



Independent Scientific Advisory Board
for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council,
Columbia River Basin Indian Tribes,
and NOAA Fisheries
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PROCEDURE FOR INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD REVIEWS
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Purpose: This document formalizes the procedures by which the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) provides independent scientific advice and recommendations regarding fish and wildlife programs to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council), NOAA Fisheries (Northwest Fisheries Science Center), and the Columbia River Indian Tribes (through the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission) consistent with the ISAB's Terms of Reference (July 15, 2004). The objectives of this procedure are to ensure:

- (1) understanding by the ISAB of the scope and nature of the issue(s) for which review is requested by the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes,
- (2) that those groups affected by the ISAB review are ensured of a complete and fair review of the issue(s) by the ISAB,
- (3) written documentation of ISAB recommendations that is available to those reviewed and others,
- (4) that administrative and policy implications of the ISAB advice to Council, NOAA Fisheries and the Tribes are left to those agencies,
- (5) appropriate technical/scientific dialogue between the reviewed group and the ISAB through the Council, NMFS, and the Tribes.

Background: This proposed procedure updates the 30 June 1997 version, which was a modification of portions of the earlier "Guide to Project Peer Review in the Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program," SRG 94-1, Scientific Review Group report to BPA, February 1994.

Proposed Procedure:

1. Selection of Issues for Review

Topics or questions are posed to the ISAB by the Council, NOAA Fisheries and the Tribes by letter signed by any or all of those entities. A variety of circumstances may prompt a review or analysis, including special concerns and routine evaluation of long-standing projects. Review requests carefully identify the scope and nature of the review or analysis expected. Questions to be referred to the ISAB are often discussed in advance among representatives of the Board, Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes to clarify the scope and nature of the review and to formalize the questions. The ISAB Executive Committee will review the requests and specific questions initially and bring any concerns, particularly policy issues, to the attention of the full ISAB and the Coordinators. The specificity of the request should ensure mutual understanding of the task by the requesters, reviewers, and those reviewed.

2. Selection of an Appropriate Review Product

The ISAB and its predecessor groups have been asked to provide reviews ranging from small narrowly focused reviews of specific projects or documents to large programmatic-scale reviews. These reviews have also varied with respect to their intended audience, level of technical detail, and the amount of time the ISAB needed to complete the review. Rather than producing a single type of report, the ISAB uses a variety of reports, each designed to serve a specific purpose.

As a first step in assignments, the ISAB identifies the type of report it could complete given the nature of the question, workload and deadlines. Reviews could include fully researched and documented formal reports, focused reviews, less fully documented letter opinions, and formalized discussions or consultations (see table below). Each type of report will have a standard introductory page, which describes the report type, its strengths and shortcomings. The following table lists potential ISAB review products:

<u>ISAB Products: ISAB YR-#</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Level of Detail</u>	<u>Time</u>
1. Memos – Opinion letters	Administrative	Low	Short
2. Reviews A. Projects (mostly ISRP) B. Programs C. Existing Document	Administrative and/or Technical Peer	Moderate (as needed)	Moderate
3. Formal Reports	Technical Peer and Administrative	High	Long
4. Consultation/Discussion	Administrative or Technical Peer	As required	Short to continuous

3. Selection of the Review Team

The ISAB as a whole is responsible for the report, with a subcommittee of the ISAB and subcommittee chair generally assigned by the ISAB Chair or the Executive Committee to have responsibility for detailed study and preparation of an initial draft report. Occasionally, expertise is needed that is not represented on the Board. In such cases, outside experts may be contracted to serve as temporary participants (i.e., *ad hoc* members).

4. ISAB Preparation

The ISAB, through the assigned subcommittee and subcommittee chair, assesses the materials needed to carry out the requested review or analysis. Relevant materials are identified and obtained by Board members or staffs of the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes. Early in the review process, the subcommittee drafts an outline for the review product, which it distributes to the whole ISAB for review and comment. After consensus is reached on the outline, assignments are given within the subcommittee by its chair to complete the analysis and drafting of the initial review product.

