European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

IMPEL NPRI

National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Methodology and Guidance

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Acknowledgement

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on implementing a National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) that can be performed at national, regional, local and organisational level.

The document is based on analysis of results of a survey though a questionnaire, as well as a study on Peer Review methods used by various organisations. The content of the guidance is inspired by work in this area of:

- The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) - the IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI)
- Italian Environmental Protection Agencies (ARPA's)
- Regional Environmental Protection Agencies (REPAs) in the Netherlands
- International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA) - Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV)
- European Union - Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) and TAIEX EIR Peer To Peer Tool
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) - Environmental Performance Review (EPR)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Environmental Performance Review (EPR)

The NPRI-team acknowledges the work, policies and methodologies of the aforementioned organisations on the subject 'Peer and/or Performance Review' and is grateful for the use of their free accessible information, as well as kindly provided oral and written information and the approval of the use of specific information for the study and this document.

Important note:

It needs to be noted that this guidance and its annexes aim to be used as open, flexible and non-prescriptive and contain options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs. This means that organisations in a country that wish to perform a Peer Review can consider using elements of this guidance in addition to their own methodology. IMPEL is available for providing support and assistance on implementation.

National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Scheme, Methodology and Guideline

1. Introduction

'Improve continuously'; that's an ambition of almost every organisation. This certainly also applies to government organisations from which society may expect excellent performance of its services.

The implementation of tasks and responsibilities by governmental (environmental) authorities is organized at various levels, namely at national, regional and local level. IMPEL assists authorities with the implementation of environmental legislation and the performance in its execution, amongst others through the application of peer review, the IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI).
IMPEL members, stimulated by positive experiences with a peer review scheme in Italy and the Netherlands, expressed the need for an instrument or tool that can be applied within a country and by comparable organisations within a network, and often at different administrative levels such as provinces and regions. Application of such an instrument aims at the exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices through dialogue between colleagues and experts. The outcome of this provides input for improvement of the execution of tasks and their performance.
The development and implementation of such an instrument is encouraged by the European Commission that included this topic in the Action Plan accompanying the Environmental Compliance Assurance (ECA) Initiative.[1],[2] IMPEL also included this ambition in its Position Paper on Environmental Compliance Assurance and its multi-year Strategic Work Programme.[3]

The expressed need for a peer review instrument to be used at the various administrative levels is in particular based on the conviction that results of a structured and accessible peer review promote and accelerate further improvement of performance. The outcome of a Peer Review can also strengthen legal equality and an improved level playing field within a country as well as in an international context. Furthermore, to carry out Peer Reviews by experts from comparable organisations who are familiar with the tasks, responsibilities and quality aspects of the organisation in a programmatic way, is seen as an important advantage. Such a programme, the National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI scheme), should be implemented and managed at the national level by a network of representatives of involved authorities. Currently no such scheme exists.

Those who want to grow and improve would do well to compare their results with those of others. This allows the best ideas and working methods to be compared. Visiting and questioning colleagues and comparing working methods help determine the vision, direction and implementation of improvements. The NPRI method is therefore ideally suited for performing benchmarking.

This document describes the design of a NPRI scheme, methodology and process, as well as the setup of a (national) NPRI-network. Attached to this document are 7 Annexes that contain detailed guidance on specific subjects.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/pdf/COM_2018_10_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_TO_INST_EN_V8_P1_959219.pdf
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/pdf/SWD_2018_10_F1_OTHER_STAFF_WORKING_PAPER_EN_V5_P1_959220.pdf
[3] https://www.impel.eu/publications/impel-position-paper-on-environmental-compliance-assurance/

1.2 Characteristics of the NPRI scheme

The main focus of the NPRI scheme is to encourage the introduction and implementation of a Peer Review tool within a country, that helps to continuously improve processes and performance. The scheme consists of two main parts, namely:

- setting up a NPRI network at national and network level in which representatives of various organisations participate, and
- the execution of Peer Reviews through which organisations systematically exchange information, good practices, and assess, through (open and constructive) dialogue, the implementation of policy decisions and related (operational) tasks. Also 'benchmarking' of organisations in a network will be possible by using the NPRI scheme.

