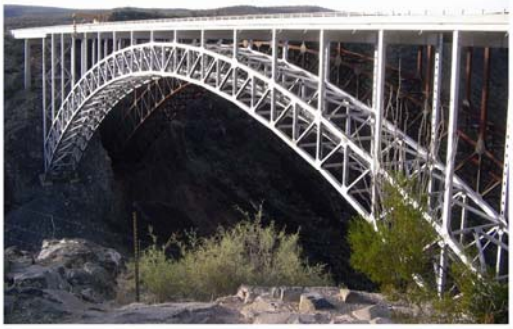
August 2015

QUALITY CONTROL PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT QUALITY & DELIVERY GUIDANCE



Environmental Planning Group

ADOT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iii

1. INTRODUCTION & DEFINITION OF TERMS 1
- 1.1. Quality Assurance 1
- 1.2. Quality Control 1
- 1.3. Customer Service Policy 1
- 1.4. Monitoring QA/QC 4

2. PROJECT ASSIGNMENT 5
- 2.1. Assignments 5
- 2.2. First Steps After Project Assignment 5

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT 7
- 3.1. Environmental Planning Group (EPG) Roles 7
- 3.2. Communication & Coordination 8
- 3.3. Scope of Work 13
- 3.4. Schedules 13
- 3.5. Project Funding & Budget 15
- 3.6. Environmental Consultants 16
- 3.7. Clearance Distribution & Record Retention 17

4. QUALITY DOCUMENTS & REVIEWS 20
- 4.1. Documents to Support QA/QC 20
- 4.2. Review & Approval Procedures 21
- 4.3. Document Readability 22

5. APPENDIX 24
- 5.1. Document Review Form
- 5.2. EPG Timeframe Guidelines
- 5.3. NEPA Approval Diagram
- 5.4. Consultant Evaluation Form
- 5.5. Document and Folder Labeling Guidelines
- 5.6. Clearance Distribution Email Template
- 5.7. How to Create a Project in EPG PTS
- 5.8. AIDW Guidance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) vision is to be the standard of excellence for transportation systems and services. One strategy to help achieve this is by continuously evaluating all processes to determine new approaches and efficiencies to ensure that we deliver quality service. The Environmental Planning Group (EPG) is strongly committed to producing quality documents and providing excellent customer service to internal and external customers including internal ADOT Divisions, federal, state and local government agencies, tribal communities, and the public.

EPG established a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) Plan to ensure that the overall quality and efficiency of products and services provided to our customers is exceptional. This plan provides guidance on producing quality documents, explains necessary procedures, identifies the staff responsible for performing activities and verifying compliance; and also provides templates and tools for successfully implementing this plan.

This plan will be implemented by project teams during the preparation and review of environmental documents that meet federal, state and local rules and regulations. Because these documents are made available to a broad audience, they require accurate information, should be well-written, easy to read, and provide full and honest disclosure. This QA/QC Plan is designed to provide functional and easily understood guidelines to assist project teams in meeting these requirements.

ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have agreements in place to help deliver the Federal-Aid Highway Program. This plan will assist ADOT in conforming to the stipulations of the FHWA-ADOT Stewardship and Operating Agreement which covers all areas of the program. The FHWA-ADOT Programmatic Categorical Exclusion Agreement (PCE) requires ADOT to maintain a QA/QC Plan and procedures. This QA/QC Plan ensures that ADOT EPG staff fully understands the provisions of the PCE and what is required of ADOT to retain approval authority for certain Categorical Exclusions (CE) on FHWA's behalf. The QA/QC Plan ensures compliance with the PCE including 23 CFR 771.117 requirements, EPG roles and responsibilities, documentation requirements, proper CE determination under 23 CFR 771.117(c) and (d), environmental analysis, evaluation of unusual circumstances, document peer reviews, checking of environmental commitments, exercise of proper approval authority, and the execution of proper filing conventions and record keeping.

1. INTRODUCTION & DEFINITION OF TERMS

Quality products and quality service are of utmost importance in EPG. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC), as well as EPG's customer service policy are defined below.

1.1. Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality Assurance is defined as a system for ensuring a desired level of quality control in the development, production, or delivery of products and services. A quality assurance system is employed at the management level to ensure that prudent QC procedures and tools are in place and are being carried out, with the desired result of quality professional services being achieved. EPG defines QA as preventing problems.

1.2. Quality Control (QC)

Quality Control is a system for verifying and maintaining a desired level of quality in technical analysis and documentation through careful planning and use of proper checking against standards and verification of products. A quality control system is routinely employed at the production and administrative levels. EPG defines QC as identifying and correcting problems.

1.3. Customer Service Policy

EPG's customer service standards outline the necessary time and manner in which our services are delivered to our customers. These standards are made available to guide EPG staff, internal ADOT divisions, outside agencies, and the public about when they can expect requested services to be delivered. In all contact with customers, EPG staff should aim to exceed the customers' needs while representing the agency.

<u>Customer Service Goals</u>
EPG consistently strives to exceed our customers' expectations by achieving the following goals:

- Deliver products and services at the agreed upon time to all customers.
- Listen to, accept, and act upon customer feedback.
- Assist all customers in defining their needs and requests.
- Provide courteous, prompt and professional customer service.
- Deliver the highest quality products and service with the goal of exceeding customer expectations.

1.3.1. Engage Customers Proactively

Exceptional customer service requires both responding well when customers contact them, but also taking the initiative to contact customers. Proactive communication anticipates questions before they are raised or before issues occur. In general, customer enquiries should be responded in the format they are received. For example if EPG receives a letter, staff should respond by letter. If staff receives an email, they should respond by email. However, if a time constraint or a miscommunication exists, another format may be used when appropriate. For example if a letter is received but there is a sense of urgency in the need for a response an email or phone call would be appropriate. In addition, communication between agencies should be federal to federal, state to state, etc. Consultants should only communicate with other agencies through EPG staff. Consultants may directly transmit information and documents to agencies when pre-approved to do so by EPG. The Environmental Planner shall be copied on all such transmittals.

1.3.2. Telephone & Voicemail

Staff should answer the telephone within two rings. Use of voicemail will be kept to a minimum. When answering a telephone call, staff should greet the caller and identify themselves giving their name and department. For example: "Hello, ADOT Environmental Planning Group, this is name." Staff will remain polite at all times and assist their caller where possible.

All staff member phones are to have voicemail accounts with a professional recorded message informing callers, if staff members are out of the office, to leave a voicemail. Staff will respond to messages left on voicemail as soon as possible upon their return to the office. Documenting project related phone conversations in the Project Tracking System (PTS) or on a phone log is recommended.

1.3.3. Email

All staff members are expected to adhere to ADOT's internet and email policies.

All staff emails will contain a consistent signature block including the staff person's name, title, department, telephone number and ADOT logo. Refer to the ADOT graphics website http://azdot.gov/media/adot-graphic-standards.

Emails should be responded to as soon as possible and at minimum within two business days. Critical items should be responded to between four hours to one day by email. If appropriate an email should be marked as urgent in the subject line. If a response is going to take longer than the timeframes noted above, the inquirer will be informed by EPG of the progress and a realistic timeframe set for resolution.

Be selective and inclusive when distributing emails. Not all messages should be sent to every customer every time. Do not "reply all" if the topic is not important to everyone on the distribution list. There should be no "tone" or indignation expressed in any emails. Use discretion and judgment when forwarding emails you have received from others. Emails that may be of a more direct internal nature may not be appropriate for sending to outside partners and stakeholders. In such cases, create a new email to convey the necessary information.

Staff should respond by email in a professional, positive, courteous and helpful manner. Punctuation that can be interpreted as yelling (exclamation marks or all capitalized letters) should not be used. Use highlighting to point out key facts or information if necessary. Staff should write clear and concise emails that provide enough information to answer questions. Use spell check before sending. If discussions become lengthy or very detailed a phone call or in-person meeting is recommended.

All project related emails shall contain the ADOT TRACS Number, and project name in the email subject line. In addition, for email sent that include representatives of FHWA, the Federal-aid Project Number shall also be included.

When staff members are out of the office during work hours, the Microsoft Office "Out of Office Assistant" should be activated with a personal message informing customers who to contact in their absence and when they will be able to respond to emails.

1.3.4. Letter Inquiries

All letters will be on current ADOT letterhead, with the exception of letters sent through the FHWA or Local Public Agency (LPA) projects. For letters processed by FHWA (for cooperating agency letters, consultation, etc.), refer to FHWA Letter Guidance on the EPG ADOT website.

