

CECW-CE  Regulation No. 1110-1-8158	DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Washington, DC 20314-1000	ER 1110-1-8158  15 April 2011
	Engineering and Design  CORPS-WIDE CENTERS OF EXPERTISE PROGRAM	
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CORPS-WIDE CENTERS OF EXPERTISE PROGRAM

1. Purpose. This regulation defines the policy and process for establishing and maintaining expert designations under the Corps-wide Centers of Expertise (CX) Program. The program provides an inventory of specialized knowledge and skills within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that can furnish beneficial and expert assistance to all Corps elements. This regulation also prescribes policy and guidance concerning CX use by USACE major subordinate commands (MSC), districts, laboratories, and field operating activities (FOA). This revision 1) makes the designation Directory of Expertise (DX) obsolete in favor of the designation Technical Center of Expertise (TCX), 2) clarifies when a Center of Standardization (COS) is a Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) or a TCX, 3) clarifies the approval process to establish CXs, 4) requires that all CXs currently operating in one capacity or another be recertified within six months of publication of this regulation, and 5) requires all CXs designated as an MCX publish an Engineering Regulation (ER) that provides roles, responsibilities, guidance, and structure of the MCX. The current listing of CXs, including a description of products and services, is available on the USACE Technical Excellence Network (TEN) at <https://ten.usace.army.mil>.

2. Applicability. This regulation applies to all USACE Commands.
3. References.
  - a. ER 5-1-9, *Assignment and Transfer of Project Responsibilities*.
  - b. ER 5-1-10, *Corps-Wide Areas of Work Responsibility*.
  - c. ER 5-1-11, *Corps of Engineers Business Process*.
  - d. ER 70-1-5, *Corps of Engineers Research and Development Program*.
  - e. ER 1110-1-12, *Quality Management*.
  - f. ER 1110-2-1150, *Engineering and Design for Civil Works Projects*.
  - g. ER 1110-345-100, *Design Policy for Military Construction*.
  - h. ER 1140-1-211, *Support for Others: Reimbursable Work*.
  - i. ER 1140-3-1, *Support to Defense Departments and Agencies*.

4. Distribution. Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.

5. Definitions. This regulation establishes a two-tiered CX program: mandatory use and voluntary use. The mandatory portion is designated Mandatory Centers of Expertise, and the voluntary portion is named Technical Center of Expertise. Organizations with these designations are considered the “lead activities” in their own specialized area.

a. Centers of Expertise (CX). CXs are designated USACE organizations (District, Laboratory, or Center) that have demonstrated capability and expertise in a specialized area. CXs improve capabilities and management, eliminate redundancy, optimize the use of specialized expertise and resources, enhance Corps-wide consistency, facilitate technology transfer, help maintain institutional knowledge in key areas, and improve service to customers, including rapid response to emergencies.

b. Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX). An MCX is a USACE organization that has been approved by HQUSACE as having a unique or exceptional technical capability in a specialized subject area that is critical to other USACE commands. Mandatory services to be rendered by an MCX are published in an ER and identified on TEN. These services may be reimbursable or centrally funded.

A CX receives its designation as an MCX when one or more services provided by the CX are considered to be mandatory use by all USACE elements. An MCX may provide additional discretionary or voluntary products or services as authorized, similar to a TCX; however, its designation remains an MCX based on the mandatory component.

c. Technical Center of Expertise (TCX). A TCX is a USACE organization that has been approved by HQUSACE as having a unique or exceptional technical capability in a specialized subject area that is beneficial to other USACE commands. The services to be rendered by a TCX are voluntary, advisory, and reimbursable. TCXs and services rendered are identified on TEN.

d. Center of Standardization (COS). A COS can be an MCX or a TCX. When a COS has a mandatory component requiring a product or service to be used by all USACE elements, it is designated as an MCX. Absent a mandatory component, a COS is designated as a TCX.

e. Directory of Expertise (DX). This designation is no longer used. All centers formally established as a DX, or any other centers of expertise formally established and currently recognized but not meeting the standard for an MCX, are now designated as a TCX.

6. Policy. HQUSACE will confer expert status upon designated organizations in critical technology and mission areas. These Centers of Expertise (MCX and TCX) will deliver the products and services authorized, with quality as expected, with full command support.