The NPRI scheme aims to be a flexible instrument but also a defined process that supports the assessment of performance of a country, organisation, authority or processes in the implementation of environmental legislation. Furthermore, the scheme seeks to promote better understanding of needs of competent authorities (e.g. training, common rules, documents, type of instruments and technical support etc.) and to determine ways in which support could be delivered by a core group of experts to achieve this. It can therefore also serve as a capacity-building instrument, as it acts as a mutual learning process, both for the organisation under review, but also for other organisations especially those acting as reviewers.

The scheme is to be carried out on a voluntary basis, and only be applied upon request. Hence, it is the country, organisation or authority itself that proactively initiates the review process in view of assessing its current performance and improve upon it. Nevertheless, an NPRI scheme could become a regular tool to be used based on internally agreed agreements within a network.

It also serves as a means of stimulating reform in the policies and practices of the reviewed organisations. Findings from the review, presented as 'opportunities for development (OfD)' and 'Good Practices' are suggestive and non-binding. Finally, through the NPRI scheme support can be delivered to requesting organisations for conducting a Peer Review, as well as implementing its relevant findings supported by a pool of experts. IMPEL can provide assistance and support as well in these processes.

The NPRI scheme differs from the IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) due to its focus on national and regional networks and equivalent organisations, rather than only on single agencies or authorities within a country which constitutes the main focus of the IRI. Furthermore, the NPRI scheme is carried out independently managed at country level by a dedicated team. Hence, the whole review process, its related activities and potential outcomes are managed by the country (or country institution) itself.

1.3 Flexibility

The NPRI scheme is a voluntary and flexible concept. 'Flexible' means that the scheme can be adjusted and subsequently tailored to fit special circumstances and/or specific needs of networks and/or organisations within a country. Needs can be determined in consultation, coordination and agreement with comparable organisations within a national or regional network of organisations (such as provinces, municipalities, environmental protection agencies, inspection organisations etc.).

Based on the results of the inventory of needs of organisations(s), the next step relates to 'scoping', i.e. the determination of the scope of the subject the Peer Review should focus on. In this step, a reference framework for the assessment is determined in close consultation with the organisations to be reviewed. It is during this step that an 'Assessment Framework' will be developed against which the findings of the assessment will be 'measured'. The nature of this framework depends on the choice of the subject to be reviewed and may also depend on relevant legal requirements, quality requirements or the extent to which goals of the organisation are pursued. In fact, each Peer Review requires or may require customisation and the nature of the chosen topic will determine the framework against which the performance of an organisation is assessed. For example, the requirements for conducting inspections and licensing will differ from each other, as well as policy evaluation and goal achievement. Here too, the NPRI scheme may be applied in a highly malleable and flexible manner.

It is important that an Assessment Framework is developed in close consultation with the organisations to be reviewed. As the wishes of organisations may differ, flexibility is also very important in such cases, as the process might vary accordingly in the duration of the review, the number of experts and/or organisations involved, costs, focus areas and themes, qualitative and quantitative aspects, etc.

Annex IV, *'Guidance to design an Assessment Framework'* provides comprehensive information on developing Assessment Frameworks.

1.4 Benefits of Peer Reviews in the context of NPRI

The outcome of Peer Reviews by and between comparable or equivalent organisations can contribute amongst others to:

- Harmonization in implementation of tasks and responsibilities of organisations;
- Improvement of efficiency, both in terms of human and financial recourses, and not infrequently even a more effective performance of tasks;
- Harmonising the execution of tasks and responsibilities, which can have an important effect on treating the target audience of the organisations in an equal manner. In this regard, permitting and inspections are important examples to mention specifically in connection with stakeholders such as industrial operators and other supervised businesses and actors;
- Legal equality and an improved level playing field;
- (Strategic) prioritisation of an organisation - also at the (inter)national level.

1.5 A ‘National Network’ within the context of NPRI

Implementation of a NPRI concept and scheme can take place in various ways. Most desirable is to do this in a uniform manner. However, due to how countries have organised their own governmental and coordination structures, it will be necessary to adjust and tailor the implementation of NPRI to countries’ specific situation. In general, countries have coordination and aligning structures in place on subjects such as permitting, enforcement of environmental legislation and performance of environmental inspections. This because various organisations are involved in these activities, such as policy and legal departments, inspectorates, but also law enforcement authorities (police and public prosecutors). They work together and adjust their ways of working and these structures have often been set up to safeguard uniformity, legal certainty and legal equality in approaches as well as for effectiveness and efficiency reasons.

