

Department of Justice

§91.55

of formula grant funds, the States can use VOI/TIS grant funds to pay for the costs of preparing environmental documents, to implement mitigation measures to reduce adverse environmental impacts, and to cover the costs of construction delays or other project changes resulting from compliance with the NEPA process. However, any funds used for these purposes must be included as a portion of the State's grant which requires a State match.

§91.52 Definitions.

The definitions supplied by the Council on Environmental Quality in its *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act*, 40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508, (CEQ Regulations), shall apply to the terms in this subpart.

§91.53 Other guidance.

The Department of Justice has also published NEPA procedures that incorporate the CEQ regulations at 28 CFR part 61. Additionally, the Office of Justice Programs' Corrections Program Office has prepared a handbook for VOI/TIS grantees, *Program Guidance on Environmental Protection Requirements*. This publication and other relevant documents can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/cpo>.

APPLICATION TO VOI/TIS GRANT PROGRAM

§91.54 Applicability.

(a) *Major Federal action.* NEPA's requirements apply to any proposal for legislation or other major federal action that might significantly impact the quality of the human environment. The CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1508.18 define "major federal actions" as actions with effects that may be major and which are potentially subject to Federal control and responsibility. The CEQ regulations categorize "major federal actions" as, among other things, the "[a]pproval of specific projects, such as construction or management activities located in a defined geographic area. Projects include actions approved by permit or other regulatory decision as well as Federal and Federally assisted activities." (40 CFR 1508.18(b)(4)).

(b) *VOI/TIS construction grants subject to NEPA.* This subpart applies to all proposed, new and partially completed VOI/TIS projects (including projects on tribal lands) initiated by state or local units of government with grant funding from OJP that involve construction, expansion, renovation, facility planning, site selection, site preparation, security or facility upgrades or other activities that may significantly impact the environment.

(c) *Projects.* Although VOI/TIS money cannot be used for a project's operations expenses, the definition of "project" or "proposal" for NEPA review purposes is defined as both the construction and the long-term operation of correctional facilities and related components such as all off-site projects to accommodate the needs of the correctional facilities project (e.g., road and utility construction or expansion, projects offered to the affected community as an incentive to accept the correctional facility construction or expansion, and other reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or third party undertakes such action). Reasonably foreseeable actions include future prison construction phases, especially when either current acreage requirements or design capacities for utilities are based on needs stemming from future phases.

§91.55 Categorical exclusions.

Activities undertaken by State, local, or tribal entities using VOI/TIS funds that are consistent with any of the following categories are presumed not to have a significant effect on the human environment and thus, are categorically excluded from the preparation of either an EA or an EIS. Although these activities are excluded from environmental reviews under NEPA, they are not excluded from compliance with other applicable local, State, or Federal environmental laws. Additionally, an otherwise excluded activity loses its exclusion and is subject to environmental review if it either would be located within or potentially affect any of the following: a 100-year flood plain, a wetland, important farmland, a proposed or listed endangered or threatened species, a proposed or listed critical habitat, a property that