

Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluations

ETDM Phase

December 31, 2015



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How to Obtain Copies

You can electronically download copies of the guides from the FDOT Central Environmental Management Office web site at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm>.

**ETDM PROCESS
PRACTICAL APPLICATION GUIDES FOR SCE EVALUATIONS**

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Introduction

The *ETDM Process Guide* of the *Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluations* series describes the process for evaluating sociocultural effects (SCE) for projects undergoing Planning screen or Programming screen reviews as part of Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. The SCE evaluation process identifies and addresses the potential effects of transportation projects on communities and community resources. The process is collaborative, involving government agencies, the public, and other stakeholders, to ensure that community values and concerns receive adequate attention during project planning and development and that no groups or populations are disproportionately affected.

OBJECTIVES

In the ETDM Process, the primary objectives of the SCE evaluation performed during the Planning screen and Programming screen are to:

Planning Screen

- Assess sociocultural effects early in the project planning phase to identify potential fatal flaws or controversies that should be considered in determining if the project should move forward
- Recommend adjustments to project concepts to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects
- Inform decisions in support of the development of cost-feasible transportation plans

Programming Screen

- Conduct reviews of potential direct and indirect effects for the SCE issues
- Recommend cumulative effects considerations, if applicable.
- If these reviews were conducted during a previous Planning Screen, update the reviews as needed
- Provide scoping recommendations for a subsequent Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study to address the key SCE issues identified in the ETDM screening

Note: Not all projects entering the Programming screen will have been evaluated in a previous Planning screen. For these projects, the Programming screen will be the first SCE evaluation and, therefore, must fulfill the objectives of both screens.

APPLICATION

The [FDOT ETDM Manual](#) identifies project types qualifying for ETDM screening. The timing of the SCE evaluation process for Planning and Programming screens generally within the 45-day review period during which the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) reviews and comments on a project. After the review period, the SCE evaluation results and recommendations are documented and summarized in the Planning or Programming Screen Summary Report. *Note:* Community outreach for the SCE evaluation process may occur at any time.

Planning Screen

The ETDM Planning screen is performed as projects are considered for adoption in Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and local government long range plans and for some projects that have not been previously screened, but are already cited in these plans.

During the Planning Screen, the Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) performs SCE evaluations for MPO/TPO priority projects located within the MPO/TPO area. The FDOT CLC performs SCE evaluations for all other ETDM projects.

Programming Screen

The ETDM Programming screen occurs before the PD&E study, ideally when priority projects are considered for inclusion in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Five-Year Work Program. In the Programming screen, the District CLC performs the SCE evaluation since the District serves as the lead agency or liaison to the lead Federal agency. In MPO/TPO areas, the District CLC may coordinate with the MPO/TPO for review of the SCE evaluation results and preliminary recommendations. The MPO/TPO CLC also may provide comments on Programming screen SCE evaluations during the 45-day ETAT review period for projects in the MPO/TPO area. Local governments may provide comments for projects in non-MPO/TPO areas.

SOCIOCULTURAL EFFECTS ISSUES

The SCE evaluation process focuses on six categories of sociocultural issues, including social, economic, land use changes, mobility, aesthetic effects, and relocation potential. *Note:* The SCE evaluation of aesthetic effects considers noise-related effects on communities and community resources. This is a separate evaluation than that performed in the PD&E phase to identify noise impacts to the physical environment.

SCE ISSUES

[Social](#)

[Economic](#)

[Land Use Changes](#)

[Mobility](#)

[Aesthetic Effects](#)

[Relocation Potential](#)

Use the [Sociocultural Effects Considerations](#) to assist in the investigation of each SCE issue. These considerations incorporate federal and state guidelines, metropolitan planning factors, and standard data analyses to facilitate:

- Identification and evaluation of potential community effects
- Identification of needed technical study
- Assessment of intensity of project impacts

PROCESS STEPS

The major steps in the SCE evaluation process are:

- Step 1: Review Project Information
- Step 2: Define Study Area
- Step 3: Prepare Community Information
- Step 4: Evaluate Sociocultural Effects
- Step 5: Recommend Ways to Address Issues
- Step 6: Document Results

An important consideration in each of the SCE evaluation process steps is the potential for project effects on federally protected population groups defined in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination statutes. Thorough demographics for these populations, potential effects on them, both positive and negative, and possible solutions are identified and documented during the ETDM Process.