7. CX Approval. Establishment of a CX is a formal, two-step approval process. The first required approval is to obtain Command support of the need for a CX. The second required approval is to obtain Command endorsement of the proposed USACE organization (District, Lab, or Center) that will carry the CX designation. The HQUSACE proponent is responsible for presenting the CX for approval (for above first and second steps) using the Approval Request

Report format provided by Appendix A. Prior to initiating any activity to establish a CX, the proponent will ensure funding is available for any centralized activities or services the proposed center would be required to perform on a recurring basis.

- a. Commander, USACE. The Commander, USACE will make the final decision on CX requests.
  - b. Directors of Civil Works and Military Programs. The Director of Civil Works (DCW) and Director of Military Programs (DMP) will jointly review requests to establish a CX. This review will be in consultation with the Director of Research and Development. If the request is favorably endorsed by both the DCW and DMP, then that decision moves the request forward to the USACE National Management Board for further consideration. Proposals to the DCW and DMP for a CX will be in a written report, whose format and requirements are provided in Appendix A. If a proposed CX is located outside of the Civil Works and Military Programs Directorates, the Director of the Directorate or Office Chief responsible for the MCX function will share the CX review and approval responsibility.
  - c. USACE National Management Board (NMB). The NMB shall evaluate a request and make a recommendation to the Commander, USACE. Once the Commander, USACE has made a decision, the NMB shall notify all USACE activities. The NMB shall maintain a list of all approved requests. This allows the NMB to monitor Corps-wide work assignments, consistent with ER 5-1-10.
8. CX Recertification. Recertification of CX designations will be accomplished every five years. Existing CXs will complete their recertification process—as described herein—with six months of publication of this ER revision. Thereafter, a CX will be recertified every five years. The proponent will ensure that the expertise is still retained by the CX organization and that other MSC and district commands are regularly using the center’s expertise and services. The HQ Division Chief responsible for the function the CX provides has the authority for recertification. If the responsible office or directorate does not have a division chief, then the office chief, when delegated by the directorate director, will have approval authority. The proponent will prepare a recertification memorandum for the record for signature by the responsible HQUSACE division chief. The recertification process and Recertification Report format are provided by Appendix B.
9. Discontinued CX. If a CX is disapproved for continuation, a transition plan will be jointly developed by the HQUSACE CX proponent and the CX to minimize the impacts to mission.
10. Responsibilities.

- a. HQUSACE - Program. Chief, Engineering and Construction (E&C) is assigned the overall responsibility for program policy, oversight, and review of the CX Program. The Chief, E&C will assign CX Program Management responsibility to an HQUSACE employee. This employee, designated as a the CX Program Manager, is responsible for coordinating all approval request reports, keeping web based information current, conducting customer surveys on CX performance, and maintenance of official record copies. In addition to the assignment of a CX

Program Manager, the overall technical monitoring of an MCX or TCX is assigned to a HQUSACE employee, designated as the Proponent for that CX.

b. HQUSACE Proponent (proponent). Each MCX and TCX will have a headquarters employee designated as the HQUSACE Proponent for that particular center. The headquarters proponents will work with the CX Program Manager to effectively and efficiently manage the CX Program. The proponent is assigned by the directorate responsible for the MCX or TCX and is responsible for the following:

(1) Operating and Reporting. The proponent is responsible for establishing operating and reporting procedures with the cooperation of the assigned MCX or TCX. For an MCX, the operating and reporting procedures are to be published through an ER. For a TCX, these procedures may be published in the form of a program management plan, a memorandum of agreement, or an authorizing letter. Approved documents will be posted on TEN and will (as a minimum):

(a) Detail the responsibilities of the CX.

(b) Identify products and services that are mandatory or voluntary and the means of funding these services, as appropriate.

(c) Establish procedures and criteria to streamline acceptance and accomplishment of reimbursable work in accordance with ER 5-1-9 and ER 5-1-10.

(d) Establish procedures for periodically reporting the program activities of the CX.

(e) Establish enforceable customer service criteria.

(f) Detail the management responsibilities of the organization that houses the CX staff.