For scoping letters, refer to the EPG Guidelines for Scoping Projects with Categorical Exclusions for writing and responding to inquiries. The project scope of work description and all draft response letters shall be reviewed by the ADOT Project Manager prior to sending letters to the customer. LPA project scoping letters and responses will be on the local agency letterhead. LPA scoping letters can also go out under the LPA's consultant or the ADOT on-call consultant's letterhead if the letter asks for comments to be submitted to the LPA c/o of the consultant.

All response letters (for scoping, consultation, etc.) should thank the recipient for their response and staff should directly and concisely address their comments and/or questions using plain English without technical terminology, unless necessary.

1.3.5. Face to Face Meetings

Where staff members meet face-to-face with customers, regardless of location, they will greet customers immediately as they present themselves. Staff should address the inquiry quickly and in a professional, courteous and helpful manner.

When scheduling meetings, reasonable advance warning should be provided and include date, time, location, contact person, phone number and subject of the meeting. Where appropriate, agendas shall be made available to keep meetings on schedule especially if many items are to be discussed. If there are schedule changes or cancelations, reasonable notice should be given. Meetings will start and end on time, and be conducted in a professional, respectful and courteous manner. Prior to sending meeting invitations, be selective and ensure the appropriate people are invited.

1.3.6. Referrals

If a staff member is unable to respond to an inquiry, every effort should be made to refer the inquirer on to the person best able to help them. If a person is being referred by email or phone to a different division or colleague, a relevant direct phone number and/or email address will be given.

1.3.7. Cover for Colleagues

To maintain excellent customer service within EPG teams, annual leave will be coordinated. Staff members are expected to provide coverage within their own teams and arrange for a 'back-up' to attend any critical meetings missed while on leave. If team members are planning on taking annual leave, team leaders will be updated on the status of their projects prior to leave. EPG staff is responsible for completing their projects on schedule regardless of vacations or other absences and should make arrangements if an activity or assignment is due during the scheduled leave.

1.3.8. Document Requests

If staff is asked by anyone (outside of the normal day-to-day project information sharing) for ADOT related documents they should be directed to suitable existing online information (i.e. ADOT Statewide Project website azdot.gov/projects). [For all other requests direct them to inquire through ADOT Safety and Risk Management (SRM).] SRM is part of the Administrative Services Division which is under Business Operations. Procedures for requesting public records can be found here: http://azdot.gov/images/default-source/inside-adot/adot-organization-chart.jpg?sfvrsn=0

1.3.9 Media Requests

For media inquiries, direct customers to the Public Information Officer in ADOT Communications.

1.4. Monitoring QA/QC

EPG will continually compare their customer service performance against other leading agencies and organizations in order to maintain high standards, foster growth, encourage learning and possible improvements.

1.4.1. Continual Monitoring

Each staff member will monitor their own performance against the standards in this policy. Frequent supervisor feedback to staff on document quality, delivery and customer service performance will also be provided so staff members know if they are reaching the performance goals stated above and the standard MAP (Managing Accountability and Performance) customer service goals. Direct feedback and MAP reviews provide an opportunity to make staff aware of any room for performance improvement. To ensure customer service goals will be met, managers should recognize teams and individuals who demonstrate outstanding customer service and who meet the customer service goals.

1.4.2. Annual Assessment

EPG customer service, document quality and delivery will be assessed on an annual basis. EPG Management will meet at least once annually with the Project Management Group Management to attain direct feedback on customer service and process.

In addition, “Document Review Forms” will be completed by the Environmental Planner for each project. These forms list all reviewers, review dates and comments. The Planning Section Manager will save the completed form from each project. These forms will be reviewed for project timeliness and document quality based on comments and number of submittals. This review process will be completed annually by EPG. Based on the review, the QA/QC Plan will be evaluated and updated accordingly. EPG staff and FHWA will be made aware of the annual assessment process and results, and any revisions made to this QA/QC Plan, and process improvements.

2. PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

Quality Management begins with assigning the most appropriate person to a given task. Each member of the project team is responsible for controlling the quality of the environmental products. Team members assigned to a particular project are chosen based on experience, expertise, and workload. Procedures on how projects are assigned to staff members are described below, in addition to the questions and tasks that should take place in the early stages of project assignment.

2.1. Assignments

Projects originate in the Planning and Programming Group within the Multimodal Planning Division (MPD). EPG is informed of new projects from the Project Management Group. All new projects requiring assignment should go directly to the EPG Group Manager who will then forward the request to the Planning Section Manager. If requests for assignment are sent directly to the Environmental Planners, those should be forwarded to the Planning Section Manager. The Planning Section Manager will assign the project to one of the planning team leads (Senior Environmental Planner) and concurrently send to the technical area team leads for assignment. The planning team lead will assign the project to the most appropriate Environmental Planner based on past experience, geographic location, scale of project and current workload. It is the responsibility of the Environmental Planner to proactively *lead* the coordination with the technical disciplines within EPG.

Although one individual may have numerous projects assigned to them, generally not all projects are technically moving concurrently or at the same relative pace. All projects will be at different stages in the development process and may require more or less work-hours during a given period of time. In order to effectively manage multiple projects it is important to track progress in the available computer data programs, electronic storage folders and the project hard copy folder as projects and people assigned to them occasionally change. Environmental Planners must be skilled in multi-tasking.

2.2. First Steps after Project Assignment

When initially assigned a project, the Environmental Planners shall first update the PTS with their name and any project related information. See section 3.7.1. for more information on PTS. Next, they are to introduce themselves to the ADOT Project Manager and notify them that they will be the environmental point of contact and request to be added to the project distribution list. As project information is accumulated, a digital folder shall be created by the Environmental Planner or Technical Specialists under the G-drive where all files and emails are to be saved (see section 3.7.2.). A hard copy folder shall also be created by the Environmental Planner (see section 3.7.4) to contain signed documents and final copies of technical reports.

The following are important questions to ask the Project Manager when assigned a project:

- What is the current stage of development (scoping, or final design)?
- What is the proposed scope of work and will an engineering scoping document (also known as a Project Assessment) be completed?
- Has a project schedule been created? What is the bid ready date?
- Have staff and consultant budgets already been established?
- Is there an engineering and/or environmental consultant on-board that I should coordinate with?

Once the above questions are answered, the Environmental Planner shall share this information with the Technical Specialists to determine if the use of an EPG on-call environmental consultant will be needed, if one is not already on board. Coordinate closely with the ADOT Project Manager on the schedule and hiring of consultants and the management of budgets.

2.2.1. Projects

Keep in mind that the end product of the sum total of professional services provided during the development process is a safe, efficient high-quality transportation project that will serve the citizens of Arizona who fund the transportation system.

SR 69 and SR 89 Interchange in Prescott

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management is the process and activity of planning, organizing, controlling resources, and following procedures and protocols to achieve a specific goal, by the application of knowledge, skills, and techniques to execute a project effectively and efficiently; a methodical approach to planning and guiding a project from start to finish. Effective project management helps carry out large-scale projects on time, on budget and with minimal disruption to the rest of the organization. This chapter will provide guidance on communication and consultant management in addition to the three main components of project management (scope, schedule and budget).

For more guidance on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project management see the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) "Effective Project Management for NEPA".

3.1. Environmental Planning Group (EPG) Roles

The Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists each play a critical role in a project's success. While it is important to effectively and efficiently manage your "piece of the puzzle", each should contribute to the management of the overall project and assist the ADOT Project Manager to deliver the ADOT Five-Year Construction Program.

The EPG project team is a QA feature, in that it ensures that the persons producing and approving documents communicate mutual expectations about what is needed for a project. Consistent interaction between team members is intended to resolve most, if not all problems before the documents are completed and ready for review. As a result, when a document is sent around for reviews, it should be a final draft ready for approval. The team ensures that the environmental commitments are communicated from environmental approval through design and documented in the special provisions and bid packet. The Environmental Planner may assist the Resident Engineer (RE) with environmental issues that arise during construction. The RE is the ADOT lead during construction and the primary point of contact for all issues construction related.

The Environmental Planner leads the NEPA approval and environmental clearance process which includes managing the project's environmental schedule, budget and end products that are in compliance with NEPA rules and regulations. The Environmental Planners are responsible for coordinating and communicating closely with the ADOT Project Manager, FHWA, the Technical Specialists assigned to the project, and the ADOT Districts. ADOT Districts play a key role in ensuring that mitigation measures are constructible and agreed upon. Environmental Planners are required to review each stage of plans and ensure that the mitigation measures are incorporated into the special provisions.

Technical Specialists manage and approve technical analysis, reports, technical work schedules and budgets that are in conformance with their related environmental rules and regulations. The Technical Specialists are responsible for coordinating closely with their project Environmental Planner and recommending and creating mitigation measures that are clear, reasonable and constructible.