Step 1 - Review Project Information

OVERVIEW

Information that you may already have can help you determine the level of analysis for the SCE evaluation. This information is supplemented and verified through community outreach, field review of the project area, and data obtained from other sources, as necessary.

Task 1.1 Review EST Information

Establish a preliminary understanding of the project and foundation for the SCE evaluation. Refer to [Environmental Screening Tool Project Information](#) for instructions on locating project information typically available on the EST, such as the project description, Purpose and Need Statement, GIS analysis results, and resource data and maps. The ETDM Screening Summary Report may include information on community issues/preferences and any previously identified project commitments. Also, refer to [Defining Context - Useful Environmental Screen Tool Information](#) to help you find information to establish a contextual overview of the project area. These EST datasets and resource maps are a starting place for SCE evaluation in terms of:

- Defining a preliminary study area for the SCE evaluation
- Identifying additional information needed to better understand the project area and potential for sociocultural effects

For Programming screen projects previously evaluated in the Planning screen, the *Planning Screen Summary Report* provides project-specific and system-wide information and agency commentary on potential project effects identified during the Planning screen. Background information, including EST datasets and corresponding hard copy maps, provides a comparison for measuring change in the project area since the Planning screen and determining needs for additional data and community outreach to support the Programming screen SCE evaluation. The Planning Screen Summary Report also documents any community issues or preferences and project commitments identified during the Planning screen. This information is evaluated during the Programming screen to ensure that:

- Community issues/preferences receive adequate attention and are recognized in scoping for the PD&E study, as appropriate
- Commitments are still applicable and are carried forward to inform the PD&E study

Task 1.2 Perform Community Outreach

Community outreach is performed in the ETDM Process to identify community concerns and preferences and ways to resolve project effects. Not to be confused with the public involvement conducted in the PD&E phase, community outreach to support ETDM screenings is scaled to achieve the objectives of the screening while also taking into consideration the project nature and scope.

Community outreach for the SCE evaluation process may occur at any time to ensure that public input is available for the evaluation of the SCE issues. Inform outreach audiences about the project, including the 45-day project review period. Upon conclusion of the screening period, summarize the public commentary received and upload to the EST so all users can benefit from the information.

Planning Screen

The objectives of community outreach in the Planning screen are to:

- Identify community issues and preferences
- Evaluate the magnitude of potential project effects and associated level of controversy
- Identify ways to resolve adverse project effects
- Evaluate the need for targeted community outreach in the PD&E phase

Community outreach typical to the Planning screen includes interviews with local government planners about existing/projected conditions in the project area, relevant community planning initiatives, and local values, preferences, and concerns. A previous study or planning effort may offer public commentary about the project or project area. Meeting minutes from the MPO/TPO board and advisory committees are also a source public commentary. For example, a MPO Bicycle Advisory Committee voicing their preference for bicycle accommodations on a proposed road project.

Programming Screen

The objectives of community outreach in the Programming screen are to:

- Increase understanding of community issues and preferences identified during the Planning screen
- Identify new or changed community issues and preferences since the Planning screen
- Evaluate the magnitude of potential project effects and associated level of controversy
- Identify ways to resolve adverse project effects
- Evaluate the need for targeted community outreach in the PD&E phase

In addition to the community outreach activities listed for the Planning screen, community outreach for the Programming screen could include interviews with community leaders that are knowledgeable about a potentially affected community or resource and presentations at select community organization meetings with interest in the project area. For instance, members of a local Parent Teacher Organization will be familiar with traffic circulation issues near a school or may have specific concerns about roadway safety issues (e.g., walking routes to school and school bus stops).

Task 1.3 Conduct Field Review

Visit the project area to get a first-hand look. The field review allows you to observe physical conditions in the project area and how people use the project corridor or site. In preparation for the field review, coordinate with the MPO/TPO(s), local government planners, and neighborhood groups to identify community/neighborhood boundaries (e.g., local government jurisdiction, delineated neighborhood, and residential subdivision), special districts (e.g., school, legislative, historic, redevelopment, and employment) and community focal points, history, and goals. When possible, include project reviewers representing other disciplines (e.g., a biologist) and MPO/TPO/local government staff knowledgeable about the project area to participate in the field review.

