

Section Three

Planning Process

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3.1 IFR Requirements for Planning Process

The IFR states that “[a]n effective planning process is essential in developing and maintaining a good plan.” The IFR backs up this statement with specific requirements for documenting the planning process and indicating to what extent this planning effort is integrated with other plans and programs at the Federal, state and local level. The IFR includes three specific requirements for the process of developing Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plans:

- **Documentation of the Planning Process** per **Requirement §201.4(c)(1)**: “[The State plan must include a] description of the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how other agencies participated.”
- **Coordination among Agencies** per **Requirement §201.4(b)**: “The [State] mitigation planning process should include coordination with other State agencies, appropriate Federal agencies, interested groups,…”
- **Program Integration** per **Requirement §201.4(b)**: “[The State mitigation planning process should] be integrated to the extent possible with other ongoing State planning efforts as well as other FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives.”

3.2 Documentation of the Planning Process

This subsection includes documentation regarding:

- Plan Preparation;
- Meetings and Workshops; and
- Participants.

Plan Preparation

The process used to develop the Plan was formally initiated in late 2003 with the issuance of a Request for Proposal for consulting services to support OHSEP and SHMPC efforts. A consultant was selected in the spring of 2004 and the work began in May. The scope of work undertaken by all the participants consisted of seven basic tasks as detailed on the following two pages.

Task 1 – Organize Resources

This task included initial meetings with OHSEP, the SHMPC, representatives of FEMA Region VI and the consultants. The purpose of these meetings was to confirm the steps in the planning process and schedule milestones for the work. This task also included initiating opportunities for public involvement by identifying content to include on the OHSEP website.

Volume II, Appendix C contains summaries and/or meeting minutes for these initial meetings as well as all other meetings and workshops associated with this planning effort.

Task 2 – Identify and Profile Hazard Events

This task focused the planning effort on the types of hazards the State of Louisiana is vulnerable to and determined the relevant physical characteristics of the hazards. For example, relevant characteristics for a hazard such as flooding include where, how often and how deep flooding is likely to occur in specific areas of the State. Hazard profiles for the State had been updated in 2003, the year prior to the initiation of this planning process. OHSEP determined in consultation with FEMA Region VI that the results of the hazard profile study were adequate for use in this planning effort. However, the consultant's scope of work for this Plan included evaluating the existing hazard profile information to determine if any information appeared to be missing or if any subsequent studies would be more useful for this and/or future planning efforts.

Section Four summarizes the hazards and profiles identified for the State. Volume II, Appendix D includes the complete description of the hazard profiles included in this effort.

Task 3 – Risk Assessment

Assessing risk was the next step in developing the Plan. In general terms, information from Task 2 about the likelihood and extent of hazards was overlaid, using a Geographic Information System (GIS), with the locations of communities, centers of population, and in some cases specific structures, to determine the extent to which the citizens of the State of Louisiana and their businesses and property are at risk of damage and loss. For this Plan, as noted above, there was a parallel effort to assess risk to State-owned buildings, critical facilities and infrastructure. When adequate data was available, work under Task 3 included estimating the value of physical damage, damage to building contents, and loss of use associated with specific hazards as a more refined way to identify where the residents and property owners in the State might expect to experience the greatest losses. This information was then used to develop and prioritize goals, objectives and specific mitigation actions to most effectively reduce losses.

Sections Five and Six, and related materials in Volume II, Appendices E and F, provide definitions of relevant terms and detail the methodology and results of the risk assessment process for the identified hazards statewide and for State-owned assets respectively.

Task 4 – Capability Assessment

The Plan will be more successful in reducing the impact of natural and manmade disasters if the State of Louisiana and the parish and local governments can realistically implement the proposed actions. For example, staffing shortfalls may limit the State in providing adequate technical support to local communities and may interfere with its ability to administer grant programs as effectively as possible. Therefore, the SHMPC undertook an assessment of the State of Louisiana's capabilities to initiate, support and implement hazard mitigation planning and related activities. The intent was to help determine the feasibility of various mitigation actions and implementation strategies and to identify areas where enhanced capabilities would prove beneficial to the State and its programs.

