

May 2025

# Project Development Procedures

For Federal-aid Highway Projects  
ADOT Environmental Planning



# 1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Assignment of FHWA Environmental Review Responsibility.....	1
1.1.1 CE Assignment - State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions .....	1
1.1.2 NEPA Assignment - Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program .....	2
1.2 Involvement with FHWA .....	2
1.3 Responsibilities.....	2
2. QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	3
2.1 Staff Expectations.....	3
2.1.1 QA Goals.....	3
2.1.2 Proactive Engagement .....	3
2.1.3 Telephone and Voicemail .....	3
2.1.4 Email.....	4
2.1.5 Letter Inquiries.....	4
2.1.6 Face to Face Meetings .....	5
2.1.7 Referrals .....	5
2.1.8 Planning for Staff Leave of Absence .....	5
2.1.9 Document Requests.....	5
2.1.10 Media Requests.....	6
2.1.11 Continuous Monitoring .....	6
2.1.12 Question Escalation.....	6
2.1.13 NEPA Chats, post-NEPA review team (performance review team), and the CORE Team concept	6
3. TRAINING PROCEDURES.....	7
3.1 Staff Training .....	7
3.2 Tracking and Monitoring .....	7
3.3 Training Classes .....	7
3.4 New Hires .....	8
4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT .....	8
4.1 Environmental Project Team.....	9

4.1.1	Environmental Planners.....	9
4.1.2	Cultural Resources .....	9
4.1.3	Biological Resources .....	9
4.1.4	Hazardous Materials .....	9
4.1.5	Air Quality and Noise Team .....	9
4.1.6	Water Resources.....	9
4.2	Project Assignments.....	10
4.2.1	Staff Assignment for Projects .....	10
4.3	First Steps after Project Assignment.....	10
4.4	Environmental Planning Roles .....	11
4.5	Communication and Coordination.....	12
4.5.1	Proactive Communication.....	12
4.5.2	District Coordination.....	12
4.5.3	FHWA and Agency Coordination .....	14
4.5.4	Early Agency, Tribal and Public Involvement.....	14
4.5.5	Decision and Conflict Resolution .....	14
4.5.6	Government-To-Government Consultation .....	15
4.6	Project Meetings and Scope of Work.....	15
4.6.1	Internal Environmental Planning Kick-Off Meetings .....	15
4.6.2	Project Kick-Off Meetings .....	16
4.6.3	Meeting Documentation.....	18
4.7	LPA Projects.....	18
4.7.1	ADOT Administered LPA Projects .....	19
4.7.2	Certification Acceptance (CA) Agency Projects .....	19
4.8	Recreational Trails Program .....	20
4.9	Plans and Special Provisions Review .....	20
4.10	Project Schedules .....	21
4.11	Environmental Planning Review Timeframes.....	22
4.11.1	Categorical Exclusions .....	23
4.11.2	Environmental Assessments .....	23
4.11.3	Environmental Impact Statements .....	23
4.11.4	Federal Register Notices and e-NEPA Process for ADOT NEPA Assignment.....	23

4.12	Project Funding and Budget .....	23
4.13	Project Review Board (PRB) Procedures .....	24
4.14	Environmental Consultants .....	24
4.14.1	Hiring Consultants .....	24
4.14.2	Project Environmental Data Sheet (PEDS) .....	24
4.14.3	On-call Assignments ("Turn-Key").....	25
4.14.4	Task Order Procedures for Environmental Planning On-Call Projects.....	26
4.14.5	Quality Submittals from Consultants .....	26
4.14.6	Consultant Evaluations.....	26
4.15	NEPA Approval and Validation .....	27
4.15.1	NEPA Approvals.....	27
4.15.2	NEPA Validation.....	27
4.16	NEPA Documents Distribution and Record Retention .....	27
4.16.1	PTS .....	28
4.16.2	Electronic Record (ENV-Drive) .....	28
4.16.3	Workfront.....	28
5.	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....	28
5.1	Public Involvement.....	29
5.1.1	Meeting Coordination.....	29
5.1.2	Environmental Document Public Review .....	29
5.1.3	Environmental Planning Website .....	30
5.2	Public Review and Comment Involving Section 4(f) .....	30
5.3	Public Review and Comment Involving Section 106 .....	31
	APPENDIX.....	32
	Project Environmental Data Sheet.....	33
	Environmental Planning Review Timeframe Guidelines .....	38
	NEPA Approval in Relation to Final Design .....	40
	Consultant Evaluation Form .....	41
	Folder and File Labeling Guidelines .....	43
	326 CE Approval Email Template (ADOT Project).....	49
	326 CE Approval Email Template (LPA ADOT Administered) .....	50
	NEPA Approval Email Template (CA Agency Projects) .....	51

327 NEPA Approval Email Template .....	52
327 Environmental Clearance Email Template.....	53
NEPA and Plans Review Email Template for CA Agencies <sup>1</sup> .....	54
Project Delivery, NEPA Assignment, Technical Team Escalation Standard Procedure .....	55
New Hire Standard Work Plan – Planner II First Year .....	56
Technical Sections Basic Procedures .....	59
Air Quality and Noise Procedures .....	59
Cultural Resources Procedures .....	59
Biological Resources Procedures .....	63
404/401 Procedures .....	67
Hazardous Materials Procedures .....	69
Amendments to Project Development Procedures Manual .....	71



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) vision is to be the standard of excellence for transportation systems and services. One strategy to help achieve this is by continuously evaluating all processes to determine new approaches and efficiencies to ensure that we deliver quality service. Environmental Planning (ENV – short-hand throughout this document) is strongly committed to producing quality documents and providing excellent service to internal and external stakeholders including internal ADOT Divisions, federal, state and local government agencies, tribal communities, and the public.

ENV established the *Project Development Procedures* to assist ENV staff with the procedural and coordination steps necessary to successfully develop projects and implement the environmental review process. This document describes internal procedures on management and contracting; provides guidance on coordination and communication; identifies staff responsible for performing various project development activities and also provides templates and tools for successfully implementing in projects. This document works in conjunction with the ENV *Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) Plan* which contains more detailed information on the quality controls and approval of environmental review documents. The *QA/QC Plan* also contains quality controls related to program monitoring including performance measures and self-assessments. The ENV *Project Development Procedures* outlines staff expectations and responsibilities, also a component of a quality program.

Project teams follow these procedures during the preparation and review of environmental documents. Because environmental documents are available to a general audience, they should be well-written, easy to read, and provide full disclosure of accurate information. These procedures are designed to provide directions to assist project teams in meeting these requirements.

ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have agreements in place with procedure requirements to help deliver the Federal-aid Highway Program (FAHP). Consequently, the *Project Development Procedures* assists ADOT in conforming to the stipulations of the FHWA-ADOT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions (CE) under 23 U.S.C 326 (CE Assignment) and the MOU between FHWA and ADOT for the Surface Transportation Delivery Program codified in 23 U.S.C. 327 (NEPA Assignment). The *Project Development Procedures* provide direction on ENV roles and responsibilities, internal environmental analysis procedures, checking of environmental commitments, the execution of proper filing conventions and record keeping procedures and more.

### 1.1 Assignment of FHWA Environmental Review Responsibility

#### 1.1.1 CE Assignment - State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions

FHWA and ADOT have entered into a CE Assignment MOU, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 326, that assigned to the ADOT FHWA's environmental review responsibilities for determining whether certain projects are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). All responsibilities concerning CE determinations that are not

assigned under the CE Assignment MOU are assigned under the 327 MOU. The CE Assignment MOU is renewable every three years.

#### **1.1.2 NEPA Assignment - Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program**

FHWA and ADOT have entered into a NEPA Assignment MOU, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327, that assigned to the ADOT FHWA's environmental review responsibilities including the preparation and approval of EAs and EIS as well as the preparation of CEs not assigned under the CE Assignment MOU. The MOU is renewable every five years.

### **1.2 Involvement with FHWA**

Pursuant to these MOUs, FHWA cannot provide any project-level assistance to ADOT in carrying out any of the responsibilities assumed under CE and NEPA Assignment. Project-level assistance is defined as any advice, consultation, or document review associated with a particular highway project. However, project-level assistance is not process or program level assistance or discussions concerning issues addressed in prior projects; interpretations of any applicable law contained in Titles 23 or 49 of the United States Code; interpretations of any FHWA or USDOT regulation, or interpretations of FHWA or USDOT policies or guidance -FHWA may assist ADOT in these areas.

For those projects excluded from NEPA Assignment where FHWA remains the lead federal agency ADOT coordinates with FHWA on relevant issues.

### **1.3 Responsibilities**

As a consequence, CE and NEPA assignment, ADOT is solely liable and solely responsible for carrying out all of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities it has assumed under NEPA Assignment, subject to the limitations of the Eleventh Amendment waiver of sovereign immunity by ADOT. FHWA and USDOT have no liability for the performance of the responsibilities assumed by ADOT, including any decision or approval made by ADOT while under the NEPA Assignment and CE Assignment (MOUs).

In assuming the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA Assignment and other agreements, ADOT is subject to the same procedural and substantive requirements that apply to the USDOT Secretary in carrying out these responsibilities. Such procedural and substantive requirements include federal laws, federal regulations, Executive Orders, policy, guidance and interagency agreements such as programmatic agreements, memoranda of understanding, memoranda of agreement, and other similar documents that relate to the environmental review process.

ADOT is committed to maintaining adequate organizational and staff capability, including competent and qualified consultants where it is necessary or desirable, to effectively carry out the responsibilities it has assumed under Assignment. These commitments include:

- Using appropriate environmental technical and managerial expertise
- Devoting adequate staff resources
- Demonstrating, in a consistent manner, the capacity to perform ADOT's assumed responsibilities under the MOUs and applicable federal laws

ADOT makes all reasonable and good faith efforts to work with affected parties and attempt to resolve any and all conflicts during the consultation and environmental review process.

## 2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance (QA) is a system for ensuring a desired level of quality in the development and delivery of project environmental decisions and documents. As defined in the ADOT ENV QA/QC Plan, QA is a systematic way of preventing problems and is, in part, employed at the project level to ensure that prudent procedures and tools are in. The *Project Development Procedures* contain the tools and procedures for developing consistent quality environmental review documents.

### 2.1 Staff Expectations

ENV's expectations of staff's daily interactions with project team members, stakeholders and the public are part of the standards put in place under an overall QA program. These standards guide ENV staff on how and when services and products are delivered to stakeholders including: ADOT project management, ADOT divisions and project teams, outside agencies, Tribes, and the public. In all contact with project stakeholders, ENV staff should aim to meet their needs while delivering projects for ADOT.

#### 2.1.1 QA Goals

ENV consistently strives to exceed expectations by achieving the following goals:

- Deliver products and services at the agreed upon time
- Listen to, accept, and act upon feedback
- Assist stakeholders in defining their needs and requests
- Provide courteous, prompt and professional service
- Deliver the highest quality environmental review documents
- Strive to deliver on ADOT's Vision, Mission, and Values

#### 2.1.2 Proactive Engagement

Proactive communication anticipates questions before they are raised or before issues occur. In general, enquiries should be responded to in the format they are received. If a time constraint or a miscommunication exists, another format may be used when appropriate. For example, if a letter is received but there is a sense of urgency in the need for a response an email or phone call may be appropriate. In addition, communication between agencies should be federal to federal, state to state, etc. Consultants should only communicate with other agencies through ENV staff. Consultants may directly transmit information and documents to agencies when pre-approved to do so by ENV. The Environmental Planner shall be copied on all such transmittals.

#### 2.1.3 Telephone and Voicemail

When answering a telephone call, staff should greet the caller and identify themselves by giving their name and department. For example: "Hello, ADOT Environmental Planning this is . . . ." Staff assists the caller to the best of their availability.



All staff member phones are to have voicemail accounts with a professional recorded message informing the caller if staff members are out of the office, to leave a voicemail. Staff should respond to messages left on voicemail as soon as possible upon their return to the office. Documenting project related phone conversations in a memo is recommended and required if a project related decision is made.

#### 2.1.4 Email

All staff members are expected to adhere to ADOT's internet and email policies.

All staff emails should contain a consistent signature block including the staff person's name, title, department, telephone number and ADOT logo. Refer to the [ADOT graphics website](#) (ADOT Intranet only) for more information.

Emails should be responded to within two business days if possible. Critical items should be responded to as soon as possible. If appropriate, an email should be marked as urgent. If a response is going to take longer than the timeframes noted above, the inquirer should be informed by ENV of the progress and a realistic timeframe set for resolution.

Be selective and inclusive when distributing emails. Do not "reply all" if the topic is not important to everyone on the distribution list. Use discretion and judgment when forwarding emails you have received from others. Emails that may be of a more direct internal nature may not be appropriate for sending to outside partners and stakeholders. In such cases, create a new email to convey the necessary information.

Staff should respond by email in a professional, positive, courteous and helpful manner. Use highlighting to point out key facts or information if necessary. Staff should write clear and concise emails that provide enough information to answer questions. Use spell check before sending. If discussions become lengthy or detailed a phone call or in-person meeting is recommended.

All project related emails should contain the ADOT TRACS Number and project name within the email subject line. In addition, for emails sent that include representatives of FHWA, the federal-aid Project Number should also be included. For example, subject: H8485 / 060-B-NFA / Draft CE. Not all emails need to be saved in the project file. Use judgement in deciding which emails are deliberative in project decision-making and should be saved.

When staff members are out of the office during work hours, the email "Out of Office Assistant" should be activated with a personal message with who to contact in their absence or when they will be able to respond to emails.

#### 2.1.5 Letter Inquiries

All letters will be on current ADOT ENV letterhead, with the exception of letters sent through the FHWA for projects excluded from NEPA Assignment or on behalf of Local Public Agency (LPA) projects. For letters processed by FHWA, such as consultation letters, refer to [FHWA Letter Guidance](#).

For scoping letters, refer to the *ADOT Environmental Planning Guidelines for Agency and Public Scoping for Projects with Categorical Exclusions* for writing and responding to inquiries. The project information and scope of work description are confirmed by the ADOT Project Manager prior to

sending the letters. LPA project scoping letters and responses utilize the local agency letterhead. At the discretion of the LPA, scoping letters can also go out under the on-call consultant letterhead if the letter asks for comments to be submitted to the LPA c/o of the consultant.

All response letters (for scoping, consultation, etc.) should thank the recipient for their response and staff should directly and concisely address their comments and/or questions using plain English without technical terminology, unless necessary. The content of response letters to inquiries received are reviewed by the ADOT Project Manager, District and/or ADOT Communications as necessary.

#### 2.1.6 Face to Face Meetings

When scheduling meetings, reasonable advance warning should be provided and include date, time, location, contact person, phone number, and subject of the meeting. Where appropriate, agendas should be made available to keep meetings on schedule especially if many items are to be discussed. If there are schedule changes or cancelations, reasonable notice should be given. Meetings are to start and end on time, and be conducted in a professional, respectful and courteous manner. Prior to sending meeting invitations, be selective and ensure the appropriate people are invited.

#### 2.1.7 Referrals

If a staff member is unable to respond to an inquiry, every effort should be made to refer the inquirer on to the person best able to help them. If a person is being referred by email or phone to a different division or colleague, provide a relevant direct phone number and/or email address.

#### 2.1.8 Planning for Staff Leave of Absence

To maintain project development efficiency within ENV teams, annual leave is to be coordinated with their direct supervisor. Staff members are expected to provide appropriate back-up within their own teams and arrange for a substitute to attend any critical meetings while on leave. If any staff plans to take annual leave, supervisors are to be updated on the status of their projects prior to leave. ENV Staff is responsible for completing their projects on schedule regardless of vacations or other absences and should make arrangements if an activity or assignment is due during the scheduled leave.

#### 2.1.9 Document Requests

If staff is asked by anyone (outside of the normal day-to-day project information sharing) for ADOT related documents they should be directed to suitable existing online information (i.e., ADOT Statewide Project website ([azdot.gov/projects](http://azdot.gov/projects))). For all other requests, including procedures for requesting public records, direct the inquiries to ADOT Safety and Risk Management (SRM). All projects that fall under the 326 CE MOU and 327 NEPA MOU shall adhere to the Arizona State Records Request Law which is comparable to the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). All other projects that are not covered under these MOUs are subject to both the state and the federal public records request. When in doubt, contact ADOT's SRM office for direction as noted above. If files are requested by ADOT attorneys, responding to their request may include consolidating files from email, the ENV-Drive, Workfront, ADOT Information Data Warehouse (AIDW), and hard copy files.

#### 2.1.10 Media Requests

For media inquiries, direct inquiries to the Public Information Officer in ADOT Communications. ADOT staff does not respond directly to media inquiries.

#### 2.1.11 Continuous Monitoring

Each staff member monitors their own performance against the standards outlined within this document. Frequent supervisor feedback to staff on document quality and delivery performance will also be provided so staff members know if they are meeting requirements. A master Environmental Planner workload and delivery tracking system is in place. Direct feedback and annual performance reviews provide an opportunity to make staff aware of any room for performance improvement. Supervisors should recognize teams and individuals who demonstrate outstanding interactive personnel skills and performance.

#### 2.1.12 Question Escalation

Often questions arise that do not have an immediate answer either because they are atypical or the ENV team member may not have the experience to manage the full scope of the issue. Therefore, a Project Delivery, NEPA Assignment, Technical Team Escalation Standard Procedure has been developed. It can be found in the Appendix under the same name and allows for a standard escalation/resolution process.

