association of Home Builders
- National Association of Realtors
- National Emergency Management Association
- National League of Cities
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Association

NGOs and NPOs

- American Red Cross
- American Rivers
- American Shore and Beach Preservation Association
- Coastal Conservation Association
- Institute for Business and Home Safety
- The Nature Conservancy

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Influential civic organizations

If any of these organizations have issues with the project and/or the data and products being produced, it would benefit the Project Team to know about the issues so they may address them, in whole or part, before the data and products are delivered to community officials at the end of the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase. Many of these affiliates – particularly those associated with lending, insurance, real estate, and business/commerce – are likely to become more active during the Due Process Phase, which begins with the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s).

Communications and Outreach staff in the Risk Analysis Division (RAD) of the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) are formulating a National Partnership Network as a platform for thought leaders who have a complementary disaster resiliency perspective. The CERC provider is providing support on this effort. If they have not already engaged with participants in the National Partnership Network, the FEMA Project Officer or a Project Team member designated by the FEMA Project Officer may want to initiate this engagement by coordinating with the CERC-L.

The other key private-sector stakeholder group with whom the Project Team may need to engage during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase is the media. Engagement with the media – which would consist primarily of working with the editorial boards of newspapers, television stations, and radio stations in the watershed or geographic area covered by the project – should be carried out under the leadership of the Regional Office of External Affairs.

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Depending on the watershed or geographic area covered, the print and broadcast media are likely to be very active in communicating to the general public, covering most, if not all, of the stakeholder groups discussed in this subsection. Getting the media to provide accurate information may be labor-intensive, but definitely worthwhile even before the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) are held.

3.2 Engagement with Internal Partners and Programs

In addition to coordinating with external stakeholders, Project Teams may want to continue their engagement with internal partners. The primary internal partners for the Project Team to continue engagement with are as follows:

- FIMA offices at FEMA HQ
- FEMA Regional Offices that are not represented on the Project Team
- Risk MAP providers that are not represented on the Project Team (i.e., CERC provider, CDS provider, PTS providers)

3.2.1. Engaging with Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration Offices

FIMA is charged with integrating the efforts of teams who oversee individual programs within its organization to ensure that resources are better leveraged and steps are taken to reduce duplication of effort and better achieve complementary goals and objectives. The FIMA RAD,

Risk Reduction Division (RRD), Risk Insurance Division (RID), and Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP) are uniquely positioned to accomplish this because of the natural synergies among the staff and the programs they oversee. Periodic engagement with the RAD, RRD, RID, and OEHP staff may be appropriate during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase for Project Team members to obtain the following:

- Latest information on existing programs and initiatives
- Latest mitigation planning guidance and outreach materials
- Information on near-term and longer term initiatives that are in progress or planned and that are expected to have a positive impact on stakeholder engagement during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase
- Support for answering community questions regarding existing programs and initiatives and any newly implemented programs and initiatives
- Support for responding to inquiries from U.S. Congress and State legislature

The Project Team may also find it beneficial to engage with another key internal stakeholder group, the more recently created Office of the Flood Insurance Advocate (OFIA). As a result of their day-to-day activities, the Flood Insurance Advocate and the OFIA staff may have information and documentation that will help the Project Team identify problems or concerns regarding the area of study that were not raised during earlier project phases. Therefore, the Project Team may want to engage with the OFIA staff to obtain their insights, which may assist the Project Team with fine-tuning the engagement plan and carrying out documented activities. In addition, the Flood Insurance Advocate and OFIA staff may have developed specific recommendations regarding regional mapping outreach and education that the Project Team needs to implement during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase.

The two-way communication that takes place during engagement may be equally beneficial to the Flood Insurance Advocate and the OFIA staff. The Flood Insurance Advocate and OFIA staff will be able to obtain project-related information for areas that may be the subject of, or pertinent to responding to, a particular inquiry.

