**Annex 2:** **Example MCC Country Team and AE Protocol for Managing Technical Review and No-Objection Processes**

*Below is a sample protocol for managing Technical Review and No-Objection processes. The specific protocol developed for a given program could follow this format, or take a completely different approach, as agreed by and between the relevant AE and MCC Country Team. The specific content may likewise be adjusted based on the needs and preferences of the AE and MCC Country Team, provided that the final protocol maintains consistency with the requirements established by the Guidance.*

**Key Roles and Responsibilities**

*Document Owner*: AE project/technical staff member responsible for the development of the document being submitted for Technical Review and/or No-Objection. This could include drafting the document or managing an external entity who is leading the drafting process. Document Owners are responsible for coordinating with other AE staff to ensure all relevant technical input is received and ensuring that the Clearance Sheet, recording the AE review and clearance process, is completed and submitted as part of No-Objection requests. They also lead any Informal Review processes with their technical counterparts in MCC. Document Owners may be project/sector directors, or staff members below the director level.

*AE project/sector directors*: AE project/technical staff member responsible for leading an AE work unit. AE project/sector directors should confirm that all relevant AE input has been received, and review documents to confirm that they are in an acceptable state before they are submitted for MCC Technical Review and/or No-Objection. They are expected to understand which documents within their technical area of responsibility require MCC No-Objection and are responsible for ensuring that required No-Objections are incorporated into and submitted in accordance with relevant work plans. AE project/sector directors are also responsible for ensuring that all their project/sector’s upcoming requests for Technical Review and/or No-Objection are incorporated into the AE’s No-Objection tracking tool. Where required based on the AE Clearance Matrix, AE project/sector directors will review and approve documents before they are sent to MCC for No-Objection.

*AE No-Objection Focal Point (Focal Point)*: AE staff member responsible for managing and ensuring compliance with required No-Objection requests. The Focal Point will confirm that completed Clearance Sheets are submitted with all No-Objection requests and is responsible for submitting requests for No-Objection and receiving and disseminating responses from MCC. The Focal Point maintains the AE’s No-Objection tracking tool, working with AE project/sector directors and AE Leadership to keep it up to date, and sharing with MCC’s Resident Country Mission (RCM) on at least a weekly basis. The Focal Point will also notify AE project/sector directors about any documents that MCC has opted-in to review.

*AE Leadership*: AE Leadership retains overall accountability for ensuring that documents receive required No-Objections, and that they are submitted in accordance with relevant workplans. The Focal Point will keep AE Leadership informed about upcoming and/or in process Technical Review and No-Objection requests, and any delays or expected challenges. This may include delays on the AE or MCC side. Where required based on the AE Clearance Matrix, AE Leadership will review and approve documents before they are sent to MCC for No-Objection.

*RCM*: MCC Country Team members responsible for coordinating engagement with the AE, including primary responsibility for coordinating the No-Objection process. The RCM will coordinate MCC’s internal review process and will send all responses to requests for Technical Review and No-Objection. The Resident Country Director (RCD) or Deputy Resident Country Director (DRCD) will also notify AE Leadership and the AE No-Objection Focal Point about any documents that MCC has opted-in to review.

**Review Types**

**Informal Review**: Conducted on an “as needed” basis, as determined by MCC project or sector leads or as requested by the AE, and held directly between counterparts (e.g., MCC ESP lead with AE ESP lead). If needed, this takes place prior to a Technical Review or submission for No-Objection. One or more Informal Reviews may be required to ensure that the document is in an appropriate state before it is officially submitted for Technical Review or No-Objection.[[1]](#footnote-2) The specific approach to managing Informal Reviews should be agreed upon and managed on a counterpart-to-counterpart basis.

**Technical Review**: Conducted on an “as needed” basis, as determined by MCC or as requested by the AE, in accordance with the procedures in Table 1 below. When items are submitted for Technical Review, MCC will endeavor to ensure that all Fatal Flaws and any other significant comments are identified during the Technical Review phase.

MCC and the AE will strive to conduct a single, comprehensive Technical Review for each item—though in cases where MCC provided extensive substantive comments or the AE has added new information or otherwise significantly revised the document post-Technical Review, additional Technical Reviews may be required. Following completion of a Technical Review and MCC’s indication that a document is ready for submission for No-Objection, MCC will only raise additional comments and Fatal Flaws during the No-Objection phase in exceptional cases.

The timeline for Technical Reviews may vary widely based on the document’s level of complexity and whether any Informal Reviews are completed before the document is submitted for Technical Review. The RCM and AE project/sector directors should agree up front on an appropriate review period for a given Technical Review.

