

## SUGGESTED CONTENT FOR AN EIS/EA

Sections with an asterisk (\*) are usually retained in an EA; the others are omitted or combined with other sections.

\*Cover Sheet  
Summary  
Table of Contents  
Issue Tracking Matrix

### \*1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action

*NOTE: This content outline does not give the suggested headings for chapter subsections because the headings in an EIS or EA must change to reflect the features of each specific project.*

- \*1.1 Explain who wants to do what and where and why they want to do it.
- \*1.2 Explain any other EISs/EAs that influence the scope of this EIS/EA.
- \*1.3 Explain the decision(s) that must be made and identify any other agencies involved in this NEPA analysis.
- \*1.4 Summarize the scoping and explain the relevant issues. As appropriate, identify issues considered but discarded from detailed analysis.
- \*1.5 List Federal permits, licenses, and entitlements necessary to implement the project.
- 1.6 Preview the remaining chapters of your EIS/EA, especially if you have changed the CEQ organization.

**CHAPTER 1 + CHAPTER 2 =  
AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**\* 2.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action**

- \*2.1 Explain that this chapter describes the alternatives (potential actions). Also remind readers that this chapter summarizes the environmental consequences of the alternatives.
- \*2.2 Describe the alternatives, including the proposed action and no action. Your descriptions should focus on potential actions, outputs, and any related mitigations.
- 2.3 Explain how these alternatives represent a range of reasonable alternatives. As part of this explanation, describe briefly the alternatives eliminated from detailed study and explain why they were eliminated.
- \*2.4 Compare the alternatives by summarizing their environmental consequences. Potential actions and outputs would cause these consequences.
- 2.5 Identify your agency's preferred alternative, unless your agency directs otherwise. Do not give in the EIS/EA the rationale for your choice. Include the rationale in the ROD or Decision Document/FONSI.

*Alternatives are the heart of the NEPA process. A range of reasonable alternatives shows the trade-offs facing the decisionmaker.*

## CHAPTER 3 + CHAPTER 4 = SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 3.0 Affected Environment

- 3.1 Explain that this chapter presents relevant resource components of the existing environment—that is, the baseline environment. As appropriate, preview the chapter contents so that readers can readily find subsections.
- 3.2 Resource X (Issue 1)
- 3.3 Resource Y
- 3.4 Resource Z (Issue 2)
- ...

NOTE 1: Include all relevant physical, biological, social, and economic features of the human environment. Use the same order or sequence of resources in Chapters 3 and 4.

NOTE 2: Relevant issues (resources) should receive more extensive discussion than issues that are not relevant. For tracking, cross-reference resources with the relevant issues.

### \*4.0 Environmental Consequences (organizational option 1)

- \*4.1 Explain that this chapter is organized by resources.
- \*4.2 Effects on Resource X (Issue 1)
  - 4.2.1 Alternative A (No Action)
  - 4.2.2 Alternative B (Proposed Action)
  - 4.2.3 Alternative C (Short Title)
  - 4.2.4 Alternative D (Short Title)
- \*4.3 Effects on Resource Y
  - 4.3.1 Alternative A (No Action)
  - 4.3.2 Alternative B (Proposed Action)
  - 4.3.3 Alternative C (Short Title)
  - 4.3.4 Alternative D (Short Title)
- \*4.4 Effects on Resource Z (Issue 2)
- ...
- \*4.10 Unavoidable Adverse Effects
- \*4.11 Relationship of Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity
- \*4.12 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources
- \*4.13 Any Other Disclosures

*The subheadings in Chapters 3 and 4 reflect separate resources, but these resource discussions should reflect the scope of relevant issues presented in Chapter 1 (section 1.4).*

*Choose organizational option 1 if you have an EIS or a lengthy EA.*

*See Appendix A (pp. A-1 to A-8) for specific examples of how to organize Chapters 3 and 4.*

## \*4.0 Environmental Consequences (organizational option 2)

- \*4.1 Explain that this chapter is arranged by alternatives.
- \*4.2 Effects of Alternative A (No Action)
  - 4.2.1 Resource X (Issue 1)
  - 4.2.2 Resource Y
  - 4.2.3 Resource Z (Issue 2)
- ...
- \*4.3 Effects of Alternative B (Proposed Action)
  - 4.3.1 Resource X (Issue 1)
  - 4.3.2 Resource Y
  - 4.3.3 Resource Z (Issue 2)
- ...
- \*4.4 Effects of Alternative C (Short Title)
  - 4.4.1 Resource X (Issue 1)
  - 4.4.2 Resource Y
  - 4.4.3 Resource Z (Issue 2)
- ...
- \*4.10 Unavoidable Adverse Effects
- \*4.11 Relationship of Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity
- \*4.12 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources
- \*4.13 Any Other Disclosures

## 5.0 List of Preparers

- \*6.0 List of Agencies, Organizations, and Persons to Whom Copies of the Statement Are Sent (For EAs, call this chapter the List of Agencies and Persons Consulted.)

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Appendices (if any)

NOTE: Some other sections can be either one of the appendices or a separate chapter:

Scoping Information

Bibliography

Glossary (Terms, Abbreviations, and Acronyms)

Maps

*Choose organizational option 2 if you have a short EA or if you want to emphasize alternatives.*

*The key NEPA categories in sections 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 are essential for adequate disclosure in an EIS. Shipley Environmental also recommends disclosing them in an EA.*