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and provides information and conclusions for incorporation into EAs. Unclassified documents incorporated by reference into the EA or FNSI are public documents.

(d) Copies of public notices, ''scoping'' letters, EAs, draft FNSIs, FNSIs, and other documents routinely sent to the public will be sent directly to appropriate congressional, state, and district offices.

(e) To ensure early incorporation of the public into the process, a plan to include all interested or affected parties should be developed at the beginning of the analysis and documentation process. Open communication with the public is encouraged as a matter of Army policy, and the degree of public involvement varies. Appropriate public notice of the availability of the completed EA/draft FNSI shall be made (see §651.35) (see also AR 360–5 (Public Information)). The plan will include the following:

(1) Dissemination of information to local and installation communities.

(2) Invitation and incorporation of public comments on Army actions.

(3) Consultation with appropriate persons and agencies.

(f) Further guidance on public participation requirements (to potentially be used for EAs and EISs, depending on circumstances) is presented in Appendix D of this part.

§651.37 Public availability.

Documents incorporated into the EA or FNSI by reference will be available for public review. Where possible, use of public libraries and a list of POCs for supportive documents is encouraged. A depository should be chosen which is open beyond normal business hours. To the extent possible, the WWW should also be used to increase public availability of documents.

§651.38 Existing environmental assessments.

EAs are dynamic documents. To ensure that the described setting, actions, and effects remain substantially accurate, the proponent or installation Environmental Officer is encouraged to periodically review existing documentation that is still relevant or supporting current action. If an action is not yet completed, substantial changes in the proposed action may require supplementation, as specified in §651.5 (g).

§651.39 Significance.

(a) If the proposed action may or will result in significant impacts to the environment, an EIS is prepared to provide more comprehensive analyses and conclusions about the impacts. Significant impacts of socioeconomic consequence alone do not merit an EIS.

(b) Significance of impacts is determined by examining both the context and intensity of the proposed action (40 CFR 1508.27). The analysis should establish, by resource category, the threshold at which significance is reached. For example, an action that would violate existing pollution standards; cause water, air, noise, soil, or underground pollution; impair visibility for substantial periods; or cause irreparable harm to animal or plant life could be determined significant. Significant beneficial effects also occur and must be addressed, if applicable.

(c) The proponent should use appropriate methods to identify and ascertain the ''significance'' of impacts. The use of simple analytical tools, which are subject to independent peer review, fully documented, and available to the public, is encouraged.[4] In particular, where impacts are unknown or are suspected to be of public interest, public involvement should be initiated early in the EA (scoping) process.

Subpart F—Environmental Impact Statement

§651.40 Introduction.

(a) An EIS is a public document designed to ensure that NEPA policies and goals are incorporated early into the programs and actions of federal agencies. An EIS is intended to provide a full, open, and balanced discussion of significant environmental impacts that

[4] EIFS is one such Army system for evaluating regional economic impacts under NEPA. This system is mandated, as Army policy, for use in NEPA analyses. Other similar tools may be mandated for use in the Army, and will be documented in guidance published pursuant to this part.

may result from a proposed action and alternatives, allowing public review and comment on the proposal and providing a basis for informed decision-making.

(b) The NEPA process should support sound, informed, and timely (early) decision-making; not produce encyclopedic documents. CEQ guidance (40 CFR 1502.7) should be followed, establishing a page limit of 150 pages (300 pages for complex projects). To the extent practicable, EISs will ''incorporate by reference'' any material that is reasonably available for inspection by potentially interested persons within the time allowed for comment. The incorporated material shall be cited in the EIS and its content will be briefly described. Material based on proprietary data, that is itself not available for review and comment, shall not be incorporated by reference.

§ 651.41 Conditions requiring an EIS.

An EIS is required when a proponent, preparer, or approving authority determines that the proposed action has the potential to:

(a) Significantly affect environmental quality, or public health or safety.

(b) Significantly affect historic (listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service, Department of Interior), or cultural, archaeological, or scientific resources, public parks and recreation areas, wildlife refuge or wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, or aquifers.

(c) Significantly impact prime and unique farmlands located off-post, wetlands, floodplains, coastal zones, or ecologically important areas, or other areas of unique or critical environmental sensitivity.

(d) Result in significant or uncertain environmental effects, or unique or unknown environmental risks.

(e) Significantly affect a federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species, a federal candidate species, a species proposed for federal listing, or critical habitat.

(f) Either establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration with significant environmental effects.

(g) Adversely interact with other actions with individually insignificant effects so that cumulatively significant environmental effects result.

(h) Involve the production, storage, transportation, use, treatment, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials that may have significant environmental impact.

(i) Be highly controversial from an environmental standpoint.

(j) Cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

§ 651.42 Actions normally requiring an EIS.

The following actions normally require an EIS:

(a) Significant expansion of a military facility or installation.

(b) Construction of facilities that have a significant effect on wetlands, coastal zones, or other areas of critical environmental concern.

(c) The disposal of nuclear materials, munitions, explosives, industrial and military chemicals, and other hazardous or toxic substances that have the potential to cause significant environmental impact.

(d) Land acquisition, leasing, or other actions that may lead to significant changes in land use.

(e) Realignment or stationing of a brigade or larger table of organization equipment (TOE) unit during peacetime (except where the only significant impacts are socioeconomic, with no significant biophysical environmental impact).

(f) Training exercises conducted outside the boundaries of an existing military reservation where significant environmental damage might occur.

(g) Major changes in the mission or facilities either affecting environmentally sensitive resources (see § 651.29(c)) or causing significant environmental impact (see § 651.39).

§ 651.43 Format of the EIS.

The EIS should not exceed 150 pages in length (300 pages for very complex proposals), and must contain the following (detailed content is discussed in appendix E of this part):

(a) Cover sheet.

(b) Summary.