Coordination between these three key players, the Environmental Planner, Technical Specialists and consultants is essential in helping complete the full environmental effort for each project and assisting other divisions in meeting project deadlines and adhering to budgets.

3.2. Communication & Coordination

Communication and coordination are essential for project management. Maintaining early, open, regular and accurate channels of communication at all levels of project staff is vital to ensure the smooth flow of information and instruction from project partners and regulatory agencies. It also permits for early warning of risks and changes which enable assessment and timely resolution.

3.2.1. Proactive Communication

Proactive communication that is timely and concise is imperative. For active projects, communicate continually with the ADOT Project Manager, the FHWA Area Engineer and the project consultants. Do not wait for them to contact you. If there is a change to the project, the EPG team should be made aware. Be adaptable to changes in project scope and schedules but notify the ADOT Project Manager that if changes take place, it may impact the environmental analysis, schedule and budget. In order for the project team to make accurate and informed decisions, all of the relevant information should be discussed.

The ADOT Project Manager is the main ADOT point of contact during project development and shall be included on relevant communications between EPG and the FHWA Area Engineer. The ADOT Project Manager shall be invited to EPG-initiated multidisciplinary environmental technical meetings with designers and outside agencies to resolve project specific environmental issues.

All Technical Specialists and Environmental Planners will discuss concerns internally within EPG and formulate a proposed solution before requesting FHWA's assistance in order to respect their time as a resource. Most likely other EPG staff has had similar questions or issues on a project and in-house resources can be used to solve the problem.

3.2.2. District Coordination

It is important that the environmental team keep the District informed on environmental commitments as they will work with the contractor in the field to make sure these are carried out.

The environmental team is required to involve the District when the following items are involved during design:

- **Avoidance Commitments -** If the Technical Specialist finds that a project requires an avoidance area commitment for cultural, biology or 4(f) for example, the Technical Specialist must inform the Environmental Planner. The Environmental Planner will email a request to the District and ADOT Project Manager for consideration. This request needs to be sent prior to including the avoidance area in consultation letters, design plans or the technical documents. The Environmental Planner will need approvals from both the District and ADOT Project Manager in order to move forward with the avoidance area. Also, the District may not be able to avoid these areas during construction and the team may need to find another creative way to avoid it or they may need to undertake the necessary steps to impact it. Communicate with your project team and Technical Specialists on all the options.

- **404 Permit Reviews –** This pertains to Pre-Construction Notifications (PCN) and Individual Permits, not Nationwide Permits. The Environmental Planner, the 404/401 Program Coordinator, the ADOT Project Manager and the District need to review the permit applications prior to sending them to the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Environmental Planner will need to coordinate these reviews.
- **Mitigation Measures** – If a technical analysis proposes to address project impacts by using mitigation measures not included on the Commonly Used Mitigation Measures, the Technical Specialist must inform the Environmental Planner.

The above listed requests need to be sent to the ADOT Project Manager and District for approval before including them in the technical documents. Be sure to email these requests to the District Engineer, the District Environmental Coordinator and the Transportation Engineering Specialist on the District Engineers contact list. The Environmental Planner only needs one person in the District to approve these requests, in addition to the ADOT Project Manager. If the environmental consultant sends this email request on the Environmental Planner's behalf, ensure that they send it to these three people at the District and that they copy the Environmental Planner on the email.

Please give the District a minimum of two (2) weeks to review. They may need three (3) weeks to review an Individual Permit. This is not a hard set timeframe, work closely with your teams and see how much time they need.

During construction, the ADOT RE is the primary ADOT contact and is responsible for communicating construction related environmental issues to the FHWA Area Engineer. The Environmental Planner and FHWA Environmental Coordinator should be copied on environmental related communications between the ADOT RE and FHWA Area Engineer. The Environmental Planner shall further coordinate with the appropriate EPG Technical Specialists and FHWA Environmental Coordinator as necessary.

EPG staff shall inform the ADOT RE when additional coordination with outside agencies is required to address environmental issues that arise during construction.

For projects in which EPG has an environmental consultant to monitor during construction. Monitors shall work directly with the ADOT RE to resolve issues in the field and shall keep EPG informed of any issues that arise. Though under a design contract, environmental consultants need to be mindful of the fact that the ADOT RE is the primary ADOT contact for the project during construction and issues in the field need to be communicated to the ADOT RE. EPG and the District Environmental Coordinator shall also be informed of environmental issues communicated between the Monitor and the ADOT RE.

Resolution of environmental issues during construction shall follow the normal ADOT escalation process. Issues should be addressed at the lowest level and but may be raised to the "next level" as needed. If an on-call consultant or monitor is unable to resolve an issue with the RE, then they shall inform EPG.

3.2.3. FHWA Coordination

The FHWA Area Engineer is the primary FHWA contact for matters related to project development and construction.

All NEPA documents shall be transmitted from EPG to the FHWA Area Engineer, with the FHWA Environmental Coordinator copied. All environmental resource and/or consultation letters that are to be sent out on FHWA letterhead shall be sent to arizona.fhwa@dot.gov to be reviewed and processed. The FHWA Environmental Coordinator and Area Engineer shall be copied on the email transmittal to the above email address.

All technical reports for review and/or project file shall be submitted directly to the FHWA Environmental Coordinator. The FHWA Area Engineer shall be copied on all technical report email transmittals.

3.2.4. Decision & Conflict Resolution

Conflicts and indecision can stall projects. Open and honest communication should take place to resolve issues and to expedite decision-making. Project concerns or issues should not be left unaddressed to result in schedule and budget impacts. If an issue or concern is found, discuss the item right away with the appropriate person, team or team lead. If more people or agencies are needed to address the concerns, a meeting should take place to discuss and create a plan of action on how to resolve the issue. If a decision cannot be reached, or the team or an individual is uncertain on how to move forward or address a concern, it should be brought to your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. If the project is still stalled or the conflict is still unresolved, the issue needs to be escalated to the next level supervisor and if necessary all the way up to the EPG Group Manager. Always try to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. Do not escalate a small issue immediately to the highest level manager. Always keep the ADOT Project Manager informed of major project issues.

Conflict resolution applies within ADOT as well as with outside agencies, stakeholders, and District staff. Disagreement between the Environmental Planner and the ADOT Project Manager or technical staff needs to be resolved as quickly as possible. The same escalation steps apply with the immediate supervisor being the first step in the resolution process.

Waiting for information can also delay a critical project decision or become a factor in the critical path of the schedule. This escalation process should also be employed if there is no response when critical information is needed to advancing the project development.

3.2.5. Project Meeting Attendance

Environmental Planners or their representing environmental consultant should attend all project progress meetings they are invited to, absent significant conflict. Technical Specialists will be asked to attend progress meetings when there is a technical item on the agenda that requires their attendance. If you are unable to attend a meeting, inform the ADOT Project Manager or meeting host or have someone fill in for you if necessary. Be inclusive, but selective when sending meeting invitations. Not everyone should attend all meetings. Be cognizant of people's time.

EPG attendance of project kick-off and field review meetings is important. The kick-off meeting is typically the first meeting with the project team and stakeholders of the project. This meeting introduces members of the team, their roles and an overview of the project and other planning elements. Some projects may have one kick-off meeting, while others may have a kick-off meeting at the start of the scoping phase and one at the start of the design phase of the project.

Internal EPG Kick-Off Meetings

As soon as the basic scope of work has been established for the project, an internal EPG kick-off meeting with the Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists should take place. It is suggested that all projects have an EPG kick-off meeting; however, it will be left to the discretion of the Environmental Planner whether or not to schedule the meeting. For example smaller projects with limited construction, with no impacts or projects with no construction at all may not require this level of coordination. These meetings will focus around discussing the project schedule, required coordination between technical disciplines, required project deliverables and any potential environmental concerns. The EPG kick-off meeting can take place before or after the ADOT project kick-off meeting. For example a project that involves a water crossing may require a pre-meeting with the Technical Specialists to determine who should attend the kickoff meeting.

The purpose of these meetings is to be proactive, incorporate early planning, foster close coordination, and anticipate and discuss concerns up front in an effort to reduce delays and unknowns later in the project schedule. For example if an Individual 404 permit is needed for a bridge project, the biology and cultural resources determination of effect is required in the application to the Army Corps of Engineers. The timing of these three components (biology, cultural resources and the 404 application) is essential to coordinate and is the responsibility of all parties in order not to adversely affect the schedule.

Project Kick-Off Meetings

The presence of an EPG Environmental Planner and/or environmental consultant representative at the project kick-off meeting is essential. This attendance will lead to a better understanding of environmental requirements during the study, scoping or design phases. The EPG Environmental Planner and/or environmental consultant should bring as much information as possible to this meeting, such as any known cultural resources, sensitive species or 4(f) resources within the project vicinity. Communication and document distribution protocols should also be reviewed at the kick-off meeting.

