1.1   **Purpose.** This chapter establishes Indian Affairs (IA) policy regarding peer review of influential scientific information.

1.2   **Scope.** This policy applies to all functions under the authority of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (AS-IA), including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) (collectively, "Indian Affairs (IA)"). This policy applies to all information disseminated by IA, including information that IA receives from tribal governments or tribal organizations operating IA programs under grants, contracts or compacts (including but not limited to those authorized by the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, as amended (25 U.S.C. 450 *et seq.*)) and thereafter disseminates.

1.3   **Policy.**

A. **Compliance with Peer Review Requirements.** IA shall ensure appropriate peer review of all influential scientific information prior to use in decision-making, regulatory processes, or dissemination to the public, regardless of media (i.e., print, digital, audiovisual, or Web). For both "influential scientific information" and "highly influential scientific information," IA will comply with the more specific, independent peer review requirements established by the OMB Peer Review Bulletin. IA will also comply with requirements for making its peer review agenda and plans publicly available and for reporting annually. IA may waive or defer some or all of the peer review requirements where warranted by a compelling rationale.

B. **Publication of Peer Review Agenda and Plans.** IA will publish on its Web site and update every six months an agenda for peer review of any influential scientific information that IA plans to disseminate in the foreseeable future and the peer review plan for each such agenda item.

C. **Reporting.** IA will report annually to the Department's Chief Information Officer the number of peer reviews conducted, as well as additional information required by the OMB Peer Review Bulletin.

1.4   **Authority.**

A.   **305 DM 2** requires that science must be integrated into and used in setting regulatory and management policies in the Department and its bureaus.

B. **DOI Information Quality Guidelines** establish policy to ensure and maximize the objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated to the public by the Department. These guidelines implement the Information Quality Act (P.L. 106-554 Section 515) and associated OMB Guidelines (67 FR 8452-8460).

C. **Executive Order 12866** establishes a government-wide policy that each agency shall base its regulatory decisions on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic and other information.

D. **OMB Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677)** establishes government-wide requirements for the peer review of "influential scientific information" and "highly influential scientific assessments." It also establishes requirements for publishing peer review plans on a Web site and annual reporting of associated peer review activities to the OMB.

1.5 **Responsibilities.**

A. **The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)** is responsible for collecting applicable information from AS-IA Office Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors, establishing and maintaining the peer review Web site and submitting annual reports on peer review to the Department's Chief Information Officer.

B. **AS-IA Office Directors, Bureau Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors** are responsible for ensuring that their staffs implement this peer review policy. AS-IA Office Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors are responsible for determining whether or not an activity requires peer review and, for an activity that does require peer review, shall designate a peer review manager to oversee implementation of these guidelines with respect to the specific activity. AS-IA Office Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors are also responsible for providing the OCIO with their peer review agendas, updates, and other information for Web site publication and annual reports.

C. **Peer Review Managers** are responsible for:

1. Determining what level of peer review is required;

2. Overseeing the conduct of the formal peer review using appropriate guidance;

3. Providing review findings to authors;

4. Ensuring that the authors address comments adequately and fairly;

5. Ensuring that proper records are kept; and

6. Overseeing independent entities or contractors (including tribes acting under contracts, compacts, or grants) commissioned to conduct or manage the peer review process.

1.6 **Related Guidance.** The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677) is incorporated here, by reference.

1.7   Definitions.

    A. The definitions stated in 10 IAM 1 are incorporated herein by reference.

    B. Highly Influential Scientific Assessment. A scientific assessment that: (i) could have a potential impact of more than $500 million in any year, or (ii) is novel, controversial, precedent-setting, or has significant interagency interest.

    C Influential Scientific Information. Scientific information that IA can reasonably determine that dissemination of the information could have a clear and substantial impact on important public policy or management decisions or private sector decisions.

    D. Peer Review. The critical evaluation of the scientific or scholarly merits of an activity conducted by impartial subject-matter experts who are not directly associated with the activity. Peer review may be formal or informal. It may involve open exchange of views and ideas between reviewers and managers of the activities being reviewed during the process of the review, or it may consist of reviewers conducting their observations and writing their reports without any contact with those managers. No matter how it is conducted, it must be objective to achieve its purpose of ensuring that the quality (including objectivity, utility, and integrity) of scientific and scholarly information meets scientific, scholarly, and technical community standards.

    E. Scientific Assessment. An evaluation of a body of scientific or technical knowledge, typically by synthesizing multiple factual inputs, data, models, assumptions, and/or by applying best professional judgment to bridge uncertainties in the available information.

    F. Scientific and Scholarly Information. Scientific and scholarship outputs that consist of proposals, hypotheses, models, written documents, records of all kinds, and assessments. This definition does not include opinions, where the presentation of an output makes clear that what is being offered is someone's opinion rather than fact or the agency's views. Scientific or scholarly information includes all of the following:

        1. Factual inputs, data, models, analyses, technical information, or scientific or scholarly assessments based on the behavioral, cultural, and social sciences, health and medical sciences, life and earth sciences, engineering, or physical sciences.

        2. Any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms.

        3. Information that an agency disseminates from a web page, but does not include the provision of hyperlinks to information that others disseminate.