

Instream Flow Council Peer Review Policy

This policy describes the process and considerations by which IFC will determine whether to respond to a request for a “formal” IFC peer review and how such a review will be conducted. A formal IFC review is that where IFC is being asked to provide an official organizational (i.e., IFC-based) conclusion. This policy does not apply to informal reviews where an IFC-wide opinion is not desired, nor to informal technical assistance conducted by individual members or groups of members.

The IFC Peer Review policy is established to guide review of instream flow studies, reports, programs, or policies to help meet the IFC’s mission “to improve the effectiveness of state, provincial, and territorial instream flow programs and activities.” Priority is on instream flow and water level studies, reports, programs, and policies that (in the following order):

1. have direct bearing on decisions being made regarding instream flow/water level needs (would include agency reports from either the development or conservation side);
2. will influence future decisions being made regarding instream flow and water levels (this could include reports from NGOs, consultants, academics, or other government agencies that can be applied to water management decisions); or
3. will help increase the knowledge base for science, public dialogue, law or policy necessary to ensure water requirements that sustain ecological integrity (this would include manuscripts for the primary literature).

IFC will consider conducting a formal peer review only if the request for such a review is made or sponsored by a Member Agency in good standing. Member Agencies may sponsor an IFC review for another party (Sponsored Party), regardless of the author, if the Member Agency determines that it would benefit from the IFC review.

The Member Agency should identify how the review would benefit it (referring to the three criteria above) and the importance of the review to the Member Agency. The Member Agency’s review request must state its goals and objectives in having the IFC review the work and the relevant deadline. The Member Agency must also agree that they or others will cover the costs incurred by the IFC Review Team associated with the review. This information will: a) help the IFC identify whether the review is feasible and meets IFC priorities as set out above; b) if feasible, help the IFC identify appropriate reviewers; and c) help form the basis of the IFC’s review.

The IFC decision whether to review shall be based solely on: (a) the criteria above; and, (b) the availability of willing and qualified IFC volunteer reviewers. It is the responsibility of the IFC reviewer to adhere to his or her member agency’s requirements for performing these types of services.

IFC will be reimbursed for the costs of the IFC Review Team conducting the review, including necessary travel, per diem and other related costs. IFC will also charge for any administrative costs it incurs as a result of setting up or coordinating the review. IFC may charge a Sponsored Party a fee for conducting a review.

Expenses claimed by IFC members on the Review Team conducting these reviews must be in accordance with guidelines and requirements of their employing agency. If the Member Agency

requires reimbursement of its staff time from the Sponsored Party, such reimbursement will be handled directly between the Member Agency and the Sponsored Party. Also, if the agency of a Review Team member requires reimbursement of its staff time, such reimbursement will be handled directly between that agency and the Member Agency or Sponsored Party.

If IFC cannot address a peer review request with reviewers from within the staff pool of member agencies in good standing, or due to time constraints, then IFC will not conduct the review. IFC will maintain an expertise directory of IFC members for various IFC purposes, including selection of IFC peer review panels in response to specific requests by sponsors for IFC peer review. IFC will not contract out to third parties peer review to be done in IFC's name.

IFC peer reviews shall be conducted according to the following process:

1. Member Agency makes a request for a formal review by IFC to the IFC President;
2. Peer Review Committee screens the request to determine if the review shall be undertaken;
3. Peer Review Committee Chair solicits IFC members as to their interest, expertise, and availability to serve on an IFC Review Team;
4. IFC, Member Agency, and Sponsored Party (if applicable) develop a contract on all review details including deliverables, timelines, expense reimbursement, billing processes, costs, and liability;
5. IFC Review Team members conduct reviews either independently or at a central location of the Review Team chair's choosing where all review team members are in attendance (if determined appropriate by the Chair and funds are available to cover the cost of the meeting);
6. IFC Review Team chair compiles reviews into a consensus report that notes any divergent opinions;
7. IFC President circulates compiled review to Governing Council members with 21 day deadline for Governing Council feedback;
8. IFC Review Team incorporates any Governing Council feedback that differs from the compiled review as a separate section of the review and sends the entire review package to IFC President to facilitate final approval by the Executive Committee; and
9. IFC President sends completed IFC peer review on behalf of IFC, including Governing Council feedback, to the Member Agency and the Sponsored Party, if applicable.

Adopted by the Executive Committee on September 15, 2010.

INSTREAM FLOW COUNCIL PEER REVIEW APPLICATION

IFC Member Agency

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Sponsored Party (if applicable)

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Type of document to be reviewed

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How your agency will benefit (check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. The review will have a direct bearing on agency decisions being made regarding instream flow/water level needs (e.g., agency reports from either the development or conservation side). <input type="checkbox"/> 2. The review will influence agency's future decisions being made regarding instream flow and water levels (e.g., reports from NGOs, consultants, academics, or other government agencies that can be applied to water management decisions). <input type="checkbox"/> 3. The review will help increase the agency's knowledge base of science, public dialogue, law or policy necessary to ensure water requirements that sustain ecological integrity (e.g., manuscripts for the primary literature).
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Describe why the review is important to your agency

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Describe your agency's goals and objectives in having the IFC perform the review

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Deadline for completed review

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Expenses incurred by the IFC Review Team will be covered by:

- IFC Member Agency
- Sponsored Party
- Other
