

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 7.3

7.1 Strategy Implementation Tracking and Evaluation..... 7.3

7.1.1 SITE Components..... 7.4

7.2 Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan..... 7.6

7.2.1 Evaluating SITE..... 7.7

7.2.2 The Plan Moving Forward..... 7.8

7.3 SHMPAT Meetings..... 7.10

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Introduction

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) mitigation staff work closely with the State Hazard Mitigation Plan Advisory Team (SHMPAT) through regular meetings, sub-groups, and online collaboration to assure that the plan is a living, working effort for excellence in mitigation in Florida.

DEM is the lead agency tasked with managing all aspects of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP). The State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO), in coordination with the SHMPAT, is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the SHMP. The Mitigation Planning Unit staff facilitates this task by monitoring and reporting on progress as understood through information offered by the SHMPAT members, local government, and other pertinent sources or partners.

As part of the 2013 update, the plan maintenance process outlined in the 2010 plan was evaluated by both DEM staff and SHMPAT members. The revisions to the plan monitoring process for the 2013 plan have been included. In addition, new information outlining the evaluation and update procedures has been added.

7.1 Strategy Implementation Tracking and Evaluation

Section 6.0 of the 2010 plan described the state's new process and schedule for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the SHMP. The process, referred to as "Strategy Implementation, Tracking and Evaluation" (SITE), was the result of SHMPAT's deliberation over past monitoring failures and a desire to implement a pro-active, day-to-day process that would not be abandoned over time. SITE is a six component monitoring plan designed to track and evaluate the implementation of the SHMP. The SHMPAT approved use of SITE at the April 2010 meeting as a method of maintaining the plan as a working document moving forward.

SITE was devised to serve as evidence that the 2010 plan was implemented as planned and also to document areas for improvement, success stories, and to evaluate the process on a rolling basis. Additionally, it was to be used to update the plan as progress, roadblocks, or changing circumstances were recognized. SITE was also intended to ensure all state actions or projects initiated during the three year interim period were in conformance with the SHMP under 44 C.F.R. § 201.4(c)(3)(iii).

The six components of SITE include the following:

- SHMPAT relationships, response, and capacity cultivation
- Mitigation related projects, initiatives, process, and activities
- Local government and agency capabilities
- Goals and Objectives
- Hazards and Incidents
- Funding Opportunities.

The tracking methods that were outlined during the creation of SITE intended to facilitate inter-agency cooperation by consolidating Florida's statewide and regional mitigation efforts into one database for viewing and reconciling. Tracking of the six components above was to be implemented by dedicated DEM staff.

To populate the SITE project list, the 2010 SHMP was searched to inventory all agency goals and objectives, projects and initiatives, as well as any claims or future plans that will need to be monitored or substantiated between the 2010 plan and the 2013 update. Any projects, initiatives, goals, or objects mentioned in the plan were placed into a spreadsheet by sponsoring agency. It was with the greatest of intentions that this spreadsheet would become a fully functioning database.

7.1.1 SITE Components

As previously mentioned, SITE contains multiple components in order to comprehensively monitor and track the SHMPAT's mitigation actions. The following six component descriptions serve to provide a better understanding of what SITE means. To further stress the importance of the six components, SITE Reports are produced and distributed at SHMPAT meetings.

I. SHMPAT Relationships, Response, and Capacity Cultivation

The SHMPAT relationships, response, and capacity cultivation component defines how input is maximized through a continuous effort of improving engagement in the process. Solicitation of information to determine the best communication methods, meeting times, and structures falls under this component. Finding and developing any extra actions taken to facilitate and encourage participation are also essential to fulfilling this component. The goal of this component is to facilitate mitigation across the state through relationship building and information exchange.

Periodically, opinion surveys are sent to SHMPAT members regarding structure and manner of participation. Members are surveyed to gauge satisfaction with the process as well as any needed improvements. These opinion surveys are used to improve the process and facilitate participation into the future.