During the field review, check the currency and accuracy of the information you already have to identify:

- Inconsistencies between the data and field conditions
- Additional community features or characteristics
- Additional data needed to support the SCE evaluation

View aerial maps to detect community resources, physical features, land use, and other features in the project area. Photograph features in the project area that could be affected by the project including the existing transportation facility, roadway intersections, community resources, and human activity. Create a photo log as a supplement to the field review notes to enhance the information for the SCE evaluation and PD&E study documentation. Additional field review guidance is available in the [District 1 Field Data Collection Guide](#) and [District 7 Field Quick Reference Guide](#).

Step 2 - Define Study Area

OVERVIEW

The study area for the SCE evaluation defines the geographic area encompassing all of the project alternatives and communities/community features with potential for project effects. In the ETDM Process, this area is usually a selection of EST buffer areas by SCE issue or community feature/characteristic. The project type, character, and setting also have bearing on the extent of the study area.

Task 2.1 Review Field Notes and Project Information

Review the field notes and project information to familiarize yourself with the areas encompassing the project alternatives and communities/community resources that might be affected. Make note of communities and community resources with potential for project effects.

Task 2.2 Review Project Buffers (Preliminary Study Area)

Review project buffers in the EST or other analysis tool to establish a preliminary study area.

Planning Screen

A Planning screen starts out with a broad study area to cast light on all potentially affected communities and community resources within proximity to the project. Start with the 500-foot buffer area in the EST or other analytical tool to examine demographic and SCE issue datasets. Review other buffers to reveal any additional potentially affected populations or community resources. Consider the following guidance when selecting buffers:

- In rural areas, consult the 5,280-foot (one-mile) buffer, which may be more suitable than the 500-foot buffer due to coarser land use patterns and distribution of individual communities
- In urban areas, consult the smallest buffer that is wider than the existing transportation facility
- When the existing or proposed transportation facility typical section is particularly wide (e.g., interstate facilities or interchanges), expand the study area to the 1,320 feet (¼-mile) or 2,640 feet (½-mile) buffer distance
- Consider using corridor polygons to represent new roadways instead of lines to allow for adjustment of the future alignment

Programming Screen

A Programming screen study area encompasses the project alternatives that were not eliminated during the Planning screen and focuses only on areas where community concerns were identified during the

Planning screen. If a Planning screen was not performed, use the guidance above to select appropriate buffers to serve as the study area.

Task 2.3 Review Additional Information

Prior to finalizing the initial inventory of potentially affected communities and community resources and defining the study area, consult other sources to reveal additional detail about the project and project area such as:

- Project-specific studies and associated maps
- Newspaper and business journal archives
- Local or regional plans
- Local government planning staff

Upload additional information in PDF, Word or other supported file formats as project attachments in the EST so the information is included with the project record and viewable by others.

Task 2.4 Select Study Areas

Using compiled information, personal knowledge of the project area, and professional judgment, select the buffer areas comprising the study area for the SCE evaluation. These buffer areas are recorded as part of the SCE evaluation results (See Task 4.1).

Step 3 – Prepare Community Information

OVERVIEW

Community information for the SCE evaluation describes the history, present physical and sociocultural characteristics, and future trends in the study area for use in identifying and assessing sociocultural effects. This information is collected to support the SCE evaluation in rural, suburban, and urban contexts. The compiled information is organized, verified, and summarized for each SCE issue as it relates to specific communities and population segments in preparation for steps 3-6, including community outreach activities.

In the ETDM Process, the community information typically consists of data from the EST or other analysis tool, field review, and other sources. With each successive SCE evaluation, from the ETDM Process through the PD&E phase, the compiled community information transitions from a macro-level view of the project area to a more micro-level view (i.e., neighborhood level) through updates and refinements.

Task 3.1 Collect Community Information

ORGANIZE COMPILED COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Review previously compiled community information to determine its usefulness for the SCE evaluation. Previously compiled information will typically include:

Project Description

The project description briefly depicts the existing project limits, location, and proposed improvements. This information furthers understanding of the project type, scale, location, and geographical context. *Source:* EST.

