



*10th Meeting of the
International Scientific Committee
for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean
Victoria, BC Canada
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ISC Peer Review Requirement¹

ISC

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ISC Peer Review Requirement

The Rules and Procedures for Conduct of the ISC and Subsidiary Bodies requires the following regarding peer review:

- C9.** *Peer review of function.* Every five years, or more frequently as may be decided, the Committee shall organize a team of three recognized peers with no Committee affiliation, to review the function of the Committee and subsidiary bodies and to offer recommendations for improvement.

ISC has not yet had a review of its function throughout its existence and should endeavor to conduct one in order to promote transparency and scientific effectiveness. ISC10 is tasked with determining how to accomplish this requirement. The following are considerations for ISC in determining how to execute a peer review:

1. Objectives
2. Focus on ISC function for producing stock assessments
3. Availability of working group working papers
4. Cost
5. Time frame
6. What process could be used to accomplish this?
 - a. ISC organizes review using a process like:
 - SEDAR
 - STAR
 - ICCAT review process
 - Others?
 - b. ISC contracts out the work to organizations that conduct reviews:
 - Center for Independent Experts (ISC/10/PLENARY/info/01)
 - Marine Resources and Fisheries Consultants (MRAG)
<http://www.mrag.co.uk/>
 - Others?

Summary of MRAG (from MRAG website)

MRAG pays considerable attention to tracking the performance of projects in relation to the goals and milestones specified in the project design. Sophisticated project planning and monitoring tools are used, such as the Logical Framework, which include the pre-specification of verifiable indicators of project and program performance and clear explanation of the means of verification.

MRAG has gained considerable experience in the application of project planning management tools in the fisheries development sector. Besides monitoring our own project and program performance, MRAG's expertise and experience has been used extensively by governments and international funding agencies such as the World Bank, to evaluate the performance of external projects and resource assessment programs.

Summary of CIE

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service instituted the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) in 1998 to provide independent and timely reviews of science upon which many management decisions are made. Operations of the CIE, run under a contract with the University of Miami in Florida, maintain the independence of reviewers from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and follow strict conflict of interest guidelines.

The structure and operation of the CIE have been designed to ensure the quality, relevance, and independence of the reviews. Independence is maintained by eliminating any role for NOAA in selecting or paying the reviewers, or in approving the contents of reviewers' reports. Also, strict conflict-of-interest policies are followed. To ensure quality and timeliness, the University of Miami pays CIE reviewers for their work, and requires them to sign contracts with well-defined deliverables and schedules.

The CIE conducts on-site and correspondence reviews. For on-site reviews, the CIE experts are sent to meetings, workshops, or other fora. In correspondence reviews, the CIE experts conduct all review related activities from their home location. A typical CIE review requires two to four months from initiation to delivery of final review reports. The CIE completed 101 reviews between 1999 and September 2006. Ninety-eight reviewers have participated in CIE reviews, with 72% of them coming from overseas. The informational document, *The Center for Independent Experts: A National External Peer Review Program of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries service* (ISC/10/PLENARY/info/01), describes the review process, CIE structure, how conflict of interest is eliminated and other details regarding the CIE.