



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899

January 4, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Mark Liao
NEPA Coordinator

Subject: Categorical Exclusion

Project Title: Subproject No. 1, Classroom Conversion

Location: Florida International University, Biscayne Bay Campus
Marine Sciences Building
3000 NE 151 Street, Building N13,
North Miami, FL 33181

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) require that all major actions by federal agencies be reviewed with respect to the environmental consequences on the human environment. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has selected Subproject No. 1, Classroom Conversion at the Marine Sciences Building, Florida International University for a federal funding grant. Consequently, NEPA and the associated implementing regulations apply to this project.

This memorandum summarizes the determination that Subproject No. 1, Classroom Conversion at the Marine Sciences Building, Florida International University has been found to be categorically excluded from further environmental review under NEPA.

Description of the Action

The Marine Sciences Building was constructed in 2004, and has 60,478 square feet of floor space. This subproject involves converting two former classrooms (1,100 square feet combined) into a computing center as well as an education and outreach facility. This space will primarily be used to develop a cross-cutting research program aimed at integrating and implementing new methodologies to study the health of Biscayne Bay.

All work will be done on the interior of the building. No modifications to the exterior of the building or adjacent grounds are part of this project.

This project will be accomplished in accordance with all applicable state and federal environmental and safety regulations. All applicable regulatory permitting will be obtained.

Specific Considerations of this Action and any Extraordinary Circumstances

- Air Emissions, Stormwater, Wastewater, Critical Habitats

Since all renovation are to the interior of the building, no significant impacts to air, water resources or critical habitats are expected.

- Building Staffing/Utilities

Staffing at the Marine Sciences Building is not expected to increase significantly. Water consumption and electricity use are not expected to change significantly over current building use.

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The limited building renovations planned are not expected to improve the energy efficiency or reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the building.

- Flooding Potential and Resilience

Since all renovation are to the interior of the building, there will be no impact to the flooding potential or flood resilience of this building. The Marine Science Building is not located within the 500-year floodplain.

- Hazardous Materials

Due to the age of the building (built in 2004), hazardous building materials are not expected to be encountered in this project. Any hazardous materials (i.e., asbestos, lead based paint, polychlorinated biphenyls) that may be disturbed in the building renovations will be handled and disposed in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

- Historic/Cultural Significance

The interior renovation tasks planned are not considered to have any historic or cultural impacts on the project site or vicinity.

- Environmental Justice

This renovation project is not anticipated to have any disproportional adverse human health or environmental impacts to overburdened and underserved communities, including minority, Tribal, or low-income populations.

Effects of the Action

No significant adverse impacts on the environment are expected from this action.

Categorical Exclusion

The activities associated with this project fall within the criteria of the following Department of Commerce Categorical Exclusion:

A-1 Minor renovations and additions to buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facilities that do not result in a change in the functional use of the real property (e.g. realigning interior spaces of an existing building, adding a small storage shed to an existing building, retrofitting for energy conservation, or installing a small antenna on an already existing antenna tower that does not cause the total height to exceed 200 feet and where the FCC would not require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for the installation). This CE does not apply in instances where the project must be submitted to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for review and NCPC determines that it does not have an applicable Categorical Exclusion.

This project is considered a minor renovation of a building that does not change functional use of the real property. The project does not require review by the NCPC.

The proposed activity: Subproject No. 1, Classroom Conversion at the Marine Sciences Building, Florida International University is categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project will require additional NEPA review.

Mark Liao
NIST NEPA Coordinator

Date

R.C. Vaughn
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date