The following are suggested questions that can be asked during this meeting. The information received in response to these questions will lead to a better understanding of the overall project and help the Environmental Planner determine the type of environmental documents needed (type of NEPA document, required technical reports, etc.). A "Field Review Form" should be completed for the project.

Project Site

- What are the project limits or footprint including access?
- Who are the surrounding land owners? Will the project be on ADOT owned right-of-way (ROW) or an easement

- Where will staging or stockpiling take place? It is encouraged that this be determined during design and incorporated in the clearance, for areas within existing right-of-way, rather than leaving it to the contractor to decide. Review that contractor staging and stockpiling on private land requires additional clearance by the contractor if and when such sites are determined for use during construction.
- Will traffic control require detours or full closures be needed? Will there be any temporary or permanent access changes to residences or businesses?
- Are there previous environmental documents for the area including previous NEPA documents; do the documents aid in determining needed mitigation or eliminate the need for duplicitous environmental work?
- Ask if there will be utility relocation or need to provide utility service. If such service is paid for by the project, even if the work is done by the utility company, the area, if outside the project limits, may have to be environmentally cleared.

Hazardous Materials

- Will there be pavement marking obliteration?
- Will any demolition or work be done on any painted surfaces or load bearing concrete structures?
- Will any work be done on load bearing bridge joints or bridge barriers? This will determine if lead-based paint testing and/or asbestos will be needed.

Biology and Waters of the US

- Will vegetation clearance be required? Will any of the work take place in or near water or ephemeral water sources? This may cause seasonal restrictions due to possible critical habitat or migratory birds.
- Are there any waters of the US within the project limits, adjacent to or within the drainage from the project? Discuss the project ahead of the kick-off meeting with the water quality specialist as needed.

Cultural Resources

- Discuss the Area of Potential Affects (APE) and if there has been previous survey of the area? Are there any known sites?
- Is the project within a historic district?
- Is an architectural survey needed?
- Any properties afforded protection under Section 4(f)?

Parks and Recreational Areas

- Are there any parks or public recreational facilities or multi-use trails, proposed or existing, within or near to the project location? If project involves a multi-use trail, ask if it will connect to an existing trail.
- How will any trails or access points be impacted during construction?
- Any properties afforded protection under Section 4(f)?

Geotechnical

- Will geotechnical investigations be necessary? What is the nature of the geotechnical investigation, borings or augured holes?

- When is the geotechnical clearance needed, early or can it be covered under the overall project clearance? Coordinate closely with the Technical Specialists and see if tasks can be combined such as consultation.

Pavement Design
- Will there be millings?
- Is shoulder build-up necessary?

Roadway Drainage
- Will drainage improvements be required?
- Will there be any work in a river or wash? This may trigger the need for a 404 permit.

Bridge Design
- Will the bridge work require construction activities below the bridge and if so how will the work area be accessed?
- Are there indications of migratory bird or bat use under the structure?

Right-of-Way
- Will new ROW, easements or temporary easements be required for the project?
- When will the ROW Division need to begin their acquisition process? The environmental clearance is needed prior to ROW acquisition.

3.3. Scope of Work

The Environmental Planner, Technical Specialists and supporting consultant should constantly review that the scope of work is consistent throughout the environmental review process and at each stage of plan review (15%, 30%, 60%, 95%, and 100%). Environmental Planners are required to review each stage of plans to confirm a consistent scope of work. For LPA projects, the Environmental Planner shall forward each set of plans to the Historic Preservation Team (HPT) Specialist for continuing consultation if the project has a “no adverse” effect determination.

If the scope of work or project limits change during design the ADOT Project Manager shall inform the Environmental Planner. If the scope of work or project limits change, the Environmental Planner shall inform all of the Technical Specialists and determine if any re-analysis is needed. Direction by Technical Specialists to consultants regarding project changes that could impact the budget, scope or schedule should not be given without first coordinating with the Environmental Planner and the ADOT Project Manager as these changes my require approval of the ADOT Project Review Board (PRB) or the Local Public Agency.

3.4. Schedules

The environmental component of the project schedule is a critical component when ensuring timely project delivery. Other project actions such as ROW, Utilities and Geotechnical may be dependent on the approval of the environmental documentation. The ADOT Project Manager will develop a submittal schedule for 30% to 100% design, as well as an estimated date for the bid advertisement and construction in coordination with the Environmental Planner and with input from the project team and the environmental consultant. The schedule should include estimated dates for technical document submittals, surveys, submittal of permits and completion.

Typically, the environmental analysis and clearance process should not exceed nine (9) months in duration and should be achieved at 60% design for CE level projects with no adverse impact or where alternatives are not in consideration. This may not always be possible depending on the scale and impacts of the project. Proceed cautiously to 95%. Discussions with EPG/FHWA should be ongoing throughout the project. EPG and FHWA can make a "risk assessment" based on the impacts and relevant environmental issues. 95% plans can be distributed with EPG/FHWA approval prior to NEPA Approval.

For projects with greater potential for environmental impacts, the environmental documentation is developed concurrently with the project preliminary engineering (Design Concept Report). NEPA approval is required by the 30% Design Phase for large scale projects, generally when an EA or EIS is prepared. Below are crucial factors that should be considered when creating or monitoring a schedule:

- What type of NEPA documentation will be needed
- Level of approval: ADOT approved or FHWA approved
- Is a cultural resource survey needed, and how will resources if present be addressed (avoidance, monitoring, data recovery, etc.)
- Presence of critical habitat or listed/special species of concern requiring coordination with the land owner and/or USFWS (possibly up to 135 days for consultation)
- Geotechnical work and if a geotechnical clearance is required prior to the NEPA approval
- Presence of 4(f) or 6(f) properties that require analysis and/or coordination
- Requirements for 404 permitting with the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), requirements for 401 permitting with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and/or Environmental protection Agency (EPA)
- Public involvement requirements
- Seasonal restrictions for accurate surveys, public involvement and construction
- Testing and proper disposal requirements for hazardous materials
- Air and Noise Quality requirements

The environmental process is a discovery process; therefore, lead time should be evaluated when estimating the submittal of technical documents. Sufficient time should be incorporated for multiple reviews, agency reviews, and other foreseeable tasks. However, unforeseeable items such as changes in laws, newly listed species, a newly discovered cultural site, or changes in scope of work may take place. In addition, many 404 permits and technical documents need a certain stage of development plans, such as 60%, in order to proceed. Early and often communication with the ADOT Project Manager is a must, as well as frequent communication with the environmental consultant, EPG technical team, resource agencies and land management agencies. Though factors in the environmental schedule should remain flexible, the final due date should be relatively fixed based on programming and the expected bid advertisement date. This will safeguard the timely delivery of fiscal year projects.

For more information see the Federal Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Memorandum on Preparing Efficient and Timely Reviews under NEPA.

3.4.1. EPG Timeframes

The timeframes below are estimates for completing the environmental analysis and NEPA documentation. For specific document review timeframes refer to the EPG Timeframe Guidelines (Appendix 5.2.). Keep in mind that each consulting agency may have its own review timeframe requirements. Please work closely with each agency to determine and incorporate their required

timeframes into the schedule. Also work closely with the ADOT Project Manager to determine if there are ROW needs, as the ROW Group cannot begin property acquisition without NEPA approval. If the NEPA approval is delayed it could also potentially impact other required ADOT clearances needed for the project. Once a basic scope of work has been defined at the project kick-off meeting these timeframes should be followed. The goal should be to complete the NEPA document and clearance under these timeframes if no technical issues arise.

Categorical Exclusion (CE)

- Should take three (3) to nine (9) months to complete the analysis, NEPA process and clearance documentation
- All CEs should be completed at 60% plan submittal
- Technical areas such as Section 4(f), Section 106, Section 7 consultation and 404 permits, as well as project financial issues can be the critical path 'drivers' of the schedule.
- If there are potential adverse environmental impacts; move cautiously past 60% plans with EPG approval. Approval need only be in the form of communication between the Environmental Planner, the ADOT Project Manager and the FHWA Area Engineer.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

- Should take two (2) to three (3) years to complete the analysis, NEPA process and clearance documentation
- Needs is to be completed by the 30% plans, i.e. a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is needed to begin Final Design

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

- Should take up to three (3) to five(5) years to complete the analysis, NEPA process and clearance documentation
- Needs is to be completed by the 30% plans, i.e. a Record of Decision (ROD) is needed to begin Final Design

3.5. Project Funding & Budget

For federally funded projects ADOT staff and consultant charges cannot be accrued until there is an authorization for Preliminary Engineering (PE) funds from FHWA. However, State-funded staff charges are allowed to assist in pre-scoping advice, scope of work definition or cost proposal development. State-funded actions also require an authorization based on the particular funding source utilized. The Project Info Retrieval Tool (PIRT) and the ADOT Information Data Warehouse (AIDW) are useful computer tools to help manage budgets and track funding availability. Ask the ADOT Project Manager for the funding authorization; it can also be found in Advantage/PIRT and on the AIDW.

