



Regional Flood Planning Update

February 2025

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A Message from Reem Zoun, Assistant Deputy Executive Administrator

Greetings, Regional Flood Planning Stakeholders. It has been a while since we have released a newsletter, and a lot has happened in the several months! Before you read through this information-filled newsletter, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who helped make the first flood planning cycle such a success. The state flood plan could not have been possible without you all. We are already hearing from other states who are looking to Texas as a blueprint for similar planning processes and we look forward to improving and building upon your hard work during the second cycles of regional and state flood planning. As always, please don't hesitate to contact your Regional Flood Planners should you have any questions or concerns.

Happy New Year,

Reem

TWDB Staff Updates: New Hires and Promotions

NEW Assistant Deputy Executive Administrator – Reem Zoun

Reem Zoun has been promoted to the Assistant Deputy Executive Administrator role. Reem joined the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in 2019 to lead the effort for developing the statewide flood planning program and has over 23 years of private and public sector experience in engineering, flood risk reduction projects, water supply planning, modeling, mapping, capital improvement project portfolio management and delivery, management and leadership. She has a MS in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and an undergraduate degree in Environmental Engineering with First

Class Honors from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. Reem received the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Austin Branch 2017 Civil Engineer of the Year award.

NEW Flood Planning Assistant Director – Tressa Olsen

Tressa Olsen has been promoted to the FP Assistant Director role. Prior to joining the TWDB, Tressa worked as a Senior Administrative Associate at UT Austin and continued to do so while she earned her master's degree in Community and Regional Planning from UT's School of Architecture. She started at the TWDB as a Regional Flood Planner in 2021 and in 2022 became the Senior State Flood Planner. Outside of work she spends her time with her one-year-old, Joey (Joanne) and her husband, Peter.

NEW Flood Data Manger – Angela Khong

Angela Khong has been promoted to the RFP Flood Data Manager. Angela holds a bachelor's degree in environmental Geoscience and a master's degree in Geography-Climatology from Texas A&M University. Her career began with impactful service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal followed by a Data Analyst role at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. In 2022, Angela joined the Texas Water Development Board as a Flood Data Analyst, where she contributed as the lead Data Analyst in developing Texas' first-ever State Flood Plan. Outside of work, Angela enjoys hanging out with her Russian Blue cat "Serena," baking, hiking, yoga, and taking dance classes at Austin Ballet.

NEW FPPG Project Managers – Melissa Hislop and Dita Prasidi

Melissa Hislop joined TWDB in October as a Project Manager IV for FIF Cat 1 projects as part of the Flood Protection Planning Grant Division. She went to school at the University of Texas at Arlington for Mechanical Engineering and while there, was an active member of Engineers without Borders. After graduating, she moved to Houston where she worked in industrial distribution, specializing in fluid power and hydraulics project management. In pursuit of a local or state level role she found TWDB, which aligned perfectly with her interest in not only public works but also environmental conservation. In her free time, she loves to spend time with her partner and their Great Dane, Gracie. She loves spending time outdoors and on weekends loves to garden, hike or camping and hitting as many fun restaurants with friends as possible.

Dita Prasidi joined TWDB in November as a Project Manager IV for FIF Cat 1 projects as part of the Flood Protection Planning Grant Division. She graduated Texas A&M in 2020 with a bachelor's in civil engineering. Growing up in Jakarta & Houston, she knew she was bound to go into water resources to help make communities more resilient to flooding. Prior to working at TWDB, she worked on the contractor side on various stormwater modeling & mapping projects. Outside of work, she enjoys playing tennis, cooking, or walking her dog.

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Regional and State Flood Plan Accolades

We are proud to share the recent achievements and recognitions awarded to our outstanding program, teams and projects:

2024 NAFSMA Excellence in Innovative Water Project Award: December 2024, the Texas Regional Flood Plans won second place at the prestigious 2024 NAFSMA (National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies) Excellence in Innovative Water Project award. Reem Zoun accepted the award at the annual meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

2024 ACEC Engineering Excellence Silver Award: April 2024, the 2024 ACEC Texas State Engineering Excellence silver award was bestowed upon the numerous engineering technical consultants, RFPG members, RFPG sponsors, and the TWDB staff members who contributed to developing Texas's first fifteen regional flood plans. Reem Zoun accepted the award alongside fellow engineers and planners in Houston, Texas.

2024 Texas Impact Enterprise Award: May 2024, the statewide flood planning program received the Texas Impact Enterprise Award awarded by the Hunt Institute for Engineering & Humanity at the Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas.