Purpose and Need Statement

The purpose and need statement is the foundation of project decision making and alternatives development. This information furthers understanding of project objectives and associated network/corridor deficiencies, and serves as a basis for structuring the SCE evaluation. Descriptive information regarding the project need may help in the evaluation of potential project effects. *Source:* EST.

GIS Analysis Results

GIS analysis results by buffer area or community boundary are generated from community datasets and presented as standardized reports. This information reveals community features and demographic characteristics in the project area.

A customized dataset can be generated by uploading or digitizing a user-defined community boundary in the EST or other analysis tool. The EST CCI tool queries data for the boundary area and generates a report. This report becomes accessible to the resource agencies, public, and other stakeholders to support their examination of SCE issues. Contact the ETDM Help Desk at help@fla-etat.org for instructions on using the CCI tool. Other analysis tools used in Florida for ETDM screenings have similar capabilities such as the [Transportation Outreach Planner](#) used by the Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach MPOs. *Sources:* EST or other analysis tool.

Maps

Hard copy maps depict the location of population groups and community resources in proximity to the project. *Source:* EST.

Public Commentary

Public commentary for other planning efforts in the project area can be an indicator of public perceptions about the project, including community concerns, issues, and preferences. *Sources:*

- MPO/TPO LRTP/TIP background materials
- Comprehensive plan/other plan materials
- MPO/TPO committee meeting minutes
- Planning project websites/community websites

Previous Project-specific Studies

Planning or technical studies (feasibility/traffic studies, Interchange Justification Reports, corridor studies, etc.) can identify:

- Plans, policies, or designations applicable to the project area or region
- Neighborhood plans, comprehensive plans, bicycle/pedestrian plans, or other plans indicating the future desired course of the affected community
- Special designations (e.g., Community Redevelopment Area, Enterprise Zone, or historic district) indicating the values and preferences of the affected community relative to the transportation project

Sources: MPO/TPO and local government staffs and project websites.

Other Information

Additional sources of pertinent community information.

Sources: Local newspaper archives, business journals, local government websites, community organization websites/blogs, local or regional plans, and local government planning staff correspondence.

SUPPLEMENT COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Compile field-verified community data and supplemental data from other sources to adequately evaluate potential sociocultural effects. Refer to [Data Sources for Sociocultural Effects Evaluations](#) for guidance on where to locate community data.

Demographic Data

Collect demographic data to identify:

- Demographic characteristics of the county where the project is located and communities within the study area (*Note:* Refer initially to the 1-mile project buffer for rural areas and the ¼-mile project buffer for urban areas)
- Percentage of each population group relative to the total population of the study area, the municipality, and/or the county
- Population groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the project development process based on race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, and disability present within the study area
- Number of census blocks adjacent to the project with proportionately large populations of the above-described groups
- Any of the above-described population groups representing a small proportion of the census block group population but having a concentrated presence in a smaller geographical unit (i.e., census block)

Community Focal Points

The community information should include an inventory of the places that are important to the community, such as:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| • Schools | • Health care facilities | • Major attractors/multi-use facilities |
| • Religious facilities | • Cultural facilities | • Bridges |
| • Community centers | • Civic centers | • Cemeteries |
| • Parks | • Social service facilities | • Historic places |
| • Fire stations | • Intermodal facilities | • Other significant quality of life features |
| • Law enforcement facilities | • Business districts | |
| • Government buildings | • Theme parks | |

Community/Neighborhood Boundaries

Community/neighborhood boundaries are geographic areas with similar characteristics (e.g., land use, property value, or demographic character) or divided from other areas by natural or constructed boundaries (e.g., waterbodies or major roads). Unofficial community/neighborhood boundaries—those delineated specifically for the SCE evaluation—should be verified through community outreach. *Note:*

This information is usually collected for projects with controversy potential or environmental justice implications.

Community Narrative

Information describing aspects of a community that make it unique or special (e.g., history, values, goals, and preferences).

Pertinent Information from Other Sources

- MPO/TPO/local government advisory committee meetings and staff interviews
- Web-based research
- Project-specific studies

Evaluate whether the compiled community information is sufficient for evaluating each of the SCE issues. Check to ensure that all potentially affected communities and community resources have been identified; the defined study area is sufficient to include potentially affected communities and community resources; and the data is the best available to evaluate the issues (i.e., inclusive, reliable, and current). If you find that data or study area refinements are needed, repeat Task 3.1 to the extent needed to meet these conditions.