The State capability assessment first focused on OHSEP and the other state agencies represented on the SHMPC, because they are generally considered to be most involved and responsible for on-going and potential mitigation activities. SHMPC members were interviewed and surveyed regarding their agency's mission, personnel, organizational structure, mitigation-related activities and programs, limitations, and interactions with other entities. In addition, SHMPC members evaluated the effectiveness of existing programs within their agencies. Finally, details regarding non-SHMPC state agencies were gleaned from public information sources.

Section Three – Planning Process (continued)

Another important part of assessing state capabilities is determining what resources are available at the local level. One good source of this information can be the local equivalent of the DMA 2000 Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Local communities are also required to prepare and submit hazard mitigation plans for approval by FEMA with similar requirements, deadlines and funding incentives. Although the majority of parishes in the State were actively preparing their own plans at the time this portion of the State's Plan was being developed, none had been completed or approved. Therefore, the SHMPC used other methods to perform a local capability assessment. The process for identifying and assessing the local capabilities to support hazard mitigation involved a series of interviews and surveys. Following SHMPC review and approval of the process, a survey was delivered to the emergency management directors for each parish via telephone and email. The survey results were compiled and summarized for each of the nine emergency management regions in Louisiana.

Section Seven and Volume II, Appendix G provide more detailed accounts of the methodology and results for the State and local capability assessments.

Task 5 – Mitigation Action Plan

Under this task, the SHMPC first established a series of goals and objectives to help identify hazard mitigation actions that will be most effective in reducing or eliminating risks to threatened parishes, communities and State-owned assets. The goals and objectives reflect the issues and opportunities identified in the assessments and analyses performed for Tasks 3 and 4. The SHMPC considered options for how to structure the goal statements and objectives and identified a way to organize this information that responds to major areas of concern with objectives that address particular needs of each "audience" (i.e., statewide versus State-owned).

The next step was the development of a mitigation action plan that answered these important questions:

- What actions will the State of Louisiana take to reduce the identified impacts of natural and manmade disasters?
- Who will be responsible for implementing these actions?
- When will specific actions be taken or improvements put into place?

Section Eight includes a description of the goals and objectives and the details of the mitigation action plan. Volume II, Appendix H includes related material regarding recommended best practices for mitigation in the State of Louisiana.

Task 6 – Implementation

The Plan also identifies the process the SHMPC and OHSEP will follow to monitor and update the Plan. The IFR requires that Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plans must be updated and re-approved at least every three years. A key part of this process will be for the State to incorporate information that becomes available as local hazard mitigation plans are completed and to increase the number of state agencies who are actively involved in the planning and implementation process.

Sections Nine and Ten provide more detail regarding coordination with local hazard mitigation planning efforts, and the process for maintaining the Plan during the next three years.

Task 7 – Mitigation Options and Best Practices

In Task 7, the SHMPC listed mitigation options recommended for use by parishes and local communities, and hazard mitigation "best practices" for state agencies. These recommendations followed the parallel planning approach started with the risk assessments in Task 3, and were based on the goals and objectives from Task 5.

The lists included in Volume II, Appendix H of the Plan include a range of proven structural and non-structural mitigation techniques applicable to the State and its particular hazard conditions.

Meetings and Workshops

The SHMPC met on seven separate occasions while developing the Plan:

Table 3-1: State Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee Meetings and Workshops

#	Date / Place	Subject	Participants
1	June 8, 2004 / OHSEP Offices in Baton Rouge	Project scoping meeting	OHSEP, FEMA Region VI & Consultants
2	June 30, 2004 / OHSEP Offices in Baton Rouge	Project initiation meeting	OHSEP, SHMPC, FEMA Region VI & Consultants
3	August 4-5, 2004 / New Orleans	Workshop #1 to review results of vulnerability assessments and loss estimates and initial development of goals and objectives.	OHSEP, SHMPC, FEMA Region VI & Consultants
4	September 22-23, 2004 / New Orleans	Workshop #2 to review work-in-progress	OHSEP, SHMPC & Consultants
5	December 1-2, 2004 / New Orleans	Workshop #3 to review Preliminary Draft	OHSEP, SHMPC & Consultants
6	January 11, 2005 / Baton Rouge	Workshop #4 to review Draft	OHSEP, SHMPC & Consultants
7	February 15, 2005 / Baton Rouge	Workshop #5 to review Final Draft	OHSEP, SHMPC & Consultants

These workshops and meetings were facilitated by OHSEP and its consultant. Prior to these meetings, the SHMPC received packets of information that were subsequently presented and discussed at the workshops / meetings. After the presentations the SHMPC reviewed modified proposed elements of the Plan, and either approved or rejected them. This was usually accomplished through facilitated discussion and consensus. Prior to submitting the Plan to the Governor, the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT)¹⁰ took a formal vote to approve and recommend the Plan for adoption.

