

(1) Monitor these processes to ensure that the agency procedures are achieving their purposes;

(2) Advise line management and inform NASA employees of technical and management requirements of environmental analysis, of appropriate expertise available in and out of NASA, and—with the assistance of the NASA General Counsel—of relevant legal developments; and

(3) Consolidate and transmit to the appropriate parties NASA comments on environmental impact statements and other environmental reports prepared by other agencies.

(b) Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices (hereafter termed "Headquarters officials") are responsible for implementing the procedures established by these regulations for the consideration and documentation of the environmental aspects of the decision processes in their respective areas of responsibility.

(c) The Assistant Administrator for Legislative Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the legislative environmental impact statements accompany NASA recommendations or reports on proposals for legislation submitted to Congress. The Associate Administrator for Management, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Comptroller and the General Counsel will provide guidance as required.

[44 FR 44485, July 30, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 9761, Mar. 25, 1988; 56 FR 50507, Oct. 7, 1991]

AGENCY PROCEDURES

§ 1216.304 Major decision points.

The possible environmental effects of a proposed action must be considered, along with technical, economic, and other factors, in the earliest planning. At that stage, the responsible Headquarters official shall begin the necessary steps to comply with all the requirements of section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Major NASA activities, particularly R&D (or SFCDC) and facility projects, generally have four distinct phases: The conceptual study phase; the detailed planning/definition phase; the development/construction phase; and the operation phase. (Other NASA

activities have fewer, less well-defined phases, but can still be characterized by phases representing general or feasibility study, detailed planning or definition, and implementation.) Environmental documentation shall be linked to major decision points as follows:

(a) Completion of an environmental assessment and the determination as to whether an environmental impact statement is required must be made prior to the decision to proceed from the conceptual study phase to the detailed planning/definition phase of the proposed action. For example, this determination must be concurrent with:

(1) Proposal of an R&D (or SFCDC) project for detailed planning and project definition;

(2) Proposal of a major Construction of Facilities project for detailed planning and project definition;

(3) Proposal of an institutional action (other than a facility project) for detailed planning and definition; and

(4) Proposal of a plan to define changes in an approved project.

(b) The final environmental impact statement (EIS) should be completed and circulated prior to the decision to proceed from the detailed planning/definition phase to the development/construction (or implementation) phase of the proposed action. For example, the EIS should be completed by, and incorporated with:

(1) Proposal of an R&D (or SFCDC) project for development/construction;

(2) Proposal of a major Construction of Facilities project for development/construction;

(3) Proposal to undertake a significant institutional action (other than a facility project); and

(4) Proposal to implement a program change.

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§ 1216.305 Criteria for actions requiring environmental assessments.

(a) Whether a proposed NASA action within the meaning of the CEQ Regulations (43 FR 55978) requires the preparation of an environmental assessment, an environmental impact statement, both, or neither, will depend upon the scope of the action and the context and intensity of any environmental effects

expected to result. A NASA action shall require the preparation of an environmental assessment (§§1501.3 and 1508.9 of the CEQ Regulations) provided the action is not one normally requiring an environmental impact statement (paragraph (c)) or it is not categorically excluded from the requirement for an environmental assessment and an environmental impact statement (paragraph (d)).

(b) Specific NASA actions normally requiring an environmental assessment are:

(1) Specific spacecraft development and flight projects in space science.

(2) Specific spacecraft development and flight projects in space and terrestrial applications.

(3) Specific experimental projects in aeronautics and space technology and energy technology applications.

(4) Development and operation of new space transportation systems and advanced development of new space transportation and spacecraft systems.

(5) Reimbursable launches of non-NASA spacecraft or payloads.

(6) Major Construction of Facilities projects.

(7) Actions to alter ongoing operations at a NASA installation which could lead, either directly or indirectly, to natural or physical environmental effects.

(c) NASA actions expected to have a significant effect upon the quality of the human environment shall require an environmental impact statement. For these actions an environmental assessment is not required. Criteria to be used in determining significance are given in §1508.27 of the CEQ Regulations (43 FR 55978). Specific NASA actions requiring environmental impact statements, all in the R&D budget category, are as follows:

(1) Development and operation of new launch vehicles.

(2) Development and operation of space vehicles likely to release substantial amounts of foreign materials into the earth's atmosphere, or into space.

(3) Development and operation of nuclear systems, including reactors and thermal devices used for propulsion and/or power generation. Excluded are devices with millicurie quantities or

less of radioactive materials used as instrument detectors and small radioisotope heaters used for local thermal control, provided they are properly contained and shielded.

