

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process*

A **project EIS** is prepared for a proposal that generally involves physical changes to one or more elements of the environment. Examples of the types of proposals that could be analyzed in a project EIS include:

New construction

Demolitions

The purchase, sale, lease, transfer, or exchange of natural resources (such as the lease of public lands for timber harvest)

Facility operation changes

Environmental clean-up projects

Steps in the EIS Process

1. **Scoping** initiates participation by the public, tribes, and other agencies and provides opportunity to comment on the proposal's alternatives, impacts, and potential mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIS.
2. **Writing a Draft EIS** analyzing the probable impacts of a proposal and reasonable alternatives, and including studies, modeling, etc.
3. **Draft EIS review and comment** by the public, other agencies, and the tribes.
4. **Writing a Final EIS** analyzing and responding to all comments received on the draft EIS, and including additional studies and modeling to evaluate probable impacts not adequately analyzed in the draft EIS.
5. **Issuing the final EIS.**
6. **Decisions** use the EIS information in review of permits or other project authorization.
7. **Mitigation** conditions are applied to actions that were addressed in the FEIS.

Scoping is the first step in the EIS process. The purpose of scoping is to:

- . narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues
- . eliminate insignificant impacts from detailed study
- . identify alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS

Scoping also provides notice to the public and agencies that an EIS is being prepared and initiates their involvement in the process.

The scoping process alerts both the lead agency and the applicant to areas of concern and controversy early in the process. As a result, it offers more opportunities for the applicant to consider and explore means to address the concerns. From an environmental perspective, this can result in changed proposals with fewer environmental impacts.