(2) Internet Updating. The proponent for each CX is responsible for maintaining and providing to the CX Program Manager approved information on current centers and their roles and responsibilities, in electronic format, so TEN can be periodically updated. Pursuant to this regulation, TEN is the primary source of current approved detailed information on the CX Program.

c. MSC and District Commands.

(1) CX-assigned Commands. The MSC, district command, command center, or laboratory to which centers of expertise are assigned has the responsibility to establish, maintain, and support those centers. Support will include the provision of sufficient training opportunities and funding to enable assigned personnel to maintain state-of-the-art proficiency in their assigned mission area. Specific responsibilities of MCX and TCX designees will be as defined below:

(a) Mandatory Centers of Expertise. Maintain technical expertise in the assigned specialty. Provide technical assistance and specific services to HQUSACE, all other USACE commands, and other organizations per the mission and function statements as approved, authorized, and

posted on TEN. Maintain minimum customer service quality standards established in operating procedures.

(b) Technical Centers of Expertise. Maintain technical competence and awareness in the assigned specialty. Provide advisory assistance or specific design services in the assigned specialty to HQUSACE, USACE commands, and other organizations upon request. Maintain minimum customer service quality standards established in operating procedures.

(2) Using Commands. All MSC and district commands will coordinate with and use the expertise and services of the centers as presented on TEN to satisfactorily accomplish their mission. They will use the expertise and advisory service of centers as they would any other consulting service and will monitor and review those services in accordance with the provisions of ER 1110-2-1150, ER 5-1-11, and ER 1110-345-100. Using commands will provide adequate funding for CX services. Each district will maintain familiarity with the MCX categories as published through ERs and listed on TEN. MCX functions and services that are listed as mandatory on TEN will be used by all USACE elements. Any USACE command involved with the disciplines or business processes having an MCX must contact the appropriate MCX to determine which services of the MCX are mandated for use. Involvement by the MCX must be initiated as early as possible in the planning and design process. To allow MCXs to manage their workload effectively, all USACE commands involved in a project with an assigned MCX will keep the appropriate MCX advised of all applicable project developments. Service-related problems should immediately be brought to the attention of the proponent.

## 11. Procedures.

a. Task Initiation. USACE commands may request the services of a CX by letter, memorandum of agreement, or any other authorizing document. This document will outline the required scope of service, funding for reimbursable services, and required scheduling constraints.

b. Administration. Administrative requirements, including transfer of funds, are the same as those usually performed for any reimbursable service.

c. Services. The services provided by a center will be included in, and become a part of, the appropriate project documents and will be subject to the same review and approval actions as any other product furnished by a USACE command.

d. Work for Others. Procedures for performing services for other agencies of the Federal government, state and local governments, and private firms are outlined in ER 70-1-5 for research and development laboratories and in ER 1140-1-211 and ER 1140-3-1 for all other USACE commands.

12. Exceptions. Exceptions to the mandatory use of an MCX may exist. Specific exceptions, if any, can be found within the published ER and on TEN. Other exceptions must be fully justified and submitted by the MSC to the HQUSACE proponent for approval. TCX use is always voluntary.

13. Enforcement of MCX and TCX Use. MSCs will monitor the usage of MCXs in the design activities of their districts and are responsible for ensuring their appropriate use in accordance

with ER 1110-1-12. Districts will include statements in their project documentation, signed by the Chief of the Engineering function, certifying that MCXs have been appropriately utilized in the planning, design, and execution of the project; will fully document any approved exceptions to MCX use; and will certify that use of TCX assets has been appropriately considered.

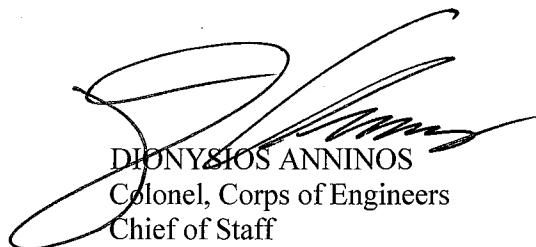
14. Right of Refusal of Work. TCX organizations maintain a need to execute their own missions; therefore, TCX organizations maintain the right of refusal for work that districts elect to send to them. TCXs may refuse additional work only when there is adequate justification; however, they are encouraged to refuse work sparingly. Concerns regarding non-acceptance of work should be referred to the proponent for resolution. MCXs may not refuse mandatory work in their assigned specialty without approval of the HQUSACE proponent.

