Completing an NTIA Tiered Environmental Assessment

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an Environmental Assessment (EA) for actions that are likely to have significant environmental effects. When an agency prepares a programmatic environmental document, like a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), a "Tiered EA" can narrowly focus on site-specific environmental issues.

> NTIA's Tiered Environmental Assessment Template provides a simple, concise, table formatted document with suggested text, figures, and appendices drawn from PEIS analyses, eliminating unnecessarily duplicative effort and reducing preparation time and cost.

WHY USE THE TIERED EA TEMPLATE?

- NEPA allows relevant analyses from programmatic environmental documents to be used in NEPA documents for subsequent related actions. (42 USCS § 4336.b)

- NTIA has adopted Regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEISs) that analyze the environmental impacts of broadband in every US State and Territory.

- The issues discussed in the PEISs can be incorporated into NEPA documents prepared for subsequent related actions by summary, significantly reducing the time, effort, and length of environmental assessments.

HOW TO COMPLETE A TIERED EA

1 Contact the assigned NTIA Federal or Environmental Program Officer (FPO or EPO)

NTIA grant recipients may contact their assigned NTIA FPO or EPO to discuss NEPA compliance and create an action plan prior to starting the Tiered EA template.

2 Review the First Responder Network (FirstNet) Authority Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS) chapter for the project's state or territory

The Tiered EA template considers the potential impacts of broadband deployment activities on resource categories assessed in the FirstNet PEISs, which analyze each state and territory. The NEPA professional(s) completing the Tiered EA will review and incorporate the relevant PEIS analyses into the template.

3 Identify and complete site-specific analyses relevant to the "subsequent action" (NTIA funded project)

Incorporate the results of statutorily required reviews (e.g., Endangered Species Act Section 7 and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106) and analyze unique resources that may be affected by the project.

4 Review and complete the Tiered EA Template

NTIA grant recipients should add and modify the language of the Tiered EA template as appropriate for their proposed project needs and legal requirements.

5 Submit Tiered EA to NTIA for review and approval

NTIA grantees should follow program guidance on the submission of EAs.

6 Receive Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and initiate deployment

The Tiered EA template promotes expedited NTIA review and FONSI determination for complete documents.

NTIA