Relationships are built and cultivated through regular communication with SHMPAT members. In order to adequately capture information on new and ongoing mitigation activities, DEM mitigation planners contact various organizations and partners on a regular basis. New projects or initiatives are entered into the SITE tool, while updated information is entered for existing actions. Information collected during the communication is then shared via the SITE Report.

II. Mitigation Related Projects, Initiatives, Process, and Activities

Tracking mitigation related projects, initiatives, processes, and activities is an essential component of the mitigation plan. Projects in the SHMP are monitored in coordination with SHMPAT members, project managers, and local government representatives. All activities mentioned in the 2010 SHMP update were paired with the current goals and objectives and inventoried for tracking. Projects which emerged during the 2010 to 2013 period were added to the SITE inventory so that they could be monitored. Actively monitoring the projects helps support SITE component I.

During interim periods, DEM staff follow-up with agency representatives to determine whether projects are continuing as planned or whether they are completed, deleted, or deferred. Staff also seeks information concerning any emerging projects. All items added between 2010 and 2013 were tracked in a spreadsheet which indicated the timeframe for the next appropriate follow-up to ensure proper monitoring of all items. The hope was that this monitoring process would help expedite the 2013 plan update process.

The following methods are used to monitor projects:

- Projects and initiatives identified by non-profits in the state are monitored through their respective SHMPAT members or DEM grant staff. All project progress is monitored for SITE reporting reasons and to comprehensively assess mitigation efforts.
- Projects, initiatives, and processes identified by state agencies (including water management districts and regional planning councils) are monitored through their respective SHMPAT members. All project progress is monitored for SITE reporting reasons and to comprehensively assess mitigation facilitation in the state.
- Projects funded by the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs administered by DEM are monitored through their respective quarterly reports as well as through database tracking in FloridaMitigation.org. FloridaMitigation.org is reviewed regularly to ensure that all necessary information is entered appropriately. The database website is also used to monitor and track project closeouts. More on HMA program monitoring can be found in **Section 5.2: Project Implementation** of the SHMP.

III. Local Government and Agency Capabilities

The goal of component III is to accurately track local government and agency activities during the interim period. DEM staff track activities through their contacts and stay abreast of concerns and success stories as they arise. In addition to facilitating the capability assessment of future updates, such tracking activity fosters intergovernmental relationships, monitors progress, encourages participation, identifies mitigation best practices, provides technical support, facilitates flow of information, and promotes funding opportunities. By monitoring capability within the state, Florida can enhance it.

IV. Goals and Objectives Tracking

The SHMPAT felt that it was important to be able to track work and projects that helped achieve the defined goals and objectives. Successfully completed projects are written about and shared via the SITE Report. The SHMPAT uses completed project information to determine whether goals and objectives are satisfied by the extent of activities conducted. Additionally, this facilitates the assessment of goals and objectives by enabling the SHMPAT to determine whether the goals and objectives are still comprehensive and relevant to state needs.

V. Hazards

Throughout the three year interim period, risks and their histories are updated as incidents occur. Emerging risks and vulnerabilities are addressed on a case by case basis as they are revealed through SHMPAT meetings or by other means.

VI. Funding Opportunities

In an effort to increase SHMPAT participation and make it more rewarding and effective, DEM:

- Monitors planning grants and funding capabilities
- Distributes emerging information to all SHMPAT members
- Reports results at SHMPAT meetings.

Such activity promotes intergovernmental coordination, maximizes funding use, and helps leverage resources among entities pursuing like objectives.

7.2 Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan

Requirement §201.4(c)(5)(i): [The Standard State Plan Maintenance Process must include an] established method and schedule for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the plan.

Requirement §201.4(c)(5)(ii): [The Standard State Plan Maintenance Process must include a] system for monitoring implementation of mitigation measures and project closeouts.

Requirement §201.4(c)(5)(iii): [The Standard State Plan Maintenance Process must include a] system for reviewing progress on achieving goals as well as activities and projects in the Mitigation Strategy.