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Approval of the 2024 State Flood Plan

On Thursday, August 15, 2024, the Board adopted the 2024 State Flood Plan. The state flood plan represents Texas' first attempt to perform comprehensive planning to reduce flooding the risk and impact of flooding and take a broad look at flood hazards across the state. As you know, a tremendous amount of information was generated by the 15 RFPGs through the efforts of more than 350 planning group members, sponsors, and technical consultants who held over 550 public meetings during the historic first cycle of regional flood planning. This plan sets forth thousands of specific, actionable evaluations, projects, and strategies—costs and sponsors included—that clearly demonstrate a path forward to reduce the risk and impact of existing flood risk and avoid the creation of future flood risks.

The 2024 State Flood Plan and supplemental documents are available on the TWDB's State Flood Planning website (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/sfp/index.asp>).

An [Interactive State Flood Plan Viewer](https://texasstatefloodplan.org) (texasstatefloodplan.org) was generated as a complement to Texas' inaugural 2024 State Flood Plan. The viewer allows stakeholders to view and download the extensive dataset generated by the statewide flood planning program, including flood risk and recommended flood risk reduction solutions.

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Update to the 2nd Cycle Exhibit C Guidance

Exhibit C Technical Guidelines and Exhibit D Data Submittal Guidelines documents were made available to the Regional Flood Planning Groups in December 2024.

As of February 2025, the TWDB has made minor revisions to the Exhibit C Technical Guidelines document. The changes are as follows:

1. Task 2.2.A.2 (Section 3.b, Page 28): Removed mention of 10-percent flood annual exceedance probability to clarify that this percentage is **NOT** optional.
2. Task 2.4.A (Page 59): Added clarification language: "Estimated flood hazards during the 1% annual chance storm event are expected to be included with FMEs, additional guidance in Exhibit D."

3. Section 2.4.A (Page 66): Added guidance about the non-recurring, non-capital fund requirement for future TWDB funding for FMS.
4. Task 2.5.A.1 (Page 72): Added clarification language: “Estimated flood hazards during the 1% annual chance storm event shall be included for all recommended FMEs, as required in Exhibit D”
5. Task 3.2 (Page 99): Removed duplicated Flood Mitigation Strategy (FMSs) list previously stated under Section 3 ‘Flood Mitigation Projects – Non-Structural’

The updated Exhibit C Technical Guidelines and Exhibit D Data Submittal Guidelines are available for download on our [2nd Cycle Webpage](https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/planningdocu/2028/index.asp) (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/planningdocu/2028/index.asp>).

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Updated Regional Flood Plan Amendment Guidance

The TWDB prepared additional guidance on amendments to the 2023 Region Flood Plans (RFPs) to best align with the 2026-2027 Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) cycle. Since distributing this guidance on October 2nd, 2024, the TWDB has made one minor update section 5.7, General Requirements for Regional Flood Plan Amendment Submissions. This section now includes information regarding the registered Professional Engineer’s seal requirement on amendments incorporating additional recommended Flood Mitigation Projects (FMPs).

The updated amendment guidance document is available for review and download on our [2nd Cycle Webpage](https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/planningdocu/2028/index.asp) (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/planningdocu/2028/index.asp>).

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2nd Cycle Regional Flood Planning Updates

TWDB Base Level Engineering (BLE)

The TWDB is proud to announce that after the past few years of dedicated work, the Flood Science Mapping and Modeling Team has reached the statewide BLE milestone.

Information about TWDB Base Level Engineering (BLE) program can be obtained on the [BLE website](https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/science/ble.asp) (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/science/ble.asp>). The website includes a quick overview of the approach, a sample application example of BLE data and status of BLE studies for HUC8 watersheds in Texas. The [status dashboard](#) can be accessed directly on the BLE website or can be viewed in a separate web browser instance. The dashboard includes information about the status of BLE studies. It includes metrics on completed studies, in-progress studies, and planned studies. This information is also demonstrated with a map that shows the HUCs color coded based on the status and the metrics are shown through a couple of charts. Studies that have been completed are color coded in green. Depending on whether the studies are readily available for download, HUCs are hatched or left unhatched (solid green). Hatched HUCs represents that BLE data is available but not downloadable yet. Whereas HUCs color coded in green and not hatched are directly downloadable from the [USGS estimated BFE viewer](#). To access the BLE data for hatched HUCs, please send an email request to BLE@twdb.texas.gov. Include the name and code of the HUC you are interested in and for what the intended of the dataset.

