

TSK 400-ab1: Project Initiation Meeting

See also: [EM Chapter 400](#)

Effective June 2012

Start task: Region Environmental Coordinator is assigned a project with a federal nexus that will require an EA/EIS and the NEPA Compliance Strategy meeting has been held.

End task: For an EIS the Project Lead submits the Project Initiation Letter to the ESO Director. For an EA meet with local officials and/or resource agencies as needed.

1. Prepare for the meeting:

- a. **Review project summary**, ERS and project scoping documents. Reconcile any project or regulatory changes since the ERS was signed.
- b. **Review NEPA Compliance Strategy** meeting summary
- c. **Create a preliminary list of disciplines** to analyze in the environmental document reports needed for the project. See [TSK 400-ab2: Determining What Discipline to Analyze](#).
- d. **Establish legislative intent**, type of work, project limits, and time lines.
 - i. Draft Purpose and Need statement, description of work, and logical termini.
- e. **Identify potential permits** required for the project and key local, state, and federal resource agencies that will be involved in the project.
 - i. Jurisdiction is determined by investigating:
 1. Federal or state land ownerships.
 2. Regulatory authorities requiring project permits.
 3. Project funding involving state or federal funding.
 - ii. Include agencies that have special interest regarding a resource that will be investigated in the EA/EIS, without having special authority/jurisdiction to regulate that resource.
- f. **Review GIS data layers** for the project area and estimate the potential extent and severity of key environmental issues.
 - i. Map potential study area, project limits, and key environmental resources likely to be adversely affected by the project.
- g. **Identify tribes** that will be involved on the project.
 - i. Draft Tribal Coordination Plan
- h. **Conduct preliminary demographic analysis** to identify minority, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations that may be affected by the project.
 - i. Document results and draft Public Involvement Plan
- i. **Identify alternatives** that will be considered in the analysis.

- i. If only one build alternative will be considered briefly describe alternative that were considered and the reason they were eliminated from study.
- j. **Draft meeting agenda**, reserve meeting room, and develop meeting materials described in previous steps (Purpose and Need statement, project description and logical termini, study area map, list of potential permits, draft tribal coordination plan, draft public involvement plan, and list of proposed discipline reports.)
- k. **Invite participants** to the Project Initiation Meeting. Participants should include:
 - i. Federal Lead, or Co-lead Agency representative (FHWA Area Engineer/FTA Environmental Lead/FRA lead).
 - ii. Project environmental team.
 - iii. Project Design Engineer.
 - iv. Discipline specialist from any discipline identified in Step 1d as a key environmental issue.
 - v. HQ ESO NEPA Specialist.

2. During the meeting:

- a. **Review** the draft project purpose and need, type of work, location, and logical termini.
- b. **Discuss the NEPA project classification** (EA/EIS?) and confirm NEPA strategy.
 - i. **If the project is an EA with only one build alternative**, discuss the rationale for this decision, secure agreement by Federal Lead, and document concurrence in the project file.
- c. **Confirm Federal Lead (or Co-lead) Agency.**
- d. **Confirm list of required local, state, and federal permit and approvals.**
- e. **Review draft public involvement plan and tribal coordination plan.**
- f. **Discuss** how the environmental issues identified in Step 1 affect the proposed project schedule and adjust major milestones as needed.

3. After the Meeting

- a. **For an EIS.**
 - i. **See** PRO 400-b: Preparing and EIS
 - ii. **Draft the Project Initiation Letter.**
 - iii. **Documents decisions** in the project file. See [TSK 400-ab7: Creating a Project File to Support the Administrative Record](#).
 - iv. **Sends draft of Project Initiation Letter to ESO Director** with a cc to ESO NEPA Specialist.

- v. **Drafts Participating and Cooperating Agency letters.** See [PRO 400-b2: Requesting Agency Cooperation](#).
- b. **For an EA.**
 - i. See [PRO 400-a: Preparing an EA](#)
 - ii. **Document decisions** in the Project File. See [TSK 400-ab7: Creating a Project File to Support the Administrative Record](#)