



TIP 1

NEPA STREAMLINING TIPS

Ask Tough Questions, Make Tougher Choices: Worksheet

Is NEPA review needed?

A proposal is a federal action and is subject to the procedural requirements of NEPA when all of the following apply:

- A federal agency has a goal and is actively preparing to make a decision on one or more alternative means of accomplishing that goal;
- The action has effects that can be meaningfully evaluated given the present understanding of the proposal, especially in the case of applicant-driven proposals;
- The proposed action and effects are subject to agency control and responsibility;
- Effects of the proposed action are related to the natural and physical environment, and the relationship of people with that environment; and
- There is an irretrievable commitment of resources.

A NEPA review for discretionary planning purposes is also appropriate.

What is the appropriate level of NEPA review?

These questions guide the determination of what level of NEPA documentation is appropriate:

- Is the action categorically excluded from preparing an EA or EIS?
 - Yes—Conduct CE review
 - Likely—Conduct CE review
 - Uncertain—Prepare an EA
- Can the proposal be modified to fit into a category of excluded actions or to avoid triggering an extraordinary circumstance?
 - Yes – Modify and conduct a CE review
 - Uncertain – Prepare an EA
- Can the proposal be reasonably mitigated to prepare an EA and FONSI?
 - Yes – Prepare a mitigated EA/FONSI
 - Uncertain – Prepare an EA
- Might the action significantly affect the quality of the human environment?
 - Yes—Prepare an EIS
 - Likely—Prepare an EIS
 - Uncertain—Prepare an EA





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Is new or more NEPA analysis even needed?

Existing NEPA documents that may be applicable and appropriate are those that evaluate similar actions, environmental setting, resources, or issues.

- Yes, see next question
- No (applicable NEPA analyses exist)

If no, 1) list applicable NEPA documents, and

2) Describe how the analyses in the existing NEPA documents adequately assess the proposed action and reasonable alternatives?

Can an existing NEPA document be tiered from, incorporated by reference, or adopted?

Tiering is when the referenced document is an existing EIS or EA that is broader in scope than the NEPA document under preparation. Incorporation by reference integrates material that is essential to the NEPA analysis. Adoption is a process designed to utilize an EIS or EA prepared by another federal agency to inform the current decision-maker. Examine CEQ and DOI regulations and agency procedures before adoption.

- Yes
- No

If yes, what documents and what aspects of the analysis?

Can an existing NEPA document be supplemented to provide review of the current action?

If the current proposal is within the scope of an existing NEPA document, a supplemental document can be prepared to address any significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.

- Yes
- No

If yes, what documents?

