Project Plan Revision and Project Implementation (Six to ten weeks)
Along with the panel's written recommendations, OSQR sends the Area Directors a worksheet that lists each reviewer's judgment of which action class each project plan should have. The action classes are also converted to a numerical equivalent, averaged, and a final action class rating is assigned to the plan by the SQR Officer. (See Exhibit 7: Sample Action Class Rating Worksheet.)

If the action class is:
1. No revision required. No revision is required, but minor changes to the project plan may be made.
2. Minor revision required. The project plan is basically feasible as written but requires some revision to increase quality to a higher level.
3. Moderate revision required. The project plan is basically feasible as written but requires moderate revision to one or more objectives, perhaps involving changes to the experimental approaches, in order to increase quality to a higher level. The project plan may also need some rewriting for greater clarity.

Scientists are required to submit a formal statement to their Area Director demonstrating their response to peer reviewers' recommendations. Responses are inserted after each recommendation on the peer review form. (See Exhibit 4: Sample Peer Review Recommendations and ARS Response.) The response must clearly indicate which recommendations were adopted, include other changes that were made, and cite sound rationale for not accepting recommendations, if applicable. The Area Directors subsequently submit the formal response to the SQR Officer.

Research leaders and lead scientists revise their project plans and prepare responses to each peer review recommendation for their plans. Revisions made to the project plans may be highlighted with bold text. Lead scientists solicit comments and obtain approval of the revised project plans from their Laboratory, Center, or Institute Director. The revised project plan, the ARS response, and original signed coversheets are then forwarded to the Area Director. The Area Director reviews and approves each revised project plan, as well as solicits input and approval from the National Program Team. The Area forwards the fully approved revised project plan, ARS response, and original signed coversheets to OSQR. OSQR delivers the ARS response to peer reviewers.

OSQR certifies the ARS response to the peer review and that the process is complete and in the best interest of the Agency. The certification letter also contains the termination date, the next scheduled peer review, and public access to information pertaining to the review.

If the final action class is:

    4. Major revision required. Substantial revision to one or more objectives is necessary, but the project plan should be sound and feasible after significant revision.

    5. *Not feasible*. The project plan has major flaws or deficiencies, and cannot be simply revised to produce a sound project. If the project is not terminated, a complete redesign and rewrite are required.

The Area Director of that project is responsible for convening a team of representatives from the Area, Laboratory, Center/Institute (if applicable), and National Program Staff to determine the best course of action to respond to the peer review.

a. *Re-review*. The project is revised and approved over a 10-week period, using the same steps involved in preparing a project plan prior to a peer review. (See "Project Plan Development" above). OSQR re-sends the project to at least two of the original peer reviewers. The project is peer reviewed within a 4-week period.

b. *Postponed Review*. The project is completely re-written, possibly by different scientists, the project is included in the next peer review session for projects within the National Program. The next peer review of the project occurs about a year later.

c. *Termination*. The project is terminated. Objectives that are reassigned from the subject project to other ARS projects are peer reviewed according to the receiving project's status in the peer review cycle.

Area Directors send OSQR a memo discussing the course of action selected and their rationale for that decision. OSQR further informs the peer reviewers of ARS's decision and makes arrangements for a re-review if requested.

Comments
for Section 8
Project Plan Revision and Implementation