Regarding the implementation of a NPRI concept, it is advised to connect to these structures or platforms, often organised as ‘national networks’. In case such coordination platforms are not available, it is recommended to encourage cooperation between organisations and if possible, to setup a national (NPRI) team or network of experts and representatives of various organisations.

Annex I (*Guidance on implementation of a NPRI scheme through a National NPRI Network*) to this document aims to offer countries (taken into account the variety of the coordination structures in the European countries), networks and related organisations, guidance on:

- Actions to promote and implement the NPRI scheme by (national) networks
- Institution of a NPRI Network and the main steps that could be taken to set up its own NPRI system and governance
- How IMPEL could assist countries, networks and organisations in these actions.

1.5.1 Guidance on implementation of a NPRI scheme through a National NPRI Network (Annex I)

Annex I provides information on what should be understood by a National Network in the context of the NPRI, namely defined as: *‘a group of organisations with largely the same characteristics, aims, roles and responsibilities who are willing to improve their processes and performance through peer reviews, discussion, dialogue and mutual learning.’*
Subsequently, Annex I briefly describes which types of networks can be distinguished and how a NPRI scheme can add value to these networks.

Because the role of a national network is seen as essential in the implementation of an NPRI scheme, Annex I further discusses the nature and content of those roles. The guidance also discusses which officials can play a role in promoting, establishing, joining and implementing a network, as well as how an NPRI network can be governed. In particular, attention is paid to a National NPRI Coordinator who can play a stimulating and coordinating role.
The guidance then provides suggestions and clear process steps on how a NPRI scheme can be implemented.

1.5.2 How can IMPEL help?

IMPEL can provide support and assistance in all phases, activities and process steps regarding the implementation and execution of peer reviews as described in this document. Annex I describes more in detail how IMPEL can provide support on the implementation of the NPRI scheme in the distinct phases of 'Initiation - Preparation - Review Mission - Follow-Up', and activities that are carried out in those phases and the associated process steps.

As examples, support by IMPEL can consist of:
- Supplying documents containing strategies and guidance;
- Participating in discussions to promote and support the establishment of networks;
- Providing support in preparing discussion documents;
- Discussing and reviewing the documents produced by a National Network in preparation of its peer review activities with regard to the documents that are produced within the NPRI project and by sharing the experiences and opinion of members of the NPRI Project Team;
- Participating with experts in sessions on (strategical) scoping, assessment frameworks, assessing performance and connected review activities;
- IMPEL members and representatives of organisations with experiences with peer reviews can make an important contribution to promoting as 'ambassadors' the NPRI concept and stimulating partnership between organisations;
- Providing support on request on the implementation of outcomes of Peer Reviews.

1.6 Evaluation

A national NPRI team has excellent capabilities to analyse and evaluate past Peer Reviews. It is recommended that these types of assessments be a regular activity. The lessons learned from this can contribute to improvements of the National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Methodology and Guidance 'and its annexes. The method and annexes must therefore be seen as 'living documents'.

2. Peer Review and its process

2.1 Introduction

Peer review is intended as a fruitful dialogue amongst equals: exploratory, making connections, constructive and positively critical. Colleagues of organisations with expertise in certain subjects and / or processes may delve into similar or analogous processes that are carried out by fellow organisations. The aim is to explicitly provide the other organisation with appropriate feedback that can serve as constructive input for further development. It is not an audit, but rather a Peer Review is aimed at learning from and with each other, whereby questions may certainly be critical.
A Peer Review can also be set up and carried out in such a way that the focus is on gaining insights into ways in which an organisation performs its tasks, measured on the basis of internal and external standards. In fact, this is an assessment and measurement of the performance of an organisation.