Participants

A number of individuals and agencies played key roles in preparing the Plan including:

- The Governor of Louisiana;
- Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (OHSEP);
- State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT);
- State Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (SHMPC);
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region VI; and
- Consultants.

¹⁰ See the discussion in the following subsection regarding “Participants” for an explanation of the SHMT and its relationship to the SHMPC.

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The specific responsibilities of these participants and agencies are as follows:

The Governor of Louisiana

The Governor of Louisiana was responsible for:

- Issuing Executive Order KBB 2004-35, re-establishing the SHMPC (see discussion below regarding the SHMPC and Volume II, Appendix C.1);
- Authorizing the SHMPC to develop the State of Louisiana Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- Reviewing the recommendations of the OHSEP and SHMPC to adopt the Plan on behalf of the State;
- Requesting revisions to the Plan's contents if deemed necessary; and
- Formally adopting the Plan.

Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

OHSEP was the lead state agency for developing the Plan with specific responsibility for project management resting with the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO). Although the SHMPC was responsible to the Governor for the actual development and production of the Plan per executive order, OHSEP performed an important coordination function throughout its development. OHSEP directly supervised the consultant's activities and facilitated the involvement of the SHMPC members. OHSEP also provided important oversight and quality control to ensure that the Plan and the associated process met Federal requirements. At the end of the process, OHSEP provided a formal recommendation for the Governor to adopt the Plan

State Hazard Mitigation Team

The SHMT was responsible for developing, reviewing and approving the Plan. The SHMT was designated by the Governor and is comprised of a variety of state agencies. Executive Order No. KBB 2004 – 35, issued on August 20, 2004 (see Volume II, Appendix C.1), identifies the following member agencies:

- The Military Department, OHSEP, Office of the Governor;
- The Department of Transportation and Development;
- The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries;
- The Department of Environmental Quality;
- The Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Restoration and Management; and
- The Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

Section 2 of the Executive Order indicates that the "duties and functions of the Team shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Identifying the State of Louisiana's vulnerability to hazards;
- B. Reviewing existing mitigation plans and prioritizing recommendations;
- C. Developing or updating Hazard Mitigation Plans required under 44 CFR Subpart M;
- D. Developing a comprehensive strategy for the development and implementation of a State Mitigation Program;
- E. Reviewing, assigning priority, and recommending mitigation actions for implementation, including measures to be funded under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program or other Federal grant programs; and
- F. Seeking funding for implementation of mitigation measures."

State Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee

To assist the SHMT in developing the Plan, the State Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (SHMPC) was formed. The Committee consists of the SHMT plus a number of long-time advisors to the SHMT, including former voting and non-voting members¹¹. The SHMPC was the body that provided the primary direction for the planning process and reviewed all milestone deliverables.

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI

FEMA, through its Region VI office in Denton Texas, is the responsible party for reviewing the Plan for compliance with DMA 2000 and the IFR. Representatives of FEMA Region VI also helped facilitate completion of this Plan through on-going review of the Plan as it was developed and participating in SHMPC meetings and workshops.

Consultants

The consultants for the project included a consortium of planning and engineering firms:

- URS Corporation – served as the prime consultant and primary author of the Plan;
- PBS&J – provided technical assistance for the statewide risk assessment (Section Five);
- Dewberry & Davis – provided similar technical support for the risk assessment for State-owned assets (buildings, critical facilities and infrastructure) (Section Six);
- Innovative Emergency Management, Inc. – focused their efforts on the State and local capability assessments (Section Seven).