3.5.1. Project Review Board (PRB) Procedures

PRB is the main oversight body within Development that provides funding approvals and reviews changes to the project scope. The EPG Group Manager is on the Board and relies upon project dates and information that are entered into PTS. This information is utilized in decision making during the meetings. PTS reports are printed prior to each meeting and are the main source of project information. For projects listed on the PRB agenda, the assigned Environmental Planner shall fill out the "Project Updates, Details, and EPG Dates" tabs in PTS and print the summary report for EPG management prior to the PRB meeting.

3.6. Environmental Consultants

Consultants that assist EPG can either be an EPG on-call consultant or a sub-consultant under the ADOT Development on-call, also known as a "turn-key" project consultant, for both ADOT and LPA projects. The following provides guidance on hiring a consultant, reviewing contracts, managing their schedules, tracking deliverables, and monitoring the quality of their work.

3.6.1. On-call Assignments

Prior to the project funding authorization there should be a request from the ADOT Project Manager for the amount of funding needed to complete environmental tasks. This will be an initial cost estimate based on a general scope of work. This estimate should cover EPG staff time and environmental on-call consultant work required. The Planning Section Manager will provide this estimate to the ADOT Project Manager prior to project assignment to an Environmental Planner.

Once the funding authorization has been received, the Environmental Planner shall send an email request to the Planning Section Manager for an on-call consultant to be assigned. It may also be that a Development on-call consultant has already been assigned to the project when the initial request for EPG involvement is received. For projects that utilize an EPG on-call environmental consultant, the consultant can complete the full environmental analysis and NEPA documentation or they may complete only a portion of the work based on the Environmental Planner's discretion. The Environmental Planner should work closely with the Technical Specialists to determine what tasks can be completed in-house versus what can be completed by the consultant. LPAs that self-administer design without federal-aid funding are encouraged to provide an initial scope of work and fee to ADOT EPG for review through the ADOT Project Manager.

3.6.2. Task Order Procedures for EPG On-Call Projects

After obtaining funding authorization, the Environmental Planner prepares a Task Order Request Form for the EPG Procurement Specialist. The cost proposal should be prepared by the consultant and submitted in a timely manner within one (1) to two (2) weeks. Once a consultant cost proposal has been prepared and submitted to EPG, the Environmental Planner will distribute the draft cost proposal to the Technical Specialists assigned to the project for their detailed review and comment. EPG staff should look to minimize project development costs while still meeting all the necessary clearance requirements. Once the cost proposal has been reviewed by the Technical Specialists and the Environmental Planner, comments are sent back to the consultant for revision. Once the contract hours are agreed upon, the Environmental Planner will forward the final cost estimate to the EPG Procurement Specialist for processing with the Engineering Consulting Section (ECS).

Projects that are prepared by the ADOT Development On-Call ('turn-key' consultant) will be processed by the ADOT Project Manager with assistance from the Environmental Planner for the environmental tasks. As with the EPG on-call consultants, the EPG team will also review and comment on the cost proposal after receiving a copy from the ADOT Project Manager.

The successful timing of financial actions is critical to the success of the overall project schedule and is a shared responsibility. The Environmental Planner needs to be aware of the financial status of the project budget during all phases of the development process. If there is inadequate funding to cover

the environmental consultant and EPG staff time, the ADOT Project Manager needs to be made aware of the situation immediately so joint resolution can take place.

3.6.3. Reviewing Cost Estimates and Minimizing Costs

Reducing and minimizing costs are critical to ADOT and are part of its mission statement. All cost estimates are to be reviewed by the Environmental Planner, Senior Environmental Planner, Technical Specialists, and EPG management prior to approval. Cost estimate submittals shall be broken down by task. Hours assigned to each task shall be reviewed.

While it is important to manage costs it is also important to ensure adequate/necessary analysis, compliance, and documentation based on the scope of work and predicted impact. Below are a few ways to reduce costs:

- Research if other recent projects were completed in the same project vicinity in order to see if the technical documents can be used or updated
- Combine projects and/or consultant tasks if two projects are adjacent to each other (coordinate with the Technical Specialists and ADOT Project Manager)
- Use your own judgment; do not let the consultant assumptions go unchallenged
- Ensure that the environmental effort is commensurate with the scope of the project and not a 'blanket coverage' for activities unlikely to occur
- Ensure project deliverables, analysis and documentation are all necessary
- Ensure hours are adequate/necessary for the itemized deliverables

3.6.4. Quality Submittals from Consultants

It is required that consultant documents also meet the highest quality standards. Each on-call consultant has a QA/QC plan in place and is located in the G-drive here:
G:\Environmental Planning Group Projects\Consultant Ratings\On-call QAQC Plans

If environmental documents are submitted with many errors, the document will be returned with a request to be revised according to the template and documenting guidance on the EPG website and according to their QA/QC plan. If the quality of work is poor or documents go through more than two EPG reviews it should be documented on the Consultant Evaluation form and Document Review Form.

3.6.5. Consultant Evaluations

All projects with assistance from an environmental consultant require a Consultant Evaluation form be completed. The consultant evaluation form will be completed by the Environmental Planner prior to submitting the NEPA document and clearance to the Planning Section Manager for approval (Appendix 5.4.). If the Technical Specialists had concerns with the quality of work, that information needs to be provided to the Environmental Planner to be documented. All completed forms will be saved in the G-drive folder here:
G:\Environmental Planning Group Projects\Consultant Ratings.

3.7. Clearance Distribution & Record Retention

Proper documentation is required by NEPA and therefore essential within EPG. Under the PCE, FHWA will conduct periodic project reviews. During the environmental analysis, all project data documents and relevant data should be uploaded into the G-drive electronic folder, AIDW and the hard copy folder. PTS should be consistently updated with the status of the project.

Maintaining an organized project folder with pertinent information is required in the event of a management inquiry or is the reassignment of the project to others within EPG. Follow the EPG guidelines on how to name folders and documents consistently (Appendix 5.5.). Project information needs to be uploaded into all data storage locations after the NEPA document is approved and the project is completed. Do not keep project files only in your email inbox, hard drive, or on your "U" drive. These locations are not readily accessible by others. All administrative documents and approved technical documents and NEPA approvals should be in the G-drive at all times. Once a project has gone to bid and the environmental clearance document is complete, important project related information and emails should be saved in the G-drive.

Once a NEPA document has been approved, it is to be distributed by email to the contacts listed in the clearance (Appendix 5.6.). If the document is too large to send as a digital file, a hard copy should be delivered. In addition, the Environmental Planner shall update the status and dates in PTS, upload the approved NEPA document and clearance to AIDW, the G-drive folder, and keep the signed copies in the hard copy folder. FHWA receives a copy of all ADOT approved categorical exclusions for their file.

3.7.1. Project Tracking System (PTS)

PTS provides project location information, identifies the ADOT Project Manager, project numbers, technical details, project status, environmental schedules, and also links to other databases with the full project schedule and budget. To create a new project in PTS reference Appendix 5.7. Each individual assigned to a project is responsible for updating project information under their discipline tab. PTS should be updated with project information as it takes place, and updated on a monthly basis, at a minimum. The following, at a minimum, are required to be filled out by the EPG team.

- Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists names
- "Details" tab with short status updates such as "scoping letters sent".
- Technical discipline checklist "comments" tab
- Estimated and actual clearance dates
- "Project Updates" tab for PRB agendas
- Project milestones

3.7.2. Electronic Record (G-Drive)

For each project a digital file shall be created within the "G-drive" here:
G:\Environmental Planning Group Projects\Projects

Each project is listed under the route, then by the TRACS Number. The main project folder should be titled as such: "Tracs_DocumentName_ApprovalDate". Sub folders will be created as materials need to be stored. Do not create folders that will sit empty. The following are the basic folders that should be in each project folder. The EPG team members may add more folders and sub folders as needed; and name them according to the attached guidelines (Appendix 5.5.).