5. Notification of Those Reviewed

Those being reviewed are appraised of the situation by the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes. The notification is directed to an appropriate person for the specific review (e.g., principal investigator or head of an agency or office). The notification describes the request being made of the ISAB, requests cooperation in the review, lists the main materials that the ISAB has available for the review, and requests that additional relevant materials, if any, be provided. The requested additional materials may be known to the ISAB specifically and listed (e.g., needed reports) or volunteered by those being reviewed. All volunteered materials are to be clearly marked for relevance (e.g., specific pages or sections of a report, specific sets of data, etc.) and include a relevant synthesis as part of the written transmittal.

6. Meeting Between ISAB and Individuals in Possession of Relevant Information

In some circumstances, but not all, a meeting with those having relevant information or those responsible for the project may be a fruitful way to speed communication and understanding. Such meetings are held at the ISAB's request.

7. Contacts During Conduct of the Assignment

The ISAB, its subcommittee, or members of the team may contact (by any suitable means) individuals relevant to the ISAB assignment for additional information or clarification. The ISAB initiates these contacts; it is not appropriate for those being reviewed to seek to influence the ISAB or its members. Summary records should be kept of such contacts.

8. Internal ISAB Review of Subcommittee Progress

In-depth progress reports are expected from ISAB subcommittees working on active reviews at each ISAB meeting. (See also Item 4 above on ISAB Preparation). Background materials can be distributed at the meetings; however, any written draft for review and discussion at the meeting should be sent out so that ISAB members have a minimum of seven days to review it before the meeting. ISAB members are obligated to respond, with a minimum number of internal reviews predetermined. A major task of the subcommittee is to identify the areas of initial consensus and to define areas of non-consensus.

9. Confidentiality of Individual Comments and Draft Reports

In order to encourage individual reviewers to express their views freely and to facilitate the consensus process, Board members and staff are to refrain from disclosing the contents of draft reports and individual comments.

10. Final ISAB Consensus on Review

A final step in all reviews will be a discussion by the whole ISAB in which consensus is reached on the issues, or the debate is sufficiently characterized so that the remaining steps in producing the review are primarily editorial in nature. At this point, the subcommittee will pass its draft to the Executive Committee for the final editing and completion of the review.

11. Use of the Executive Committee as an Editorial Committee

Final compiling, editing and formatting of the report will be done by the Executive Committee, in close coordination with the lead authors of the report, prior to submission of the review or report to the requesting institution.

12. Reports

All reviews, reports or analyses conducted by the ISAB are to be completed by presentation of a written report, adopted by consensus in the ISAB and submitted to the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes, with a cover letter and an identifying report number (year plus sequential number for the year, e.g. ISAB 2004-8). The report is to include reference to the specific request, procedures followed by the ISAB in addressing the request, background information on the issue, description of materials reviewed, a narrative of the analysis, conclusions and recommendations, a list of references cited, and (if relevant) appended comments or suggestions for the benefit of those being reviewed. All ISAB reports should provide a full explanation of the rationale for its recommendations for Council, NOAA Fisheries, and Tribal decision-making and public information. The ISAB's advisory report is to the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes, not to the entity being reviewed or those affected by the review.

13. Distribution of Reports

The ISAB's final report on the request is transmitted to the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Tribes. The Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes are responsible for distribution of the reports as they feel appropriate. The ISAB is not the source for distribution. In general, reports will be made available to the general public on the ISAB webpage (Council website) within two weeks of submittal.

14. Comments on the Final Reports

All comments on completed ISAB reports are to be directed to the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes. The ISAB serves in a limited technical advisory capacity to these agencies and is not the appropriate body for administrative and policy debates regarding its conclusions and recommendations. The Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes may ask the ISAB to respond to technical and scientific comments. Such requests should be by formal letter. The ISAB responds to the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes, and further dialog with commentors is at the discretion of the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes.

15. Outside Communication

Communications with the press or other outside groups with respect to specific reviews should normally be handled by the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes. When contact with the ISAB is deemed by the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes to be appropriate, the ISAB Chair will normally act as spokesperson unless another member is designated by the chair to speak for the ISAB on a particular topic. Public statements should be based on written materials in the ISAB report. The Council, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the Tribes, through the Science Coordinators, should be kept informed of all outside contacts.