§ 6.301 Applicant requirements.

(a) The applicant must prepare an EID in consultation with the Responsible Official, unless the Responsible Official has notified the applicant that an EID is not required. The EID must be of sufficient scope and content to enable the Responsible Official to prepare an EA and FONSI or, if necessary, an EIS and ROD. The applicant must submit the EID to the Responsible Official.

(b) The applicant must consult with the Responsible Official as early as possible in the planning process to obtain guidance with respect to the appropriate level and scope of environmental information required for the EID.

(c) As part of the EID process, the applicant may consult with appropriate federal agencies, state and local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribes, and other potentially affected parties to identify their interests in the project and the environmental issues associated with the project.

(d) The applicant must notify the Responsible Official as early as possible of other federal agency, state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe requirements related to the project. The applicant also must notify the Responsible Official of any private entities and organizations affected by the proposed project. (See 40 CFR 1501.2(d)(2).)

(e) The applicant must notify the Responsible Official if, during EPA’s environmental review process, the applicant:

(1) Changes its plans for the project as originally submitted to EPA; and/or

(2) Changes its schedule for the project from that originally submitted to EPA.

(f) In accordance with §6.204, where appropriate, the applicant may request a categorical exclusion determination by the Responsible Official. If requested by the Responsible Official, the applicant must submit information to the Responsible Official regarding the application of a categorical exclusion to EPA’s pending action and the applicant’s project.

§ 6.302 Responsible Official requirements.

(a) Consistent with 40 CFR 1501.2(d), the Responsible Official must ensure early involvement of applicants in the environmental review process to identify environmental effects, avoid delays, and resolve conflicts.

(b) The Responsible Official must notify the applicant if a determination has been made that the action has been categorically excluded, or if EPA needs additional information to support the application of a categorical exclusion or if the submitted information does not support the application of a categorical exclusion and that an EA, or an EIS, will be required.

(c) When an EID is required for a project, the Responsible Official must consult with the applicant and provide the applicant with guidance describing the scope and level of environmental information required.

(1) The Responsible Official must provide guidance on a project-by-project basis to any applicant seeking such assistance. For major categories of actions involving a large number of applicants, the Responsible Official may prepare and make available generic guidance describing the recommended level and scope of environmental information that applicants should provide.

(2) The Responsible Official must consider the extent to which the applicant is capable of providing the required information. The Responsible Official may not require the applicant to gather data or perform analyses that unnecessarily duplicate either existing data or the results of existing analyses available to EPA. The Responsible Official must limit the request for environmental information to that necessary for the environmental review.
§ 6.303  Third-party agreements.

(a) If an EA or EIS is to be prepared for an action subject to subparts A through C of this part, the Responsible Official and the applicant may enter into an agreement whereby the applicant engages and pays for the services of a third-party contractor to prepare an EA or EIS and any associated documents for consideration by EPA. In such cases, the Responsible Official must approve the qualifications of the third-party contractor. The third-party contractor must be selected on the basis of ability and absence of any conflict of interest. Consistent with 40 CFR 1506.5(c), in consultation with the applicant, the Responsible Official shall select the contractor. The Responsible Official must provide guidance to the applicant and contractor regarding the information to be developed, including the project’s scope, and guide and participate in the collection, analysis, and presentation of the information. The Responsible Official has sole authority for final approval of and EA or EIS.

(b) In order to make a decision on the action, the Responsible Official must independently evaluate the information submitted in the EA or EIS and any associated documents, and issue an EA or draft and final EIS. After review of, and appropriate changes to, the EA or EIS submitted by the applicant, the Responsible Official may accept it as EPA’s document. The Responsible Official is responsible for the scope, accuracy, and contents of the EA or EIS and any associated documents (see 40 CFR 1506.5).

(c) A third-party agreement may not be initiated unless both the applicant and the Responsible Official agree to its creation and terms.

(d) The terms of the contract between the applicant and the third-party contractor must ensure that the contractor does not have recourse to EPA for financial or other claims arising under the contract, and that the Responsible Official, or other EPA designee, may give technical advice to the contractor.