#### 2.1.13 NEPA Chats, post-NEPA review team (performance review team), and the CORE Team concept

As part of the QA/QC oversight for issues related to NEPA Assignment the use of an ENV Core Team approach of subject matter experts serves as the standard process for process resolution to improve the quality of documentation in future NEPA decisions. The Core Team is the NEPA Assignment Management Team with the solicited help of identified technical experts as needed. The Core Team reaffirms the effort through the documentation of collaboration, thereby illustrating the efforts to improve document quality and accuracy. The standard process is as follows;

##### Process Solving Hierarchy

- General project level knowledge allows issues to be sourced and Core Team experts to be identified
- Issue are added to the agenda as needed in the weekly ENV senior planner weekly call
  - Once clarified through that call and issue clarification/discussion the Core Team may resolve or move the issue to the monthly Planner/Tech meeting
- Persistent hard to solve issues can also be escalated to the ENV Administrator Problem Solving Register

### **3. TRAINING PROCEDURES**

To ensure ADOT has qualified and knowledgeable staff, training and familiarization will be required of all staff. Staying up-to-date with the latest guidance, regulations, etc. is the responsibility of each staff member and their supervisor. A master ENV training tracking system is in place.

#### **3.1 Staff Training**

Managers/supervisors are responsible for assuring that staff receives the required orientation, corporate, safety, and skills training. An employee's required training is listed on the My Training Progress Report which is accessed through the ADOT Learning and Development Center Reports function. Additionally, the ENV specific training requirements are identified in the ADOT Environmental Training Plan and the Environmental Planning Staff Training tracking spreadsheet. In addition to this formal training, staff and their supervisors will regularly communicate when new requirements or policies come about that affect procedures.

#### **3.2 Tracking and Monitoring**

Training of staff will be tracked via the Environmental Planning Staff Training tracking spreadsheet managed by the ENV Training Officer.

The tracking system will indicate the mandatory training for each staff member based on the function which is assigned. Additional courses that a staff member completes, but that are not required, can also be tracked. Supervisors are to ensure their staff completes the required training. ENV management meets with the Environmental Training Officer quarterly to discuss completed training and future training needs, periodically.

The Environmental Training Officer verifies completion dates using the ADOT Learning Management System (LMS). The Training Officer will inform supervisors of courses their direct reports are deficient in on a quarterly basis.

#### **3.3 Training Classes**

Managers, Program Coordinators and Technical Specialists must inform the Environmental Training Officer if they identify changes in regulations, guidance, procedures, new manuals, etc. that affect current training requirements, or that may give rise to new training requirements. Additionally, performance measures that may indicate the need for changes to current training or the need for additional training should be identified.

If ADOT will be hosting or conducting environmental training classes (e.g., vendor training, FHWA Resource Center, National Highway Institute, US Fish and Wildlife, etc.), the Environmental Training Officer must be notified. The Environmental Training Officer shall schedule/enter these courses into the LMS, advertise classes to the appropriate audiences, and document completion of the courses. The host/instructor is responsible for ensuring attendance is recorded (sign-in roster). Individuals and their supervisors are responsible for documenting course completion in the ENV Staff Training Spreadsheet.

There is no requirement to complete courses in a certain order or sequence. It is preferred to take courses in a logical sequence, such as taking introductory NEPA courses before taking the advanced

NEPA courses. However, the availability of the courses and the needs of the office and individuals will be assessed to determine when courses will be requested and taken.

Courses can be provided by ADOT, the FHWA Resource Center, the National Highway Institute (NHI), or other vendors. If staff would like to take additional courses not provided by the above referenced sources, they should discuss this with their supervisor.

### 3.4 New Hires

Newly hired ENV staff are required to complete assigned environmental training within one year of hire or assignment to the current position. Supervisors should add newly assigned individuals to the Staff Training Spreadsheet and assign them the appropriate function within their first month. Each supervisor should discuss staff development needs, prior training, and additional training opportunities with their staff.

In addition to ADOT's general on-boarding requirements, ENV supervisors should provide a binder of procedures and policies to the new staff for their familiarization. Supervisors are also required to create a calendar for their first month at ADOT with opportunities for the new employee to shadow other ENV and project development staff. Shadowing opportunities could cover the following topics, including but not limited to:

- How to use the essential computer programs (ENV-Drive, Workfront)
- How to maintain project records
- General overview of the environmental review process
- Complete a construction site visit
- Attend project progress meetings, partnering meetings, and kick-off meetings
- Shadow Environmental Planners and/or Technical Specialists
- Introduce them to other ADOT divisions, FHWA staff and other Agency staff as needed

A [New Hire Standard Work Plan – Planner II First Year](#) has been developed as part of the overall training/guidance updates and more consistency with elements found in the "First Year Experience" from the ADOT Continuous Improvement office.

## 4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management is the process of planning, organizing, controlling resources, and following procedures through knowledge, skills, and technique; a methodical approach to planning and guiding a project from start to finish. Effective project management helps carry out large-scale projects on time, on budget, and with minimal disruption to the rest of the organization. This chapter will provide guidance on communication and consultant management in addition to the three main components of project management (scope, schedule, and budget).

Reference Tool: [\(AASHTO\) Effective Project Management for NEPA](#)

## **4.1 Environmental Project Team**

Environmental Planners are responsible for the overall management of the environmental review process and the environmental review documents. Environmental Planners are responsible for NEPA and other compliance areas, not under one of the Technical Sections responsibilities, including Farmland Protection, Visual Assessments, Section 4(f), Section 6(f) and others. Various staff from the Technical Sections of ENV oversees responsibilities that lie outside the purview of the Environmental Planner.

### **4.1.1 Environmental Planners**

The Environmental Planner coordinates with the relevant technical specialists throughout the development of a project. The specialists inform the Environmental Planner as early as possible about any technical-related actions that might significantly affect a project scope, schedule or budget, and work with the project team to on how to best address these issues.

### **4.1.2 Cultural Resources**

The Historic Preservation Team (HPT) is responsible for ensuring that all FAHP projects consider effects to significant historic and prehistoric cultural resources in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act [Section 106] as other federal and state historic preservation laws.

### **4.1.3 Biological Resources**

The Biology Team oversees compliance for all projects through the ADOT Biologists. The ADOT Biologists are responsible for reviewing or preparing all biology-related project deliverables and for certain types of agency coordination in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act as well as other federal and state biology-related protection laws. The Wetland Biologist is responsible for reviewing project needs and permitting requirements associated with the Clean Water Act [Sections 401, 402 and 404].

### **4.1.4 Hazardous Materials**

The Hazardous Materials Section oversees compliance with laws and regulations related to hazardous materials in lands and rights-of-way, testing of materials for lead and asbestos and permitting actions related to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants.

### **4.1.5 Air Quality and Noise Team**

The Air Quality Program Manager oversees compliance with conformity requirements of Clean Air Act. The Noise Technical Specialist oversees compliance with federal noise requirements (23 CFR 772) and the ADOT Noise Abatement Requirements.

### **4.1.6 Water Resources**

Water Resources oversees compliance with the Clean Water Act Section 402 and groundwater protection including the Safe Water Drinking Act and evaluates outstanding and impaired waters.



## 4.2 Project Assignments

An Environmental Planner and various technical leads are assigned to each project. The environmental project team manages the schedule, scope, and budget of the environmental efforts that support preparation of environmental review documents.

### 4.2.1 Staff Assignment for Projects

ADOT projects originate in the Planning and Programming Group within the Multimodal Planning Division (MPD). LPA projects originate from the individual community and ENV is informed by the ADOT LPA Group. ENV is informed of new projects from the Project Management Group (PMG). All new projects from PMG will be developed through their standard work process for establishing project teams. In addition, standard work procedure for in-house designed projects can also originate through PMG. In-house design projects will include the ADOT Project Team standard work process but will also engage the team members in a pre-scoping meeting and include one follow up meeting to finalize the project estimate. All projects requiring assignment should go directly via email request from the Project Management Group to the Project Delivery Manager as the primary contact and to the ENV Administrator as a secondary contact. If requests for assignment are sent directly to the Environmental Planners or Technical Specialists, those should be forwarded to the ENV Project Delivery Manager. The project will be assigned to the most appropriate Environmental Planner based on past experience, geographic location, scale and complexity of project, and their current workload. It is the responsibility of the Environmental Planner to proactively lead the coordination with the technical disciplines within ENV once the project is assigned.

## 4.3 First Steps after Project Assignment

When initially assigned a project, the Environmental Planner will:

- Update Workfront
- Update the appropriate project tracking: Planner Workload and 327 MOU Environmental Monitoring spreadsheet (if applicable)
- Introduce themselves to the ADOT Project Manager as the environmental point of contact
- Start a digital project folder under the ENV-Drive using the standard template folders

The following are important questions the Environmental Planner should be aware of when assigned a project:

- What is the current stage of development (scoping, study, or final design)?
- What is the proposed scope of work and will an engineering scoping document (also known as a Project Assessment or Scoping Letter) be completed?
- Has a project schedule been created? What is the bid ready date?
- Does the project have federal authorization?
- Which sub phase should Environmental Staff charge to?
- Have staff and consultant budgets already been established?
- Is there an engineering and/or environmental consultant on-board that I should coordinate with?
- Is the project currently programed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?

Does the project meet fiscal constraint? Please reference this FHWA memorandum [Clarifying Fiscal Constraint Guidance](#).

The Environmental Planner shares known project information with the Technical Specialists (Air, Noise, Hazmat, Biology, Cultural, Wetland Biologist and Water Resources) to determine what level of analysis is needed and whether or not an environmental consultant will be needed.

This information will be documented on the Project Environmental Data Sheet (PEDS) (see [Appendix](#)) and provided to the environmental consultant so that they can prepare their scope and cost estimate. A PEDS is a tool to assist in task order contracting but is not a requirement for every project. Based upon the scoping document, the Environmental Planner should coordinate closely with the ADOT Project Manager on the schedule and contracting of the environmental consultants and the management of budgets. If the ADOT Project Manager utilizes an environmental consultant, the Environmental Planner should review the scope and fee estimate to ensure the appropriate tasks are included. For an LPA project, the local agency may contract with a consultant or ADOT administers the project and contracts with a consultant under the Project Management on-call process. The Environmental Planner should always know who the consultant is working for. The Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists should still provide the PEDS form or some direction on what contract scope of work is needed to complete the environmental process.

#### **4.4 Environmental Planning Roles**

The Environmental Planner leads the environmental review process which includes managing the project's environmental schedule, scope, budget and end. The Environmental Planner is responsible for coordinating and communicating closely with the; ADOT Project Manager, LPA environmental coordinator/contact, Technical Specialist, ADOT Communications, ADOT Civil Rights Office, ADOT Districts and FHWA for projects excluded from NEPA Assignment. The Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists each play a critical role in a project's success. While it is important to effectively and efficiently manage one's technical responsibility each should contribute to the management of the overall project and assist the ADOT Project Manager to deliver projects within budget and on time. It takes a cooperative team effort to meet these goals. Consistent interaction between the project team is intended to resolve most, if not all problems, before the documents are completed and ready for review. As a result, when a document is sent around for reviews, it should be a final draft ready for approval. The Environmental Planner ensures that the environmental commitments are included in design plans through the Environmental Permits Issues and Commitments (EPIC) Sheet (as needed) and incorporated in the special provisions as applicable.

ADOT Districts play a key role in ensuring that environmental commitments and permits are constructible and followed during construction. After the project is bid and prior to construction, the Environmental Planner, in coordination with the Environmental Commitments Coordinator and any other relevant technical specialists, attends the pre-construction meetings to communicate and discuss with ADOT Districts and Contractor the required environmental commitment and permit requirements. The environmental commitments requirements are communicated in writing through the EPIC sheet included in the final plans and project special provisions, which will be discussed at project pre-construction and partnering meetings. Environmental Planning (Environmental Planner,

Environmental Commitments Coordinator, Technical Specialists) may assist the Resident Engineer (RE) with environmental issues that arise during construction. The RE is the ADOT lead during construction and the primary point of contact for all issues construction related. Technical Specialists manage and approve project related technical analysis, reports, technical work schedules and budgets that are in conformance with related environmental regulations. The Technical Specialists are responsible for coordinating closely with the project Environmental Planner and recommending and creating project environmental commitments that are clear, reasonable, and constructible.

#### **4.5 Communication and Coordination**

Communication and coordination are essential for project management. Maintaining early, open, regular, and accurate channels of communication at all levels of project staff is vital to ensure the smooth flow of information and instruction from project partners and regulatory agencies. It also permits for early warning of risks and changes which enable assessment and timely resolution.

##### **4.5.1 Proactive Communication**

Proactive communication that is timely and concise is imperative. For active projects, communicate continually with the ADOT Project Manager, LPAs and project consultants. For excluded projects not covered under NEPA Assignment it is also important to keep the FHWA Area Engineer and Environmental Coordinator informed. If there is a change in scope to the project, the ENV team should be made aware by email or through meetings. And likewise, if the environmental project team finds something that may impact the scope, schedule or budget, the Environmental Planner should inform the ADOT Project Manager as soon as possible. Be adaptable to changes throughout the process but notify the ADOT Project Manager of their options in moving the project forward. In order for the project team to make accurate and informed decisions, all of the relevant information should be discussed.

##### **4.5.2 District Coordination**

The environmental team is required to coordinate with the District when the following items are involved during design:

- **Avoidance Commitments** – If the Technical Specialist finds that a project requires an avoidance area commitment, for example a cultural resources site, a habitat area or a Section 4(f) property, the Technical Specialist must inform the Environmental Planner. The Environmental Planner emails the District and ADOT Project Manager for consideration of the proposed avoidance areas. This request needs to be sent prior to including the avoidance area in consultation letters, design plans or the technical documents. The Environmental Planner will need concurrence from both the District and ADOT Project Manager in order to move forward with the avoidance area. Also, the District may not be able to avoid these areas during construction and the team may need to find another creative way to avoid it or they may need to undertake the necessary steps to impact it. Communicate with your project team and Technical Specialists on all the options.
- **404 Permit Reviews** – This pertains to notifications under the ADOT Regional General Permit, Nationwide Permits, and Individual Permits. The Environmental Planner, the Wetland Biologist, the ADOT Project Manager and the District review the permit applications prior to sending

them to the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Environmental Planner will need to coordinate these reviews.

- **Mitigation Measures** – If a technical analysis proposes to address project impacts by using mitigation measures the Technical Specialist must inform the Environmental Planner for coordination with the District.

The above-listed requests need to be sent to the ADOT Project Manager and District for approval before including them in the technical documents. The C&S Specialist should also review the environmental commitments and EPIC sheet as early in the process as possible. Be sure to email these requests to the District Engineer, the District Environmental Coordinator and the Transportation Engineering Specialist on the District Engineers contact list. The Environmental Planner only needs one person from the District to approve these requests, in addition to the ADOT Project Manager. If the environmental consultant sends this email request on the Environmental Planner's behalf, ensure that they send it to these three people at the District and that they copy the Environmental Planner on the email.

The District is given a minimum of two (2) weeks to review these proposals. They may need three (3) weeks to review an Individual Permit. This is not a hard-set timeframe; work closely with your teams and see how much time they need and adjust schedules accordingly.

During construction, the ADOT RE is the primary ADOT contact and is responsible for communicating construction related environmental issues. The ADOT RE is also responsible for ensuring completion of environmental commitments requirements by the contractor and will sign off on the EPIC sheet to confirm completion of requirements at the end of construction and as part of the submittal for the record drawings process. The need for additional environmental review during construction may also be communicated to ENV by the RE. The Environmental Planner further coordinates with the appropriate ENV Technical Specialists as necessary. ENV staff informs the ADOT RE when additional coordination with outside agencies is required to address environmental issues that arise during construction. Refer to the Re-Evaluations section in the appendix of the *Categorical Exclusions (CE) Checklist Manual*.

For projects in which ENV has an environmental consultant performing services during construction, such as monitoring or training, the consultant works directly with the ADOT RE to resolve issues in the field. The consultant keeps ENV informed of any issues that arise. Environmental consultants need to be mindful that the ADOT RE is the primary ADOT contact for the project during construction and any issues in the field need to be communicated to the ADOT RE. ENV and the District Environmental Coordinator should also be informed of environmental issues communicated between the monitor and the ADOT RE.

Resolution of environmental issues during construction follows the normal ADOT escalation process. Issues should be addressed at the lowest level and may be raised to the "next level" as needed – within 5 working days or less. If still unresolved; the issue should be escalated to the next level supervisor and, if necessary, to the ADOT ENV Administrator.

#### 4.5.3 FHWA and Agency Coordination

For projects covered under CE Assignment and NEPA Assignment ENV staff should not engage FHWA staff on environmental project-specific questions. The Air Quality Manager coordinates air quality conformity determinations with FHWA for projects prepared under the 327 MOU.

Documents of projects excluded from NEPA Assignment that require FHWA review and approval are transmitted from ENV to FHWA per the agreed upon protocol. All environmental resource and/or consultation letters that are to be sent out on FHWA letterhead are sent directly to the Area Engineer or Environmental Coordinator to be reviewed and processed.

#### 4.5.4 Early Agency, Tribal and Public Involvement

Early coordination with appropriate agencies and the public can assist in determining the appropriate Class of Action, scope of work, and the level of analysis.