**No-Objection**: Conducted as required, in accordance with the procedures in Table 1 below. The AE will submit the item for which they are requesting No-Objection, along with the Clearance Sheet and any supporting documents. MCC will respond with either a No-Objection or, in the case of Fatal Flaws, an Objection to a document; MCC will not provide a “conditional No-Objection” (this means MCC says something like, “MCC provides its No-Objection, provided that the AE changes X and Y,” or “MCC provides its No-Objection subject to further assessment of Z.”). If MCC provides an Objection, MCC will clearly and concisely articulate the reason(s) in writing, with clear actions that are required to address the Fatal Flaw(s).

In cases where a Technical Review was conducted prior to the document’s submission for No-Objection, the AE should submit both ‘clean’ and ‘track changes’ versions of the document.

MCC will typically respond to a request for No-Objection within six (6) business days of receipt. In cases where additional time is required, the RCM will notify the AE as early as possible.

**Table 1: Procedures for AE submitting and MCC processing Technical Reviews and No-Objections**

|  | **Technical Review Process** | **No-Objection Process** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Quality Control** | The AE will ensure that relevant AE staff, including cross-cutting team members, have reviewed documents prior to their submission to MCC for Technical Review or No-Objection. | |
| **2. Submission** | AE project/sector directors will submit Technical Review requests, including all background or other supporting documents, to [XX@mcc.gov](mailto:XX@mcc.gov), with copy to the relevant AE and MCC technical leads and the AE Focal Point. The email subject should state “For Technical Review: *document title*.”  The AE is encouraged but not required to include a Clearance Sheet, or otherwise communicate which AE staff have reviewed and/or provided input into the document prior to its submission to MCC. | The AE No-Objection Focal Point will submit the request for No-Objection, including all background or other supporting documents, to [XX@mcc.gov](mailto:XX@mcc.gov), with copy to the relevant AE and MCC technical leads. For any documents that previously underwent Technical Review, the AE will submit both ‘clean’ and ‘tracked changes’ versions. The email subject should state “For No-Objection: *document title*.”  For each submission, the AE will include a Clearance Sheet that summarizes the request and indicates which AE staff have reviewed and cleared the document prior to its submission to MCC. |
| **3. Confirmation of Submission** | The RCM will confirm receipt within 1 business day of receipt, with confirmation on the expected response date. | |
| **4. Clarifying Questions during the Review Period** | While MCC project/sector leads may discuss questions or issues with their counterparts during the review period, it is not expected that resolution of these questions would delay MCC’s response to a Technical Review request. | If MCC project/sector leads have clarifying questions, they will communicate with their counterparts to try to resolve the questions during the review period. If these discussions are still ongoing at the end of the review period, the RCD or DRCD will communicate to the No-Objection Focal Point that MCC and the AE project/sector leads are discussing the request and that MCC will provide its response as soon as outstanding questions are resolved. The AE may edit and re-submit a tracked changes version of the document during the course of these discussions. |
| **4. Response** | The Program Officer will respond to the AE project/sector director, with copy to [XX@mcc.gov](mailto:XX@mcc.gov), the relevant AE and MCC technical leads, and the AE No-Objection Focal Point within the agreed upon Technical Review period. The Feedback will clearly distinguish between issues that would be considered Fatal Flaws and must be addressed before the document is submitted for No-Objection, and those that are recommendations to improve the document. | The RCD or DRCD will respond to the AE No-Objection Focal Point, with copy to the relevant AE and MCC staff, normally within six (6) business days following the submission. The response will be either a No-Objection, or an Objection. In case of an Objection, the response will clearly identify the specific Fatal Flaw(s) that led to the Objection, and any actions required to address the issue(s). The response may also include additional Feedback that MCC recommends the AE address. |
| **6. Addressing MCC Comments** | The AE will address all Fatal Flaws and consider all recommendations before submitting the document for No-Objection. If the AE chooses not to address any of the recommendations, the AE should provide an explanation as to why not.  If the reviewed document was a contractor/consultant/grantee deliverable, the AE will communicate MCC’s Feedback to the entity, together with the AE’s comments. | If MCC provided an Objection, the AE will address all Fatal Flaws and consider all recommendations before resubmitting the document for No-Objection.  If MCC responded with a No-Objection, but also provided Feedback, the AE can choose whether to address the comments. If the AE makes edits to respond to the Feedback, the document does not need to be resubmitted for No-Objection. |
| **7. Follow Up** | The AE No-Objection Focal Point should submit the final versions of all documents that received MCC No-Objection to [XX@mcc.gov](mailto:XX@mcc.gov), with copy to the relevant AE and MCC technical leads, prior to sharing with external parties (outside the AE). The RCM is responsible for ensuring the final version of the document is received.  The AE Document Owner will also share the final version with AE staff who were involved in the development, review and clearance of the document. | |

1. AE and MCC counterparts may also conduct Informal Reviews on items such as consultant monthly reports or other deliverables that are not expected to be submitted for No-Objection. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)