

Integrated Quality Control/Quality Assurance Review Procedures under the NEPA Assignment Program (ADA version of flowchart)

Pre-PA&ED Collaboration/Review

Step 1. Project Initiation

District/Region reviews Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (PEAR) or Preliminary Environmental Study (PES) form, as well as the draft Project Initiation Document (PID) (for both Caltrans- and consultant-prepared PIDs, the District/Region quality control reviews the PID).

Review period: As determined by District/Region, HQ Environmental Coordinator, and Legal, as applicable.

Revisions: PID is revised in response to review comments, as needed, until agreement is reached.

Review period: As determined by District/Region, HQ Environmental Coordinator, and Legal, as applicable.

Best practice: Collaborate with HQ Environmental Coordinator and/or Legal if HQ DEA and/or Legal review of environmental documentation is required. Conduct environmental review of cooperative agreement, if applicable.

Note for Complex EAs: As part of the Class of Action determination for Complex EAs, the District/Region and HQ Environmental Coordinator determine the technical studies and associated environmental document topical sections that HQ DEA will review during Steps 3 and 4. The HQ Environmental Coordinator has final decision-making authority in identifying these technical studies/ environmental document sections.

“Begin Environmental” Collaboration/Review

Step 2: Preliminary Environmental Activities

District/Region reviews purpose and need, proposed alternatives, preliminary scope, study methodologies, schedule, cost, and other “Begin Environmental” information (for both Caltrans- and consultant-prepared environmental documents, the District/Region quality control reviews “Begin Environmental” information). If a Complex Environmental Assessment (EA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation is being prepared, the HQ Environmental Coordinator must be invited to participate in Step 2. If an EIS, Legal must also be invited.

Review period: 22 business days for initial review of “Begin Environmental” information.



Revisions: Purpose and need, proposed alternatives, preliminary scope, study methodologies, schedule, cost, and other information are revised in response to review comments, as needed, until agreement is reached.

Review period: 10 business days for revisions and review of each iteration of revised “Begin Environmental” information.

Technical Studies

Step 3: District/Region Review (Concurrent Headquarters Environmental Review, if Required)

District/Region reviews technical studies (for both Caltrans- and consultant-prepared environmental documents, the District/Region quality control reviews technical studies). If HQ DEA review of the environmental document is required, then send the technical studies to the HQ Environmental Coordinator who will coordinate DEA reviews of technical studies concurrently with District/Region.

Review period: 22 business days for initial District/Region/Headquarters Environmental Coordinator review of technical study(ies).

Revisions: Technical studies are revised in response to review comments, as needed, until agreement is reached.

Review period: 10 business days for revisions and review of each iteration of revised technical study(ies).

Environmental Documentation

Step 4: External Readiness and District/Region Review (Concurrent Headquarters Environmental Review, if Required)

If a Categorical Exclusion, District/Region prepares and approves Determination Form.

District/Region reviews Routine and Complex EAs, EISs, and/or Individual Section 4(f) Evaluations (for both Caltrans- and consultant-prepared environmental documents, the District/ Region quality control reviews these documents). If a Complex EA, EIS, or Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation, then the HQ Environmental Coordinator and HQ specialists also review concurrently with District/Region. The Coordinator transmits comments to the District/Region. One set of combined District/Region and HQ comments to be sent to documentation preparers.

Submit External Readiness Certification Form with administrative draft environmental document.

Review period: 22 business days for initial District/Region/DEA review of environmental documentation.



Revisions: Environmental document is revised in response to review comments, as needed, until agreement is reached and document is ready for circulation. If Legal review is required, proceed to Step 5; otherwise, proceed to Step 6.

If Legal review isn't required, submit Internal Quality Certification Form at end of District/Region/ HQ Environmental review process.

Review period: 10 business days for revisions and review of each iteration of revised environmental documentation.

Best practice: District/Region is strongly encouraged to hold a meeting with HQ Environmental Coordinator and others, as applicable, within the 22-business-day review period, to discuss comments to be submitted back to documentation preparers.

Step 5: Legal Review

If an EIS or Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation, then Legal reviews. Legal transmits its comments to the District/ Region with a copy to the HQ Environmental Coordinator.

Review period: Goal of 22 business days for initial legal review of environmental documentation.

Revisions: Documentation is revised, as needed, until Legal approves for public circulation.

If Legal review is required, submit Internal Quality Certification Form after Legal review/Legal sufficiency finding.

Review period: Goal of 10 business days for revisions and review of each iteration of revised environmental documentation.

Step 6: Sign and Circulate

Upon completion of the Legal review or achieving legal sufficiency, the HQ Environmental Coordinator recommends, in writing, to the District/Region that the environmental document is ready for signature and approved for circulation.

Note for Records of Decision: Steps 4-5 are repeated for the Record of Decision for an EIS.

Note for final environmental documents: Steps 4-6 are repeated for the final environmental document following draft environmental document circulation.