- Administration
- Biology
- Communication
- Cultural Resources
- Engineering Documents

- Environmental Clearance
- Hazardous Materials
- Scoping

3.7.3. ADOT Information Data Warehouse (AIDW)

All approved environmental documents are to be uploaded onto AIDW (i.e. biology, hazardous materials, NEPA document, ADOT clearance, 404 permits) under the appropriate headings. All files are to be named as such: "Tracs_DocumentName_ApprovalDate". The AIDW also contains the Five-Year Construction Program list of projects and the ADOT photo log.

3.7.4. Hard Copy Folder

The same information that is saved in the digital folder should be saved here as well, except for all email communication. Please follow the folder labeling guidelines within Appendix 5.5.

3.7.5. ADOT Project and EPG Website

For EA and EIS level projects, the Draft EA and Draft EIS documents are to be uploaded onto the EPG website under the Recently Approved Environmental Documents page. The documents must be loaded prior to the public review and comment period. Final EAs and EISs are to also be loaded on the website after approval. The same documents, plus any public involvement related materials should also be uploaded onto the ADOT Statewide Project website under the specific project. The Environmental Planner needs to coordinate these efforts with ADOT's website team.

4. QUALITY DOCUMENTS & REVIEWS

All documents submitted to EPG by consultants, or written in-house, should be reviewed for format, structure, accurate content, spelling, and grammar prior to each submittal. Each submittal shall include a transmittal letter documenting who completed the QA/QC review.

4.1. Documents to Support QA/QC

There are a multitude of documents available to support environmental analysis and NEPA documentation. Follow the links below for document templates and guidance.

Consultant Document Templates & Guidance
Transmittal Letter Template
FHWA Letter Guidance
Project Data and Field Review Form

Technical Document Templates & Guidance
Air Quality Analysis
Biological Evaluations
Cultural Resources
Hazardous Materials Assessment
Material Source Guidance
Noise Abatement
404/401 Permitting Guidance

ADOT Document Templates & Guidance
ADOT Environmental Clearances
Categorical Exclusions (CE)
Environmental Assessments (EA)
Categorical Exclusion Scoping Guidance
Geotechnical Clearance Guidance
Commonly Used Mitigation Measures
ADOT Local Public Agency Manual

Federal & AASHTO Document Guidance
23 CFR 771 – Environmental Impact and Related Procedures
40 CFR Council on Environmental Quality Part 1500's
NEPA and Transportation Decision Making
Practitioner's Handbook 15, Preparing High-Quality NEPA Documents for Transportation Projects
Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents
Improving the Quality of Environmental Documents
FHWA Memorandum on Improving the Quality of NEPA Documents
Center for Environmental Excellence, NEPA Process
FHWA Section 4(f) Policy Paper

4.2. Review and Approval Procedures

Document review and approval procedures are described below. For EPG timeframes, refer to section 3.4.1 and Appendix 5.2.

4.2.1. Technical Document Review

All technical documents submitted by consultants, private parties or local agencies are to be reviewed by the Technical Specialists assigned to each project. When submitting technical documents to the specialists, the Environmental Planner should be copied on the email submittal. This will allow the Environmental Planner to monitor project timeframes. Class III Cultural Survey Reports shall be submitted directly to the Historic Preservation Team Specialist and copy the Environmental Planner on the email transmittal.

No more than two review submittals are permitted. If there are still more errors that need to be addressed after the second review, a meeting or phone conversation between the Technical Specialist and the submitter should be arranged to discuss and resolve the remaining comments. If the Technical Specialist needs assistance from their supervisor, then they may request that their supervisor also review the document. However, timeframes for two specialists to review a document should be included in the schedule and coordinated with the Environmental Planner. The Technical Specialist should confirm with the Environmental Planner that the scope of work within the technical document is correct.

4.2.2. NEPA & Clearance Document Review

For a CE Checklist (short form checklist), the Environmental Planner assigned to the project will fill out the checklist and send it to the assigned Technical Specialists for review. Once all the Technical Specialists concur that it is filled out correctly in regards to their particular discipline, the Environmental Planner will then add their signature to the CE Checklist. The Environmental Planner will then fill out the "Document Review Form" and will provide this along with the completed CE Checklist to the Senior Project Manager for a peer review. If edits are needed, the Environmental Planner will make those changes and then provide the final CE Checklist and Document Review Form to the Planning Section Manager for final review. If the document has no errors the Planning Section Manager will forward the document to the EPG Group Manager for approval signature. Per the PCE the Planning Section Manager has approval authority for CEs in the absence of the Group Manager.

For an Individual CE (long form checklist), EA or EIS documents, all first draft NEPA and clearance documents are to be submitted directly to the Environmental Planner assigned to the project. The Environmental Planner will then immediately distribute the document to the Technical Specialists assigned to the project for their review. The Environmental Planner will include a review due date in the distribution email. All review timeframes are specified in the EPG Timeframe Guidelines (Appendix 5.2.). The Environmental Planner and Technical Specialists will concurrently review the first draft. Once all of the technical comments are received by the Environmental Planner they will consolidate all of the comments on one PDF version or one hardcopy version of the document. The first submittal document along with all of the comments and a completed "Document Review Form" (and Appendix 5.1.) will be provided to their Senior Environmental Planner for review. The Senior Project Manager will provide their comments back to the Environmental Planner.

For an Individual CE (long form checklist), EA or EIS documents the Environmental Planner will consolidate all comments and send them back to the consultant or LPA for editing, or make the revisions them self if the document was created in-house.

The second draft submittal shall be resubmitted to the Environmental Planner who will ensure all of the comments have been addressed. The second draft will only go back to the Technical Specialist or Senior Environmental Planner if the comments were highly technical within the specific discipline, difficult in nature, or requested by the Technical Specialist. If all of the comments were addressed, the Environmental Planner will add their signature and provide the document to the Planning Section Manager for final review along with the completed "Document Review Form". Only two (2) review submittals are permitted. If there are still more errors that need to be addressed after the second review, a meeting and/or phone call between the Environmental Planner and the submitter should be arranged to discuss and resolve them. If the submitter needs more time or information in order to address the remaining comments the Environmental Planner needs to coordinate the schedule impacts with the project team and/or assist in finding the information needed.

The final document along with the completed "Document Review Form" will be forwarded to the Planning Section Manager for final review. If the document has no errors the Planning Section Manager will sign the document themselves or forward the document to the EPG Group Manager for approval signature.

For FHWA Approved CEs, EAs and EISs, the Environmental Planner will then send a hard copy of the NEPA document to FHWA for review and approval. No more than two (2) submittals to FHWA should be required. See the FHWA and ADOT EA Guidance for more information.

Once the final document has been approved by EPG and FHWA (if required), the Environmental Planner will email or deliver a hard copy of the approved document and ADOT environmental clearance to the distribution list (Appendix 5.6. Clearance Distribution Email Template).

4.3. Document Readability

All documents prepared or approved by EPG are public documents and can be made available to the public (exceptions include documents with confidential cultural resources information). All documents should be written clearly and concisely with accurate information. Documents should be written in plain English with no planning or engineering jargon. However, technical documents may contain highly technical terms and wording, for example as the biology document will include scientific names of plant and animal species. All acronyms should be spelled out with the first use. Documents shall be written using correct grammar, content, and spelling. Consultant and internally written documents shall be peer reviewed for quality and consistency. The following should be reviewed for accuracy, and consistency.

PROJECT INFORMATION

- ☐ Federal number
- ☐ TRACS number
- ☐ Project name
- ☐ STIP Item No. and FY Date
- ☐ County
- ☐ Route/Limits/Mile Posts
- ☐ Nearest landmark (City/Town)
- ☐ Estimated project cost
- ☐ Land ownership
- ☐ Scope of work

CLEARANCE & NEPA DOCUMENT

- ☐ ADOT Approved / FHWA Approved
- ☐ CE (c-list, d-list), EA, EIS

FORMAT

- ☐ Print double sided
- ☐ Add header to all pages except cover, include: Federal Number, TRACS number, Project name
- ☐ Page numbers
- ☐ Font no smaller than 11pt
- ☐ Accurate signature lines and initials

CONSISTENCY INFORMATION

- ☐ Mitigation measures consistent throughout document
- ☐ Project Limits (Mile posts)
- ☐ No acronyms in mitigation measures
- ☐ Grammar and spelling check
- ☐ Acronyms – Spell out all first time with acronym in parenthesis unless Abbreviation list is included
- ☐ Correct Dates (MM/DD/YYYY)

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ☐ Environmental Planner – Name and phone number
- ☐ Consultants – Name and phone number
- ☐ CC' (copy) the appropriate people: FHWA (Area Engineer and Environmental Coordinator), ADOT Project Manager, and Consultant, LPA