7.2.1 Evaluating SITE

The 2010 plan update of the 2007 plan brought the difficulties associated with not having a good monitoring process in place to light. Outdated information was carried into the 2010 plan. After implementing SITE and reviewing the 2010 plan, DEM mitigation planners were able to find many projects that were previously completed as well as projects that did not relate to mitigation. Additionally, there were projects that current SHMPAT members knew nothing about. This made monitoring projects, collecting new information, and building relationships difficult and frustrating.

SITE was developed with the intention of turning a basic spreadsheet into a fully functioning database. Developing the database required a funding source, which DEM was able to secure, but was unable to execute due to contracting difficulties. As a result, SITE remained a term used for tracking mitigation projects on an Excel spreadsheet. Even without the database, SITE was still a functional tool. Each planner was assigned a specific spreadsheet with a variety of agency projects to monitor. The spreadsheets were housed on a password protected Wiki site so that they could be accessed by any mitigation planner at any time.

A report prepared for the October 2011 SHMPAT meeting titled “SITE Analysis” provided a status of the mitigation initiatives offered by state agencies and non-profits. It included the following points:

- 171 activities, or projects, of the 200 initially listed were being tracked by DEM/Mitigation planning staff
- Of the initiatives for which updates have been received:
 - 22 were completed
 - 36 were current
 - 10 were proposed
 - 25 were ongoing
 - Nine were deleted - five due to funding expiration, three because the respective agencies did not have any information concerning the projects, and one because funding ran out prior to implementation.

As a part of the SITE monitoring process, each mitigation planner is responsible for performing specific roles in tracking mitigation progress in the state. The process has been operational for the previous three years and DEM mitigation planners have several recommendations to implement for the upcoming years.

All mitigation staff and SHMPAT members saw the value in SITE. In general, implementing the monitoring process was a success. The process outlined in the 2010 plan forced SHMPAT meeting facilitators to address all six SITE components on a regular basis. Other state plan monitoring procedures were researched, but good examples were difficult to find. Even without a fully functioning database, the overall intended purpose of SITE was successfully implemented. However, the process was not without difficulties.

It took the better part of the 2013 update to iron out the monitoring process. Items that were originally added to SITE were often difficult to track. For example, there were several mitigation related programs and agency specific goals included on the SITE spreadsheet. Tracking progress on agency specific goals and programs was easier said than done. Eventually DEM mitigation planners determined that we should no longer track specific agency goals or programs, but instead only capture the information on measurable projects being implemented by the specific agency or program. Removing broad goals and programs allowed DEM mitigation planners to focus on specific projects being implemented that demonstrate mitigation progress, and made it easier to communicate with agency representatives about each specific project.

The original SITE spreadsheet had numerous columns for information. A great deal of information was missing and some projects did not have enough information to provide a basic understanding of the project. SITE spreadsheets were much too large to print, requiring several pages both across and down. Hanging SITE spreadsheets in the office reminded planners to follow up with specific project information and helped keep SITE in the forefront of the planner's minds; however, keeping an updated printed copy took a great deal of time, and the excessive columns with limited information made tracking projects more complicated than necessary.

To solve many of the issues addressed above, a simplified SITE spreadsheet was developed in late 2012. The revised tracking/monitoring list is proving to be adequate for collecting all applicable information and is more appropriately sized for printing purposes. The new spreadsheet contains a worksheet for measurable, ongoing projects from the original SITE spreadsheet; a worksheet for completed projects; and a worksheet dedicated to "un-measurable mitigation actions." The un-measurable mitigation actions worksheet contains many of the agency goals that staff had a difficult time tracking. The purpose of keeping these hard to measure items was to remind planners of agency goals prior to communicating with agency representatives. The new Excel workbook has helped planners track 100% of the projects on the list.

7.2.2 The Plan Moving Forward

I. Monitoring the Plan

The streamlined changes reflect the needs of the state and lessons learned during the previous three year planning period. As described above, SITE required new technology and additional effort to create and implement the database tool. Moving forward, the Mitigation Planning Unit hopes to develop its own simple database for entering and tracking mitigation project information. The simplicity of the current process appears to be working well, but staff will continue to seek ways to improve the mitigation monitoring process.