3.2.2. Engaging with Other Regional Offices

Where a watershed abuts or crosses regional boundaries, continued engagement by the FEMA Project Officer and the Project Team with the FEMA Project Officer(s) and Project Team(s) in the adjoining Region(s) is vital. Such engagement will help to ensure that the flood hazard and risk information presented to community officials and related messaging are consistent.

Engagement with other Regional Offices that do not have a geographic stake in the project might be carried out by the FEMA Project Officer or Project Team members to obtain information on lessons learned and best practices developed for similar projects or situations.

3.2.3. Engaging with Risk MAP Providers

As mentioned earlier in this document, some Risk MAP provider staff (i.e., PTS staff, CERC-L) may participate actively on the Project Team. When Risk MAP provider staff members are not actively involved, periodic Project Team engagement with the providers could prove valuable and should be considered. Some potential benefits of this engagement are summarized below.

- Engagement with the CDS provider may be appropriate to obtain recent email messages and telephone records from the FEMA Map Information eXchange (FMIX) map specialists and to provide FMIX map specialists with information they can use to answer incoming flood risk study-related questions.
- Engagement with the CERC-L (if not a Project Team member) and other CERC provider staff that are not Project Team members may be appropriate for the following:
 - Obtain summaries of recent congressional correspondence and summaries from media monitoring activities.
 - Plan how to respond to inquiries from, or prepare presentations for, Federal, State, and local elected officials and the media.
 - Develop Region- or project-specific materials related to the release of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA; the benefits of taking appropriate actions to reduce flood risk; and other pertinent topics.
 - Arrange for professional meeting facilitation or dispute resolution support.
- Engagement with the PTS provider that does not have members on the Project Team may be appropriate to share information when a watershed abuts or crosses regional boundaries and to obtain information on lessons learned and best practices.

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3.3 Potential Tools and Techniques to Support Stakeholder Engagement Effort

Project Team members may want to consider a number of tools and techniques when determining how to engage effectively with both internal and external stakeholders during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase. Several potential techniques and tools that Project Teams may consider for are listed below.

- **Facilitated Conference Calls:** Facilitated conference calls can be a very effective form of engagement to minimize travel costs.
- **Facilitated Webinars:** As discussed in Section 4, it will be necessary to deliver a volume of information for discussion with community officials and key stakeholders before the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) are held - Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA. Properly facilitated webinars using Adobe Connect or a similarly capable platform can be very effective when in-person meetings will not be held and it when it is appropriate to meet simultaneously with multiple communities. Depending on the platform used, these sessions can also be recorded, allowing participants to review sessions at a later date or direct other stakeholder staff to listen to the recording. The webinar format also may be appropriate to allow additional FEMA, State, and provider staff to participate remotely in

the CCO Meeting(s) in support of the FEMA and Project Team staff attending the meeting(s) onsite.

- **In-Person Meetings:** In-person meetings are invaluable opportunities for the Project Team to engage with key influencers and other stakeholders. In-person meetings with community officials and key stakeholders regarding the Preliminary FIRMs, FIS reports, FIRM databases, and SOMAs may be preferred when additional work is need to improve their understanding, acceptance, and ownership of the products and the process being followed. In-person meetings may also be preferred when there is the potential for contentiousness among the attendees or between the attendees and the Project Team.
- **Correspondence:** Before or after a facilitated conference call, webinar, or in-person meeting, tailored project- or community-specific letters and email messages are an effective way to keep stakeholders engaged. Email messages are also effective for delivering updates regarding upcoming meetings, for distributing key materials before and after meetings, and for soliciting general feedback from community officials and other stakeholders.
- **Fact Sheets, Flyers, and Brochures:** Project Teams have, for many years, relied on fact sheets, flyers, brochures, and other print-type publications to communicate information. These tools are most effective as a means of communicating information one way. However, a Project Team can use them effectively as an integral part of engagement efforts to announce webinars, meetings, conferences, and workshops. They also can be effective as “leave-behinds” at in-person meetings, as digital attachments to email messages, as attachments for webinars, or as content posted to partner or Regional Office websites to enhance stakeholder understanding, acceptance, and ownership of products and processes and to minimize misinterpretation/confusion about content presented at meetings/workshops.
- **Newsletters, ListServes, or Other Means of Maintaining General, Ongoing Engagement:** If the Project Team has already used newsletters, ListServes, or other means of monthly or bimonthly engagement with Federal and State partners, regional entities, and local communities, this type of engagement could be continued during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase.
- **Templates:** To assist Project Teams with engaging Federal and State partners, professional associations, and other NGOs, FEMA, FEMA partner, and Risk MAP provider staff 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 Project Team needs. Project Team members should consult with the FEMA Project Officer about the availability of previously developed templates that may be appropriate for the project.