Note: The timeframe for receiving requested BLE data varies depending on the size of the request. Requests for 1 or 2 HUC8s may be fulfilled using file sharing systems like SharePoint and may be completed in about a week. However, if the request is large (5+ HUC8s), sharing systems may not work. In these cases, TWDB will need to coordinate hard drive exchange, a process estimated to take anywhere from 1-3 weeks. TWDB staff will communicate with you directly to establish a timeframe for your request.

Minor Changes to Select Coastal RFPG Boundaries

On Thursday, January 16, 2025, Chairwoman Stepney and Director Miller approved minor changes to the boundaries of select coastal flood planning regions. This boundary amendment will reallocate 2.5 square miles among six affected coastal flood planning regions, namely:

1. Region 3 Trinity;
2. Region 5 Neches;
3. Region 6 San Jacinto;
4. Region 10 Lower Colorado-Lavaca;
5. Region 12 San Antonio; and
6. Region 13 Nueces

The boundary changes are effective now for the second cycle of regional and state flood planning and are expected to remain in effect in perpetuity. Please note that the current geodatabase available on the [2nd Cycle Webpage](#) already incorporates these changes. Starting January 16, 2025, all RFPG maps shall utilize the updated RFPG boundary.

New TWDB Flood Mapping Resources Webpage

The TWDB Flood Science Department has launched a new online repository for all agency flood mapping resources, which includes multiple available sources for flood hazard mapping data. The page includes a quick overview of the characteristics (e.g., source, methods, and coverage) of commonly used flood mapping data sources (e.g., FEMA regulatory, Base Level Engineering (BLE), and Cursory Floodplain Dataset) as well as links to access. You can access this resource [online](#) (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/science/resources.asp>).

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In Case You Missed It:

Contract Kick off Webinar

On November 22nd, 2024, the Flood Planning team hosted a *2nd Cycle Contract Kickoff Webinar* that covered contract details, new scope of work tasks, payment requests, and amendment guidance. You may view the recording and presentation slides [online](#).

Payment Request Webinar

On Thursday, January 9th, 2025, the Flood Planning team hosted a *2nd Cycle Payment Request Webinar* that covered overview of the payment request process, along other topics such as advance payments, eligible/ineligible expenses, voting member travel and more. You may view the recording and presentation slides [online](#).

Guidance Documents Conference Call

The Flood Planning team hosted a 2nd *Cycle Guidance Documents Conference Call* on January 31, 2025 for Chairs, Sponsors, and Technical Consultants. The purpose of this call was to provide an opportunity to answer any questions or concerns regarding the information provided within Exhibit C – Technical Guidelines and Exhibit D – Data Submittal Guidelines, provide an update on second cycle data, and to discuss potential changes to the second cycle timeline. We had representation from all 15 RFPGs and look forward to hosting a similar call in the coming months. Responses to written questions as well as updates regarding changes to the second cycle timeline will be sent out soon.

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Update on the 2024-2025 Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF)

The **Flood Management Strategies (FMS)** are in the full application review phase. The deadline to submit full applications was November 19, 2024.

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) is holding a period of public review and comment before consideration of the draft State Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) project prioritization lists for the **Flood Management Evaluations (FMEs)** category and **Flood Mitigation Projects (FMPs)** category.

The period of public review and comment on FMEs and FMPs will end on **March 10, 2025**. The project prioritization lists for FMEs and FMPs are available for review on the [TWDB FIF webpage](https://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/programs/FIF/index.asp) (<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/programs/FIF/index.asp>). Public comments should be submitted to FIF@twdb.texas.gov.

For questions about the FIF program, please email FIF@twdb.texas.gov or call Sara Sopczynski (FIF Program Coordinator) at 512-936-0852. For questions about any current FIF Category 1/FME, please contact Malcolm Hamilton at malcolm.hamilton@twdb.texas.gov.

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Recent RFPG Inquiries

1. **Is the initial date for which the technical consultants can seek reimbursement April 17, 2024 (Article I, Sections C and E of TWDB-sponsor contract), or another date?**

As stated in Article 1 of the contract between the RFPG Sponsor Trinity River Authority and the TWDB, the Sponsor can request reimbursement for administrative costs associated with public notices starting Nov. 9, 2023, but can only request reimbursement for any other work performed on the second cycle of regional flood planning starting April 17, 2024. Any work performed between the Cycle 1 final reimbursable expense date of December 29, 2023, and the second cycle contract initiation date of April 17, 2024, is not eligible for reimbursement under the contract.

2. **Will technical consultants be paid to process the received amendment requests that come in between the 2-year designated times to amend the RFPs? For example, if a municipality reaches out with an amendment request in September 2025 and the RFPG has to address the**

request, will technical consultants be paid with grant funds for the work they do to process the request?