II. Evaluating the Plan

Regular communication and coordination with SHMPAT members in support of SITE helps ensure active monitoring of the plan. Effectively monitoring the information provided and the implementation of the plan helps planners recognize the pieces that work well and those that do not. In addition to monitoring the implementation of mitigation activities, sub-groups developed to assist with the update of the plan evaluate their respective sections for improvements.

Specific evaluation tasks begin with each sub-group's first meeting. Evaluation findings are then presented at the following SHMPAT meeting. Some questions sub-groups are asked to pay attention to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Have there been any changes to legislation or policies that would impact information that must be addressed?
- Does the plan adequately capture available funding sources?
- Are there any critical mitigation requirements not being met?
- Are there any recommendations for reorganization or formatting changes?
- How are other states addressing this topic?
- Is there any cutting edge information available on any of the topics addressed?
- Are the goals and objectives still relevant?
- Are there any plan short-falls?
- Have sections been implemented?

III. Updating the Plan

As of December 2012, 44CFR requires states submit plan updates every three years. Because of this short planning period, the plan remains in the update process almost two-thirds of the time. Due to the length, number of hazards, and requirements related to **Section 3: State Risk Assessment**, the risk assessment sub-group is the first one to form and begin discussing the next update. If the section is to be updated by a consultant, the development of the scope of work begins approximately 2 years prior to the plan expiration date. The update process on the remaining sections begins approximately 18 months prior to the plan expiration date.

DEM aims to submit the plan to FEMA approximately 6 months prior to the expiration date. As a result, the plan is posted for public comment approximately one month prior to submitting the plan to FEMA and a final SHMPAT meeting is held to present the plan to the members. All comments from the public and advisory team members are addressed before sending the plan to FEMA for review.

The processes and timeline used has been very successful in both the 2010 and 2013 plan update cycles and as a result will be used for future updates. For more detailed information on the plan update process, please see **Section 2: Planning Process**.

7.3 SHMPAT Meetings

I. Evaluating the Meeting Schedule

After the approval of the 2010 Plan, SHMPAT restructured its meetings in an effort to engage members. For the first time, Local Mitigations Strategy (LMS) working group members from each county were invited to attend in person or via webinar. Each quarterly SHMPAT meeting offered a mitigation presentation that was thought to be valuable to the mitigation partners and to encourage attendance.

Initially, the restructured meetings had very high attendance. Attendance levels began to fall during the subsequent years. Finding quality information to present at SHMPAT meetings that was applicable to both state and local partners could have been a contributing factor in addition to staff cutbacks at the local levels. However, the members of the LMS working groups that remained involved throughout the plan update process became integral members of the SHMPAT.

A report published in August 2011, based on a survey distributed to SHMPAT members, indicated that the number one reason agencies participate in the SHMPAT is for “funding opportunities.” A review of meeting agendas indicated that such opportunities were not discussed in the majority of meetings. This could be due in part to the increased communication between DEM and SHMPAT members outside of SHMPAT meetings. As funding opportunities became available over the previous three years, emails with all pertinent information were sent out to all SHMPAT members (as opposed to waiting to present the material at SHMPAT meetings).

II. SHMPAT Meetings Moving Forward

At the October 9, 2012 SHMPAT meeting, the SHMPAT voted to revise the meeting schedule. Amending the meeting schedule was proposed in hopes of increasing attendance by having more quality information to share. Moving forward, SHMPAT meetings will be held twice a year, once in January and once in July.

SITE procedures will continue to serve as the basis for driving SHMPAT actions. In lieu of quarterly meetings, the Mitigation Planning Unit will use its quarterly newsletter, SHMPoints, to communicate mitigation actions and best practices.

If it is determined that there is a significant amount of information to be relayed to the SHMPAT members, a meeting can be called at any time.