After the scope of work has been established and the environmental team is ready to begin scoping, reference the *Environmental Planning Guidelines for Agency and Public Scoping for Projects with Categorical Exclusions* to aid in the development of scoping and cooperating agency letters. For projects requiring outreach reference the following resources for more guidance on outreach and coordination efforts:

- ADOT's Public Involvement Plan
- 23 CFR 771.111 – Early Coordination, Public Involvement, and Project Development
- FHWA's online Environmental Review Toolkit
- AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook #09

In addition, research any relevant Memorandum of Understandings that apply between ADOT and other agencies and follow existing guidelines for working on federal lands. Understand that many agencies have their own comprehensive or land use plans and other federal agencies may have their own NEPA requirements.

#### 4.5.5 Decision and Conflict Resolution

Various types of Conflicts and indecision can delay or halt projects and damage productive working relationships in groups or agencies. Open, honest, and collaborative communication with substantive effort is necessary to resolve issues and to reach consensus in decision-making. Project concerns or issues should not be left unaddressed as they may result in team conflict, schedule, and/or budget impacts. If an issue or concern is found, time should be taken to identify and understand the source of the conflict, discuss options to resolve the issue(s), and reach consensus with the appropriate person, team, or team lead. If more people or agencies are needed to address the concerns, a meeting should be held to discuss options and create an acceptable plan of action on how to resolve the issue. If general consensus cannot be reached or an agreed upon plan of action developed, or the team or an individual is uncertain on how to move forward or address a concern, it should be brought to the next level of management as soon as possible. As a general rule, if no response is provided 5-days after an inquiry, the issue should be escalated to the next level supervisor until it is resolved. The ADOT Project Manager should be kept informed of the issue and included in the discussions. A suite of [Environmental Conflict Resolution tools](#) are available on the shared drive (ADOT internal only).

The [ADOT Partnering Office](#) has staff trained and experienced in facilitation, issue resolution, and working with federally recognized Tribes in Arizona and with resource agencies. The services of the Partnering Office are available to assist with major issue resolution. ADOT also has tribal liaisons in MPD that can assist with resolving matters related to tribal governments.

Other resources:

- [FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit: Conflict Resolution](#)
- [FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit: Conflict Resolution](#)

#### 4.5.6 Government-To-Government Consultation

Government-to-Government consultation remains the responsibility of FHWA and is different than Section 106 consultation. It remains a format in rare instances for Tribes to escalate their concerns with ADOT to the federal government. If any Tribe makes a request for formal Government-to-Government consultation, that request needs to be forwarded to the FHWA Arizona Division immediately. A Tribe can request such consultation based on any issue or concern that they have related to the transportation project. Mechanisms are in place under the MOUs to address the process that will be executed. It is anticipated that the Tribes make those requests directly to FHWA. Any such request that an ENV staff member receives will be forwarded to the NEPA Assignment Manager.

### 4.6 **Project Meetings and Scope of Work**

Environmental Planners or their representing environmental consultant should attend all project progress meetings they are invited to, absent a scheduling conflict. Technical Specialists should attend progress meetings when there is a technical item on the agenda that requires their expertise. If you are unable to attend a meeting, inform the ADOT Project Manager or meeting host or have someone fill in for you if necessary. If you are unable to attend a meeting in person, ask for a conference call in number. Be inclusive, but selective when sending meeting invitations. Not everyone should attend all meetings. Be cognizant of people's time.

ENV attendance of public, project kick-off and field review meetings is important. The kick-off meeting is typically the first meeting with the project team and stakeholders of the project. This meeting introduces members of the team, their roles and an overview of the project and other planning elements. Some projects may have one kick-off meeting, while others may have a field review meeting at the start of the scoping phase and a kick-off meeting at the start of the design phase of the project.

If meetings take place regarding a technical subject, Environmental Planners and ADOT Project Managers should be invited. The Environmental Planner is the environmental project manager and should be kept up-to-date on any technical issues that arise on the project. If agencies raise concerns or if an issue has the potential to impact the scope, schedule or budget the ADOT Project Manager should be informed.

#### 4.6.1 Internal Environmental Planning Kick-Off Meetings

As soon as the basic scope of work has been established for the project, an internal ENV kick-off meeting with the Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists should take place. It is suggested that all projects have an ENV initial coordination meeting; however, it will be left to the discretion of



the Environmental Planner whether or not to hold a meeting, a brief conference call or decide if an email with project information is sufficient. For example, smaller projects with limited construction or impacts e.g., a (c)(1) CE, would not require this level of coordination. These meetings should discuss the; project schedule, required coordination between technical disciplines, required project deliverables and any potential environmental concerns including biology, cultural resources and possible 404 application.

#### 4.6.2 Project Kick-Off Meetings

The presence of an Environmental Planner and/or environmental consultant representative at the project kick-off meeting is essential. This attendance will lead to a better understanding of environmental requirements during the study, scoping or design phases. The Environmental Planner and/or environmental consultant should bring as much information as possible to this meeting to inform the project team, such as any known cultural resources, landowners, sensitive species or Section 4(f) properties within or near the project vicinity. Communication and document distribution protocols should also be reviewed at the kick-off meeting.

The following are suggested questions that can be kept in mind by the project team. The information received in response to these questions will lead to a better understanding of the overall project and help the Environmental Planner determine the type of environmental documents needed (type of NEPA document, required technical reports, etc.). A PEDS may have been prepared during the contracting for the project by the Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists (see [Appendix](#)) and should be reviewed before the meeting if one is available.

##### ***Project Site, Scope, and Coordination***

- What are the project limits or footprint?
- Will additional access be needed?
- If unknown, who are the landowners and adjacent land areas? Will the project be on ADOT, or LPA owned right-of-way (ROW), or an easement on federal, tribal or state lands?
- What is the scope of work?
- Can all project work be located in the roadway prism?
- What are the communication protocols? (LPA, Consultants, ADOT Project Manager, etc.)
- Where will staging or stockpiling take place? It is encouraged a feasible location is determined during design and incorporated in the NEPA document (within existing right-of-way). If a site is to be dictated to the contractor it must be included in the clearance.
- Will traffic control require detours or full closures? Will there be any temporary or permanent access changes to residences or businesses?
- Are there previous environmental documents for the area including previous NEPA documents; do the documents aid in determining needed mitigation or eliminate the need for duplicative environmental work?
- Ask if there will be utility relocation or need to provide utility service. If such service is paid for by the project, even if the work is done by the utility company, the area, if outside the project limits, may have to be environmentally cleared.
- Ask if the project involves capacity additions or re-alignment of a road
- For LPA projects, has any public outreach or scoping efforts been completed?

***Hazardous Materials***

- Will there be pavement marking obliteration?
- Will any demolition or work be done on any painted surfaces or load bearing concrete structures?
- Will any work be done on load bearing bridge joints, bridge barriers, existing concrete or painted surfaces? This will determine if lead-based paint testing and/or asbestos will be needed.

***Biology and Waters of the US***

- Will vegetation need to be removed? Will any of the work take place in or near water or ephemeral water sources? This may cause seasonal restrictions due to possible critical habitat or migratory birds.
- Are any species listed under the Endangered Species Act known to occur in the project area?
- Are there any waters of the US within the project limits, adjacent to or within the drainage from the project? Discuss the project ahead of the kick-off meeting with the water quality specialist as needed.
- Can the Regional General Permit (RGP) be used?

***Cultural Resources***

- Discuss the Area of Potential Affects (APE) and if there has been previous survey of the area?
- Are there any known sites?
- Is the project within a historic district?
- Is an architectural survey needed?
- Any properties afforded protection under Section 4(f)?
- Can the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) be applied to the project?

***Parks and Recreational Areas***

- Are there any parks or public recreational facilities or multi-use trails, proposed or existing, within or near to the project location? If project involves a multi-use trail, ask if it will connect to an existing trail.
- How will any trails or access points be impacted during construction?
- Any properties afforded protection under Section 4(f)?

***Geotechnical***

- Will geotechnical investigations be necessary? What is the nature of the geotechnical investigation, borings or augured holes?
- Is the geotechnical clearance needed early or can it be covered under the overall project NEPA Approval? Coordinate closely with the Technical Specialists and see if tasks can be combined such as consultation.

***Pavement Design***

- Will there be milling?
- Is shoulder build-up necessary?

***Roadway Drainage***

- Will drainage improvements be required?
- Will there be any work in or near a river or wash? This may trigger the need for a 404 permit or containment plan to prevent debris from entering water.

***Bridge Design***

- Will the bridge work require construction activities below the bridge and if so, how will the work area be accessed?
- Are there indications of migratory birds or bats use under the structure?

***Right-of-Way***

- Will new ROW, easements or temporary easements be required for the project?
- When will the ADOT ROW Group need to begin their acquisition process? The NEPA approval is needed prior to ROW acquisition.

**4.6.3 Meeting Documentation**

All phone calls or discussions with internal or external parties should be documented if a decision is being made, or if concerns are being brought forward. This can be documented by the use of a phone memo or an email saved to the file. How a decision was reached with the rationale should be included. If it is of a technical nature, the Technical Specialist is required to document this to the file and share it with the appropriate team members. For meetings or comment response meetings, agendas and concise meeting summaries should be prepared to document the discussion and any conclusions.

**4.7 LPA Projects**

Environmental documents and technical evaluations for LPA projects follow the same process as ADOT sponsored projects with some minor differences in coordination and project oversight. The ADOT *LPA Manual* is a one-stop manual developed to aid LPAs in understanding the technical requirements for environmental documentation and the LPA [Quick Reference Guide](#) has oversight and administration tips.

All LPA projects start with an “initiation letter” sent from the LPA to the ADOT LPA Section requesting the assignment of federal-aid and ADOT project numbers to the project. The ENV Project Delivery Manager receives a copy of the letter and assigns an Environmental Planner at that time. The ADOT LPA Section sends a return letter with project numbers and the name of the assigned ADOT Project Manager and Environmental Planner. The LPAs also complete an “LPA Project Data Sheet” that is submitted to the ADOT LPA Section. This sheet indicates the anticipated class of action for the project. The vast majority of LPA projects qualify for CEs. The LPA can coordinate with the Environmental Planner in making this preliminary class of action determination at the initiation of the process.

#### 4.7.1 ADOT Administered LPA Projects

These projects are administered by ADOT and under the direction of an ADOT Project Manager and closely mirror the administration of an ADOT sponsored project.

#### 4.7.2 Certification Acceptance (CA) Agency Projects

CA agencies are self-certified and manage their own LPA projects through CA Agency Agreements. As with all LPA projects NEPA is not delegated to the CA agencies so close coordination to conduct environmental review is needed. The *ADOT Certification Acceptance Agency Manual* outlines administrative requirements for the CA agencies to following including certain environmental administration and coordination procedures. Coordination steps for CA projects include the following:

- CA designated NEPA coordinator (Environmental specialist or an LPA Project Manager) initiates contact with the ADOT Environmental Planner early in the process. Ideally the CA will contact the ADOT Environmental Planner to assist with review of any consultant contract scope of work and man-hours. Any such coordination should be relayed and shared with the ADOT Project Manager.
  - Early coordination for scope and fee review of the CA consultant may be conducted prior to the ADOT review funding in place. Review of the project technical analysis or preparation of the documents should only be conducted after review funding is in place.
- To start the environmental review process, the CA NEPA coordinator sends to the assigned ADOT Environmental Planner the project data including a final location and scope of work/project description.
  - The CA NEPA coordinator is responsible for verifying the location and scope of work/project description internally at their agency with the agencies' Project Manager and federal liaison, prior to starting the environmental review process.
- After receiving the location and scope of work/project description Environmental Planner sends back an email confirming the start of the environmental review process and includes an approximate timeline.
- The CA agency NEPA coordinator must include the CA agency Project Manager and the ADOT Project Manager in communication with the ADOT Environmental Planner at the start of the process, on transmittals and in any escalation.
  - Day-to-day communication between the ADOT Environmental Planner and the LPA CA agency NEPA coordinator should be established at the start of the project as outlined in the Quick Reference Guide.
- ADOT ENV prepares project CEs with CA Agencies typically hiring consultants to conduct technical evaluations. CA Agencies hire consultants to prepare EAs. CE and EA reviews are conducted as outlined in the *ADOT ENV QA/QC Plan*.
  - For CA Agency projects the Environmental Planner confirms the project data/location/description with the CA Agency before the NEPA Document is approved.

#### 4.8 Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the FHWA. Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. They are often funded through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). The RTP Database lists most RTP projects funded since 1993 through the current year ([recreationaltrailsinfo.org](http://recreationaltrailsinfo.org)). The RTP Annual Report describes how the States used RTP funds.

For State of Arizona, the RTP funds are managed through FHWA and ADOT MPD. As the program is federally funded, NEPA approvals are required before the funds can be released. A notice of the approved CE is sent to MPD Finance for processing the authorization. Since these projects are authorized shortly after completion of the CE approval no additional validation steps are required outside of MPD including the validation text in the authorization request sent to FHWA. Steps on how to coordinate environmental clearance (NEPA approval) for RTP projects are outlined in the ENV's ADOT RTP ENV Guidelines.

#### 4.9 Plans and Special Provisions Review

Environmental Planners review project plans, as developed by the project team and as available, to confirm consistency between plans, special provisions and the environmental review documents. The Environmental Planner also reviews the plans to ensure that the EPIC sheet is incorporated into the final plans. Note: not all projects complete plan submittals at each stage. Also, plans development is typically completed after NEPA approval so a final set of plans should be reviewed before FHWA funding authorization. 95% plans are final plans that are not stamped but convey final detail for checking that the project scope of work is consistent with the NEPA approval. Plan reviews may include:

- Stage III: 60%
- Stage IV: 95%
- Stage V: 100%

The environmental planner checking includes:

- The final plans (95% or 100% plans) ensuring the final EPIC sheet is included in the plans, and that the plans agree with the actions described in the environmental review documents; scope of work, limits and any special features if called out on plans such as avoidance areas. Review comments may be included in the project file and/or this review may be documented with a note-to-file or email as needed. However, the Environmental Planner's signature on the FHWA Authorization letter is the official record of compliance.
- The plans are forwarded to the Technical Specialist if there are special concerns for review or for continuing consultation when required.

- Mitigation measures in the contract special provisions match those of the environmental review documents EPIC sheet in final plans and all permits and species handling guidelines are included with the special provisions. Review comments may be included in the project file and/or this review may be documented with a note-to-file or email as needed. However, the Environmental Planner's signature on the FHWA Authorization letter is the official record of compliance.
  - The C&S Specialist should review the environmental commitments and EPIC as early in the process as possible.
  - The ADOT PM and ENV Planner should receive a verification<sup>1</sup> via email (see [email template in the appendix](#)), or other means (phone memo or meeting minutes), from the CA Agency (Designated Approval Authority, CA Liaison, Responsible Charge) that:
    - The project actions (scope of work) at the time of authorization for federal funding have not changed from what is approved in the project NEPA document.
    - The environmental commitments have been incorporated into the PS&E (final plans/specifications/contract as applicable) exactly as approved in the project NEPA document.

<sup>1</sup>Note: This "NEPA and plans review" step is not required for projects approved with (c)(1) CEs, for projects which have no further plan stages developed after the CE is approved or for projects in which federal authorization is sought shortly after the CE approval (project has not been "shelved"). Adjust accordingly for approvals that do not have plans and/or specifications.

If the scope of work or project limits change during development the ADOT Project Manager informs the Environmental Planner. If these items change, the Environmental Planner informs all of the Technical Specialists and determines if any re-analysis is needed. Direction by the Technical Specialists to the consultants regarding project changes that could impact the scope, schedule or budget should not be given without first coordinating with the Environmental Planner and the ADOT Project Manager as these changes may require budget approval of the ADOT Project Review Board (PRB) or the LPA. If there is an approved NEPA document already on file, and it is determined that the changes require more analysis, then a re-evaluation of the NEPA document may be needed. If the changes are small in nature a note-to-file may suffice for documentation of the changes. The Environmental Planner is responsible for completing any Re-evaluation or note-to-file as necessary.

#### **4.10 Project Schedules**

The environmental component of the project schedule is a critical component when ensuring timely project delivery. Other project actions such as ROW, Utilities and Geotechnical may be dependent on the approval of the environmental documentation. The ADOT Project Manager develops a submittal schedule for 30% to 100% design, as well as an estimated date for the bid advertisement and construction in coordination with the Environmental Planner and with input from the project team and the environmental consultant. The schedule should include estimated dates for technical document submittals, surveys, submittal of permits and completion of tasks.



Typically, the environmental analysis and NEPA Approval process for a CE should not exceed nine (9) months in duration and should be achieved at 60% design for CE-level projects with no adverse impact or where alternatives are not in consideration. This may not always be possible depending on the scale and impacts of the project. Proceed cautiously to 95% prior to approval of a CE. ENV can make a “risk assessment” based on the impacts and relevant environmental issues. 95% plans can be distributed with Environmental Planner approval prior to NEPA Approval ([See NEPA Approval in Relation to Final Design in Appendix](#)). Keep in mind that if the project is using federal-aid, and the design advances past 95%, the project is at risk of not being reimbursed for federal-aid design funds if the design changes based upon an environmental outcome or decision.