Yes, per the TWDB email blast sent out on May 28, 2024, the TWDB has updated the policy regarding the use of 2028 Cycle 2 grant funds to process, review, and approve up to two amendments to the 2023 approved Regional Flood Plans during the second Regional Flood Planning cycle. Please note that the RFPGs can amend their adopted and TWDB-approved Regional Flood Plans at their discretion in accordance with the regional planning rules (TAC §361.51(c)). However, grant funds may only be utilized to process and review up to two amendments.

3. Will grant funding apply to the work that technical consultants do to respond to TWDB's RFIs?

Yes, technical consultants can bill any work performed in response to TWDB RFIs regarding 2023 Regional Flood Plan amendments. RFPGs must approve or reject amendment requests within 180 days.

4. Will technical consultants be able to use grant funding to review amendment requests ensuring they are administratively complete that are outside the FIF application windows?

It is up to RFPGs to determine how they will split amendment requests between the two allotted amendments that are reimbursable to align with the upcoming FIF application windows. For amendment requests that fall outside of these timelines, we defer to RFPGs if they should consider including them within SOW Task 4A or Task 5 to inform their 2028 Regional Flood Plans versus amending their 2023 Regional Flood Plans.

5. On the Amendment Process Timeline, there is a discrepancy between the timelines on the two pages. The two timelines indicate timeline requirements for sending amendment materials to TWDB EA for review and comment. Page 1 says seven days and Page 2 says fourteen days.

There is a discrepancy on the second amendment flowchart. The second page was included erroneously as it is still being formulated. Please refer to the first timeline. There is a 7-day public notice requirement for the meeting to consider proceeding with an amendment and the meeting to consider public comments received on the amendment.

6. After the RFPG decides to proceed with a Regional Flood Plan amendment, how long do they need to give the TWDB EA to review the amendment package and provide comments?

Rules require a 7-day public comment period on Regional Flood Plan amendments. The TWDB EA will review amendments after they are adopted by RFPGs and submitted to the Board for approval. TWDB EA does not have a time constraint on when to review the amendment package, however, we strive to take amendments to the next feasible Board meeting for consideration and adoption.

7. For this step, do we (sponsor) just email you and Reem with the amendment package and say that the RFPG will meet on X day to adopt the amendment?

When submitting the RFPG-approved amendment package to the TWDB for review, Sponsors may notify the TWDB by emailing their regional flood planner (cc Tressa Olsen, Reem Zoun, and Floodplanning@twdb.texas.gov). Regional Flood Planners will provide instructions to the RFPG sponsor about how to submit the amendment package. More information will be provided to the RFPGs as the April 1, 2025, deadline approaches.

8. Will datasets from Cycle 1 be updated for Cycle 2?

Yes, all datasets provided by the TWDB will be updated for the second cycle of regional flood planning.

9. Will the TWDB provide new data for future conditions analysis? What will it include?

Yes, the TWDB is working with Fathom and the state climatologist to focus on developing statewide future conditions data for the second cycle of regional flood planning. Assumptions include rainfall, land subsidence, land base changes, and sea level rise. The methodology used to develop this dataset will be available on our website. Planning groups may choose whether to use this data but must justify non-use.

10. How will Atlas 15 affect the flood planning process?

The expectation for the second cycle is similar to the first cycle, where RFPGs determine if/how to incorporate Atlas 15, once it is made available.

11. What is the status of the building footprint data?

The TWDB is utilizing the same building footprints from Cycle 1 and updating them with new SVI data (TX F-SVI). The dataset will be made available on the Data Hub Feb-March 2025.

12. In reference to the second cycle scope of work (SOW), is Task 4C related to Task 5B for Flood Management Evaluations (FMEs)?

Yes, these SOW Tasks are related. The FMEs performed by the RFPGs should not also be included in the list of FMEs for the TWDB to perform under Task 5B. Task 5B was developed to focus on performing FMEs for small/rural communities with limited resources. Once the TWDB performs the evaluations under Task 5B, the results from analyses will be returned to the RFPGs.

13. What is the timeline for Task 5B items and TWDB performance of FMEs?

The timeline for TWDB to perform FMEs under Task 5B depends on the scopes developed by the RFPGs. Once FME lists and associated SOWs become available, the TWDB will establish a timeline and will turn around study results for RFPGs to include in future Regional Flood Plans.

For more information regarding the TWDB Regional Flood Planning Program, please visit [our website](#).

Note: This email was sent to all RFPG members, sponsors, and technical consultants.

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