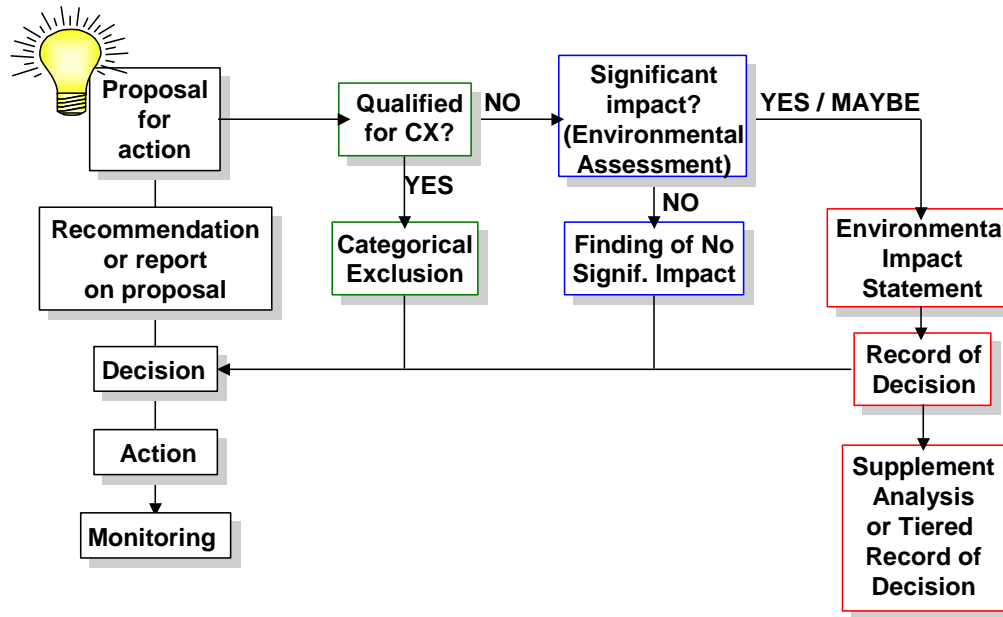


Overview of NEPA Review Processes



Environmental Impact Statement: Preparation of an "EIS" is required for proposed Federal and Federally-dependent actions potentially having significant environmental impacts. The EIS process requires public involvement. Also, development and comparative evaluation of alternatives to resolve environmental conflict is often required. The EIS process concludes with a formal "Record of Decision" explaining the agency's reasons for choices among alternatives. At BPA, the Administrator approves EISs and RODs. The EIS process generally varies from 18 to 36 months.

Environmental Assessment: An "EA" is a relatively brief document (20 to 50 pages) containing evidence and analysis sufficient to determine whether a proposed action potentially has significant environmental impacts. The process normally involves public review. A formal "Finding of No Significant Impact" determining that preparation of an EIS is not required concludes the EA process. At BPA, the Vice President for Environment, Fish & Wildlife approves EAs and FONSI. The EA/FONSI process typically varies from 7 to 12 months.

Categorical Exclusion: A "CX" is a determination that a specific proposed action is consistent with a previously identified category of actions that normally do not have significant environmental impacts and therefore normally do not require preparation of an EIS. Individual proposed actions must satisfy several conditions to qualify. At BPA, the NEPA Compliance Officer approves application of CXs. The normal CX review process is 3 months depending on interagency consultation requirements.

Supplement Analysis: An "SA" is a brief document recording evidence and analysis to determine whether a proposed action has been adequately evaluated in a previous EIS or EA. At BPA, the NEPA Compliance Officer approves SAs. The SA review process is generally 1 to 3 months depending on interagency consultation requirements.

Tiered Record of Decision: For specific actions proposed pursuant to formal policies embodied in BPA's Business Plan, a "Tiered ROD" records evidence and analysis to determine whether the action is consistent with general analysis in the Business Plan EIS. The Tiered ROD process requires public involvement. The Administrator approves Tiered RODs. Process review time required varies considerably depending on the public involvement process.