For projects with greater potential for environmental impacts such as an EA or EIS, an alternatives or corridor development report may be prepared to document how the team developed the range of reasonable alternatives to be carried into a Draft EIS for detailed analysis. The Draft EIS is created along with the Design Concept Report (DCR) which determines the preferred alternative. NEPA approval for individual CEs, EAs and EIS’ is required before “Final Design” which is defined at ADOT as plans developed beyond the 30% Design. Below are factors that should be considered when creating or monitoring a schedule:

- What is the Class of Action (CE, EA, EIS)
- Is a cultural resource survey needed, and how will resources if present be addressed (can Section 106 Programmatic Agreement be used, avoidance, monitoring, data recovery, etc.)
- Presence of critical habitat or listed/special species of concern requiring coordination with the landowner and/or USFWS (up to 135 days for consultation)
- Geotechnical work and if a geotechnical clearance is required prior to the project NEPA approval
- Presence of 4(f) or 6(f) properties that require analysis and/or coordination
- Requirements for 404 permitting with the Corps.
- Requirements for 401 permitting with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and/or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Public involvement requirements
- Seasonal restrictions for accurate surveys, public involvement and construction
- Testing (site assessment) requirements for hazardous materials for new ROW
- Will other landowners be involved, and do they have their own NEPA requirements
- Capacity or re-alignment projects that could trigger a need for air or noise analysis
- Tribal involvement, especially new ROW

#### **4.11 Environmental Planning Review Timeframes**

The environmental process is a discovery process; therefore, lead time should be evaluated when estimating the submittal of technical documents. Sufficient time should be incorporated for multiple reviews, agency reviews, and other foreseeable tasks. However, unforeseeable items such as changes in laws, newly listed species, a newly discovered cultural site, or changes in scope of work may take place. In addition, many 404 permits and technical documents need a certain stage of development plans, such as 60%, in order to proceed.

The timeframes below are estimates for completing the environmental analysis and NEPA documentation. For specific document review timeframes refer to the [Environmental Planning Review Timeframe Guidelines](#) (see Appendix). Keep in mind that each consulting agency may have its own review timeframe requirements. Please work closely with each agency to determine and incorporate their required timeframes into the schedule.

#### 4.11.1 Categorical Exclusions

- It should take three (3) to nine (9) months to complete the analysis, NEPA documentation
  - Whether preparing a “listed CE” or an individually documented CE the critical path of the schedule will be driven by the “other” environmental laws; Section 4(f), National Historic Preservation Act/Section 106, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act/Section 404, Endangered Species Act/Section 7, etc.
- All CEs should be completed between 60% and 95% plan submittal, complex CE’s that are completed through the two-step funding process need to be completed before Final Design (beyond 30% plans)
- Technical areas such as Section 4(f), Section 106, Section 7 consultation, and 404 permits, as well as project financial issues can be the critical path ‘drivers’ of the schedule
- If there are potential adverse environmental impacts; move cautiously past 60% plans with ENV approval. Affirmation need only be in the form of email communication between the Environmental Planner and the ADOT Project Manager
- Capacity or re-alignment projects could trigger air or noise analysis requiring an additional traffic study to collect details on traffic

#### 4.11.2 Environmental Assessments

- [NEPA](#) established a one-year timeline to complete an EA
- A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is needed to begin Final Design

#### 4.11.3 Environmental Impact Statements

- [NEPA](#) established a two-year timeline to complete an EIS
- Take steps in advance of an NOI to help meet the two-year timeline
- A combined Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) should be prepared to the extent practicable

#### 4.11.4 Federal Register Notices and e-NEPA Process for ADOT NEPA Assignment

Keep in mind the timeframe and level of work required to execute the Federal Register and e-NEPA steps. The full requirements and step-by-step instructions can be found in the ADOT NEPA EA and EIS Guidance.

### 4.12 **Project Funding and Budget**

For federally funded projects ADOT staff and consultant charges cannot be accrued until there is an authorization for Preliminary Engineering (PE) funds from FHWA and a Notice to Proceed (NTP) for consultants. However, State-funded staff charges are allowed to assist in administrative work such as

pre-scoping advice, scope of work definition or cost proposal development. State-funded actions also require an authorization based on the particular funding source utilized.

#### **4.13 Project Review Board (PRB) Procedures**

PRB is the main oversight body within Development that provides funding approvals and reviews changes to the project scope. The ENV Project Delivery Manager is on the Board and relies upon project dates and information that are entered into Workfront. This information is utilized in decision making during the meetings. For projects listed on the PRB agenda, the assigned Environmental Planner informs the attending ENV manager of any issues that may involve Board discussion of environmental related matters prior to the PRB meeting.

#### **4.14 Environmental Consultants**

Consultants that assist ENV can either be an ENV on-call consultant or a sub-consultant under the ADOT Development on-call, also known as a “turn-key” project consultant, for both ADOT and LPA projects. LPA CA Agencies hire their own consultants directly. The following provides guidance on hiring a consultant, reviewing contracts, managing their schedules, tracking deliverables, and monitoring the quality of their work. The Environmental Planner is responsible for coordinating the PEDS and Task Order review.

##### **4.14.1 Hiring Consultants**

Contracting qualified and knowledgeable environmental consultants is critical in delivering quality and timely products and services. Please reference the ADOT ECS (Engineering Consultants Section) Information Bulletin No. 13-02 for information regarding Labor classification and definitions for environmental consultants. This document provides a description of qualifications and typical services provided by each type of environmental consultant. Other qualifications may be required based on the task/assignment required.

In addition, a summary of required qualifications for Technical Specialists to work on ADOT projects is posted on the ADOT Environmental Planning website under each technical section. All consultants working on ADOT development, maintenance, or construction projects must meet these requirements, including hired or sub-contracted by construction contractors to implement mitigation measures requiring a Technical Specialist. Typically, environmental commitments requiring a consultant will indicate whether their resume will be needed to be sent to ENV for approval prior to commencing work. All ENV on-call consultants are required to provide a resume to the particular ADOT Technical Specialist Team Lead for approval prior to working on ADOT projects.

##### **4.14.2 Project Environmental Data Sheet (PEDS)**

To assist with the completion of an initial cost estimate, it is the responsibility of the Environmental Planner to provide the on-call environmental consultant with a general scope of work and estimate of tasks that will be required for the project. To do this, the PEDS should be completed by the Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists. The goal of the PEDS is to provide the necessary information and guidelines to the on-call environmental consultant and ultimately shorten review period times once the initial cost estimate is received. The following steps should be followed for a successful completion of the PEDS form:

1. ADOT Project Manager notifies ENV Project Delivery Manager of a new project
2. ENV Project Delivery Manager sends assignment notification by email to the Environmental Planner/Senior Environmental Planner. Biology requests will be sent to respective geographic responsible Biologist.
3. Within one week of assignment, the Environmental Planner contacts the ADOT Project Manager to discuss the preliminary scope of project, schedule and status of the project.
4. The Environmental Planner then completes General Project Information of the PEDS and coordinates with assigned technical team members to discuss the project and determine the level of work needed based on preliminary information.
5. Technical Specialists are to complete their respective sections of the PEDS within one week.
  - a. Biology Team will review the habitat and species in the project location to determine the level of analysis needed.
  - b. Cultural Resources Team will conduct background research to determine the level of effort needed.
  - c. Air and Noise Team will determine the scope of work or location warrants air quality and noise analysis. Capacity projects utilize a separate PEDS form with more detailed information needed for such projects.
  - d. The Wetland Biologist will determine level of effort needed [RGP, Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (PJD), Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) or Individual Permit (IP)].
  - e. Hazardous Materials will determine level of effort needed (Preliminary Initial Site Assessment (PISA), asbestos and/or lead testing, Phase 1 ISA.

It is encouraged that consultants coordinate with the Technical Specialists prior to submitting their scope and fee. The Technical Specialists may require geospatial data, aerial imagery, the ADOT photo log, topographic maps, species lists, literature, and other readily available sources of information to identify sensitive resources occurring in the project vicinity.

The PEDS should provide the consultant with sufficient information to anticipate the effort and hours required for the technical analysis and NEPA approval. However, because environmental compliance is a dynamic process, the scope of work may change as the project develops. If this requires adjustment to the consultant's cost estimate, coordination with the Environmental Planner and contract administrator (the Project Manager) may be necessary to determine the need for a task order/contract modification to account for changes in the consultant's scope of work.

#### 4.14.3 On-call Assignments ("Turn-Key")

Prior to the project funding authorization there should be a request from the ADOT Project Manager for the amount of funding needed to complete environmental tasks. This will be an initial cost estimate based on a general scope of work that is included in a Project Framework document provided by the ADOT Project Manager. This estimate should cover ENV staff time and environmental on-call consultant work required as stated in the PEDS. PMG should provide the consultant cost proposal and request review of the environmental sub-consultant's tasks and labor categories performing those

tasks. Input from the Technical Specialists should be provided as needed based on the environmental issues involved.

#### 4.14.4 Task Order Procedures for Environmental Planning On-Call Projects

Prior to obtaining funding authorization, the Environmental Planner will add the project to the “Upcoming Projects” list in the Planner Workload Worksheet System. After obtaining funding authorization, the Environmental Planner will complete the “EP On-Call Consultant Request Form” , PEDS and include all backup for the upcoming project. The ENV Management Analyst will submit the documentation to the firm assigned to the project region and will request a proposal within 10 business days. Once a cost proposal has been prepared and submitted to ENV, the Environmental Planner will distribute the draft cost proposal to the Technical Specialists assigned to the project for their detailed and concurrent review and comment. ENV staff should look to minimize project development costs while still meeting all the necessary NEPA Approval requirements. Use your own judgment; do not let the consultant assumptions go unchallenged. Ensure that the environmental effort is commensurate with the scope of the project and only required analysis is conducted by the consultant. The Technical Specialists will verify the technical work that is required, including the need for a site visits, surveys, the type of technical document to be prepared and any agency coordination or consultation that may be necessary. Once the cost proposal has been reviewed by the Technical Specialists and the Environmental Planner, and the contract hours are agreed upon, the Environmental Planner will forward the final cost estimate to the ENV Management Analyst for processing with the Engineering Consulting Section (ECS).

#### 4.14.5 Quality Submittals from Consultants

It is required that consultant documents also meet the highest quality standards. Each on-call consultant has a QA/QC plan in place. If environmental documents are submitted with many errors, the document will be returned with a request to be revised according to the template and documenting guidance on the ENV website and according to their QA/QC plan.

The consultant’s role in QA/QC is to abide by the QA/QC plan that it submitted to ADOT at the beginning of a contract and to have all technical documents reviewed by appropriate subject-matter experts prior to submittal to ADOT. In addition to QC for accurate content, the consultant QC review also includes a thorough technical editing (spelling and grammar) and a review for readability, format, and structure. As part of the transmittal letter accompanying deliverables, the consultant should document who performed the QC.

#### 4.14.6 Consultant Evaluations

Projects under the CE 326 MOU with assistance from an environmental consultant may benefit from a Consultant Evaluation form to be completed by the Environmental Planner (see Appendix). Projects under 327 NEPA Assignment MOU require a Consultant Evaluation. If the Technical Specialists had concerns with the quality of work, that information needs to be provided to the Environmental Planner to be documented. If the quality of work is poor or documents go through more than two ENV reviews it should be documented on the Consultant Evaluation form (see [Appendix](#)).

## 4.15 NEPA Approval and Validation

### 4.15.1 NEPA Approvals

Approvals shall be in conformance with the procedures outlined in the *QA/QC Plan*. For any NEPA document approved with outstanding consultation or pending approval under another environmental law then “reasonable assurance” as outlined in 23 CFR 771 will be included in a note-to-file or environmental commitment.

### 4.15.2 NEPA Validation

A valid NEPA approval (CE/EA/EIS) must be on file when an ADOT authorization request letter is sent to FHWA for design, right-of-way or construction funding. An acknowledgement that NEPA is approved is included in the request for authorization from ADOT to FHWA. The Contracts & Specifications (C&S) Specialist (ADOT Project Manager for CA Agency projects) will request the Environmental Planner signature through the DocuSign process. The letter is validating that the scope matches the CE.

**"Valid CE" means the scope of the project still matches the CE and any mitigation measures in the CE are included in the final plans.** If there has been no change to scope or ROW since the review of the final plans and special provisions then there is no need for additional assessments of any technical reports at the time of the authorization request letter unless there is a solid rationale such as a change in regulation.

The Environmental Planner should receive a final set of plans and special provisions, for non-CA Agency projects, when they are ready, which will be in advance of the federal authorization request letter. CA Agencies are responsible for ensuring their final plans are consistent with the approved NEPA document. See Section 4.8 - Plans and Special Provisions Review.

With these steps the Environmental Planner ensures that the CE is still valid when the request for funding is sent to FHWA. Ensuring that a valid CE is on file is a requirement of the CE MOU (reference Stipulation II.C.3. of the 326 MOU) and 23 CFR 771.129. CE re-evaluations, if required, need to be completed in advance of the request for federal authorization. See the Re-Evaluation Section of the *Categorical Exclusions (CE) Manual* for additional information. Individual CEs, EAs and EISs are also validated before a federal funding authorization request is sent.

## 4.16 NEPA Documents Distribution and Record Retention

Proper documentation is required by NEPA and therefore essential within ENV. Under the 326 CE MOU, FHWA will conduct periodic project file reviews and formal audits will be conducted under the 327 MOU. During the environmental analysis, all project decision documents, emails pertaining to project decisions and relevant data should be uploaded into the ENV-Drive electronic folder. Workfront should be consistently updated with the status of the project.

Maintaining an organized project folder with pertinent information is required in the event of a management inquiry or is the reassignment of the project to others within ENV. Follow the ENV guidelines on how to name folders and documents consistently (see Appendix). Project information needs to be uploaded into all data storage locations after the NEPA document is approved and the project is completed. Do not keep project files only in your email inbox, hard drive, or on your



personal “U” drive. These locations are not readily accessible by others. All administrative documents and approved technical documents and NEPA approvals should be in the ENV-Drive at all times.

Once a NEPA document has been approved, it is to be distributed by email to the contacts listed in the NEPA Approval Distribution Email Template (See Appendix). If the document is too large to send as a digital file, a ShareFile link should be emailed. In addition, the Environmental Planner uploads the approved NEPA document to Workfront (previously to the AIDW) and the ENV-Drive project folder.

#### 4.16.1 PTS

PTS is a legacy system that provides project location information, identifies the ADOT Project Manager, project numbers, technical details, project status, environmental schedules, and also links to other databases with the full project schedule and budget. Some older projects have data in PTS. Note that PTS has been phased out and replaced by the ADOT Workfront project management system.

#### 4.16.2 Electronic Record (ENV-Drive)

For each project a digital file is created within the ADOT ENV-Drive (ADOT internal only). Each project is listed under the route, then by the TRACS Number. The main project folder should be titled as such: “TRACS Project Name.” For LPA projects the local sponsor abbreviated title is placed in front of the TRACS; “**TUC** SL732 Liberty Bicycle Blvd.”

Sub-folders are created per the standard folders template that are used to populate project folders. The ENV team members may add specialized sub folders as needed (for example “Aviation” if a project is near an airport). See the [Folder and File Labeling Guidelines](#) (Appendix).

#### 4.16.3 Workfront

Workfront is ADOT’s project management system for project schedules and document storage. Schedules are loaded and tracked in Workfront and notes can be added and shared with the Project Team. Environmental Planners are responsible for coordinating schedules and environmental task timeline with PMG and ensuring an accurate schedule is shown for environmental tasks. Coordination and updates in the Workfront system by the Environmental Planner on the environmental clearance process should occur frequently and at important milestones. In addition, as part of issuance of the Environmental Clearance, the Environmental Planner will upload the completed environmental document, EPIC sheet, environmental commitments, and any associated permits. Note; the ENV-Drive remains the official Project File for CE and NEPA Assignment file storage and sharing with FHWA in compliance with the 326 and 327 MOUs.

## 5. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

ADOT’s [Public Involvement Plan](#) (PIP) is the agency-wide plan for conducting public involvement. It was prepared to meet federal requirements regarding public involvement and outreach for federally funded transportation projects and to undertake and facilitate projects for the benefit and betterment of Arizona communities. The PIP is a living document that provides guidelines, techniques, and

examples used by ADOT to interact with the public throughout transportation planning, project design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

## 5.1 Public Involvement

Some CE's, and all EA's and EIS' require public outreach. Some projects may warrant outreach for specific technical topics such as [Section 4\(f\)](#) or [Section 106](#) public involvement requirements. The Environmental Planner along with the project team and ADOT Communications will decide the best timing, and method to gather input from the public. Generally, for CEs public involvement in the form of outreach takes place when the project would benefit from community input or when it's a larger project potentially impacting many stakeholders. For EA's and EISs, public outreach should occur at the beginning during scoping and possibly during alternatives development. There is normally a public hearing at the end of the draft environmental document development.

Key activities typically include the following, based on the type of project and its potential impacts:

- formal public scoping meetings
- public information meetings
- agency and elected official meetings
- Tribal community meetings
- other stakeholder meetings (businesses, associations, community groups)
- project website, newsletters, displays, and meeting advertisements
- formal public review and comment period for NEPA documents
- formal public hearings
- transcript of the public hearings available for public review

### 5.1.1 Meeting Coordination

The best method or approach (meeting, workshop, open house, newsletter, etc.) chosen should be decided by the project team. Environmental Planners are responsible for assisting ADOT Communications with preparation activities, assisting in preparing and reviewing of outreach materials, and are responsible for attending all public outreach meetings. If an Environmental Planner has a conflict and cannot attend, they must find a replacement Environmental Planner to attend on their behalf. If the project team anticipates questions of a technical nature (such as noise or air pollution impacts), the Environmental Planner should invite the ADOT Technical Specialist to attend the meeting so they can answer any questions they may have. If a project anticipates many ROW acquisitions, it might be best to have the ROW specialist attend to answer any questions that the public may have. If questions regarding ROW acquisition are asked at the meeting, refer them to the ROW specialist. If media representatives are present and would like to ask questions or interview team members, they should be referred to ADOT Communications staff present at the meeting. Additional information can be found in the ADOT PIP and the FHWA toolkit.