ATTACHMENTS

- ☐ Correct Dates (MM/DD/YYYY)
- ☐ All need to be reproducible in black and white
- ☐ All applicable attachments in order
- ☐ Maps – include: Legend, North arrow, Scale, Label project start and end point, map source, major cross roads, Figure # and title, project name and numbers

5. APPENDIX

5.1. Document Review Form
5.2. EPG Timeframe Guidelines
5.3. NEPA Approval Diagram
(ADOT EPG NEPA Approval in Relation to Final Design)
5.4. Consultant Evaluation Form
5.5. Document and Folder Labeling Guidelines
(EPG Electronic Data Storage for Environmental Project Files)
5.6. Clearance Distribution Email Template
5.7. How to Create a Project in the EPG Project Tracking System
5.8. AIDW Guidance

5.1 Document Review Form

EPG INTERNAL 'DOCUMENT REVIEW FORM'

☐ District / PM mitigation approved ☐ Consultant evaluation completed

☐ Project files placed in the g-drive project folder

Project name: _____

TRACS: _____ Clearance scheduled completion date: _____

Consultant firm/Consultant name: _____

	Name	Date received	Date reviewed	Comments
NEPA Planner II (P2) *(1st/final submission)*				
NEPA Planner III (P3) *(1st submission)*				
NEPA Planner IV (P4) *(Final submission)*				
Cultural *(indicate if ongoing consultations)*				
Biology				
HazMat				
Air & Noise				
PM *(TRACS, fed ID SOW & limits confirmation,)*				
ADOT DISTRICT *approval (Mitigation or Avoidance)*				

Pre- Construction Activities

Activities to be completed	Responsible party	Task order received/Completed	Due date	Comments
Cultural avoidance				
Biology surveys				
Other				

5.2 EPG Timeframe Guidelines

EPG Timeframe Guidelines

1. Cost estimates
   - Length of time for technical specialists to review cost estimates: 7 working days
   - Total length of time for completed cost estimate review, including Planner review, technical review and coordination: 12 working days

2. Project Data Sheet / Field Review Form
   - Reviews are done concurrently. Each reviewer has 7 working days to either sign and return the PDS, or review and send it back for revision.

3. Field Review Form
   - Amount of time from when a planner receives a form from the consultant to the form being placed on the group drive and notice sent to the technical specialists: 4 working days
   - Length of time for technical specialists to review forms: 9 working days
   - Total length of time for completed cost estimate review, including Planner review, technical review and coordination: 15 working days

4. Technical document reviews
   - Technical document submittals should be reviewed and either approved or sent back with comments within 10 working days.

5. CE document reviews
   - 1st submittal: Technical specialists have 5 working days to review their discipline within a CE document.
   - 1st submittal: Planners have a total of 10 working days to coordinate all reviews and send comments back to the consultant. This is concurrent with the technical specialist review time.
   - 2nd submittal: Technical specialists have 3 working days to review their disciplines within a CE.
   - 2nd submittal: Planners have a total of 5 working days to coordinate all reviews and send comments.
   - Consultants: When determining a schedule, assume 10 working days for a consultant to amend a CE.
   - FHWA 1st submittal: When determining a schedule, 2 weeks for FHWA CE reviews.
   - FHWA 2nd submittal: When determining a schedule, 1 weeks for FHWA CE reviews.

6. EA/EIS document reviews
   - 1st submittal: Technical specialists have 15 working days to review their discipline within an EA/EIS.
   - 1st submittal: Planners have a total of 20 working days to coordinate all reviews and send comments back to the consultant. This is concurrent with the technical specialist review time.
   - 2nd submittal: Technical specialists have 10 working days to review their disciplines within an EA/EIS.
   - 2nd submittal: Planners have a total of 12 working days to coordinate all reviews and send comments.
   - Consultants: When determining a schedule, assume 20 working days for amendment of an EA/EIS.
   - FHWA 1st submittal: When determining a schedule, 4 weeks for FHWA reviews.
   - FHWA 2nd submittal: When determining a schedule, 2 weeks for FHWA reviews.

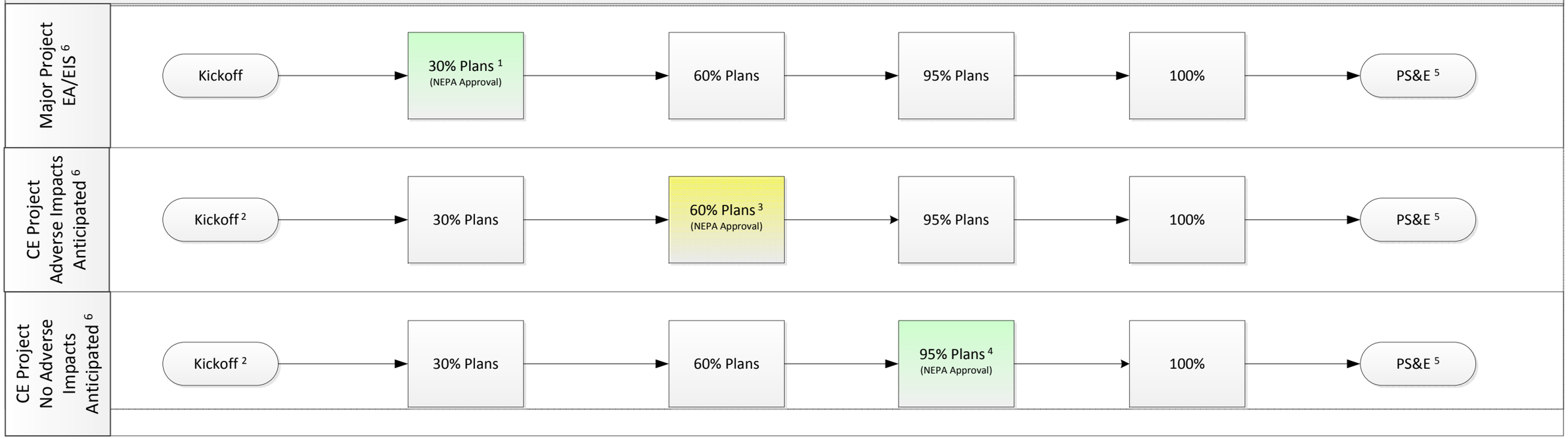
Note: working days are based on a 5 day work week

* ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE INTERNAL TIMEFRAMES NEED TO BE APPROVED BY EPG MANAGEMENT*

5.3 NEPA Approval Diagram – (NEPA Approval in relation to Final Design)

ADOT Environmental Planning Group
NEPA Approval In Relation To Final Design
(How Far Preliminary Design Can Advance)

December 23, 2014



Notes:

1. Preliminary Design can be advanced to 30%. FONSI or Record of Decision is needed by 30% in order for FHWA to authorize Phase II Final Design funds.
2. CE Projects are typically prepared under a single phase federal authorization and project development process. Begin NEPA at the start of the project
3. NEPA *should* be attained by 60%. If the project may adversely impact environmental resources and the design team may need to consider alternatives to avoid or minimize these impacts, then proceed cautiously past 60% design only after consulting with the EPG Planner.
4. No adverse impacts to environmental resources are anticipated and there are no alternatives still under consideration for avoiding or reducing impacts. Environmental *should* (not shall) be completed by 60%. However, if necessary, consult with the EPG Planner and proceed with design to 95%. Always keep in mind critical path issues such as needs for new right-of-way in relation to the schedule for completing NEPA.
5. EPG Planner reviews PS&E for all projects to ensure inclusion of all environmental commitments continued in the NEPA approval.
6. This graphic does <u>not</u> represent a relative timeline for project completion. Major projects with an EA or EIS will take substantially longer to complete than a project with a CE. CE projects with no adverse impacts will take the shortest amount of time to complete.