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- **Websites/Web Content:** If a CTP is a member of the Project Team, a project-dedicated website may have already been established or project-related information may have been posted to web pages controlled by the CTP. Where resources are available, chat rooms or other two-way communication vehicles hosted on websites may be effective. For example, the Project Team may make the Preliminary FIRM panels available for comment following the meeting discussed in Section 4.

Where Regional Offices already have established websites, these sites also could be used to announce webinars, meetings, conferences, and workshops or for posting of project-related fact sheets, flyers, and brochures. Before establishing new websites, however, Regional Office staff should confer with the FEMA HQ Office of External Affairs.

- **Social Media and Shareable Content:** 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, meetings), the Project Team may want to consider using social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, to their advantage. The Project Team may need to confer with the Regional Office of External Affairs to determine the correct protocol for the use of social media in that Region.

4.0 Community Review of Preliminary Map Products

Once the Project Team has established a firm date for when the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA will be completed – a projected date may have been provided during the Flood Risk Review Meeting(s) – the Project Team should notify community officials and key stakeholders and may want to consider offering to “meet” with them to deliver and discuss these products. This notification can be handled by email message, conference call, or webinar.

If the notification is to be handled by conference call or webinar, the Project Team may want to consider polling the communities and stakeholders to determine a suitable date and time using Doodle Poll or similar functionality. This approach should result in maximum participation. If the notification is handled by email message, it may be appropriate to use a Doodle Poll or similar polling mechanism to choose a date for the “delivery meeting(s).” (Note: The Project Management Team will determine the number of delivery meetings and whether they will be held in person, virtually, or some combination based on the size of the watershed or geographic area covered, budgetary concerns, and community officials’ preferences.)

Depending on the flood risk study, community official and stakeholder knowledge about the products, and community official/stakeholder and Regional Office preference, the delivery meeting(s) may be held in person, virtually via webinar, or a combination of in person and virtual. For in-person delivery meetings, using some form of virtual format would allow multiple Regional Office staff members, the State NFIP Coordinator, the SHMO, and others to participate remotely, conserving limited travel funding for later meetings. Separate meetings can

be held for an entire county or for individual communities depending on the FEMA Project Officer's and community officials' mutual preferences.

The Regional Office may have developed fact sheet templates and other tools to assist Project Teams in conducting the delivery meeting(s). Project Team members may also have meeting materials from other flood risk studies that would be beneficial and may help limit production costs. Other FEMA Regional Offices, FEMA HQ, and PTS and CERC provider staff that are not participants on the Project Team also are potential sources of useful templates and tools.

Delivery meetings are intended to be working meetings, with consideration for interactive, two-way communication, and not solely FEMA/Project Team briefings. Each meeting would include a general discussion of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA and the next steps in the project lifecycle – that is, the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) – and would allow time for attendees to ask questions and provide feedback. Invitees can include both technical and non-technical community officials (e.g., CEOs, administrators, FPAs, engineers, planners, emergency managers) and other key stakeholders that have been active participants in previous meetings.