### 5.1.2 Environmental Document Public Review

All EISs require public hearings. ADOT requires a public hearing or an opportunity for a public hearing for EAs (see Chapter 8 of the ADOT PIP). ADOT's notifications for public meetings and hearings are similar, to comply with both NEPA and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. ADOT provides notification of a

public hearing by placing newspaper display advertisements at least 15 business days, but no more than 30 business days, before the hearing (see Appendix J in the [ADOT PIP](#)).

The primary difference between a public meeting and a public hearing is the flexibility that public meetings can offer versus the prescriptive nature and set standards of a public hearing. Public hearings have specific time frames associated with notice and advertising and comment due dates and also require an official transcription of comments that becomes part of the public record. Public hearings are, in most cases, held to comply with regulatory requirements, such as NEPA, and occur at pivotal points in the decision-making process. Public hearings are usually held during the public review period for a Draft EIS or Draft EA to obtain public input on a project. ADOT takes the public input into consideration during the preparation of the Final EIS and ROD or the Final EA and FONSI.

### 5.1.3 Environmental Planning Website

For any project requiring public review and comment, the Environmental Planner must place the documents onto the project website. This can be completed by submitting a website update request). Final EAs and EISs are to also be loaded on the website after approval. The same documents, plus any public involvement related materials should also be uploaded onto the [ADOT Statewide Projects](#) website or the [ADOT Planning Studies](#) website under the specific project.

A public hearing date must be set to accommodate the required public review periods for the environmental document. The Environmental Planner must:

- Establish the public meeting/hearing date in cooperation with the Project Manager and ADOT Communications
- Coordinate the public meeting/hearing notice with ADOT Communications
- Coordinate with the ADOT Web Team to get the document uploaded to the Environmental Planning website in time to accommodate the public review period

## 5.2 **Public Review and Comment Involving Section 4(f)**

Section 4(f) resources that result in a use with a *de minimis* impact require public review and comment per 23 CFR 774.5. For *de minimis* impact determinations, this only applies to Section 4(f) properties that are publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and not to historic properties. This public involvement requirement can be satisfied in conjunction with other public involvement opportunities such as providing the information at a public meeting. Specific information regarding the Section 4(f) use with *de minimis* impact would be presented as well as the beginning and end of the comment period as well as ways to comment.

If no other public involvement opportunities are planned for the particular project, the requirement can be completed by providing a 30-day public review and comment period through the ADOT project website. A press release from ADOT Communications would direct the public to the website which would contain the relevant information.

The Environmental Planner is responsible for contacting the ADOT Web Team (via ADOTNET) to upload the project and Section 4(f) information to the website. The website should contain the following information for the public's consideration:

- Description of the project (including project name, TRACS number, and federal ID number)
- Section 4(f) property under consideration
- Comment due date
- Environmental Planner's contact information (phone, email, mailing address)

If an ADOT project specific website is already established, that website should provide a link to the Environmental Planning website for the Section 4(f) property public review and comment information.

The Environmental Planner is responsible for responding to any comments received. Responses should be completed in coordination with the ADOT Project Manager, and LPA contact(s) if applicable. Once the 30-day comment period is completed, any comments received should be forwarded to the Official with Jurisdiction, along with the *De Minimis Impact Form*, for their concurrence.

The Environmental Planner is responsible for contacting the Web Team to remove the project information after the 30-day review period. If there are associated links on an ADOT project specific website, the Planner is also responsible for coordinating with the Web Team to remove those links.

### **5.3 Public Review and Comment Involving Section 106**

As noted, some CEs and all EAs and EISs will require public involvement. The Section 106 process also requires public involvement, and as with the NEPA review process, the level of public involvement and outreach is based on the scope and level of interest of the public. 36 CFR 800.2(d)(1) states that the views of the public are to be considered in a manner that reflects the nature and complexity of the project and its potential effects on historic properties and based on the likely interest of the public in the effects on historic properties. Generally, Section 106-related public involvement is carried out in concert with ADOT's NEPA public involvement efforts. There may be CE-level projects, however, such as a bridge replacement where HPT may need to conduct, in coordination with the Environmental Planner and ADOT Communications, public involvement specific to Section 106 issues, when a project has the potential to adversely impact historic properties such as impacts to a historic bridge. Some CE-level projects may have impacts to sensitive archaeological sites subject to confidentiality and in such instances public involvement is limited in conformance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

## APPENDIX

---

## Project Environmental Data Sheet

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION											
Project Name											
TRACS No.				Project No.							
Milepost		to	Milepost		District		[Type "X" to mark boxes]	Y	N	?	
LPA Project Location:							New ROW				
Land Ownership(s): (indicate ADOT ROW owned or easement (tribal, federal lands) and adjacent											
On-Call Firm / Planner:											
ADOT Environmental Planner:											
<b>Certification of Completion of the Environmental Project Data Sheet (All technical areas are completed.)</b>											
On-Call Signature & Date:											
ADOT Environmental Planner Signature & Date:											
NOTE: Signatures below represent agreement between consultant/technical specialists for course of action and hours. The approvals requested throughout this form (except for cultural) may be completed by noting and dating on the signature lines that the consultant communicated by email or by phone with the ADOT Environmental planner/specialist.											
Project Description (Location and brief project description): <b>NOTE: <u>Attach map if available. Attach PA scope of work if available. Information provided below is for project understanding and fee estimation only and may not represent the final clearance scope of work for the subject project.</u></b>											

CLEAN WATER ACT											
No 404 permit /401 certification is needed because no potential WOTUS are located within the project area.										Yes	
Potential WOTUS are located within the project area, but the project will not cause a discharge of dredged or fill material to the WOTUS; therefore, no 404 permit or 401 certification is needed.										Yes	
Is a Section 404 permit needed?		No	Yes	Unknown	Explain if unknown:						
404 permit type		Non-notifying NWP		NWP with PCN		Individual Permit					
Regional General Permit (RGP)		Non- notifying RGP		RGP with Concurrence Notification		RGP with PCN					
Previous JD applicable?		No	Yes	If yes, Corps file no. and date:			New JD needed?		No	Yes	
Is a 401 Certification needed? (If yes, mark type)				NA		Conditional/Programmatic			Individual		
401 Certification Agency		ADEQ	USEPA	Hopi Tribe	Hualapai Tribe	NNEPA	WMAT				



CLEAN WATER ACT									
Distance of project from Outstanding, Impaired or Non-attaining waterbody:				Within ¼ mile:		Within ½ mile:		Within 1 mile:	Over 1 mile:
If within ¼ mile of Impaired or Non-attaining waterbody, list name(s) and impairment(s):									
Comments: (Note here if a PCN is expected as a result of biological or cultural resource impacts or why the need for a permit is unknown at this time.)									Estimated hours for completion:
On-Call Consultant Signature & Date:									
Printed Name:									
ADOT 401/404 Coordinator (signature or record of approval) & Date:									
Printed Name:									
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES									
<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	[Type "X" to mark boxes]							
		ESA Species (list):							
		Critical Habitat (list):							
		Separate Biology Field Review Recommended?							
		Arizona Wildlife Linkage present and potentially affected by scope of project? (if yes, describe in Detail below)							
		AZ Game and Fish Online Tool Printout Obtained? (Attach 1 <sup>st</sup> page if available)							
		Agency Coordination? (Forest/Tribal/BLM – list):							
		Species surveys anticipated? (if yes, list species):							
		Potential for herbicide use as part of project? (6 months of work in project area, weedy staging areas, etc.)							
		Consultation with USFWS expected (informal or formal)?							
Documentation Type		BESF	BE, no species analyses	BE with species analyses (include details below)	Other (explain below)	[Type "X" to mark boxes]			
Deliverable(s) and due date(s):									
Details: (Include timing and duration of surveys, explanation if species or critical habitat is/are nearby but not affected.)									Estimated hours for completion:
On-Call Consultant Signature & Date:									
Printed Name:									
ADOT Biologist (signature or record of approval) & Date:									
Printed Name:									

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS					
Y	N	[Type "X" to mark boxes]	Conducted/approved by	Date (mm/dd/yr)	Comments
		PISA required			
		Asbestos/lead tests:			
Deliverable(s) & due date(s):					
Comments:					Estimated hours for completion:
On-Call Consultant Signature & Date:					
Printed Name:					
ADOT HazMat Specialist (signature or record of approval) & Date:					
Printed Name:					

CULTURAL RESOURCES					
<b>Attach a copy of the report cover sheet, appropriate maps, and previous consultation if the area has a previous survey.</b>					
Y	N	[Type "X" to mark boxes]	Y	N	
		Consultant services requested (if yes, describe request in Comments section)			
		Prior survey			Sites in project area
		APE completely surveyed			Previous consultation
		APE partially surveyed (include details in Comments section)			All consultation attached
		Additional survey required (include details in Comments section)			New Consultation required
Programmatic Agreement Stipulations (list those that are applicable):					
Agency Consultation (list):					
Tribal Consultation (list):					
Deliverable(s) & due date(s):					
Details: (Include a list of sources used for record search, a description of current conditions within the project area and a list of sites with eligibility recommendations/determinations and location(s) within project area.)					

<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>	
Comments:	Estimated hours for completion:
<b>We, the undersigned, concur with the above cultural records check and recommendation(s):</b>	
<b>On-Call Consultant Signature &amp; Date:</b> <b>Printed Name:</b>	
<b>ADOT Historic Preservation Specialist Signature &amp; Date:</b> <b>Printed Name:</b>	

<b>AIR QUALITY</b>		
<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	[Type "X" to mark boxes]
		Air quality analysis with modeling needed
		Qualitative air quality evaluation needed
		Level 1: Exempt Project or Project with No Meaningful Potential MSAT Effects.
		Level 2: Project with Low Potential MSAT Effects
		Level 3: Project with Higher Potential MSAT Effects
		Is the Project in a Nonattainment or Maintenance area (Interagency consultation on Project Level Conformity Required)
Deliverable(s) & due date(s):		
Comments:		Estimated hours for completion:
<b>On-Call Consultant Signature &amp; Date:</b> <b>Printed Name:</b>		
<b>ADOT Air Quality Staff (signature or record of approval) &amp; Date:</b> <b>Printed Name:</b>		

<b>NOISE ANALYSIS</b>		
<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	[Type "X" to mark boxes]
		Is this a Type I Project (Adding capacity or significantly altering alignment)
		Sensitive noise receptors within 900 ft. of ROW
		a) Noise analysis with modeling needed per ADOT Noise Abatement Requirements
		b) Qualitative noise evaluation needed
Deliverable(s) & due date(s):		
Comments:		Estimated hours for completion:

NOISE ANALYSIS
On-Call Consultant Signature & Date: Printed Name:
ADOT Noise Staff (signature or record of approval) & Date: Printed Name:
OTHER NEPA TASKS
Comments:
On-Call Consultant Signature & Date: Printed Name:
ADOT Environmental Planner (signature or record of approval) & Date: Printed Name:

## Environmental Planning Review Timeframe Guidelines

Detailed review and approval procedures for environmental review documents are outlined in the ADOT ENV QA/QC Plan.

### 1. Project Data Sheet (PEDS)

Planner and Technical Specialist reviews are completed concurrently. Reviewers have 5 working days.

### 2. Cost estimates

Technical Specialists and Planners have 5 working days to review cost estimates for on-call task orders. For individual contracts, expand the time to 10 working days.

### 3. Technical document reviews

Technical document submittals should be reviewed within 10 working days.

### 4. CE reviews

Technical Specialists have 5 working days to review their discipline within a CE

Senior Planners have 5 working days to complete a QC review of a CE

### 5. Section 4(f) reviews

#### Forms

All forms and letters should be reviewed between 2 and 5 days

#### Programmatic Section 4(f)

1<sup>st</sup> submittal - Project Team: 2 weeks

2<sup>nd</sup> submittal - HPT Lead/NEPA Assignment Manager: 1 week

Coordinate public availability as required

Final - HPT Lead/Senior Manager: 1 week

#### Draft Individual Section 4(f)

1<sup>st</sup> submittal - Project Team: 4 weeks

2<sup>nd</sup> submittal - HPT Team Lead/Senior Manager and AGO (legal pre-review): 4 weeks

Coordinate public availability as required

#### Final Individual

1<sup>st</sup> submittal - Project Team: 2 weeks

2<sup>nd</sup>\* submittal - HPT Lead/Senior Manager and AGO: 4 weeks

AGO Legal Sufficiency Confirmation Review: 2 weeks

## 6. EA/EIS document reviews

### Draft Environmental Document

1<sup>st</sup> submittal - Project Team: 4 weeks

2<sup>nd</sup> submittal - Project Team, NEPA Assignment Manager and AGO (legal pre-review): 4 weeks

AGO Confirmation Review: 2 weeks

Coordinate 15-day public availability and 30/45-day review of the Draft EA/EIS

### Final Environmental Document

1<sup>st</sup> submittal, Project Team: 4 weeks

2<sup>nd\*</sup> submittal, NEPA Assignment Manager and AGO: 4 weeks

Draft Final, NEPA Assignment Manager and AGO Legal Sufficiency Review: 2 weeks

AGO Confirmation Review: 2 weeks

Coordinate 30-day availability for Final EIS if not combined with ROD

## 7. EA/EIS Re-Evaluation

### Environmental Document Re-Evaluation

1<sup>st</sup> submittal - Project Team: 2 weeks (4 weeks allowed for complex projects)

2<sup>nd</sup> submittal (if necessary): 1 week

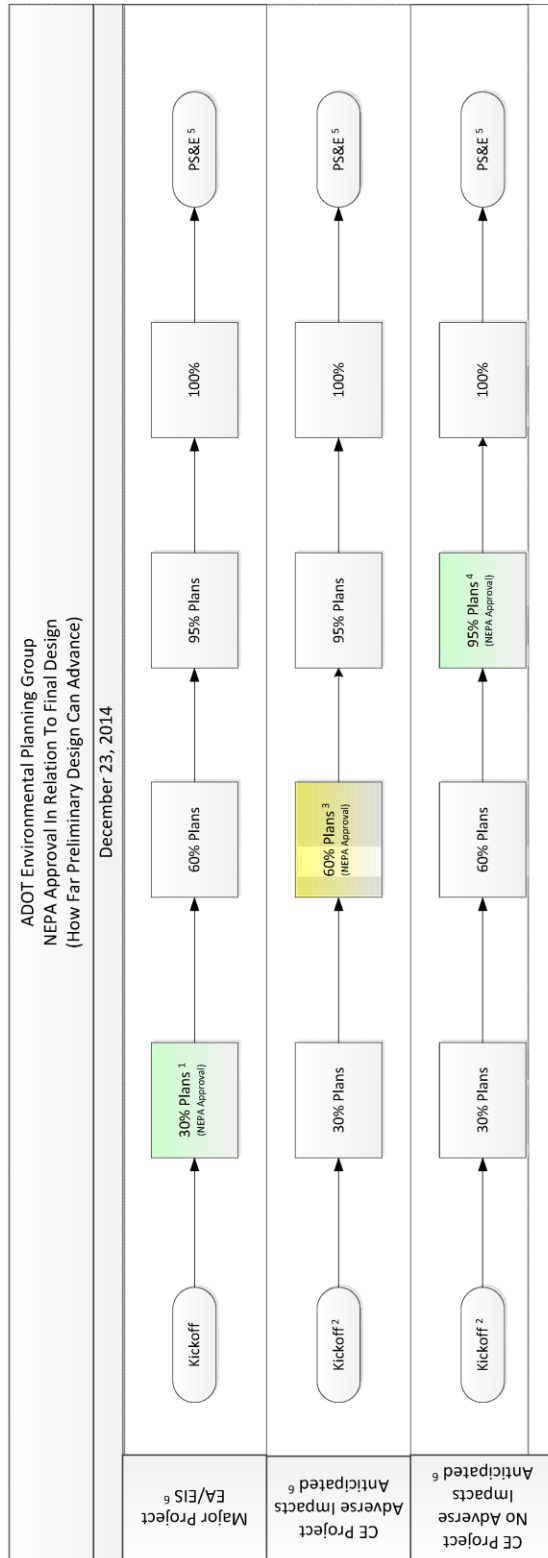
For FHWA review times for excluded projects refer to the Environmental [Joint Program Management Guideline](#).

Timeframes for additional documents needing review such as the Notice of Intent, Purpose and Need, Coordination Plan, etc. should be incorporated into the project schedule very early on. These should be agreed upon by the project team.

\* Additional submittals of a draft or sections of a draft may be necessary before legal review



## NEPA Approval in Relation to Final Design



**Notes:**

1. Preliminary Design can be advanced to 30%. FONSI or Record of Decision is needed by 30% in order for FHWA to authorize Phase II Final Design funds.
2. CE Projects are typically prepared under a single phase federal authorization and project development process. Begin NEPA at the start of the project
3. NEPA should be attained by 60%. If the project may adversely impact environmental resources and the design team may need to consider alternatives to avoid or minimize these impacts, then proceed cautiously past 60% design only after consulting with the EPG Planner.
4. No adverse impacts to environmental resources are anticipated and there are no alternatives still under consideration for avoiding or reducing impacts. Environmental should (not shall) be completed by 60%. However, if necessary, consult with the EPG Planner and proceed with design to 95%. Always keep in mind critical path issues such as needs for new right-of-way in relation to the schedule for completing NEPA.
5. EPG Planner reviews PS&E for all projects to ensure inclusion of all environmental commitments continued in the NEPA approval.
6. This graphic does not represent a relative timeline for project completion. Major projects with an EA or EIS will take substantially longer to complete than a project with a CE. CE projects with no adverse impacts will take the shortest amount of time to complete.