Note: Updated or supplemental data can be uploaded in the EST with the assistance of the University of Florida GeoPlan Center at help@fla-etat.org.

Task 3.2 Summarize Community Data

Organize the buffer or community boundary analysis and other compiled community information by SCE issue for use in the SCE evaluation (Step 4). If an analysis tool other than the EST generated a community boundary analysis, upload a PDF of the report as a project attachment in the EST or provide the digital boundary file to the University of Florida GeoPlan Center (help@fla-etat.org) for upload to the EST and generation of a community boundary analysis. Either step allows the information to be viewable by the resource agencies, public, and other stakeholders.

Step 4 - Evaluate Sociocultural Effects

OVERVIEW

The inventory of community data and agency and public commentary are examined relative to each SCE issue to evaluate potential project effects. Of the three general types of sociocultural effects defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations 40 CFR 1508.8, only the evaluation of direct effects is required for the ETDM Process.

- Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.
- Indirect (or secondary) effects are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.
- Cumulative effects result from the incremental effects of an action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of which agency or person undertakes the action.

The SCE evaluation also analyzes interrelationships among the SCE issues and how various considerations contribute to the avoidance and/or mitigation of project impacts. This analysis becomes a part of the EST documentation later used to develop the ETDM screening Summary Report.

Task 4.1 Identify Resources & Level of Importance

Identify important, potentially affected community characteristics and resources and the level of importance assigned to those resources by the community. Guidance on identifying community characteristics and resources by SCE issue is provided in the [Sociocultural Effects Considerations](#) and in the SCE issue summary sheets on the [SCE website](#).

RECORD RESULTS

Organize and record the identified community characteristics and resources by SCE issue in the EST under the **DIRECT EFFECTS** section in the **PROJECT EFFECTS** form as instructed below:

- Select an SCE issue.
- List associated community characteristics or resources, applicable study areas, and level of importance (e.g., high, medium, or low) as verified through community outreach in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **IDENTIFIED RESOURCES AND LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE**. *Note:* Avoid repeating the GIS analysis report. List only the potentially affected community characteristics and resources.

Task 4.2 Assess Potential Direct Effects

As defined under 40 CFR 1508.8, direct effects are caused by the action (project) and occur at the same time and place. The evaluation of direct effects considers the potential for both positive and negative sociocultural effects on the community, as well as the greater local and regional areas. Prior public commentary is considered to gauge the magnitude of an issue or controversy and determine the level of specificity for the SCE evaluation.

CONSIDERATIONS

A series of [Sociocultural Effects Considerations](#) organized by SCE issue are available to assist in the SCE evaluation of direct effect. These considerations are also part of the SCE issue summary sheets on the [SCE website](#). The [ETDM Manual](#) provides additional guidance on commenting on direct effects for Planning and Programming screen projects.

RECORD RESULTS

Record potential direct effects of the SCE evaluation in the EST under the **DIRECT EFFECTS** section in the **PROJECT EFFECTS** form as instructed below:

- Select an SCE issue.
- Include the salient details of the direct effects evaluation for that SCE issue and potential for community effects in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **COMMENT ON EFFECTS TO RESOURCES**.
- Record any preliminary measures to avoid or minimize project effects and additional comments in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **RECOMMENDED AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION AND**

MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES. *Note:* Recommendations may include focused technical study in the PD&E phase to understand further the potential project effects and opportunities to resolve issues.

- Identify any preliminary recommendations or potential commitments to address potential project effects or enhance the project in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **CLC COMMITMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.** *Note:* Recommendations may include targeted public involvement in the PD&E phase to understand further the potential project effects and opportunities to resolve effects.

Task 4.3 Assess Potential Indirect Effects (If Applicable)

Assess the potential for both positive and negative project-related indirect (or secondary) effects on the community, greater local area, and region, if applicable. Indirect effects are caused by other actions that have an established relationship or connection to the project. These related actions would not or could not occur without the original project. For example, displacement of an anchor tenant in a business complex caused by a new road alignment could result in other tenants in the complex to relocate.