The consultants assisted in a variety of ways, including:

- Developing an appropriate planning process;
- Providing technical support in performing the risk assessments;
- Developing written materials for meetings and web postings;
- Making presentations at SHMPC meetings and workshops;
- Facilitating SHMPC meetings and workshops, i.e., ensuring that discussions and products from meetings addressed Plan elements;
- Providing support for outreach to interested parties and coordination efforts among Federal and state agencies; and
- Assembling information for inclusion in the Plan.

3.3 Coordination among Agencies and Interested Parties

The IFR requires that the State describe how Federal and state agencies were involved in the planning process. The IFR also requires that the State describe how interested groups and individuals were involved in the planning process.

This subsection describes:

- the involvement of other Federal and state agencies; and
- the process by which the OHSEP and the SHMPC provided opportunities for interested parties to review and comment on the Plan during its development.

¹¹ A complete listing of the contributors to the Plan is included in the “Acknowledgements”.

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FEMA and the state agencies that are members of the SHMT and SHMPC had regular involvement in developing the Plan. OHSEP and the SHMPC sought participation from additional Federal and state agencies while developing the Plan. A listing of the Federal and state agencies that were contacted as part of the process is included in Volume II, Appendices C.5 and C.6 respectively along with correspondence received from these agencies.

While developing the Plan, the involvement of parish emergency management agencies (EMAs) was solicited, as was the participation of universities, private citizens and business interests, and non-profit and non-governmental organizations. Participation was sought and facilitated in the following manner:

OHSEP Website

OHSEP and the SHMPC developed a detailed posting on its web site that described the purpose of the Plan and progress on its development. The web site and posting were linked to various state agency web sites. The posting was updated periodically during development of the Plan to include copies of the draft Plan and all subsequent versions in printable formats. A printed copy of the information posted on the web site is provided in Volume II, Appendix C.3. The postings each provided methods of contacting OHSEP to ask questions about the Plan, and to provide input.

Outreach to Federal and State Agencies

Letters were sent to Federal and state agencies in mid-December 2004 to make them aware of the on-going planning process and to solicit their immediate involvement as reviewers of the draft Plan.

The agencies included:

Federal Agencies

- US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense (USACE)
- US Geological Survey, Department of the Interior (USGS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce (NOAA)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture (NRCS)

State Agencies

- Division of Administration
- Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Education
- Department of Environmental Quality
- Department of Health and Hospitals
- Department of Insurance
- Department of Justice
- Department of Labor
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Public Safety and Corrections /Office of State Police
- Department of Public Safety and Corrections / Office of Youth Development
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Social Services
- Department of State
- Department of Transportation and Development
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana State University System

- Louisiana Technical College System
- University of Louisiana System
- Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center
- Southern University System

The letters also indicated to the agencies the desire of the OHSEP and SHMPC to establish long-term partnerships as part of implementing the Plan's recommendations. A hard copy of the Plan and a CD containing digital files for all appendices were sent to these agencies on January 4, 2005, the publication date of the draft Plan. Copies of the correspondence sent to all Federal and state agencies are included in Volume II, Appendices C.6 and C.7.

Outreach to Parish Emergency Management Agencies

A letter similar to that sent to the Federal and state agencies was sent to all 64 parish EMA directors in mid-December, 2004. A copy is included in Volume II, Appendix C.8.

Video-Teleconference

In addition to the web postings and direct outreach to Federal, state and parish agencies, OHSEP and the SHMPC held a video-teleconference on January 12, 2005 to explain the Plan to representatives of the invited Federal and state agencies, as well as any interested parties, to solicit comments. The video-teleconference included a short presentation on the basic elements of the Plan and then allowed ample time for discussion and comments.

The video-teleconference was staged at seven locations around the State. Sign-up sheets for all seven locations are included in Volume II, Appendix C.4. A representative of OHSEP or the SHMPC was present at each of these meetings to facilitate participation and collect any written comments. Participants were given handout materials that included points-of-contact for additional questions about the Plan.

Comments received via the video-teleconference were summarized and responses provided for each comment (see Volume II, Appendix C.4). Appropriate changes were included in subsequent versions of the Plan. In addition, alternatives and opportunities for further involvement in the development and implementation of the Plan were identified by the SHMPC as a result of comments received during the video-teleconference (see Section Eight).