15. Program Maintenance. Once established by HQUSACE, an assigned CX will be maintained by the MSC, district command, command center, or laboratory to which it is assigned. As the Corps' responsibilities and missions change, the missions and functions of established centers may be altered, established centers abandoned, or new centers established. Changes to mission and function statements or mandatory products or services of a CX must be approved by the DCW and DMP (and other director, if appropriate). Approved changes will then be posted on TEN.

16. Recommendations for Program Improvement. Comments and recommendations concerning this regulation or the CX portion of the homepage are welcome. They may be submitted by memorandum to HQUSACE (CECW-CE), Washington, D.C. 20314-1000.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

2 Appendices  
APP A – Centers of Expertise  
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DIONYSIOS ANNINOS  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
Chief of Staff

## APPENDIX A

### Centers of Expertise Approval Process

1. Purpose. This appendix outlines the process for approval of Centers of Expertise (CX) by the Chief of Engineers, through the Director of Civil Works (DCW), Director of Military Programs (DMP), other director or office chief, if applicable, and the USACE National Management Board (NMB). Use of this approval process for each CX ensures that the CX is in the corporate best interests of USACE and is critical to support missions.

2. Process.

a. Establishment of a New CX. A new CX may be proposed at any time at the request of the responsible HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position). A HQUSACE proponent will be designated by the division chief and that person will prepare, submit, and present all required documentation for approval.

b. Approval Request Report. The proponent will prepare a report in the format established in paragraph 3 below.

c. Coordination. Prior to submission, the proponent will ensure appropriate review and coordination with appropriate elements (e.g., CECW-CE, CEMP, CERD, and CERM) to ensure there is no overlap with capabilities or responsibilities of existing elements, including CXs or laboratories.

d. Report Submitted. The responsible HQUSACE division chief and CX program manager will endorse all reports prior to obtaining a level of approval beyond the division chief. Upon receipt of these two endorsements the proponent will commence the formal approval process.

e. Endorsement. The proponent shall coordinate the submission of the report to DCW and DMP for endorsement and submittal to NMB, with copy furnished to the HQUSACE Resource Management Directorate.

f. CX Approval. The Commander, USACE will make the decision on approval/disapproval of the CX, as well as exceptions to mandatory use and definition of roles and responsibilities.

3. Approval Request Report Format. Content and Evaluative Criteria for Establishment of New Centers.

a. Part I – Obtain Approval to Establish a CX.

(1) Identify and document need based on the following criteria:

(a) Recognize how the function is presently being accomplished.

(b) Describe how the function should be accomplished.

- (c) If seeking approval for an MCX, state reasons why a TCX would not be sufficient.
  - (d) Describe the impact if not provided.
- (2) Verify CX is the appropriate designation based on the following criteria:
- (a) Confirm the function is highly specialized and requires unique or exceptional technical knowledge and experience.
  - (b) The function requires expertise that is not consolidated anywhere else in the Corps.
  - (c) Performing the function at a single center will optimize responsiveness, cost-effectiveness, uniformity, and quality within USACE.
  - (d) The function is a critical mission area for USACE, and significant adverse corporate and individual project impacts could result from its absence as a CX.
  - (e) There is Department of Defense, Army, or USACE policy or ERs that mandate the central services.
- b. Part II – Obtain Approval to Designate a USACE Organization (District, Lab, or Center) as a CX. (Note: Prior approval of Part I is required before commencing with Part II.)
- (1) Mission and Function Statement. The proponent will prepare a mission and function statement specifically defining the roles and responsibilities of the proposed CX as approved in Part I. This statement will be used to convey the intent of the action and allow USACE organizations to determine if they can potentially provide the level of required services. The statement will identify the type of center being proposed (MCX or TCX), identify which services are mandatory and which are optional, identify the appropriate area of responsibility for the CX (consistent with ER 5-1-10), and identify any source of special or central funding available to support operation.
  - (2) Organizational Selection Criteria. USACE organizations (District, Lab, or Center) will be proposed for designation as a CX based on the following criteria:
    - (a) The proponent will solicit proposals of interest from all USACE organizational elements that can potentially provide the required services. Proposals received will be evaluated by a panel of members appointed by the functional division chief. The recommendation of the Panel, with appropriate endorsements from the Division Chief and CX Program Manager, will go forward for approval. The panel's evaluation report and recommendation are to be made attachments to the approval request report.
    - (b) The proponent solicits proposals with the following minimum evaluation selection factors:
      - The organizational structure, staffing, and other personnel resources that will optimize performance of the function.