(d) NASA actions categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare either an environmental assessment or an EIS (§1508.4 of the CEQ Regulations) fit the following criteria: They are each sub-elements of an approved broadbased level-of-effort NASA science and technology program (basic research, applied research, development of technology, ongoing mission operations), facility program, or institutional program; and they are each managed relatively independently of other related sub-elements by means of separate task orders, Research and Technology Operating Plans, etc. Specific NASA actions fitting these criteria and thus categorically excluded from the requirements for environmental assessments and environmental impact statements are:

(1) R&D (or SF CDC) activities in space science (e.g., Physics and Astronomy Research and Analysis, Planetary Exploration Mission Operations and Data Analysis) other than specific spacecraft development and flight projects.

(2) R&D activities in space and terrestrial applications (e.g., Resource Observations Applied Research and Data Analysis, Technology Utilization) other than specific spacecraft development and flight projects.

(3) R&D activities in aeronautics and space technology and energy technology applications (e.g., Research and Technology Base, Systems Technology Programs) other than experimental projects.

(4) R&D (or SF CDC) activities in space transportation systems engineering and scientific and technical support operations, routine transportation operations, and advanced studies.

(5) R&D (or SF CDC) activities in space tracking and data systems.

(6) Facility planning and design (funding).

(7) Minor construction of new facilities including rehabilitation, modification, and repair.

(8) Continuing operations of a NASA installation at a level of effort, or altered operations, provided the alterations induce only social and/or economic effects but no natural or physical environmental effects.

(e) Even though an action may be categorically excluded from the need for a formal environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, it is not excluded from the requirement for an environmental analysis conducted during the earliest planning phases. If that analysis shows that the action deviates from the criteria for exclusion and it is concluded that there may be significant environmental effects, an environmental assessment must be carried out. Based upon that assessment, a determination must then be made whether or not to prepare an environmental impact statement.

[44 FR 44485, July 30, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 9761, Mar. 25, 1988]

§ 1216.306 Preparation of environmental assessments.

(a) For each NASA action meeting the criteria of 14 CFR 1216.305(b) and for other actions as required, the responsible Headquarters official shall prepare an environmental assessment (40 CFR 1501.3 and 1508.9 of the CEQ Regulations) and, on the basis of that assessment, determine if an EIS is required; except where action meeting the criteria is strictly of a local nature under the purview of the Field Installation Director.

(b) If the determination is that no environmental impact statement is required, the Headquarters official or Field Installation Director, shall, in coordination with the Associate Administrator for Management, prepare a "Finding of No Significant Impact." (See 40 CFR 1508.13 of the CEQ Regulations.) The "Finding of No Significant Impact" shall be made available to the affected public through direct distribution and publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER, or coordinated with the State Single Point of Contact pursuant to E.O. 12372, as amended, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," as appropriate.

(c) If the determination is that an environmental impact statement is required, the Headquarters official shall

proceed with the "notice of intent to prepare an EIS" (see 40 CFR 1508.22 of the CEQ Regulations). The Headquarters official shall transmit this notice to the Associate Administrator for Management for review and subsequent publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER (see 40 CFR 1507.3(e) of the CEQ Regulations). The Headquarters official shall then apply procedures set forth in 14 CFR 1216.307 to determine the scope of the EIS and proceed to prepare and release the environmental statement in accordance with the CEQ Regulations and the procedures of this subpart.

(d) Environmental assessments may be prepared for any actions, even those which meet the criteria for environmental impact statements (§ 1216.305(c)) or for categorical exclusion (§ 1216.305(d)), if the responsible Headquarters official believes that the action may be an exception or that an assessment will assist in planning or decisionmaking.

[44 FR 44485, July 30, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 9761, Mar. 25, 1988]

§ 1216.307 Scoping.

The responsible Headquarters official shall conduct an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in environmental impact statements and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. The elements of the scoping process are defined in § 1501.7 of the CEQ Regulations and the process must include considerations of the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts discussed in § 1508.25 of the CEQ Regulations. The range of environmental categories to be considered in the scoping process shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Air quality;
- (b) Water quality;
- (c) Waste generation, treatment, transportation disposal and storage;
- (d) Noise, sonic boom, and vibration;
- (e) Toxic substances;
- (f) Biotic resources;
- (g) Radioactive materials and non-ionizing radiation;
- (h) Endangered species;
- (i) Historical, archeological, and recreational factors;
- (j) Wetlands and floodplains; and