

§91.52

28 CFR Ch. I (7–1–03 Edition)

(1) Implement procedures to make the NEPA process more useful to decision-makers and the public; reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data; and emphasize real environmental issues and alternatives. Environmental impact statements shall be concise, clear, and to the point, and shall be supported by evidence that agencies have made the necessary environmental analyses.

(2) Integrate the requirements of NEPA with other planning and environmental review procedures required by law and by agency practice so that all such procedures run concurrently rather than consecutively.

(3) Encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.

(4) Use the NEPA process to identify and assess reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment.

(5) Use all practicable means to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of the actions upon the quality of the human environment.

(b) *OJP's policy to minimize harm to the environment.* It is OJP's policy to minimize harm to the environment. Consequently, OJP can reject proposals or prohibit a State from using formula grant funds for a project that would have a substantial adverse impact on the human environment. Additionally, federal law prohibits the implementation of a project that jeopardizes the continued existence of an endangered species or that violates certain regulations related to water quality. Generally, though, where an EA or EIS reveals that a project will have adverse environmental impacts, OJP will work with the State grantee to identify ways to modify the project to mitigate any adverse impacts, or will encourage the State to consider an alternative site.

(c) *Mitigation.* OJP may require the following mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate a project's adverse environmental impacts:

(1) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking certain action or part of an action.

(2) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.

(3) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.

(4) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.

(5) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

(d) *Use of grant funds.* In accordance with OJP's general policy of providing the States with the maximum amount of control and flexibility over the use of formula grant funds, the States can use VOI/TIS grant funds to pay for the costs of preparing environmental documents, to implement mitigation measures to reduce adverse environmental impacts, and to cover the costs of construction delays or other project changes resulting from compliance with the NEPA process. However, any funds used for these purposes must be included as a portion of the State's grant which requires a State match.

§91.52 Definitions.

The definitions supplied by the Council on Environmental Quality in its *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act*, 40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508, (CEQ Regulations), shall apply to the terms in this subpart.

§91.53 Other guidance.

The Department of Justice has also published NEPA procedures that incorporate the CEQ regulations at 28 CFR part 61. Additionally, the Office of Justice Programs' Corrections Program Office has prepared a handbook for VOI/TIS grantees, *Program Guidance on Environmental Protection Requirements*. This publication and other relevant documents can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/cpo>.

APPLICATION TO VOI/TIS GRANT PROGRAM

§91.54 Applicability.

(a) *Major Federal action.* NEPA's requirements apply to any proposal for

legislation or other major federal action that might significantly impact the quality of the human environment. The CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1508.18 define "major federal actions" as actions with effects that may be major and which are potentially subject to Federal control and responsibility. The CEQ regulations categorize "major federal actions" as, among other things, the "[a]pproval of specific projects, such as construction or management activities located in a defined geographic area. Projects include actions approved by permit or other regulatory decision as well as Federal and Federally assisted activities." (40 CFR 1508.18(b)(4)).

(b) *VOI/TIS construction grants subject to NEPA.* This subpart applies to all proposed, new and partially completed VOI/TIS projects (including projects on tribal lands) initiated by state or local units of government with grant funding from OJP that involve construction, expansion, renovation, facility planning, site selection, site preparation, security or facility upgrades or other activities that may significantly impact the environment.

(c) *Projects.* Although VOI/TIS money cannot be used for a project's operations expenses, the definition of "project" or "proposal" for NEPA review purposes is defined as both the construction and the long-term operation of correctional facilities and related components such as all off-site projects to accommodate the needs of the correctional facilities project (e.g., road and utility construction or expansion, projects offered to the affected community as an incentive to accept the correctional facility construction or expansion, and other reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or third party undertakes such action). Reasonably foreseeable actions include future prison construction phases, especially when either current acreage requirements or design capacities for utilities are based on needs stemming from future phases.

§91.55 Categorical exclusions.

Activities undertaken by State, local, or tribal entities using VOI/TIS funds that are consistent with any of the following categories are presumed

not to have a significant effect on the human environment and thus, are categorically excluded from the preparation of either an EA or an EIS. Although these activities are excluded from environmental reviews under NEPA, they are not excluded from compliance with other applicable local, State, or Federal environmental laws. Additionally, an otherwise excluded activity loses its exclusion and is subject to environmental review if it either would be located within or potentially affect any of the following: a 100-year flood plain, a wetland, important farmland, a proposed or listed endangered or threatened species, a proposed or listed critical habitat, a property that is listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, an area within an approved State Coastal Zone Management Program, a coastal barrier or a portion of a barrier within the Coastal Barrier Resources System, a river or portion of a river included in or designated for potential addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a designated or proposed Wilderness Area, or a sole source aquifer recharge area designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The resulting environmental review for those activities that lose their exclusion status shall focus on the factor or factors that caused the loss of the exclusion.

(a) *Minor renovations.* Projects for minor renovations within an existing facility, unless the renovation would impact a structure which is on the National Register of Historic Places, or is eligible for listing on the register.

(b) *Limited expansion.* Projects for the expansion of an existing facility or within an existing correctional complex, which does not add more than 50 beds or increase the capacity of the facility by more than 50 percent whichever is smaller. This exclusion does not apply to either a phased project that exceeds these numerical thresholds or projects to expand facilities that:

(1) Are located in a floodplain;

(2) Will affect a wetland;

(3) Will affect a facility on the National Register of Historic Places or that is eligible for listing on the register;