Briefings with Governor's Executive Counsel and Commissioner of Administration

In February and March of 2005, prior to submittal of the Final Plan to the Governor for adoption, OHSEP conducted briefings with the Governor's Executive Counsel and the Commissioner of Administration. The briefings focused on the implications of the overall Strategy for the State in terms of the level of commitment represented in the Plan including potential roles to be played by other State agencies, especially the Division of Administration. These briefings were intended to ensure that the Plan recommendations were consistent with the Governor's programs and policies but also opened up an important dialogue that will continue after the Plan's formal adoption and approval. Briefing materials from these meetings are included in Volume II, Appendix C.6.

3.4 Program Integration

The IFR requires that the State describe how its mitigation planning process is integrated with other ongoing state planning efforts as well as FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives.

This subsection describes:

- State Planning Programs; and
- FEMA Mitigation Programs and Initiatives.

State Planning Programs

A measure of integration and coordination is achieved through the participation on the SHMPC of representatives of two key state agencies who administer two programs, specifically floodplain management under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and coastal restoration under the provisions of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA). Both of these programs, and the interactions with the responsible agencies, are described in more detail in Section Seven – Capability Assessments and Volume II, Appendix G.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

The Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) administers the NFIP within the State of Louisiana. The state NFIP Coordinator, who is the DOTD's representative on the SHMPC, and staff provide technical assistance visits to local municipalities to advance hazard mitigation planning concepts and advise communities how to best meet certain Community Rating System (CRS) requirements. They work directly with local floodplain management officials and planners to emphasize the links among land use, comprehensive planning, and hazard mitigation planning. DOTD is also currently involved in an ongoing planning effort to develop a flood map modernization program for the State.

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Coastal Restoration Division and Coastal Engineering Division administer the CWPPRA, a program designed to balance preservation, conservation, enhancement and development of coastal resources, while promoting a sustainable economy in coastal areas.

In addition, updates of the State's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and substantial revisions to the State's administrative procedures for Federal emergency management funding were undertaken while this Plan was being developed and efforts were made to coordinate the contents of all these documents.

Emergency Operations Plan

Care was taken to ensure that coordination was maintained with the parallel development of the EOP. The types of issues included in these coordination efforts ranged from seeking consistency in the way hazards are identified to identifying opportunities to integrate mitigation practices in response and recovery operations.

Administrative Guidelines and Procedures

A number of improvements have been instituted in the way the State of Louisiana administers important grant programs like HMGP (See Volume IV). These improvements were engineered by the OHSEP and SHMPC at the same time as the development of the Plan to ensure complete integration of relevant issues. Examples of improvements include:

- Establishing parish rankings for each hazard type for use by the SHMT in reviewing project grant applications; and
- Establishing ways that new information can be gathered efficiently by OHSEP during the project application process to improve data available for mitigation planning over the long term.

FEMA Mitigation Programs and Initiatives

The previous discussion identified the integration of state agencies charged with administering the following FEMA programs and initiatives:

- NFIP
- CRS
- Map Modernization Program (MMP)

In addition, there is already a strong connection between the OHSEP hazard mitigation planning program and the Federal DMA 2000 State and Local Hazard Mitigation Planning initiative. However, Section Eight - Mitigation Action Plan includes recommendations that will better integrate the FEMA mitigation planning initiative with OHSEP technical support including support for:

- completion and adoption of local and parish level hazard mitigation plans;
- improving the gathering, use and sharing of data and information between the state and local governments; and
- improving local capabilities to plan and implement hazard mitigation projects.

In addition to providing leadership for state and local mitigation planning efforts, OHSEP administers and oversees Federal mitigation grant programs for the State of Louisiana that are related to hazard mitigation, emergency management and disaster relief. The organization also serves as lead agency for the State in disaster mitigation efforts. Due in part to the agency's dual roles, OHSEP has the opportunity to integrate the dissemination of mitigation planning and project information with the FEMA grant application process for the following:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive Grant Program (PDM-C)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA)
- Public Assistance Grant Program (PA)

As noted in the previous section on state programs, the OHSEP and SHMPC have updated and upgraded their administrative procedures including improvements to the information available to OHSEP staff, SHMPC members and potential applicants for these Federal programs (See Volume III – State of Louisiana Hazard Mitigation Program and Volume IV – State of Louisiana Administrative Guidelines and Procedures).