## Consultant Evaluation Form

<b>Environmental Consultant Evaluation Form</b>		
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Evaluation Date:</b>	
<b>TRACs Number:</b>	<b>Consultant Evaluation Period:</b>	
<b>Consultant Firm Name:</b>	<b>Consultant Type:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EPG On-call <input type="checkbox"/> PMG <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Consultant Name:</b>	<b>Consultant Contract Level:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EPG On-Call <input type="checkbox"/> PMG <input type="checkbox"/> _____
<b>Consultant Responsibility:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Biology <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> HazMat <input type="checkbox"/> Air <input type="checkbox"/> Noise <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		

<b>Communication:</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria and Scores</b>
What was Consultant's level of responsiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor
Were communications/responses completed in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Were communications straightforward, clear, and professional?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Unprofessional
Did consultant cooperate with project team?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Were changes in scope disseminated in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did consultant keep project team informed of changes in schedule?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>Expertise:</b>	
Did consultant staff appear to meet applicable ADOT performance standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did consultant staff have an expected level of understanding of Federal, State, and ADOT policies, procedures, regulations, laws, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes* <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally* <input type="checkbox"/> Never*
Did consultant require more than expected oversight and supervision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> Small Amount <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate Amount <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Amount <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Submissions:</b>	
Were consultant's submissions complete, organized, and correct?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never

Did the submissions comply with applicable standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Were multiple revisions required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No      Revisions Required: <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4* <input type="checkbox"/> 5+*
Were cost estimates reasonable and justified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>Organization:</b>	
Was the consultant organized?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Were realistic schedules developed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were schedules maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>General (As Applicable):</b>	
Was the project coordinated and managed well?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How well did the consultant address issues/concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair* <input type="checkbox"/> Poor* <input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor*
What was the consultant's level of creativeness and innovation?	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Deficient <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
What was the consultant's level of thoroughness and follow through in resolving project issues/concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Deficient <input type="checkbox"/> None
Did Consultant utilize appropriate staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*
Were their skill sets relevant for project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Did the prime address issues/concerns with their subs in a timely fashion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Usually <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes* <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally* <input type="checkbox"/> Never* <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>Additional Comments:</b>	

## Folder and File Labeling Guidelines

All project-related correspondence and documents are electronically stored in the shared ENV-Drive. A copy is made of the default **Project Template Folders**, located on the ENV-Drive, to populate the file folder structure for new projects. The template is populated for most projects and additional folders are added as needed and as outlined in the template naming convention below.

Project folders and files are saved under the appropriate project route number (e.g., 010 for Interstate 10). Projects that have multiple locations throughout the state such as regional sign projects are located under the 999 project folder. LPA projects are located in the 'Local' folder.

### Project Template Folders

#### Main Project Folder (1st level)

A project folder should begin with the ADOT Project Number followed by the project name (e.g., H5064 - Needle Mountain Rest Area).

#### 2nd level) Folders

Sub-folders are included with the standard Project Template Folders located in the main Projects Folder. The 2<sup>nd</sup> level folder names are by default (outlined below).

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> level Folders

3<sup>rd</sup> level sub-folders are populated as needed per the template below. Additional folders can be created as needed.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> level Folders

4<sup>th</sup> level sub-folders are in a certain 3<sup>rd</sup> level folders and created based on the needs of a project and at the discretion of staff. For example, under Project/Meetings/Agency there could be 4<sup>th</sup> level with multiple agency folders.

### Individual Files

Individual files are placed under their respective sub-folder. Some emails may be grouped into a single PDF file instead of storing individual emails. Only "decision-related" emails should be stored in the project files. Not every communication email needs to be saved.

All file names should begin with the TRACS number followed by the document name/type, and then the date (TRACS\_DocumentName\_Date). If there are multiple drafts of the same document, differentiate them by labeling them with Submittal 1, Submittal 2, etc. QC review comment files should be additionally labelled with the reviewers' initials (TRACS\_DocumentName\_ReviewerInitials\_ReviewDate).

All approved technical reports, approved NEPA documents, and any decision documents related to scope, schedule budget, and process are documented and saved to the appropriate folders. However, all working drafts do not need to be retained in the project file. If files are moved from another location into the ENV-Drive, rename them appropriately. Rename transmitted files as needed. For example; "H8485 CE for your review", relabel the file to "H8485\_Bio\_CECComments\_120418."

## QA/QC

Review comments may be located in different folders under the respective technical areas for review of technical materials. Review comments related to a CE/EA/EIS are under the appropriate environmental review document folder. A “Review Comments” folder under the environmental review document should contain review comments on the NEPA documentation as appropriate for the project.

## Final Certification

The “Final Certification” folder should contain documentation of the eSTIP and applicable completed Quality Control Form (see *QA/QC Plan*) for an Individual CE, EA or EIS.

## Folder and File Organization

Keeping folders and files labeled and placed correctly in the ENV-Drive allows for easy and quick access. Maintaining project files and Administrative Records is everyone’s responsibility. Environmental Planners and Technical Specialists are responsible for managing project folders and files under their respective supervision.

## **Standard Project File Folders (Template)** [Default Folder Structure and Labeling Convention]

### Folder Hierarchy

1<sup>st</sup> level: **[ADOT Project Number – Project Name]** (Default for every project)

2<sup>nd</sup> level: **Functional Area** (Default) – [Some titles are abbreviated]

3<sup>rd</sup> level: Sub-functional Area (Default and *as needed* listed below)

4<sup>th</sup> level: Created *as needed*

### ➤ **Route – Project Number – Project Name** (All Projects)

#### ● **Admin**

##### - **Communications**

- Fiscal constraint
- Class of Action Memo (if applicable)

##### - **Contract**

- **FHWA Authorization** Letter (if applicable – when project authorized)

##### - **PEDS** (if applicable)

##### - **Project Establishment**

- For EA/ICE: Project framework, Project Kickoff Meeting, LPA Initiation Letter
- NOI (For EIS)
- Schedule (if applicable)

- **Air Quality**
  - **AQ Clearance**
  - **Conformity**
    - **Interagency Consultation**
- **Bio**
  - **Admin**
    - **Past Docs**
    - **ENV clearance review**
    - **PEDS**
  - **Agency Coordination**
    - **USFWS**
    - **Other agencies**
  - **Approved BE or BESF**
  - **Bio Evaluations**
  - **Bio Scoping**
    - **Agency letters**
    - **Species lists**
  - **Communications**
    - **Emails**
- **Cultural**
  - **Project Information**
    - **Financial**
    - **PEDS Etc. (schedules, plans, and misc. information)**
  - **Communication**
    - **Emails**
    - **Meetings**
  - **Background Research**
  - **Maps and Graphics**
  - **Technical Reports**
  - **Consultation Letters**
  - **Mitigation Measures**
  - **Section 4(f)**
  - **Agreement Docs**
  - **Closeout Memo**
- **Engineering**



- **Plans** (Design, ROW, Utility, etc.)
- **Special Provisions** (if applicable)
  - Geotechnical/Other Preliminary Engineering (if applicable)
  - For EIS: Alternative Selection Report (ASR), Corridor Selection Report (CSR), Design Concept Report (DCR)
  - For EA/ICE: Design Concept Report (DCR), Schematic Design/PA, Design Plans, other Engineering or Traffic Reports (if applicable)
- **ENV Justice (Only projects prior to 3/27/2025)**
  - **ENV Review Docs**
    - **Categorical Exclusion**
      - Draft CE, Final CE
    - **ENV Commitments and EPIC**
    - **Review Comments**
    - **Other (add folders as needed)**
      - Note-to-File, Geotechnical, Past Environmental Documents (for reference), Early ROW Acquisitions
  - Replace CE folder and add folders for an EA or EIS as needed (not in folders template)
  - For EIS: Preliminary Drafts, Signed "Public Review" Draft and Final documents, Review Comments
  - For EA: Preliminary Drafts, Signed "Public Review" Draft and Final documents, Review Comments
- **Final Certification**
  - **QAQC Forms**
    - For CEs – CE QC Checklist, ICE QC Form
    - For EA/EIS – EA/EIS QC Checklist and Form, QC Transmittal from Consultant (for draft and final documents)
    - For EA/EIS: Federal Register Notices of Final Agency Action (SOL)
    - For 327 Re-Evaluations – Note to file forms or EA/EIS Re-evaluation Quality Control Form
  - **STIP**
    - Screenshot or other
    - for all EA/EIS/ICE, unless Tier 1 EIS documents
  - **NOFAA (add folder for EA/EIS)**
    - Notice of Final Agency Action Documentation

- **Hazmat**
  - **Communications**
    - Emails, PEDS, Related Reports
  - **PISA**
    - Preliminary Initial Site Assessment (PISA)
    - Lead Based Paint (LB), Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM), and Phase I/II/III (if necessary)
- **Meetings**
  - **Kick-off**
  - Progress meetings, kickoff meeting, minutes, etc.
- **Noise (Projects without Noise Analysis)**
  - **Communications**
  - **Noise Checklist**
- **Noise (Projects with Noise Analysis)**
  - **Communications**
  - **Reports**
  - **Other Information**
  - **Public Involvement**
  - **TNM Modeling Data**
- **Scoping**
  - **Draft Letters**
  - **Final Letters**
  - **Responses** (if applicable)
  - For EA/EIS: Final PDF agency scoping letters to Cooperating/Participating agencies (see Public Involvement for additional scoping requirements)
- **Section 402**
- **Section 404**
  - **Admin**
    - PEDS/proposals/contracts
  - **Communication**
    - Emails
  - **PJD or AJD**

- **Section 404 - 401**
  - PJD or AJD Documentation (if applicable)
  - **Section 404** (Submittal for review, *if applicable*)
    - Sub1
  - **Section 401** (Submittal for review, *if applicable*)
    - Sub1
  - **Permit Documentation** for Section 404 and 401 (*always applicable due to No WOTUS Permit closeout memo*)
    - Issued 404 Permit (if applicable)
    - Issued 401 Water Quality Certification (if applicable)
    - No WOTUS Permit closeout memo
- **Other (Move sub-folders needed to the main level if utilized – Delete “Other” folder if unused)**
  - **Public and Agency Involvement:**
    - For EA/EIS/ICE projects with meetings and/or public hearing meeting information to include such materials, notification, summary report, Notice of Availability (NOA) for EIS documents or final notice (Gov Delivery) for EA's.
    - Agency correspondence documentation (meetings, memos, emails, etc.).
    - Public comments and responses from EA/EIS/ICE public meetings or hearings. Public hearing summary reports (as applicable).
  - **Purpose and Need:** For EA/EIS, include final document as part of EA or EIS or memo
  - **Section 4(f)/6(f):** Include documentation of forms or letters and any Section 4(f) evaluations (programmatic or individual) that were completed as part of NEPA

Notes:

- \*Other disciplines such as **Farmland, Floodplain, Right of Way, Socioeconomic, Sole Source Aquifer** can have documentation in file if applicable for project NEPA consideration.
- **If any of folders are empty, delete as not applicable.**
- If general emails are saved to the project file, they are consolidated to what is only necessary for decision making/informational purposes.

## 326 CE Approval Email Template (ADOT Project)

### Distribution Email Template for Environmental Approval (delete)

To: ADOT Project Manager), C&S, Right-of-Way, PRO Office Scheduling,, DE, District TES, DEC, Engineering and Environmental consultant

Subject: NEPA Approval (CE) for XX-XXXX(000)/ 000 CO 000 HXXXX 01C Project Name

All,

The attached Categorical Exclusion (CE) (also available in Workfront) was approved on xx/xx/xxxx.

The above referenced project meets the definition for a CE under 23 CFR 771.117.

The environmental planner for the project shall be consulted to determine whether the CE remains valid if there is a change in the project scope, location, or termini or where new impacts, not previously considered, may occur.

The Project Manager shall continue to send the Environmental Planner ALL plan submittals to ensure that all NEPA review and compliance requirements have been met, that the CE determination remains valid and that the project incorporates all of the environmental commitments in the 100% plans and specifications, as applicable.

Thank you,

Name

Environmental Planner

### Attachment

Note: This project has a construction window related to tree cutting and or vegetation removal and is documented in a biological decision. A change in the bid ready date should be coordinated with the project Biologist as this could affect the environmental clearance. **(Delete this text if not applicable).**

## 326 CE Approval Email Template (LPA ADOT Administered)

### Distribution Email Template for Environmental Approval (delete)

To: ADOT Project Manager, LPA Project Manager, C&S, Right-of-Way, PRO Office Scheduling, LPA Programming, DE, District TES, DEC, Engineering and Environmental consultant

Subject: NEPA Approval (CE) for XX-XXXX(000)/ 000 CO 000 HXXXX 01C Project Name

All,

The attached Categorical Exclusion (CE) (also available in Workfront) was approved on xx/xx/xxxx.

The above referenced project meets the definition for a CE under 23 CFR 771.117.

The environmental planner for the project shall be consulted to determine whether the CE remains valid if there is a change in the project scope, location, or termini or where new impacts, not previously considered, may occur.

The Project Manager shall continue to send the Environmental Planner ALL plan submittals to ensure that all NEPA review and compliance requirements have been met, that the CE determination remains valid and that the project incorporates all of the environmental commitments in the 100% plans and specifications, as applicable.

Thank you,

Name

Environmental Planner

### Attachment

Note: This project has a construction window related to tree cutting and or vegetation removal and is documented in a biological decision. A change in the bid ready date should be coordinated with the project Biologist as this could affect the environmental clearance. **(Delete this text if not applicable).**

## NEPA Approval Email Template (CA Agency Projects)

To: ADOT Project Manager, CAA Project Manager, PRO Office Scheduling, LPA Programming

Subject: NEPA Approval (CE) for XX-XXXX(000)/ 000 CO 000 HXXXX 01C Project Name

All,

The attached Categorical Exclusion (CE) (also available in Workfront for ADOT staff) was approved on xx/xx/xxxx. The above referenced project meets the definition for a CE under 23 CFR 771.117. [Note adjust for EA]

The environmental planner for the project shall be consulted to determine whether the CE remains valid if there is a change in the project scope, location, or termini or where new impacts, not previously considered, may occur.

In accordance with FHWA regulations and the CA Agency Manual, at the time of the request for federal authorization for funding the CA Agency must verify by email<sup>1</sup> the following:

- 1) The project actions (scope of work) at the time of authorization for federal funding have not changed from what is approved in the project NEPA document and;
- 2) The environmental commitments will be incorporated into the PS&E (final plans/specifications/contract, as applicable) exactly as approved in the project CE.

<sup>1</sup>Note: This CA Agency "NEPA and plans review" step is not required for projects approved with (c)(1) CEs, for projects in which federal authorization is sought shortly after the CE approval based on the judgment of the ENV Planner or for projects which have no further plan stages developed after the CE is approved. Adjust accordingly for approvals that do not have plans and/or specifications.

Thank you,

Name

Environmental Planner

Attachment

Add this note below *only as required/needed*: [delete]

Note: This project has a construction window related to tree cutting and or vegetation removal and is documented in a biological decision. A change in the bid ready date should be coordinated with the project Biologist as this could affect the environmental clearance. (Delete this text if not applicable).



## 327 NEPA Approval Email Template

To: ADOT Project Manager, C&S, Right-of-Way, PRO Office Scheduling, DE, District TES, DEC, ADOT Communications, Engineering and Environmental consultant

Subject: NEPA Approval for XX-XXXX(000)/ 000 CO 000 HXXXX 01C Project Name

All,

The [Individual Categorical Exclusion (ICE)/Environmental Assessment (EA)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)] for this project (also available on the Workfront) was approved on xx/xx/xxxx.

The Project Manager shall continue to send the Environmental Planner all plan submittals to ensure that all NEPA review and compliance requirements have been met, that the NEPA determination remains valid and that the project incorporates all of the environmental commitments in the 100% plans and specifications as applicable.

Thank you,

Name

Environmental Planner

Attachment (if applicable)

Note: This project has a construction window related to tree cutting and or vegetation removal and is documented in a biological decision. A change in the bid ready date should be coordinated with the project Biologist as this could affect the environmental clearance. **(Delete this text if not applicable).**

## 327 Environmental Clearance Email Template

To: ADOT Project Manager, C&S, Right-of-Way, PRO Office Scheduling, DE, District TES, DEC, ADOT Communications, Engineering and Environmental consultant

Subject: Environmental Clearance for XX-XXXX(000)/ 000 CO 000 HXXXX 01C Project Name

All,

This is the Environmental Clearance for the above referenced project. The [Categorical Exclusion/Environmental Assessment] was approved in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771 on xx/xx/20xx. An Environmental Assessment Re-evaluation was approved on xx/xx/2022. [add as needed and delete this note otherwise]

If there is a change in the project scope or project limits Environmental Planning (planner) must be contacted to evaluate potential impacts.

This constitutes final environmental approval.

