

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 11/10/15

Series: Water and Land Related Resources

Part 707: Water Resources and Land Related Resources Development

Chapter 1: Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies - Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines, for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies

Originating Office: Office of Policy Analysis

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1.1 **Purpose.** This Departmental Manual (DM) Chapter provides Department of the Interior (DOI) policy for conducting water and related land resources implementation studies. The policy follows requirements set forth in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Principles and Requirements for Federal Investments in Water Resources (P&R, March 2013), CEQ's Interagency Guidelines (IG, December 2014), and the Department of the Interior Agency Specific Procedures for Implementing Council on Environmental Quality Principles and Requirements for Investments in Federal Water Resources Handbook (ASP Handbook). Taken together, the P&R, IG, and ASP Handbook, are collectively referred to as the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies (PR&G).

1.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all bureaus and offices with activities covered by the PR&G.

1.3 **Authority.** Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-114).

1.4 **Definitions.** A glossary and definitions are provided in both the P&R and the IG.

1.5 **Policy.** It is DOI policy to use PR&G as a common framework for evaluating DOI water resource investments. The PR&G uses a "with- and without-project scenario" approach, including an ecosystem service and watershed-based framework; employing the best available science; taking advantage of opportunities for collaboration with other Federal agencies, as well as with tribal and other non-federal entities; identifying and quantifying, where possible, areas of risks and uncertainties; and addressing healthy and resilient ecosystems, sustainable economic development, floodplains, public safety, and environmental justice. The requirements and procedures for implementing this policy are contained in the ASP Handbook.

1.6 Responsibilities.

A. Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB).

The A/S – PMB will determine whether or not an activity or project not already identified in the ASP Handbook may be excluded or exempted from the requirement to complete PR&G analysis. This determination will be based on whether appropriate analysis is submitted by the relevant Program Assistant Secretary.

B. Heads of Bureaus and Offices. The heads of bureaus and offices will implement the policy and procedures in this chapter and the ASP Handbook in their respective bureaus and offices.

C. Office of Policy Analysis (PPA). The PPA is responsible for reviewing regulations identified as “significant” under EO 12866. In a similar manner, the PPA will review standard PR&G analyses and provide technical assistance to bureaus and offices as needed by assisting in developing the scope and nature of the analysis. The PPA is also responsible for selecting at least one peer reviewer for each standard PR&G analysis.

D. ASP Implementation Team. The ASP Team provides assistance to bureaus and offices in implementing the ASP. This includes developing or modifying bureau level guidance, as necessary; revising bureau and office internal guidance as needed to conform to the ASP; and outreach within DOI. The ASP Team is convened as needed by A/S – PMB.

1.7 Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies.

A. The PR&G applies to Federal water resource infrastructure investments including traditional water resource investments, ecosystem restoration or land management activities, as well as grant and funding programs; studies or investigations leading to construction of infrastructure, including new facilities or modernization of existing facilities, dam safety or operational modifications; and proposals and plans that affect the management of Federal assets including national wildlife refuges, national parks, national forests, and national grasslands.

B. Details on the exemptions and exclusions and financial thresholds for application of the PR&Gs are contained in the IG and the ASP Handbook. Normal operations and maintenance, regulatory programs, research and monitoring activities, and emergency actions involving potential loss of life are excluded, as are projects with less than \$10 million Federal investment, and Federal grant or funding programs costing less than \$50 million annually. However, the cumulative effects of many small or routine actions may potentially require analysis. Exemptions are allowed when there is an equivalent evaluation process in place.

C. The ASP permits different levels of analysis for different projects and programs. Agencies need to describe how they determined the appropriate level of analysis.

1.8 Department of the Interior Agency Specific Procedures for Implementing CEQ's Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies. The procedures and requirements for implementing this policy are provided in the *Department of the Interior Agency Specific Procedures for Implementing the Council on Environmental Quality's Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies Handbook*. The Handbook is available at: <http://elips.doi.gov>.