5.4 Consultant Evaluation Form

CONSULTANT EVALUATION FORM

Project Name: **Date:**

Tracs #: **Fed #:**

Consultant Name & Firm:

Circle one - EPG On-call or ADOT On-call or LPA

EXPERTISE

1 How was the consultant's understanding of Federal, State and ADOT policies, procedures, regulations, laws, etc.?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

2 Were consultant staff certified or qualified for the technical work completed? completed?
Circle One - Yes No

3 Did consultant require excessive oversight?
Circle One - Yes No

COMMUNICATION

4 How timely were communications/responses?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

5 How professional, straightforward, and clear were the consultant communications?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

6 How well were changes to budget, scope and schedule disseminated in a timely manner?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

SCHEDULE

7 Were realistic schedules developed?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

8 How well were schedules maintained?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

SUBMITTALS

9 How well did document submittals comply with applicable standards and guidance?
Circle One - Excellent Good Fair Poor Very Poor

10 How was the overall quality of products submitted (complete, organized, accuracy)?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

11 Were more than 2 submittals needed?
Circle One - Yes No

12 Were cost estimates reasonable and justified?
Circle One - Yes No

GENERAL

13 How well did the consultant manage and coordinate the project?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

14 How well did the consultant address issues/concerns?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

15 How creative, innovative, and thorough was the consultant in resolving project resolving project issues/concerns?
Circle One - Excellent Good Neutral Poor Very Poor

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.5 Document and Folder Labeling Guidelines - (EPG Electronic Data Storage)

EPG Electronic Data Storage for Environmental Project Files
EPG Internal Guidelines

**********All project-specific correspondence and documents shall be stored at**********
E980ts02\Groups\ITD\ENV\EPG Projects\Projects

Project folders (1st level): The person who first has a need to electronically create/store information for a project should create a new project folder. A project folder should begin with the ADOT "TRACS" number followed by the project name (e.g., H5064 01C, Needle Mountain Rest Area). If a project does not have a "TRACS" number, create a placeholder (e.g. Hxxxx 01C, Needle Mountain Rest Area). Update the project folder name as information becomes available.

Project-specific subfolders (2nd level): Project-specific subfolders are listed below (e.g. 4(f), 401, 404). There are 30 subfolders. Subfolders should be created *as you need them.* You are welcome to copy and paste the folders from the "Document Folder Template", located at G:\\9151\EPG Projects. Do not create additional subfolders at this level, and do not create/store individual files at this level.

Individual files (3rd level): Individual files should be placed under their respective subfolder. As an aid to organization, you can group multiple files into a subfolder(s) if you find it helpful. Individual file names should be designated by the TRACS number followed by the document type and date (e.g., H1234 Biological Review 08-17-10; or H5678 Cost Estimate 08-20-10). In the case of a project with multiple phases, include the phase in the TRACS number (e.g., H3030 04C Biological Review 10-06-07). If there are multiple drafts of the same document, that should be indicated in the file name (e.g., H1234 Categorical Exclusion Submittal 1 08-20-10; or H1234 Categorical Exclusion Final 09-07-10). Maintain spacing and capitalization in file names to ensure files are easy to identify visually by name. As much as possible, files in PDF format should take advantage of the Adobe Acrobat Professional 'reduced file size' capability.

Emails: Emails that should be a part of the project file should go either into an Email subfolder under the "Communication" subfolder, or can go in an Email subfolder within a technical or topical subfolder (e.g., emails relating to a 404 permit can go in a subfolder called "Email" under the 404 subfolder).

EPG/FHWA Administrative Record Document Types
(Note: Regular font = existing type in AIDW; *Italics font = new type*)

4(f)

401

Certifications
Tribal

404

Certification Application
Jurisdictional Delineation (JD)
Individual Permits
Nationwide Permits *without PCN*
NWP with Preconstruction Notice (PCN)

Mitigation Plan

6(f)

Administrative
- *Contract*
- *Miscellaneous/General*
- *Project Data Sheet*

Agreements

Air Quality
- Air Quality Report
- *MSATs Report*
- *PM 10 Report*

Alternatives Analysis

Biology
- Survey Reports
- Biological Evaluation
- Biological Review
- In-House evaluations
- Invasive Species
- USFWS Concurrence
- AGFD *Correspondence*
- Biological Opinion
- Agency Correspondence
- Native Plants
- *Migratory Bird Treaty Act Correspondence*

Clearance Documents
- Categorical Exclusions
- *Clearance Memo*
- Environmental Determination
- Environmental Assessment
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Environmental Overview
- Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
- Geotechnical Clearances
- Reassessments
- Record of Decision (ROD)
- Re-evaluations
- Supplemental EA
- Supplemental EIS

Communication
- *E-mail*

DRAFT

Cultural
- *Technical Reports*
- *Consultation Letters*
- Cultural Initiation Form (CIF)
- Programmatic Agreements/Memoranda of Agreement
- *Closeout Memo*

Engineering Documents
- *Predesign*

Environmental Field Review

Farmland

Floodplains

Hazmat
- Report
- PISA
- Phase I
- Phase II

Noise
- Noise Report

Other

Project Meetings

Public Involvement/Scoping
- *Public Meetings*
- *Public Hearings*
- *Reports*
- *Letters*
- *Contact List*

Purpose and Need

Riparian/Wetlands

Right of Way (R/W)
- *PISA* (internal)
- *Reports*

Socioeconomic
- *Environmental Justice*
- *Economic Analysis*

DRAFT

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

Sole Source Aquifer

Stakeholders

- *Communication*
- *General Plans*
- *Studies*
- *Meetings*
- *FHWA*
- Tribal Information

Utilities

Visual

DRAFT

5.6 Clearance Distribution Email Template

Clearance Distribution Email Template

When the project environmental clearance has been approved, please use the following text in your distribution email. Please update the underlined information based on your individual project.

To line: *ADOT Staff*
cc' line: *FHWA, consultants and LPA contacts*

Email Subject line: *federal # / Tracs/ Project Name / Environmental Clearance*

Good Afternoon –

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Environmental Planning Group has determined that the above referenced project meets the criteria of a Group 2 Categorical Exclusion, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.117 (d). The attached Environmental clearance was approved on January 29, 2015.

This action constitutes federal environmental approval.

The list of mitigation measures specific to this project is included in the attached Environmental Clearance and is required to be included in the project specifications/construction authorization letter. ***These mitigation measures are not subject to change without written approval from the Federal Highway Administration.***

Please let me know if there is a change in project scope or limits, or if you have any questions.

The clearance has also been uploaded to AIDW for those at ADOT.

Sincerely,

5.7 How to Create a Project in the EPG Project Tracking System

How to Create a Project in the EPG Project Tracking System (PTS)

1) In PTS, click “Help”, then “Send a Message”
2) Click on the word “Submit” in “Submit a Data Change Request”
3) Check the button for “I want to create a new project”, then click “Next”
4) Fill out all the data boxes then click Submit

You will receive an email that your request was sent and another email when the request is completed.

5.8 AIDW Guidance

AIDW Guidance

Project Reference, Check - In a Document

- Type "AIDW" in the web address
- Click on "Intermodal" and "Project" tabs if needed
- In the Project Detail window enter or select "TRACS" hit enter on keyboard,'
- Click on the + sign next to 2.2 Environmental Documents
- Select the Up Arrow all the way to the right of the appropriate document type line
- "Browse" select the correct document
- Enter the correct document description, one can copy and paste part of or the entire file name.
- Enter the
- Click on the "Check in" button
- Close the "Check-in screen, hit F5 to refresh the Project Reference table of contents, you should now see the document in the Project Reference

Remove a Document from the Project Reference

- Navigate to the Document in the Project Reference
- Click on the Edit Icon (icon looks like a tablet with pencil)
- Click the check box to the left of the TRACS# that the document needs to be removed from. The TRACS# is in the list 011 the bottom of the form.
- Click the "Remove" button, The TRACS# will be removed from the list
- .Click the "Update" button, you will get a message warning you that since you've removed all the of the file/TRACS# associations, the file will be removed. Click ok.
- Close the Edit/Check-in screen and hit F5 (Refresh) on the Project Reference screen. The document should be gone now.

AIDW Guidance (continued)

Project Reference, Check - In a Document

- Type "AIDW" web address
- Click on "Document Repository"
- Click on "Project Folder"
- Enter "TRACS"
- Click on the "Find" button
- Click on the "PR" icon. Last row in the bottom of the form, all the way to the right
- Click on the + sign next to 2,2 Environmental Documents
- Select the Up Arrow all the way to the right of the appropriate document type line
- "Browse" select the correct document
- Enter the correct document description, one can copy and paste part of or the entire file name,
- Enter the document date
- Click on the "Check in" button
- Close the "Check-in screen, hit F5 to refresh the Project Reference table of contents, you should now see the document in the Project Reference

Remove a Document from the Project Reference

- Navigate to the Document in the Project Reference
- Click on the Edit Icon
- Click the check box to the left of the TRACS# that the document needs to be removed from. The TRACS# is in the list on the bottom of the form.
- Click the "Remove" button, The TRACS# will be removed from the list
- Click the "Update" button, you will get a message warning you that since you've removed all the of the file/TRACS# associations, the file will be removed. Click ok.
- Close the Edit/Check-in screen and hit F5 (Refresh) on the Project Reference screen. The document should be gone now.

"Locate Document" from the "Document Repository" menu

- Can select available criteria to search for a document
- All documents checked in at the Project Reference and Check-In can be found

Where to find User Guide on-line

- From the "AIDW", click on "Document Repository"
- Click on "Project Reference Quick-Ref' or
- Click on "Project Reference Users Guide"