

(b) The purpose of this regulation is to supplement the regulations for implementation of NEPA established by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and codified at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, as adopted by USDA in 7 CFR part 1b.

(c) Unless otherwise noted, parenthetical citations throughout this part refer to the CEQ regulations.

§ 3407.2 Definitions.

(a) *Authorized Departmental Officer* means the CSREES official, acting within the scope of delegated authority, who is responsible for awarding and administering project grants on behalf of USDA and for carrying out NEPA responsibilities as outlined in § 3407.4(d) of this part. The Authorized Departmental Officer's responsibilities do not include the review, approval, management, or similar activity relating to programs or projects funded by CSREES on the basis of statutory formula and also do not include parallel responsibilities relating to the management or administration of cooperative agreements awarded by CSREES.

(b) Other terms used in this regulation have the same meaning as they have in the CEQ regulations.

§ 3407.3 Policy.

(a) It is CSREES policy to comply with the provisions of NEPA and related laws and policies and with the implementing regulations cited in § 3407.1(b) of this part.

(b) Environmental documents should be concise, written in plain language, and address the issues pertinent to the decision being made.

(c) Environmental documents may be substituted for or combined with other reports which serve to facilitate decisionmaking (40 CFR 1506.4).

(d) CSREES personnel will cooperate with other Federal and State agencies or units thereof, as well as with grantees, contractors, and other cooperating individuals or entities undertaking activities funded or recommended for funding by CSREES to assure that NEPA considerations are addressed early in the planning process to avoid delays and conflicts (40 CFR 1501.2).

(e) CSREES reserves the right to require project participants outside of

CSREES to furnish environmental data or documentation to assist CSREES in carrying out its responsibilities under NEPA. When an applicant, grantee, or other cooperating individual or organization is required to submit environmental data to CSREES, including preparation of an environmental assessment (EA), or when a contractor hired by a grantee or other cooperating party prepares environmental data or documentation, CSREES shall provide advance instructions to the applicant, grantee, or other cooperator relating to the preparation and submission of the required information. All information supplied by external project participants shall be subject to verification by CSREES (40 CFR 1506.5).

(f) When possible, costs of analyses and development of required environmental documents shall be planned for during the budgetary process relating to the plan or program. Where the nature of particular program agreements (e.g., grants, cooperative agreements, formula projects) are determined by CSREES to require environmental documentation, the cost of preparing such documentation and of reasonable mitigation efforts shall be considered allowable costs and may be charged to the project as a portion of the Federal or the non-Federal share of project costs. However, CSREES funds above those authorized for the program award will not be made available to recipients to cover such costs.

(g) Final environmental documents, decision notices, and records of decision shall be available to the public for review. There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed during environmental analysis (40 CFR 1501.7).

(h) The concept of tiering to eliminate repetitive discussions applicable to EISs (40 CFR part 1502) is applicable to EAs also.

(i) CSREES officials may adopt an existing Federal EA or EIS when a proposed action is substantially the same as the action for which an existing EA or EIS was prepared (40 CFR 1506.3), provided that the EA or EIS or portion thereof meets the standards for an adequate EA or EIS under these regulations.

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(j) Existing environmental documents may be incorporated by reference to reduce the bulk of an EA or EIS (40 CFR 1502.21).

(k) After prior consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality, CSREES personnel may, in emergency situations, implement alternative arrangements for compliance with these procedures in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.11.

§ 3407.4 Responsibilities.

The CSREES officials identified below are responsible for carrying out the provisions of NEPA as indicated:

(a) *Administrator*. The Administrator is responsible for providing leadership, formulating agency policies and procedures to implement NEPA, and making available necessary resources to ensure that NEPA goals are met.

(b) *Associate Administrators and Deputy Administrators*. Associate Administrators and Deputy Administrators are responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that eligible institutions under CSREES formula grant programs are notified of agency environmental requirements before projects to be funded with formula funds are submitted to CSREES for approval;

(2) Assuring that adequate consideration is given to environmental effects of proposed actions during programmatic planning and decision-making processes for grants, cooperative agreements, and formula projects;

(3) Ensuring that environmental information is reviewed and that required documentation is developed in a timely and satisfactory manner for grants, cooperative agreements, and formula projects; and

(4) Approving courses of action within the range of alternatives presented including, as appropriate, approval or recommendation of EAs and EISs for grants, cooperative agreements, and formula projects.

(c) *Program Managers*. CSREES Program Managers are responsible for:

(1) Preparing EISs when required;

(2) Reviewing and making recommendations relating to environmental documentation submitted by project recipients;

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(3) Recommending and implementing courses of action within the range of alternatives presented; and

(4) Monitoring results.

(d) *Authorized Departmental Officer*. The Authorized Departmental Officer is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that eligible applicants under CSREES' project grant programs are notified of agency environmental requirements in advance of proposal preparation;

(2) Providing terms and conditions of grant award for adequate environmental documentation; and

(3) Authorizing the commencement of approved project activities.

NOTE: Where agency environmental requirements are set forth in program regulations, solicitations of applications, program guidelines, or other documents that apprise applicants of environmental requirements, the requirement for advance notification to potential applicants shall be satisfied.

§ 3407.5 Classes of action.

The following describes typical classes of action associated with CSREES programs and related activities:

(a) Actions which normally do not require the preparation of an EA or an EIS are those actions which ordinarily do not have significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. These include those activities described in §§3407.6 (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this part.

(b) Actions normally requiring an EA, but not necessarily an EIS, are those projects in which at least some level of uncertainty exists regarding individual or cumulative effects on the quality of the human environment. Such actions generally include those identified in §§3407.6(b) and 3407.7 of this part.

(c) Actions normally requiring an EIS are projects which are determined to have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment or which will be performed under extraordinary circumstances. These types of actions are identified in §§3407.6(b) and 3407.8 of this part.

§ 3407.6 Categorical exclusions.

(a) All CSREES actions will be analyzed by the appropriate CSREES official specified in §3407.4(c) to determine