- The technical abilities, specialized skills, experience, expertise, and equipment that will optimize performance of the function.
  - To what extent the proposed existing Corps organization currently performs or closely matches the organizational structure and specialized skills that will optimize performance of the function.
  - How the proposed Corps organizations plans to operate and carry out the required functions in a responsive and cost effective manner.
  - Confirmation that the proposed organization has Command level support and is willing to actively maintain the organization, skills, and other resources needed to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
- c. Evaluation – Part I Approval to Establish a CX. The following statements are provided as points of discussion and evaluation throughout the approval process.
- (1) The function is in alignment with USACE Vision and the current Campaign Plan.
  - (2) A USACE mission or recurring need is being met by performing the function.
  - (3) A USACE directive, regulation, or other key driver requires the function be performed.
  - (4) The function is highly specialized or unique.
  - (5) The function requires specialized skills and expertise to accomplish.
  - (6) The Corps-wide workload for performing the function is significant.
  - (7) The regional workload is insufficient to perform the function in several commands.
  - (8) The expertise to perform the function is fragmented and scattered throughout the Corps.
  - (9) Consolidation optimizes the utilization of USACE talent and resources.
  - (10) Consolidation optimizes USACE responsiveness, cost-effectiveness, uniformity, and quality in performing the function.
  - (11) The function is not readily available from the private sector and/or there is a poor track record in executing contracts for this function.
  - (12) Changes within the Corps have affected the capability to perform the function at most district commands.
- d. Evaluation – Part II Approval to Designate a USACE Organization (District, Lab, or Center) as a CX. Evaluate the skills, resources, and technologies of the proposed CX using the following criteria:

- (1) The center possesses the unique and specialized skills, technical ability and expertise, experience, equipment, and capacity required to perform its function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
- (2) The center possesses sufficient fiscal and FTE resources to perform its function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
- (3) The center maximizes use of information-age technology to perform its function.
- (4) The center optimizes technology transfer throughout the Corps.
- (5) The center has formalized Quality Control/Quality Assurance processes in place (e.g., ISO 9000).

## APPENDIX B

### Centers of Expertise Recertification Process

1. Purpose. This appendix outlines the recertification process of a Center of Expertise. The CX is an organization with certain specialized expertise, either critical or beneficial to other USACE organizations. The HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position) is responsible for recertification of organizations designated as centers of expertise.
2. Process. Every five (5) years, the proponent will present to the division chief a recertification letter, if appropriate, after having evaluated the continuing need of the CX against the performance statements below.
  - a. The CX continues to provide the services as authorized. Any change to services over the recertification period have appropriate approval(s) documented.
  - b. Number of requests for service received by the CX and acted on annually are sufficient to sustain the staffing.
  - c. Requests for service are completed on schedule.
  - d. Complaints and disputes from users/customers are insignificant. All complaints are resolved. Proponent will query the MSC and other using customers to comment on the need for continuing the CX and the effectiveness of the services provided. Comments received will be considered in the recertification process.
  - e. The center measurably improves cost-effectiveness for the function within the Corps.
  - f. The center measurably improves the quality of the function within the Corps.
  - g. The center measurably improves responsiveness to the customer and the speed of accomplishing the function within the Corps.
  - h. The function cannot be eliminated without adversely affecting the USACE mission.
  - i. The private sector does not have the required technical ability, experience, and resources to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner, nor could this technology be easily transferred to the private sector.
  - j. No Corps laboratory has the required technical ability, experience, resources, capacity, and customers to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
  - k. No other Corps center of expertise has the required technical capability, experience, resources, and customers to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
  - l. No two centers of expertise with a similar mission could be combined to perform this function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.