

## Recommended Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Format

Use a format for environmental impact statements that will encourage good analysis and clear presentation of the alternatives, including the proposed action. Use the recommended following format for environmental impact statements unless it is determined that there is a more effective format for communication:

- (1) Cover;
- (2) Summary;
- (3) Table of contents;
- (4) Purpose of and need for action;
- (5) Alternatives including the proposed action;
- (6) Affected environment and environmental consequences; and
- (7) Appendices, including the summary of scoping information and the list of preparers.

If a different format is used, the EIS should include the information required within this recommended format, in the chosen appropriate format.

### (1) Cover

The environmental impact statement cover should not exceed one page and should include:

- (a) A list of the lead, joint lead, and, to the extent feasible, any cooperating agencies;
- (b) The title of the proposed action that is the subject of the statement (and, if appropriate, the titles of related cooperating agency actions), together with the State(s) and county(ies) (or other jurisdiction(s), if applicable) where the action is located;
- (c) The name, address, and telephone number of the person who can supply further information;
- (d) A designation of the statement as a draft, final, or draft or final supplement;
- (e) A one-paragraph abstract of the statement;
- (f) The date by which comments must be received, which is computed in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency; and
- (g) The identification number included in the notice of intent.

### (2) Summary

Each environmental impact statement should contain a summary that adequately and accurately summarizes the statement. The summary should include the major conclusions and summarize any disputed issues raised by agencies and the public, any issues to be resolved, and key differences among alternatives, and identify the environmentally preferable alternative or alternatives. Write the summary in plain language and use, as relevant, appropriate visual aids and charts. The summary normally should not exceed 15 pages.

### (3) Table of Contents

Include a table of contents that follows this recommended format.

## (4) Purpose and Need

The environmental impact statement is to include a statement that briefly summarizes the underlying purpose and need for the proposed action.

## (5) Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

The alternatives section is the heart of the environmental impact statement. The alternatives section should identify the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed action and the alternatives in comparative form based on the information and analysis presented in the sections on the affected environment and the environmental consequences. In doing so, the analysis should sharply define the issues for the decision maker and the public and provide a clear basis for choice among options. This section should:

- (a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, and, for alternatives that were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their elimination. Every conceivable alternative to a proposed action does not need to be considered; rather, it should consider a reasonable range of alternatives that will foster informed decision making. Reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency may also be included.
- (b) Discuss each alternative considered in detail, including the proposed action, so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits.
- (c) Include the no action alternative.
- (d) Identify the preferred alternative or alternatives, if one or more exists, in the draft statement and identify such alternative in the final statement unless another law prohibits the expression of such a preference.
- (e) Include appropriate mitigation measures not already included in the proposed action or alternatives.
- (f) Identify the environmentally preferable alternative or alternatives amongst the alternatives considered in the environmental impact statement. The environmentally preferable alternative will best promote the national environmental policy expressed in section 101 of NEPA by maximizing environmental benefits, such as addressing climate change-related effects or disproportionate and adverse effects on communities with environmental justice concerns; protecting, preserving, or enhancing historic, cultural, Tribal, and natural resources, including rights of Tribal Nations that have been reserved through treaties, statutes, or Executive Orders; or causing the least damage to the biological and physical environment. The environmentally preferable alternative may be the proposed action, the no action alternative, or a reasonable alternative.

## (6) Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

### *Affected Environment:*

- (a) The environmental impact statement should succinctly describe the environment of the area(s) to be affected by the alternatives under consideration, including the reasonably foreseeable environmental trends and planned actions in the area(s).

- (b) Use high-quality information, including reliable data and resources, models, and Indigenous Knowledge, to describe reasonably foreseeable environmental trends, including anticipated climate-related changes to the environment, and when such information is incomplete or unavailable, provide a statement that that such information is lacking. This description of the affected environment, including existing environmental conditions, reasonably foreseeable trends, and planned actions in the area, should inform the analysis of environmental consequences and mitigation measures.
- (c) The environmental impact statement may combine the description of the affected environment with evaluation of the environmental consequences. The description should be no longer than necessary to understand the relevant affected environment and the effects of the alternatives. Data and analyses in a statement should be commensurate with the importance of the effect, with less important material summarized, consolidated, or simply referenced. Avoid useless bulk in statements and instead, concentrate effort and attention on important issues. Verbose descriptions of the affected environment are themselves no measure of the adequacy of an environmental impact statement.

*Environmental Consequences:*

- (a) The environmental consequences section forms the scientific and analytic basis for the comparisons. It should consolidate the discussions of those elements required by sections 102(2)(C)(i), (ii), (iv), and (v) of NEPA that are within the scope of the environmental impact statement and as much of section 102(2)(C)(iii) of NEPA as is necessary to support the comparisons. The comparison of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives should be based on the discussion of their reasonably foreseeable effects and the significance of those effects, focusing on the significant or important effects. The no action alternative should serve as the baseline against which the proposed action and other alternatives are compared. This section should not duplicate discussions within Section (5) but and should include an analysis of:
  - (1) Any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented.
  - (2) The effects of the no action alternative, including any adverse environmental effects;
  - (3) The relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity;
  - (4) Any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of Federal resources that would be involved in the proposal should it be implemented;
  - (5) Where applicable, possible conflicts between the proposed action and the objectives of Federal, regional, State, Tribal, and local plans, policies, and controls for the area concerned, including those addressing climate change;
  - (6) Where applicable, climate change-related effects, including, where feasible, quantification of greenhouse gas emissions, from the proposed action and alternatives and the effects of climate change on the proposed action and alternatives;
  - (7) Where applicable, energy requirements and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures;
  - (8) Where applicable, natural or depletable resource requirements and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures;

- (9) Where applicable, relevant risk reduction, resiliency, or adaptation measures incorporated into the proposed action or alternatives, informed by relevant science and data on the affected environment and expected future conditions;
  - (10) Where applicable, urban quality, historic and cultural resources, and the design of the built environment, including the reuse and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures;
  - (11) Means to mitigate adverse environmental effects (if not fully covered under Section (5));
  - (12) Where applicable, economic and technical considerations, including the economic benefits of the proposed action; and
  - (13) Where applicable, disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects on communities with environmental justice concerns.
- (b) Economic or social effects by themselves do not require preparation of an environmental impact statement. However, when it is determined that economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, the environmental impact statement should discuss these effects on the human environment.

## (7) Appendices

If an appendix is prepared, it should be published with the environmental impact statement, and it should consist of, as appropriate:

- (a) Material prepared in connection with an environmental impact statement (as distinct from material that is not so prepared and is incorporated by reference).
- (b) Material substantiating any analysis fundamental to the impact statement.
- (c) Material relevant to the decision to be made.
- (d) For draft environmental impact statements, all comments (or summaries thereof where the response has been exceptionally voluminous) received during the scoping process that identified information for consideration.
- (e) For final environmental impact statements, the comment summaries and responses.

### *Summary of Scoping Information:*

- (a) The draft environmental impact statement or appendix should include a summary of information, including alternatives and analyses, submitted by commenters during the scoping process for consideration.
- (b) Append to the draft environmental impact statement or publish all comments (or summaries thereof where the response has been exceptionally voluminous) received during the scoping process.

### *List of Preparers:*

The environmental impact statement should list the names, together with their qualifications (expertise, experience, professional disciplines), of the persons who were primarily responsible for preparing the environmental impact statement or important background papers, including basic components of the statement. Where possible, the environmental impact statement should identify

the persons who are responsible for a particular analysis, including analyses in background papers. Normally the list will not exceed two pages.