

# Statements of Work: Questions and Sideboards

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A statement of work (SOW) is the written description of tasks and deliverables that you expect to be performed and/or generated by the contractor. It is the primary vehicle for communicating the BLM's needs and expectations of a planning or NEPA project, so it should be clearly written.

For complex projects, describe the requirements in Phases, or defining milestones. For example, Phase 1 could be project initiation through completion of Scoping. Phase 2 could be preparing and releasing an environmental assessment or draft environmental impact statement (EIS) to the public. Phase 3 could be analyzing and summarizing public comments. Phase 4 could be preparing and releasing the final EIS. Tasks and subtasks would then be defined for each phase.

## Tasks/Subtasks: What Questions Should I Consider?

- Will meetings be necessary? If so, how many? What locations?
- What mailings (mass or direct) will be needed? Who will handle the postage?
- Will the project have a website (internal or external)? Will ePlanning be used to develop the website? Who will maintain it?
- What deliverables do you anticipate to ensure a high-quality process? When do you want to see them—when sections are complete? Chapters? Or a complete document?
- Have you built in all the necessary reviews (State Office, Washington Office, Congressional, Cooperating Agencies, Solicitors, Tribal, Governor's Consistency Review, etc.)? Did you include timing and scheduling of these reviews to try and avoid potential schedule conflicts?
- Should the contractor build in time to respond to any of the reviews?
- Did you specify parameters for technical or specialist reports?
- Who/how will agency comments/revisions be tracked?
- Who will be responsible for drafting Federal Register notices?
- What tasks will be accomplished by BLM staff?
- If cooperating agencies are going to contribute to the analysis, has this been incorporated adequately?
- Will any documents be created and/or released using ePlanning? If so, does the contractor need training, security clearances, equipment, etc.?
- Who is responsible for compatibility with Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

## Example Sideboards for Statements of Work

A SOW should specify sideboards and/or assumptions, which will help communicate the BLM's needs and expectations. For example, a SOW may specify the following:

- Introduction and description of project**—so the contractor gets an idea of the extent of what is to be analyzed.
- Preliminary purpose and need statement**—which will show them it's the BLM's purpose and need, not the proponent's. It will help define the range of alternatives.
- Decision to be made**—be specific about what the decision space is and what will not be included in the decision, such as restrictions due to VRM Class II designation, for example.
- Preliminary goals or objectives**, which form the alternatives—include any requirements for alternatives, such as “a no grazing alternative and a no action (no change in grazing) alternative is required.” Include all your assumptions, don't make them guess any of the sideboards or facts.
- Relevant background or history of the project that may provide useful context**—include any public controversy, similar projects in the area, pitfalls, etc.
- Information about geographic or temporal scope for the analysis**—if you know any of the issues, then specify it/them along with the geographic and temporal scope for each. (Remember: “Wildlife” is not an issue. This is an issue: “how will the *x project* or *z activity* affect the spotted bat habitat during its mating season?”)
- Guiding principles for the analysis**—anything else that will help the contractor help you do the analysis.
- Relevant process or technical requirements**—is there anything required or standard that they should know about?

Include in the Statement of Work relevant assumptions and anything else that will help them do a good job on the analysis or whatever the project is. Don't make them guess. Don't test their awareness of a particular detail. Lay it out for them so they can do a good job for you.