Thank you,

Name

Environmental Planner

Attachment

Note: This project has a construction window related to tree cutting and or vegetation removal and is documented in a biological decision. A change in the bid ready date should be coordinated with the project Biologist as this could affect the environmental clearance. (Delete this text if not applicable).

## NEPA and Plans Review Email Template for CA Agencies<sup>1</sup>

The template below can be used to “copy and paste” to an email for transmitting verification of CE and plans review. This template does not have to be used verbatim but the CA Agency needs to convey the main points outlined below as applicable. This verification can be made by the CAA designated qualified personnel in conformance with the CAA Manual (Designated Approval Authority, CA Liaison, Responsible Charge). (Delete this text)

To: [Name, ADOT Project Manager, Name, ADOT Environmental Planner]

SUBJECT: Final Plans and CE Check for XX-XXXX(000) Project Name

All,

The above referenced final project plans are consistent with the scope of work defined in the [CE approved on xx/xx/xx] or [CE re-evaluated on xx/xx/xx]. [Choose one and delete the other]

The environmental commitments have been incorporated into the PS&E (final plans/specifications/contract as applicable) as approved in the project NEPA document.

Thank you,

[Name, CAA Title]

<sup>1</sup>Note: This “NEPA and plans review” step is not required for projects approved with (c)(1) CEs, for projects which have no further plan stages developed after the CE is approved or for projects in which federal authorization is sought shortly after the CE approval (project has not been “shelved”). Adjust accordingly for approvals that do not have plans and/or specifications.

## Project Delivery, NEPA Assignment, Technical Team Escalation Standard Procedure

- Issue arises
- Planner II strive to resolve (if unresolved)
- Planner II consults with other Planner II(s) (if unresolved)
- Escalate to Planner III - examples where there can be an understandable need;
  - technical team
  - design
  - consultant conflicts
  - interpretation of guidance
  - non-response
  - schedule issues
  - (If unresolved)
- Planner III consults with other Planner III(s) (if unresolved)
- Original Planner III will escalate to the Project Delivery Manager (Katie Rodriguez). If it is a NEPA Assignment Program issue, escalate to NEPA Assignment (NA) Manager (Steve Olmsted).
- When the appropriate Manager is not available, it is preferable to go to another available Manager before going to the ENV Administrator
- Issues that move to the Planner III level should move to weekly Planner III meeting agenda
- Issues that are identified at the Planner III weekly meeting and rise to a level that affect policy or procedure should move to the monthly Planner meeting agenda
- If the issue being escalated to Planner IV level concerns the technical teams that issue will move to the monthly Planner/Technical manager meeting agenda

## New Hire Standard Work Plan – Planner II First Year

All timelines are goals and not hard requirements due to timing and availability of all resources outside of Environmental Planning. Supervisors will assist new planners in meeting their goals.

### Week 1 Tasks

- ✓ I-9 and Employment forms (ASO)
- ✓ Confirm computer and phone access
- ✓ Obtain ADOT ID Badge
- ✓ Introduction to ADOT facilities and campus
- ✓ Introduction to ADOT ENV Team
- ✓ Overview of Planner II Responsibilities / ENV Environmental Toolkit Book

### Month 1-3: *Introduction to ADOT & Environmental Planning*

**Introduction to ADOT ENV Team:** Meeting with Team, Monthly Planner Meeting, 1:1 Check-in Meeting, ADOT ENV Technical Specialist shadowing, Planner II/III shadowing, connect with ADOT “Buddy”

#### **Introduction to NEPA and ADOT:**

- ✓ Statewide New Employee Training
- ✓ New Employee – ADOT Orientation Training
- ✓ ADOT New Employee Training
- ✓ ADOT ENV Training (Web-Based)
  - ENV1700W: CE Assignment and NEPA Assignment
  - ENV1740W: Introduction to Environmental Clearances
  - ENV1010W: 401-404 Awareness
  - ENV1005W: Stormwater Awareness
  - ENV1006W: Storm Sewer System and Highway Maintenance
  - TCH3002: Highway Plans Reading
- ✓ National Highway Institute Courses (Web-Based):
  - NHI-142052: Intro to NEPA & Transportation Decision Making
  - NHI-151052: Basics of Transportation Planning
  - NHI-142071: Air Quality: Transportation Conformity
  - NHI-142077 Basics of Public Involvement in Transportation Decision Making

**Introduction to ADOT ENV Guidance:**

- ✓ [CE Process Flowchart](#)
- ✓ [Categorical Exclusion \(CE\) Checklist Manual](#)
- ✓ [CE Scoping Guidelines](#)
- ✓ [LPA Projects Manual - Chapter 9 Environmental Clearances](#)
- ✓ [ADOT ENV Project Development Procedures](#)
- ✓ [ADOT ENV Quality Assurance / Quality Control Plan](#)
- ✓ [ADOT Section 4\(f\) Manual](#)
- ✓ [ADOT ENV Geotechnical Guidance](#)
- ✓ Other Miscellaneous Guidance:
  - [Prime and Unique Farmland](#)
  - [Visual Resources](#)

**Introduction to ADOT, and Project Delivery:** Introduction to ENV project workload, Arizona Management System (AMS) / Continuous Improvement, various ENV project tracking spreadsheets, project tracking systems, other applications (DocuSign, e-STIP, Workfront, etc.) and overview of ADOT ENV role in project delivery

**Month 3-6: *Planner Integration into NEPA and Project Delivery***

**Coordination with ADOT ENV Team:** Bi-weekly 1:1 coaching with supervisor and monthly team coordination meetings to discuss projects, issues, or guidance and/or training questions

**Continued development of Planner II:** Additional shadowing of technical specialists (in field), shadowing of Planner II/III at project meetings, introduction to problem solving register and huddle board.

**Training:**

- ✓ ADOT PM Academy Training (Modules 1-3)
- ✓ ADOT ENV In-House Training
  - ADOT Project Development Process
  - Environmental in Project Development
  - Section 4(f)
  - Highway Engineering
  - Access Control
- ✓ [AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook](#) series (Self-Study)
  - Tracking Compliance with Environmental Commitments
  - Complying with Section 4(f) of the U.S. DOT Act
  - Complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for Transportation Projects

**Month 6-12: *Planner Integration into Project Delivery and NEPA Studies***

**Coordination with ADOT ENV Team:** Bi-weekly/monthly 1:1 coaching with supervisor and monthly team coordination meetings to discuss project workload, issues, or guidance and/or training questions

**Continued development of Planner II:** Introduction to 327 MOU projects and process, continued shadowing of Planner II/III, continue ADOT and associated training.

**Training:**

- ✓ ADOT PM Academy Training (Modules 4-6)
- ✓ ADOT ENV Training (Web-based)
  - ENV1355W: Introduction to ADOT Noise Abatement Requirements

**Guidance:**

- ✓ [EA/EIS Guidance](#)
- ✓ [EA/EIS Guidance Appendix](#)
- ✓ [AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook](#) series (Self-Study)
  - Addressing Air Quality Issues in the NEPA Process for Highway Projects
  - Preparing High-Quality NEPA Documents for Transportation Projects
  - Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines in Transportation Project Decision-Making
  - Defining the Purpose and Need and Determining the Range of Alternatives for Transportation Projects



## Technical Sections Basic Procedures

Chapter 4 outlines basic roles and responsibilities of the ENV project team members. Detailed procedures for the Technical Sections reside in the respective technical area's guidance and procedures. This appendix supplements basic information for ENV Planners to incorporate technical procedures into the project development and environmental review processes.

### *Air Quality and Noise Procedures*

The Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists are responsible for determining if technical analysis is required for a project for their respective area of technical responsibility.

#### **Coordination and Administration**

The project scope of work including whether or not capacity is being added or if there are impacts such as a significant change in the horizontal or vertical alignment of existing highway are critical early inputs. The Environmental Planner should discuss the project scope of work as early as possible with the Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists. The Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists assist with determining the task order scope of work. If the Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists determine that a technical analysis is needed, the Environmental Planner, the Air Quality and Noise Specialists, and consultant should discuss the level of analysis needed before finalizing the scope.

#### **Procedures**

All consultant prepared reports will be reviewed by the appropriate ADOT specialist for methodology, accuracy and consistency. The Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists will complete the appropriate level of documentation and save the completed forms to the electronic project folder in the ENV-Drive. The Environmental Planner will send the draft CE checklist to the Air Quality and Noise Specialists for review. The Specialists will respond to the Environmental Planner with comments or an approval email. The Air Quality and Noise Technical Specialists will save the approved technical documents to the project file and upload them to Workfront to document that Air and Noise analysis is completed.

#### **Technical Guidance**

For more information regarding the preparation of technical analysis, reports, modeling and/or consultation procedures, please refer to the Air Quality and Noise sections on the Environmental Planning web page.

- [Air Quality](#)
- [Noise](#)

### *Cultural Resources Procedures*

The HPT is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects associated with the federal-aid highway program consider project-related effects to significant historic and prehistoric cultural

resources and that these undertakings are in compliance with the Federal and State historic preservation laws.

### **Coordination and Administration**

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Project Delivery Manager notifies the HPT Team Lead when a new project is initiated. The HPT Team Lead determines if the project has no potential to cause an effect on historic properties and documents this decision in a memorandum to the Environmental Planner.

If the project does have the potential to cause an effect on historic properties, the HPT Team Lead assigns the project to an HPT Specialist. The HPT Specialist works closely with the Environmental Planner and project team to conduct background research on an Area of Potential Effects (APE) that they define based on information provided to them. The background research identifies known and potential cultural resources as well as previous cultural resource projects carried out within the APE.

Based on this background research, the HPT Specialist will evaluate the applicability of stipulations in the *Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA)* including:

- Screened Undertakings Exempted from Further Review (Stipulation X.C.1)
- No Historic Properties Affected (Stipulation X.F.1.a)
- No Adverse Effect with Standard Conditions (Stipulation X.F.2.a.)
- No Adverse Effect (where standard conditions do not apply) (Stipulation X.F.2.b)
- Adverse Effect (Stipulation X.F.3)

Also, at this time, the HPT Specialist will determine whether this project can be completed in-house or if an outside consultant would be required.

All of this information would be provided to the Environmental Planner in a PEDS or in a word document for LPA projects.

### **Section 106 PA Implementation**

The normal Section 106 process includes a 30-day period for each consultation effort; initial consultation establishing the project APE, identification of cultural resources (survey reports), finding of project effect, and any modifications to the scope of the project. The streamlining process in the PA allows for reduced consultation periods, consolidations of consultation steps, and lists of actions exempted from further review.

The HPT Specialist cannot begin Section 106 consultation without two essential pieces of information: A Project Manager-approved scope of work and a project footprint.

As a rule of thumb, Section 106 review should be completed as soon as enough design information is available but may be completed between the 60% and 95% plans submittal for projects that are authorized through the single-step funding process, which includes most CE projects. For EA, EIS and

some CE projects that are authorized through the two-step funding process, NEPA, including Section 106 review, must be completed by the approval of 30% plans.

For projects that will be constructed through alternate delivery methods, such as design-build or Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) there may not be staged plans. For those projects the project team should closely coordinate the environmental review or re-evaluations with the design-build process.

### **Section 106 PA Documentation Memo**

A number of stipulations of the PA allow for quarterly batch consultation and reporting of Section 106 findings and other decisions including initial consultation findings of effect, scope changes, geotechnical testing, and protocols for signage and fencing and recreational trails.

A memo has been developed to standardize PA documentation. All memos include the definition of the APE based on the final project footprint, areas for background research, notification of land owners, findings of effect, and final.

After the appropriate sections of the memo have been filled out, the HPT Specialist sends it to the HPT Lead for review. If the project is on the land of a Tribe or agency that is signatory to the PA, the Memo is sent to the landowner/manager for review and concurrence with the actions taken. The landowner signifies concurrence by email.

Once concurrence has been obtained from the landowner, if any, and SHPO if required, the memo and any supplemental information necessary to support the decision should be filed in the PA documentation folder and in the ENV-Drive project folder. The memo, or the link to the memo's location on the ENV-Drive, should be sent to the Environmental Planner. Detailed instructions for filling out, processing, and filing the memos are included in the HPT Handbook.

### **Finding of Adverse Effect (Stipulation X.F. 3)**

If a project adversely affects a historic property, HPT will consult to resolve the adverse effect in consultation with the appropriate land managing agency, Tribe, and other consulting parties. As stipulated in the PA, HPT has two paths to resolving adverse effects: resolution of adverse effects using Standard Measures, as defined in Stipulation X.G.1 and Attachment 6 of the PA, or the use of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or project-specific PA, as defined in Stipulation X.G.2.

### **Coordination and Communication with ADOT's Project Team**

As noted above, it is essential that the Environmental Planner and HPT Specialist coordinate closely on each project. If HPT holds a project meeting regarding a technical subject, Environmental Planners and ADOT Project Managers should be invited. If land managing or permitting agencies or Tribes raise concerns to an HPT Specialist, the Environmental Planner and ADOT Project Manager should always be made aware of these concerns. The Environmental Planner should also be made aware if a project contains or has the potential to contain a historic property that may be protected under Section 4(f).

Environmental Planners also need to be aware of known and potential properties of religious and cultural significance to Tribes (i.e., Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)), properties requiring an avoidance commitment, properties requiring flagging or monitoring, or properties that will be adversely affected by a project. If there are plants within the project limits that are considered culturally sensitive or special resources for Tribes, the HPT Specialist provides this information to the Biologist assigned to the project as well as the Environmental Planner. In addition, the HPT Specialist needs to inform the project team as early as possible about any Section 106-related actions or finding that might affect a project scope, schedule or budget, and work with the project team to on how to best address these issues.

### **Early Consultation with Native Americans**

For projects that require an EA or an EIS, it is beneficial to involve Tribes as early as possible in the project. Meeting regularly with face-to-face meetings, which include decision makers for the project is critical in establishing the working relationship. Realize that it will be necessary to meet repeatedly and the Tribes may not be forthcoming initially on any information. Be aware that the information needed for the consultation may be protected information for Tribes that the Tribe may not have the authority to disclose. It may be that no information on their sacred spaces will be provided. If information also is provided it will be protected (subject to Section 304 of NHPA) and not disclosed to other consulting parties. Being willing to travel or meet with the Tribe on their lands is necessary in demonstrating the importance of their involvement. Providing updates to ongoing projects at their monthly meetings (if Four Southern Tribes) are also helpful. If the Tribe has provided comments, but it is not possible to accommodate the request - make sure to be ready to define why it was not possible to accommodate that request.

If an agreement document is needed for the project, SHPO and ACHP advise that providing an outline of the proposed agreement document is a more effective method to encouraging input from Tribes who may see the presentation of a completed draft as foreclosing on their ability to provide input. Even when Tribes (and their lawyers) are actively involved in the development of the PA, it is quite possible that they will not sign, unless it directly crosses their lands.

Be sensitive in Tribal interactions - these are ancestral lands and have strong and deep emotions for the Tribes. Be patient and respectful, give the Tribe opportunity to voice their concerns fully, realizing that it will be accompanied by strong emotion and may be difficult to express. True consultation is a collaborative process, that should involve give and take, within reason. This is one of the primary reasons to meet early on in the development process, when the route is still flexible enough to be modified. It may also be necessary to conduct field visits - as tribal members may need to see the relationship of the project area to a larger landscape.

### **Public Involvement and Section 106**

As noted in Chapter 5 of these procedures, some CEs and all EAs and EISs will require public involvement. The Environmental Planner, along with the project team and ADOT Communications, will

decide the best timing and method to gather input from the public. Environmental Planners are responsible for assisting ADOT Communications with preparation activities, assisting in preparing and reviewing of outreach materials, and are responsible for attending all public outreach meetings.

The Section 106 process also requires public involvement, and as with the NEPA review process, the level of public involvement and outreach is based on the scope and level of interest of the public. Stipulation VII.B of the PA, and 36 CFR 800.2(d)(1) states that the views of the public are to be considered in a manner that reflects the nature and complexity of the project and its potential effects on historic properties, and based on the likely interest of the public in the effects on historic properties. Generally, Section 106-related public involvement is carried out in concert with ADOT's NEPA public involvement efforts. There may be CE-level projects, however, such as a bridge replacement where HPT may need to conduct, in coordination with the Environmental Planner and ADOT Communications, public involvement specific to Section 106 issues, when a project has the potential to adversely impact historic properties such as impacts to a historic bridge. Some CE-level projects may have impacts to sensitive archaeological sites subject to confidentiality and in such instances public involvement is limited in conformance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

### *Biological Resources Procedures*

The Biological Resources is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects associated with the federal-aid highway program consider project-related impacts to special status species, native plants, habitat and vegetative communities, and wildlife connectivity that are regulated by federal, state, local or tribal governments.

#### **Coordination and Administration**

ADOT Environmental Planning oversees biological compliance for ADOT's development program through the ADOT Biologists. The ADOT Biologists are responsible for reviewing or preparing all biology-related project deliverables and for certain types of agency coordination. All coordination and documentation related to biological resources should go through the applicable ADOT Biologist identified in the ADOT Biological Reviewers Map (posted under Technical Guidance on the ENV webpage) or as assigned by the Biology Team Lead.

It is also important for the Environmental Planner assigned to the project to be informed of developments in the biological process. The ADOT Biologist should copy the Environmental Planner on emails related to biological submittals and coordination regarding potential issues that could impact the project scope, budget, or schedule.

If there are plants within the project limits that are considered cultural or special resource for Tribes, please coordinate with the project assigned HPT Specialist.