CONSIDERATIONS

Using the community information, agency and public commentary and the [Sociocultural Effects Considerations](#), identify indirect effects. Methods for analyzing indirect effects include quantitative methods, such as travel demand models and integrated land use and transportation models and qualitative methods such as scenario writing, Delphi Technique, and expert panels. Affirm the results of the indirect effects evaluation through community outreach. Refer to [AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence](#) for guidance on determining the potential for and magnitude of indirect effects. Verify the indirect effects evaluation through community outreach.

RECORD RESULTS

Record potential indirect effects in the EST under the **INDIRECT EFFECTS** section in the **PROJECT EFFECTS** form as instructed:

- Select an SCE issue.
- Include the salient details of the indirect effects evaluation for that SCE issue and potential for community effects in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **COMMENT ON EFFECTS TO RESOURCES.**
- Identify any preliminary recommendations or potential commitments to address potential indirect effects including focused technical study and targeted public involvement in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **RECOMMENDED AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES.**
- Identify reasonably foreseeable actions potentially affecting each resource (e.g., a trends analysis considering effects of land use and transportation actions on the Potentially Affected Resource Area) in the text box below the screen prompt labeled **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO IMPROVE AT-RISK RESOURCES.** Describe results qualitatively or quantitatively. *Note:* Supporting models are available for quantitative analysis.

Task 4.4 Identify Potential Cumulative Effects Considerations

Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period. While cumulative effects are not typically assessed in the ETDM Process, cumulative effects considerations may be provided during an ETDM screening. Commentary about the potential for cumulative effects will help the lead agency determine the appropriate level of cumulative effects evaluation in the PD&E study, if applicable. Refer to the [FDOT Cumulative Effects Evaluation Handbook](#) for further guidance.

Task 4.5 Assign Degrees of Effect

At this point in the SCE evaluation process, you know the:

- Potential for project effects on communities and community resources
- Community values and preferences
- Public perceptions of the project and potential community effects

Use this information and professional judgment to assign a degree of effect (DOE) for potential direct and indirect effects for each SCE issue and project alternative. The DOE indicates the relative intensity of a potential project effect and any future involvement necessary to address project impacts. Include your rationale for each DOE assigned in the SCE evaluation documentation (see Task 6.1).

Degrees of Effect Categories

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • Not Applicable/No Involvement | • Moderate |
| • Enhanced | • Substantial |
| • None | • Potential Dispute (<i>Planning Screen</i>) or |
| • Minimal | Dispute Resolution (<i>Programming Screen</i>) |

The District ETDM Coordinator, in coordination with the District and/or MPO/TPO CLC, considers the DOE to determine the Summary Degree of Effect for each for each SCE issue and project alternative and develop the screening Summary Report. During the Planning screen, DOE assignment is preliminary based on existing information. Early consideration helps to assess the feasibility of project alternatives moving forward.

Task 4.6 Provide Input for PD&E Study Scope (Programming Screen Only)

The Programming screen SCE evaluation and DOE assignments for the SCE issues may indicate the need for special technical study, targeted community outreach, or project permits to satisfy National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable environmental laws and regulations addressed during the PD&E phase. Document any recommended scope elements in the EST.

Step 5 – Recommend Ways to Address Issues

OVERVIEW

A function of the SCE evaluation in the ETDM Process is to recommend methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential project effects or enhance the project design to fit the context of the community.

During the Programming screen, potential agency commitments may be identified to address potential project effects.

Task 5.1 Review Prior Recommendations (Programming Screen Only)

Upon completing the Programming screen SCE evaluation, review the Planning Screen Summary Report (if available) for any previous preliminary recommendations or potential commitments to address project impacts. Update the preliminary recommendations to include any targeted community outreach (e.g., coordination with Tribal governments or special interest groups) or PD&E study scoping details based on the Programming screen SCE evaluation.

