

(1) For intramural research projects, an environmental review will be performed for each laboratory's projects at the start of the planning year. The review will be conducted before projects are incorporated into the ORD program planning system. Projects added at a later date and, therefore, not identified at the start of the planning year, or any redirection of a project that could have significant environmental effects, also will be subjected to an environmental review. This review will be performed in accordance with the process set forth in this subpart and depicted in figure 1.

(2) For extramural research projects, the environmental review shall be conducted before an initial or continuing award is made. The appropriate program official will perform the environmental review in accordance with the process set forth in this subpart and depicted in figure 1. EPA form 5300-23 will be used to document categorical exclusion determinations or, with appropriate supporting analysis, as the environmental assessment (EA). The completed form 5300-23 and any finding of no significant impact (FNSI) or environmental impact statement (EIS) will be submitted with the proposal package to the appropriate EPA assistance or contract office.

(c) *Agency coordination.* In order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure consistency throughout the Agency, environmental reviews of ORD projects will be coordinated, as appropriate and feasible, with reviews performed by other program offices. Technical support documents prepared for reviews in other EPA programs may be adopted for use in ORD's environmental reviews and supplemented, as appropriate.

§ 6.704 Categorical exclusions.

(a) At the beginning of the environmental review process (see Figure 1), the appropriate program official shall determine whether an ORD project can be categorically excluded from the substantive requirements of a NEPA review. This determination shall be based on general criteria in § 6.107(d) and specialized categories of ORD actions eligible for exclusion in § 6.704(b). If the appropriate program official determines that an ORD project is con-

sistent with the general criteria and any of the specialized categories of eligible activities, and does not satisfy the criteria in § 6.107(e) for not granting a categorical exclusion, then this finding shall be documented and no further action shall be required. A categorical exclusion shall be revoked by the appropriate program official if it is determined that the project meets the criteria for revocation in § 6.107(c). Projects that fail to qualify for categorical exclusion or for which categorical exclusion has been revoked must undergo full environmental review in accordance with § 6.705 and § 6.706.

(b) The following specialized categories of ORD actions are eligible for categorical exclusion from a detailed NEPA review:

(1) Library or literature searches and studies;

(2) Computer studies and activities;

(3) Monitoring and sample collection wherein no significant alteration of existing ambient conditions occurs;

(4) Projects conducted completely within a contained facility, such as a laboratory or other enclosed building, where methods are employed for appropriate disposal of laboratory wastes and safeguards exist against hazardous, toxic, and radioactive materials entering the environment. Laboratory directors or other appropriate officials must certify and provide documentation that the laboratory follows good laboratory practices and adheres to applicable Federal statutes, regulations and guidelines.

§ 6.705 Environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

(a) When a project does not meet any of the criteria for categorical exclusion, the appropriate program official shall undertake an environmental assessment in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.9 in order to determine whether an EIS is required or if a FNSI can be made. ORD projects which normally result in the preparation of an EA include the following:

(1) Initial field demonstration of a new technology;

(2) Field trials of a new product or new uses of an existing technology;

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(3) Alteration of a local habitat by physical or chemical means.

(b) If the environmental assessment reveals that the research is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the environment, the appropriate program official shall prepare a FNSI in accordance with §6.105(f). Pursuant to §6.400(d), no administrative action will be taken on a project until the prescribed 30-day comment period for a FNSI has elapsed and the Agency has fully considered all comments.

(c) On actions involving potentially significant impacts on the environment, a FNSI may be prepared if changes have been made in the proposed action to eliminate any significant impacts. These changes must be documented in the proposal and in the FNSI.

(d) If the environmental assessment reveals that the research may have a significant impact on the environment, an EIS must be prepared. The appropriate program official may make a determination that an EIS is necessary without preparing a formal environmental assessment. This determination may be made by applying the criteria for preparation of an EIS in §6.706.

§6.706 Environmental impact statement.

(a) *Criteria for preparation.* In performing the environmental review, the appropriate program official shall assure that an EIS is prepared when any of the conditions under §6.108 (a) through (g) exist or when:

(1) The proposed action may significantly affect the environment through the release of radioactive, hazardous or toxic substances;

(2) The proposed action, through the release of an organism or organisms, may involve environmental effects which are significant;

(3) The proposed action involves effects upon the environment which are likely to be highly controversial;

(4) The proposed action involves environmental effects which may accumulate over time or combine with effects of other actions to create impacts which are significant;

(5) The proposed action involves uncertain environmental effects or highly unique environmental risks which may be significant.

(b) *ORD actions which may require preparation of an EIS.* There are no ORD actions which normally require the preparation of an EIS. However, each ORD project will be evaluated using the EIS criteria as stated in §6.706(a) to determine whether an EIS must be prepared.

(c) *Notice of intent.* (1) If the environmental review reveals that a proposed action may have a significant effect on the environment and this effect cannot be eliminated by redirection of the research or other means, the appropriate program official shall issue a notice of intent to prepare an EIS pursuant to §6.400(b).

(2) As soon as possible after release of the notice of intent, the appropriate program official shall ensure that a draft EIS is prepared in accordance with subpart B and that the public is involved in accordance with subpart D.

(3) Draft and final EISs shall be sent to the Assistant Administrator for ORD for approval.

(4) Pursuant to §6.401(b), a decision on whether to undertake or fund a project must be made in conformance with the time frames indicated.

(d) *Record of decision.* Before the project is undertaken or funded, the appropriate program official shall prepare, in accordance with §6.105 (g) and (h), a record of decision in any case where a final EIS has been issued.