#### **Biological Resources/Issues Addressed**

The ADOT biological process is intended to ensure project compliance with applicable federal, state, tribal, and other biological resource-related laws, regulations, orders, and policies. This section

contains a brief outline of these procedures. For more detail, please refer to the ADOT ENV Internal Biological Procedures guidance document. Biological resources/issues typically addressed through the ADOT biology process include, but are not necessarily limited to:

#### Species or Habitat Protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The primary focus of the ADOT biology process is compliance with the federal ESA; therefore, the following ESA-protected species and habitats are the primary focus of ADOT biological documents:

- Species listed as threatened or endangered under Section 4 of the ESA
- Species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered
- Designated or proposed critical habitat
- Experimental non-essential populations, i.e., “10j” populations

Species with candidate status (i.e., candidates for listing as threatened or endangered) receive no protection under the ESA, but often receive some protection through other agency special status as identified below. Candidate species are evaluated in ADOT biological documents but are treated as sensitive/other special status species.

#### Other Protected Species

- Eagles protected by the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)
- Birds protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- Native plants protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law
- Species subject to official Conservation Agreements

#### Agency-Specific Special Status Species

- Navajo Nation Endangered Species List (NESL) species (when on Navajo Nation land)
- Other tribal sensitive species (when on other tribal lands)
- US Forest Service (Forest) sensitive species (when on National Forest lands)
- US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sensitive species (when on BLM lands)
- Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

#### Other Species, Resources, or Issues

- All bat species
- Wildlife connectivity/movement
- Invasive species

Further guidance on the actual evaluation and treatment of protected biological resources is provided in the separate report formats referenced in the Reports section of the ADOT ENV Internal Biological Procedures document.

## Initial External Agency Coordination and Scoping

Once the consultant's scope, cost, and schedule estimate are approved and the Notice to Proceed (NTP) is issued, the next step is further data collection, which includes any necessary agency coordination as well as official project scoping.

### External Agency Coordination General

Other than the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and AGFD internet queries and scoping procedures described below, the consultant is not permitted to contact any external agencies, including tribes, regarding ADOT projects without specific prior approval from the ADOT Biologist. The Biologist will determine the appropriate contact (ADOT or consultant). Many agencies have provided data or recommendations to ADOT and do not want to be contacted repeatedly for the same request. Also, some agencies and tribes have requested direct ADOT contact for project related coordination. If asking a consultant to contact an agency on ADOT's behalf, always request that the consultant follow up with an email summary of the conversation to the agency contact and the ADOT Biologist.

Scoping letters for biology should be completed per the Guidelines for Agency and Public Scoping for Projects with Categorical Exclusions ([CE Scoping Guidelines](#)), available on the ADOT Environmental Planning website.

### Arizona Game and Fish Department

The ADOT Biologist will complete an AGFD online environmental review tool query for all projects that are not located on tribal lands. Results will be included as an attachment to the PEDS.

AGFD online review tool receipts are valid for 6 months. The consultant or the Environmental Planner will contact the ADOT Biologist to determine whether a new review tool query is needed if the query receipt is greater than 6 months old at the following milestones:

- Approval of the biology document
- Approval of the CE (or other NEPA document)

Responses to scoping letters are typically sent to the consultant. Any AGFD responses to scoping letters which include project specific questions or proposed mitigation will be forwarded by the consultant to the Biologist and the Environmental Planner. The Biologist and/or Environmental Planner will determine the appropriate response to the letter. Concerns identified within the AGFD scoping letter are to be addressed in the biological report, typically in an appendix (see the Biological Evaluation format). The on-line review tool receipt and the letter received from the AGFD during scoping will be submitted with the draft Biological Evaluation Short Form for placement in the project folder or attached to the Biological Evaluation report.

### US Fish and Wildlife Service

The USFWS Information, Planning, and Conservation ([IPaC](#)) system is used to generate a species list for the project. An official IPaC report will be included as an attachment to the PEDS.

If an official species list is obtained via IPaC, include the USFWS tracking number from the list on all correspondence to USFWS regarding the project, including scoping letters.



IPaC species lists are valid for 90 days. The consultant or the Environmental Planner will contact the ADOT Biologist to determine whether an updated IPaC species list is needed if the species list is greater than 90 days old at the following milestones:

- Approval of the biology document
- Approval of the final CE (or other NEPA document)

#### Other External Agencies

ADOT highways across federal lands such as National Forest or BLM lands or tribal lands such as the Navajo Nation are almost exclusively on easements. This means that ADOT does not actually own the land but has permission to maintain and operate the transportation system within the highway easement. When a project is located on any federal or tribal lands the level of biological documentation required and the list of applicable sensitive species to address will be obtained through the responses to the biology scoping letters (see the Scoping Guidelines). If a response to scoping is not received from the land managing agency, the consultant will contact the ADOT Biologist to arrange a plan for further coordination with the agency.

#### Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that may have biology-related concerns such as Sky Island Alliance, The Grand Canyon Trust, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Desert Tortoise Council may also be sent scoping letters per the Biology Scoping Guidelines as appropriate based on the scope and location of the project.

#### Invasive Species Coordination

Forward a copy of the project generic agency scoping letter and maps via email to the appropriate ADOT Natural Resources (NR) contact (see the NR contacts map on the ADOT Environmental Planning website) and copy the ADOT Biologist. Allow the NR contact 30 days to respond with any invasive species issues. If the NR contact responds with invasive species issues and/or non-standard mitigation coordinate with the ADOT Biologist on how to proceed.

### **Section 7 Consultation/Conference and External Agency Coordination**

If there is a determination that the project may affect ESA-protected species or habitat, the biology document will be submitted to the USFWS as part of the Section 7 consultation or conference process as applicable. The consultant will notify the ADOT Biologist as soon as possible during the biology process if any “may affect” determinations are anticipated. The ADOT Biologist is the point of contact with USFWS for Section 7 coordination. The consultant should never contact USFWS regarding FHWA-funded projects without specific prior approval from the ADOT Biologist. If a project is on federal or tribal land the biology document will be sent to the responsible agency or tribal biologist unless otherwise determined during the initial scoping phase.

## *404/401 Procedures*

The Wetland Biologist is responsible for reviewing project needs and permitting requirements associated with the Clean Water Act, Sections 401, 402 and 404.

### **Coordination and Administration**

When a project is initiated, the Environmental Planner should inquire as to what the potential impacts are to potential WOUS and what the estimated acreage for the construction footprint is. The Planner should also coordinate with Roadside Development and the Project Manager to obtain the estimated acreage of the construction footprint and work with the Wetland Biologist to determine if a 402 permit is needed. The Project Manager should be made aware if potential Waters may be impacted during construction. Impacts will need to be minimized to the extent possible. The Environmental Planner should discuss the project as early as possible with the Wetland Biologist. All Section 404/401 reviews should begin with a discussion of permit needs and type at the same time that all other technical areas are also initiated. This will foster better communication within external and internal parties, and promote more accurate documentation of construction activities.

The Wetland Biologist will work with the ADOT/Corps Liaison to process reviews and permits. If more additional coordination between the ADOT project team and the Corps is required, depending on the complexity of the project, the Wetland Biologist will schedule a meeting or conference call to assist in answering questions or resolving issues. The Environmental Planner and ADOT Project Managers should be informed of any technical meetings. If agencies raise concerns or if an issue has the potential to impact the scope, schedule or budget the ADOT Project Manager should always be made aware.

### **Section 402 Process**

Under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, federal-aid highway projects are required to obtain Construction General Permit (CGP) coverage for stormwater discharges from construction sites that meet certain criteria. The permit is obtained during the construction phase of the project as outlined in ADOT Stored Specification 104.09. However, ADOT Water Resources can help to advise whether a permit is needed. The CGP coverage is obtained from the ADEQ when the project is on non-tribal lands and from the EPA when the project is on tribal lands. If the project meets criteria requiring permit coverage and is on both tribal and non-tribal lands, the permit is obtained from both regulatory agencies. Section 402 may be part of the NEPA evaluation process but is not likely to affect signatory requirements regarding NEPA approvals. Coordinate with ADOT Water Resources and refer to the ADOT Clean Water Act Manual for guidance on when the CGP applies.

The Wetland Biologist may aid in determining proper classification of projects in terms of permit definitions and requirements. If the project is within ¼ mile from and has the potential to discharge to an Impaired (Section 303(d) of the CWA) or Outstanding Arizona waterbody, additional documentation and/or control measures will be required. Depending on the project and the water quality, the control measures may be designed as part of the project based on advice from ADOT Water Resources. For More information go to the [Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity to Waters of the United States.](#)

During project initiation, the Wetland Biologist will evaluate if the project is potentially within ¼ mile from an Impaired or Outstanding Waters and will advise the project team accordingly. Additional coordination may also be required with the regulating agency. This discussion should always be initiated with the Wetland Biologist.

### **Section 404/401 Process**

As defined in the [ADOT Clean Water Act Guidance Manual](#), Section 404 regulates the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the US (Waters). Section 404 is regulated by the Corps; the EPA may review regulated fill activities in conjunction with the Corps. Section 401 allows for state certification of the federal Section 404 permitted activity and is necessary for all activities that may result in a discharge into Waters. It ensures that an activity will not violate applicable water quality standards. On all non-tribal lands, ADEQ is responsible for issuing the Section 401 Water Quality Certification. On tribal lands, the EPA or the governing Tribal Agency may be responsible for issuing the proper 401 certification.

The Environmental Planner should consult with the Wetland Biologist to determine the appropriate regulating agency involved.

All Section 404 and Section 401 documentation submitted by the consultant or local agencies will be reviewed by the Wetland Biologist, as well as reviewed and signed by the appropriate signatory (typically the District Engineer) prior to submittal to the appropriate regulating agency. Permitting options for Section 404 and Section 401 include the Regional General Permit 96 (RGP), Nationwide Permits (NWP), Individual permit and conditional or individual Water Quality Certification.

Application for permitting requires the description and design details pertaining to reasonability anticipated construction impacts, both temporary and permanent. An appropriate level of design is required prior to submitting to the regulating agencies. This is typically available at 60% design.

Approximately 90% of projects requiring a permit will either use a RGP or NWP. The Clean Water Act Manual includes a description of the steps and timeline associated with each permitting approach. RGP and NWP processing once submitted to the Corps varies from immediate authorization to 3-5 months, depending on the project and impacts. Individual permit processing at the Corps may take approximately 6-9 months. Consult with the Wetland Biologist for an estimate of time for processing. In processing any form of permitting associated with Section 404 or Section 401, it is important to have the most accurate information regarding scope of work. Accurate information should include information concerning both temporary and permanent impacts, construction methods and access, the specific location, design details which are unlikely to change, and information that has been previously discussed with the district.

All jurisdictional delineations and CWA Section 404 permit and 401 certification application materials will be reviewed by the Wetland Biologist. If edits are required, those will be sent back to the preparer to revise and resubmit.

### **Technical Guidance**

For more details concerning the permitting process, refer to:

- The [ADOT Clean Water Act Guidance Manual](#)

- Permit guidance – [404/401 Procedures](#)

### *Hazardous Materials Procedures*

Once the Hazardous Materials Coordinator is notified of a project they should begin working closely with the Environmental Planner and project team on the project. The Hazardous Materials Coordinator is involved early in the process to determine the project scope, schedule and budget.

#### **Coordination and Administration**

If coordination between the ADOT project team and a regulatory agency is required, depending on the complexity of the project, the Hazardous Materials Coordinator will schedule a meeting or conference call to assist in answering questions or resolving issues.

If meetings take place regarding a technical subject, Environmental Planners and ADOT Project Managers should be invited. If agencies raise concerns or if an issue has the potential to impact the scope, schedule or budget the ADOT Project Manager should be informed.

#### **Hazardous Materials Document Review Procedures**

The Hazardous Materials Coordinator is responsible for reviewing internal and consultant created technical reports and the Hazardous Materials sections in the NEPA documents for accuracy and consistency. If documents are created internally by a member of the group, they will be peer reviewed prior to approval.

The following is a step-by-step process for the Hazardous Materials Team staff on how to review NEPA documents for hazardous materials.

- The Environmental Planner assigned to the project sends relevant draft environmental review documents to the Hazardous Materials Coordinator via email.
- The Hazardous Materials Coordinator forwards environmental review documents to a Hazardous Materials Specialist to review as needed.
- The Hazardous Materials Specialist reviews any environmental review documents regarding hazardous materials such as: PISA, Initial Site Assessment (ISA, equivalent to the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment), Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI, equivalent to the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment), Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM) and Lead-Based Paint (LBP) Report or ACM-LBP Report, and Soil Sampling Report. The Specialist emails the review to the Coordinator.
- The Hazardous Materials Coordinator approves any relevant environmental review documents and emails the Hazardous Materials Specialist with any additional comments to be communicated to the Environmental Planner. The Hazardous Materials Supervisor may delegate the approval of environmental review documents to the Hazardous Materials Specialist.
- The Hazardous Materials Specialist formalizes the approval and sends notification to the Environmental Planner. Note: The Hazardous Materials Specialist places in the project file any Hazardous Materials documentation such as the PISA or ACM-LBP Report and uploads approved documents to Workfront (ADOT internal only).

- The Environmental Planner receives the Hazardous Materials Specialist email regarding the Hazardous Materials Section approval, incorporates any comments and places the approval email in the project file.
- A PISA, if applicable, must be approved within twelve months of the CE approval date. No additional approval is required prior to the request for federal authorization or the start of construction unless there is a formal CE Re-evaluation.
- As outlined in the [ADOT Right-of-Way Procedures Manual – Project Management Manual, Section 2.12](#); an Initial Site Assessment, Preliminary Site Investigation, or a Detailed Site Investigation (Phase I, II or III) may be considered for new ROW. However, such additional assessments are part of the ROW acquisition process and do not require any re-evaluation of the project NEPA approval.

### Technical Guidance

For more information on internal procedures for the Hazardous Materials Section, technical guidance on how to complete asbestos and lead based-paint testing and reporting, PISAs, or Phase 1 ISAs, consult with the Hazardous Materials Team. For additional technical guidance, go to the ADOT website.

- [Hazardous Materials Assessment](#)

## Amendments to Project Development Procedures Manual

### Description of Modification

Change	Date	Responsible
Start of MOU 4/16/2019	4/16/19	PAO
Conflict resolution materials on ENV Drive hyperlink fixed on page 14	07/05/19	PAO
Problem Escalation 2.1.12 and Appendix	09/23/19	SO
NEPA Chats, post-NEPA review team (performance review team), and the CORE Team concept 2.1.13	“	SO
Planner Onboard SOP added to 3.4 and Appendix	“	SO
e-NEPA/Federal Register 4.10.4	“	SO
Change on page 20 that CA Agencies can notify of plans review via email or other means. Re-evaluation added to Review timelines in Appendix. Planner onboard SOP updated in Appendix.	1/22/20	PAO
Change on page 20 with note added to clarify that CA Agencies “NEPA and plans review” verification is not required for every project. A note was added on page 27 that CA Agencies are responsible for their own NEPA and plans consistency review.	05/14/20	PAO
NEPA Approval Distribution Email Template for CA Agency Projects added to the Appendix	05/14/20	PAO
Section 4.13 PDS changed to PEDS throughout and revisions to new on-call task order process. A valid CE text altered to clarify technical report updates (pg. 27). Adding documents to website Section 5.1.3 modified (pg. 30) Additional bullet on PISA timing added (pg. 65)	10/15/20	PAO
Full text review and editing, logo change, bookmarks, web link editing. Addition new Section 4.8 for Recreational Trails Program. Appendix Technical Sections Basic Procedures – HPT; Early Tribal Coordination sections. Section 5.1.3 reference to placing document on the ENV website deleted.	7/27/21	SO
Changes to Section 3: Training Procedures—“ADOT Learning Center” and “My Training Plan” changed to “ADOT Learning and Development Center” and “My Training Progress Report” respectively. “Training Coordinator” changed to “Training Officer”. Changed APPENDIX: New Hire Standard Work—added new <i>ENV1740W Intro to Environmental Clearances</i> class.	12/12/22	KT
Project folder templates in appendix updated	01/19/23	PAO
Environmental Commitments Coordinator and EPIC added pages 11–13, 20–21 and 29. Task order procedures pg. 26 updated. PTS pg. 28 updated.	04/26/23	KR
Federal authorization letter moved from Final Certification Folder to the Administrative Folder (pages 44 & 47).	06/28/23	PAO
CEQ NEPA Document timelines updated pg. 23. Folder and Filing Guidelines, template folders updated pages 44 – 49. Approval email templates in the Appendix updated.	02/29/24	PAO
CEQ NEPA regulations updated pg. 14. Standard project file folders added Section 402 folder.	07/31/24	PAO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update to reflect changes in CE Scoping Guidelines with Biology Scoping being its own guidelines separate from the CE Scoping Guidelines Pg. 67.</li> <li>ADOT logo</li> <li>Environmental Justice updated per January 21, 2025, Executive Order titled <i>Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit Based Opportunity</i> rescinding Executive Order 12898 titled <i>Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations</i>.</li> <li>Removal of CEQ references throughout per Executive Order titled <i>Unleashing American Energy</i> and CEQ Interim Final Rule removing CEQ NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) from the Code of Federal Regulations effective March 27, 2025.</li> <li>Project Reference (AIDW/PTS) set-up guidance removed from appendix</li> </ul>	05/27/25	PAO