During the meeting(s), the Project Team will establish a timeframe for the attendees to provide additional feedback. A period of 2 to 4 weeks is likely to be sufficient; however, the Project Team should reach a consensus with attendees to ensure they feel they are being given ample time to provide feedback.

The primary goal of the meeting(s) is to continue to build community and stakeholder understanding, acceptance, and ownership of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA. In fact, an important message for the meeting is:

Teamwork is vital to our collective success on identifying and communicating flood risk, and making informed decisions about how to address the risk. Let's talk about our next steps on this project as a team.

During the delivery meeting(s), the Project Team would have the opportunity to review the community officials' roles and responsibilities leading up to the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s). If the meeting(s) are held in person, the Project Team would also have an opportunity to talk separately to key influencers about their role going forward and to get their perspective on issues the Project Team may face before and during the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s).

On very rare occasions, the FEMA Regional Office and community officials may decide jointly that CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) do not need to be held. The delivery meeting would be a good time for the Project Team to collaborate with community officials and other stakeholders regarding the process that will be followed to notify the public about the Preliminary versions of the FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA. When this occurs, the Project Team will need to document the decision in letters to the community CEOs, FPAs, and other key stakeholders using a template provided by FEMA.

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Following the meeting(s), Project Team members should document any specific feedback or general concerns raised by attendees and determine whether any followup is necessary. If followup with attendees is appropriate, the Project Team will want to complete that followup in a timely manner to continue building credibility and cooperation with community officials and other stakeholders.

5.0 Planning for CCO Meetings and Flood Risk Open Houses

Regardless of whether the delivery meeting(s) discussed in Section 4 are held, community officials should be contacted about the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) at least 2 months before they are projected to be held. Initially, the date(s) will be based on when the FEMA Project Officer, the State NFIP Coordinator and SHMO, and other key members of the Project Team will be available to participate in the meetings and open houses, either in person or remotely. However, the Project Team also will want to coordinate with the community CEOs, FPAs, and other active community representatives to help determine the best date(s) and locations for the meetings.

The Flood Risk Open Houses are intended to be community-led meetings attended by FEMA, the State NFIP Coordinator and SHMO, and other Project Team members. Therefore, the Project Team should allow community officials to select the sites. For larger watersheds or geographic areas, it may be appropriate to hold the Flood Risk Open Houses in multiple communities. The Project Team can help the affected community officials reach this decision during a facilitated conference call or webinar. A webinar may be appropriate to provide the CEOs and FPAs with sufficient logistical information to select an appropriate site.

The selected site(s) for the Flood Risk Open House(s) will need to meet a number of requirements, including, but not limited to, the requirements listed below.

- Accessibility for the handicapped
- Space
- Seating
- Table and work space (to lay out paper copies of FIRM panels for discussion and markup purposes)
- Electrical
- Video conferencing (if appropriate)
- Internet access (if appropriate)
- Telephone
- Other requirements established by the FEMA Project Officer

The Project Team will likely want to provide interactive work stations where property owners can receive information about the location of their property relative to the Special Flood Hazard Area and have meeting participants visit other work stations based on the information provided. Therefore, the selected location(s) will need to be sufficient to allow for a reasonable number of information and work stations and flow of people. Some Regional Offices already have established recommended room layouts to facilitate the choice of location.

During the conference call or webinar, the Project Team also will need to identify the appropriate location(s) for the CCO Meeting(s) to be held before the Flood Risk Open House(s). When possible, it would be beneficial to hold the CCO Meeting(s) at the same location(s) as the Flood Risk Open House(s). This would allow the Project Team to guide community officials and other key stakeholders through the work stations to help them understand what the public will experience. If appropriate, the Project Team may make adjustments to work stations in advance of the Flood Risk Open House(s) based on community official/stakeholder feedback.

Following the conference call or webinar, it may be beneficial for the Project Team to send an email message – or, perhaps, a letter – under FEMA signature to the community officials and other invited stakeholders indicating the agreed-upon dates, times, and locations for the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s). The community FPAs or the Project Team members could then follow up with the recipients of the email message or letter to verify availability and to minimize misunderstandings and misinformation.

