

This webinar provided an overview of how to integrate environmental considerations into the RAPID Framework. Presenters Jesse Granet (RAPID Environmental Implementation Team Lead, NWD) and Debby Scerno (Senior Environmental Planner, HQ Planning & Policy Division) emphasized the importance of incorporating environmental considerations early in the study process, discussed expectations regarding qualitative and quantitative analyses, and highlighted considerations for environmental compliance.



This summary of the Question/Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Key Resources:

- [RAPID Knowledge Management Portal \(KMP\)](#)
- The [RAPID Feasibility Study Process](#) diagram
- [Department of War NEPA Implementing Procedures](#)

The DCG-CEO [Interim Federal Interest Determination \(FID\) Guidance Memo](#) dated 22 May 2026, Section 3.e.(1)(d) states, "Identify level of [National Environmental Policy Act] NEPA and any significant environmental factors" during the FID. Does that contradict the guidance delivered during this webinar that the level of NEPA is decided between Decision Point 1 and Draft Report?

The FID is intended to utilize information available at the time. It is not intended to be an unchangeable decision as the study progresses and additional information becomes available.

If activities within a feasibility study might be eligible for a Department of War (DoW) Categorical Exemption (CatEx), what is the path forward at the District level? What would the integrated report or modified Environmental Assessment (EA) look like?

Before using a CatEx, study teams must assess the potential for "extraordinary circumstances" (as defined in the [DoW NEPA Implementing Procedures](#)) that preclude the use of that CatEx. The use of a CatEx requires documenting the finding of no extraordinary circumstances in a memorandum for record (MFR) along with environmental compliance actions. It is important to note that utilizing a CatEx does not eliminate other feasibility study requirements, such as tribal consultation and compliance with other environmental laws.

How can study teams reduce the risk of having to revise a Draft Report and put it out a second time for public comment and review if the released Draft Report only includes qualitative analysis?

Note that NEPA, as written, did not intend to require quantitative analysis; in most cases, a qualitative analysis with use of ranges (i.e., "This project will impact between 5 and 10 acres") is sufficient. If there is a risk of an unknown impact or other environmental factor that would affect the decision between alternatives, that risk should be communicated with the decision maker(s).

Study teams should capture potential mitigation risks, uncertainties, and costs during the Abbreviated Risk Analysis exercise to inform the cost estimate included in the Draft Report. Study teams should not assume mitigation costs of \$0 before completing the analysis; it is better to be conservative.

Given the requirement to prepare an EA or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) within a year of agency determination, how can study teams complete all analysis (including Public Review) within one year based on 35% design?

NEPA documents integrated with feasibility studies will follow the feasibility study timeline. Study teams will remain in compliance as long as they follow the feasibility timeline and communicate any timeline changes to the local sponsor.