Task 5.2 Identify Potential Recommendations for Project Solutions or Enhancements

Consider the following methods to address potential project effects or project enhancements:

Avoidance

- Alterations to the project so that an effect does not occur (e.g., minor alignment shifts or reduced cross-sections to avoid a community resource)

Minimization

- Modifications to the project to reduce the severity of the effect (e.g., timing construction to coincide with the tourism off-season)

Mitigation

- Actions to alleviate or offset an effect or replace a protected resource (e.g., replacement of impacted property or facilities)

Enhancement

- Additional desirable or attractive features added to the project to make it fit more harmoniously into the community (e.g., special landscaping to complement the existing or planned community aesthetic)

Consider avoidance solutions first, moving sequentially to other approaches if initial solutions appear unviable (e.g., creates other impacts or is inconsistent with the project purpose and need, community preferences, or FDOT standards and requirements). Refer to [Resolving Issues](#) for further guidance.

Obtain public input on potential project solutions through community outreach. Focus outreach on populations and neighborhoods with potential for project effects.

Task 5.3 Document Potential Commitments for Project Solutions or Enhancements

Document any potential commitments to address potential project effects or project enhancements to ensure they move forward to the PD&E phase (see Step 6). A commitment is an obligation to an external stakeholder to provide a feature or perform an action related to a project. In the Planning phase, project commitments are rare. District Planning Office staff are responsible for documenting commitments.

Step 6 – Document Results

OVERVIEW

In the ETDM Process, the SCE evaluation results (including issue-specific DOEs) and preliminary recommendations support:

- Project inquiry in subsequent SCE evaluation(s)
- PD&E scoping
- Concept development and decision making in the PD&E phase

The ETDM Coordinator considers the SCE evaluation documentation and agency and public commentary to assign a final Summary DOE and supporting rationale for each SCE issue. The ETDM Coordinator coordinates with the reviewing agencies as needed to resolve conflicting DOEs.

The conclusions and key recommendations from the SCE evaluation—including agency, public, and other stakeholder input—and evaluation of the other ETDM issues are published in the Planning or Programming Screen Summary Report. The Summary Report is used by transportation agencies to support decision making, particularly MPOs/TPOs and local governments in the staging of transportation priorities. The Summary Report is published within 60 days of the end of the 45-day agency review period when it becomes available in electronic and hard copy formats via the EST.

Task 6.1 Complete Project Effects Form

For each project alternative, document the potential direct effects (see Task 4.2), indirect effects (*if applicable*) and DOE (see Task 4.5) for each SCE issue using the **PROJECT EFFECTS** form in the EST. To access the form, go to the **TOOLS** menu, click **REVIEW PROJECT** and click **PROJECT EFFECTS**. Under **REVIEW OPTIONS**, click the **ALTERNATIVE** arrow to select a project alternative from the list, click the **SELECT AN ISSUE** arrow, click the appropriate SCE issue and click **BEGIN REVIEW**.

SELECT DEGREE OF EFFECT

Under **PROJECT EFFECTS**, click the **SELECT DEGREE OF EFFECT** arrow and then click the appropriate value.

ENTER DIRECT EFFECTS

Under the **DIRECT EFFECTS** section, type comments in the text boxes below the screen prompts.

ENTER INDIRECT EFFECTS

Under the **INDIRECT EFFECTS** section, type comments in the text boxes below the screen prompts.

TIPS:

- Text can be copied from a Word document or other type of document and pasted into the EST input fields by using the program's **SELECT > COPY > PASTE** functions.
- To enter the same comment for multiple alternatives or resource issues, click the **USE SHORT FORM** check box. This option allows you to select multiple alternatives and/or issues, and then apply the same comment to the selected alternatives or issues.

Task 6.2 Complete Cumulative Effects Considerations Review Form

Any cumulative effects considerations identified during the ETDM Process (see Task 4.3) are documented using the **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS CONSIDERATIONS REVIEW** form in the EST. To access the form, go to the **TOOLS** menu, click **REVIEW PROJECT** and click **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS CONSIDERATIONS REVIEW**. Under **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS CONSIDERATIONS**, click the **ALTERNATIVE** arrow to select an alternative from the list, click the **SELECT AN ISSUE** arrow, click the appropriate SCE issue and click **BEGIN REVIEW**. Type comments in the text boxes below the questions listed on the screen.

TIP:

- To view agency cumulative effects comments during a review period, open the **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS** report. To view the report, go to the **REPORTS** menu, click **PROJECT EFFECTS**, and then click **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS CONSIDERATIONS**.