At least 1 month before the first CCO Meeting, the Project Team should consider sending Outlook appointments to all appropriate stakeholders. Project Team members can then follow up by email or telephone with those stakeholders who do not respond to the appointment(s) to confirm or encourage attendance/participation in the meeting(s).

At least 2 weeks before the first CCO Meeting, the Project Team should conduct a dry run of any presentation(s) to be used and any content to be delivered to the attendees electronically. It is also important to practice handoffs between presenters, particularly if a presenter is participating virtually from a remote location. Where possible, content to be projected to a screen should be tested in a room with similar size and lighting characteristics to assure attendees may view the content without problems.

By the time of this dry run, the Project Team will want to verify that all appropriate resource materials, delivered in either hard copy or electronic form, have been received by each community that is hosting a CCO Meeting or Open House.

Regardless of how resource materials are delivered, a final quality control review of the materials is encouraged to minimize potential errors and to allow Project Team members to carry amended materials to the meeting(s), if necessary.

Stakeholder engagement guidance related to the actual conduct of the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) – timing, invitees and attendees, objectives, messages, and activities – and the activities to be undertaken following the meeting(s) and open house(s) will be covered in a separate guidance document, Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Due Process Phase. This guidance document, when completed, can be found on the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

Guidance regarding the appeals process that FEMA administers after the CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s) have been held will be provided in Guidance Document No. 26, Guidance for Flood Risk Mapping and Analysis: Appeals Process. Guidance Document No. 26,

when completed, can be found on the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

6.0 Congressional Notifications

In enacting HFIAA, the U.S. Congress placed some specific requirements on FEMA with regard to notifying congressional delegations about upcoming map changes. These requirements are being addressed through sending standardized reports to congressional delegations via email transmittal. The reports are also posted to the FEMA library and archived by year.

Given the interest of some congressional and state delegations in planned or actual changes in the information shown on FIRMs, it may be appropriate to send separate notifications to district office staff members of U.S. Senators, U.S. Representatives, Governors, State Senators, and State Representatives to inform them about the upcoming CCO Meeting(s) and Flood Risk Open House(s). These notifications should be handled separately from the notifications and Outlook appointments sent to community officials and other key stakeholders and should be coordinated with, and handled by, the Regional Office of External Affairs.

7.0 File Maintenance

To be compliant with Section 66.3 of the NFIP regulations (44 CFR 66.3), the Project Team needs to maintain community files for the communities affected by the project. The required community files for all affected communities should have been set up during the Discovery Phase following protocols established by the Regional Office. Therefore, the Project Team should place records of engagement activities (e.g., letters, email messages, memorandums, meeting notes) during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase in the previously established community files.

To be compliant with Section 67.3 of the NFIP regulations (44 CFR 67.3), the Project Team also should establish a Flood Elevation Determination Docket (FEDD) file for each affected community. The FEDD file should contain all copies of all correspondence with communities concerning the preliminary flood hazard information as well as copies of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, and SOMA.

Additional guidance on the information to be included in the FEDD file will be provided in Guidance Document No. 26, Guidance for Flood Risk Mapping and Analysis: Appeals Process. Guidance Document No. 26, when completed, which can be found on the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage.

8.0 Outcomes from Stakeholder Engagement Effort

Successful stakeholder engagement during the Preliminary NFIP Map Release Phase should result in the following outcomes:

- Greater transparency into the Risk MAP process
- Improved community official understanding of, confidence in, and ownership of the Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, FIRM database, and SOMA and how/why they are different from previously provided NFIP products
- Improved stakeholder understanding of, and support for, local flood risk reduction activities
- Enhanced relationships with community officials, other key influencers, and other stakeholders
- Reduced amount of misleading or incorrect information disseminated by media and other stakeholders

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