

## NEPA Threshold Checklist Instructions

**BACKGROUND** Timing is of the essence and it is critical that the NEPA process be initiated within SERO's Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act [click here](#) decision making process at the earliest possible time to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts. An initial NEPA level recommendation is made to the Regional Administrator by the proponent on all proposed actions with input from the appropriate Council, NEPA Coordinator, GCSE, and technical staff (i.e. IPT). This recommendation is briefed to the Regional Administrator for a decision on which NEPA level will be used concerning an EA or EIS. Unless extraordinary circumstances exist, CEs do not rise to the Regional Administrator's level for a determination. This decision point is critical to the whole NEPA analysis and it is the place where efficiencies can be gained.

**INTRODUCTION** The recommendation of the Initial NEPA Threshold Level should be based on considerations of the potential significance of agency actions. Significance as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity. Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long-term effects are relevant. Intensity refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following NEPA Threshold Checklist was created to aid you in formulating a recommendation of the initial NEPA Threshold Level. The questions in the checklist are taken from the Regulations for Implementing NEPA [click here](#) , and NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6 [click here](#) , Procedures for Implementing NEPA. Complete the NEPA threshold determination checklist to formulate a recommendation.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete and submit the survey within 5 working days. The NEPA Threshold Checklist survey requires an answer for each question. If you select "YES" you will be required to provide further explanation for your answer in the comment box. If you are unsure if the answer is "YES" or "NO" then click "YES" and provide an explanation in the comment box. There is an opportunity to provide additional information, or further explanation, at the end of the survey.

If anyone has any comments or suggestions on how to improve this checklist please send them to the NMFS SERO NEPA Program.

# Cover Page

## 1. Name of Proposed Action:

## 2. Name:

## 3. Date:

Today's Date:      MM      DD      YYYY  
 /  /

## Threshold Checklist

**4. Explain the Context of the Proposed Action(s):** Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long-term effects are relevant. For example, the following could be relevant context considerations: overfished and/or overfishing status of the stock; rebuilding plan status; effects to Endangered Species or their critical habitat; etc.

**5. Are the impacts both beneficial and adverse (A significant effect may exist even if the action agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial)?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation required:

**6. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to have a substantial adverse impact on public health or safety?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**7. Are there unique characteristics of the geographic area?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**8. Are the effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**9. Are the effects highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**10. Does the action establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?**

NO

YES. Explanation Required:

**11. Are the impacts individually insignificant but cumulatively significant?**

NO

YES. Explanation Required:

**12. Does the action adversely affect entities listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places [click here](#) , or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources?**

NO

YES. Explanation Required:

**13. Does the action adversely affect endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat as defined under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 [click here](#) ?**

NO

YES. Explanation Required:

**14. Does the action violate Federal, state, or local environmental protection laws?**

NO

YES. Explanation Required:

**15. Can the action introduce or spread nonindigenous species?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**16. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to jeopardize the sustainability of any target species that may be affected by the action?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**17. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to jeopardize the sustainability of any non-target species?**

- NO.
- YES. Explanation Required:

**18. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to cause substantial damage to the ocean and coastal habitats and/or essential fish habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and identified in FMPs?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**19. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, marine mammals, or critical habitat of these species?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**20. Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to result in cumulative adverse effects that could have a substantial effect on the target species or non-target species?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**21. Can the proposed action be expected to have a substantial impact on biodiversity and ecosystem function within the affected area (e.g., benthic productivity, predator-prey relationships, etc)?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required

**22. Are there significant social or economic impacts interrelated with significant natural or physical environmental effects?**

- NO
- YES. Explanation Required:

**23. Based on the above analysis of the proposed action, I recommend the following NEPA analysis be performed (check one):**

- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Categorical Exclusion - Recommended No.

**24. Comments:**