2.2 Conditions for success

To allow a Peer Review a good chance of success, it is advised that certain conditions[4] take place during the review process:

- Create a secure environment
- Ensure enough support for implementation
- Work from competences
- Ensure that results can be implemented by the organisation

These conditions can be detailed as follows:

Create a secure environment

- A peer review is based on the principle 'from good to better': This consciously positive approach emphasizes the intended development of the organisation as a whole, including that of the individual employee;
- Make sure there is enough time allocated in the programme for carrying out the Peer Review;
- A Peer Review should be well announced in advance, so everyone involved has sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the working method. Allow the participants enough time to collect information, answer questions and prepare for discussions/conversations and exchanges;
- Find the right balance between the time spent and the level of (in) formality: Avoid making it too tight and too formal. It is important that everyone feels sufficiently safe and free and is able to work in a relaxed manner;
- Provide a report that is written in a concise manner: A clear and simple style should be used, so the contents are easily and quickly understood by the reader. Avoid information of general nature unless it provides essential context for the findings;
- Agree in advance on confidentiality and publicity issues regarding the Peer Review and its outcome: If possible, formalise this in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

Ensure enough support for implementation

[4] STOWA; INSTRUCTIE PEERREVIEWONDERDEEL VAN HET ZORGTAAKAKKOORD 'SAMEN GROEIEN IN ONZE ZORGTAAK, 2016; p8-9; Available at: https://www.stowa.nl/sites/default/files/assets/PUBLICATIES/Publicaties%202016/STOWA%202016-W-05A.pdf

- Start with organisations or individuals that are curious or are already willing to participate with enthusiasm;
- Be realistic in setting goals and refrain from being overambitious;
- Highlight the added value of asking each other questions and learning from each other in a broad sense;
- Link the peer review to obligations the organisation has with regard to the performance of its tasks.

Work from competences

- A good review stands or falls with the value-free observation of facts, interviewing those involved, writing out the findings and reflecting the facts found. It is important to ensure these qualities are already present at the outset of the review and allow the reviewers develop them further;
- Realise that the reviewer should adopt the perspective of improving the performance of an organisation;
- Provide applicable and relevant guidance in view of improving performance, place a workable foundation under the method of the reviews; Repeating peer reviews can contribute to an open, learning culture.

Ensure that results can be implemented by the organisation

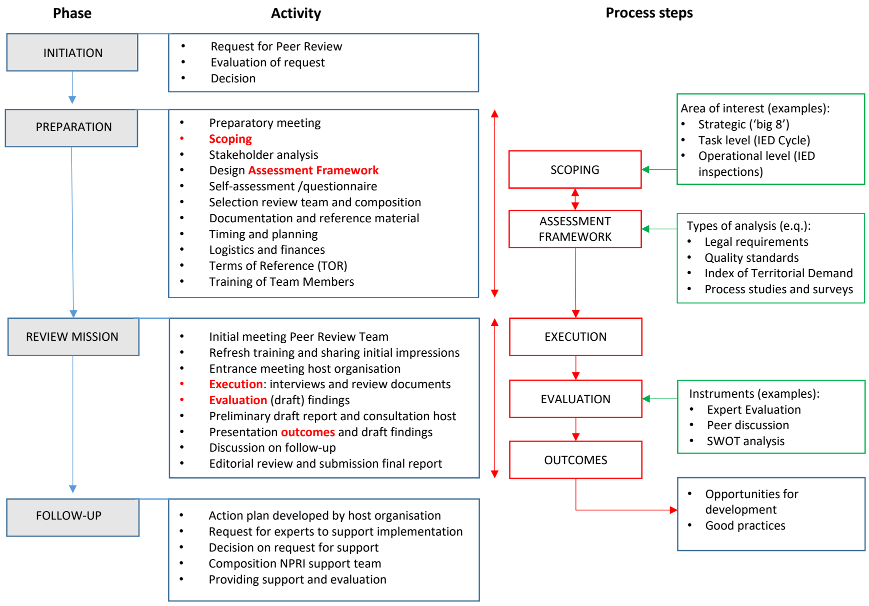
- A successful review cycle depends on the ability and willingness to introduce and implement improvements. A stimulating environment and a creative culture where joint efforts can be concentrated on structural organisational improvements is ideal. Therefore, for organisations that choose to participate in a Peer Review it is recommended that they provide the appropriate 'internal climate' where ideas and proposals for improvements and changes can be openly discussed and coordinated.

2.3 Peer Review Process

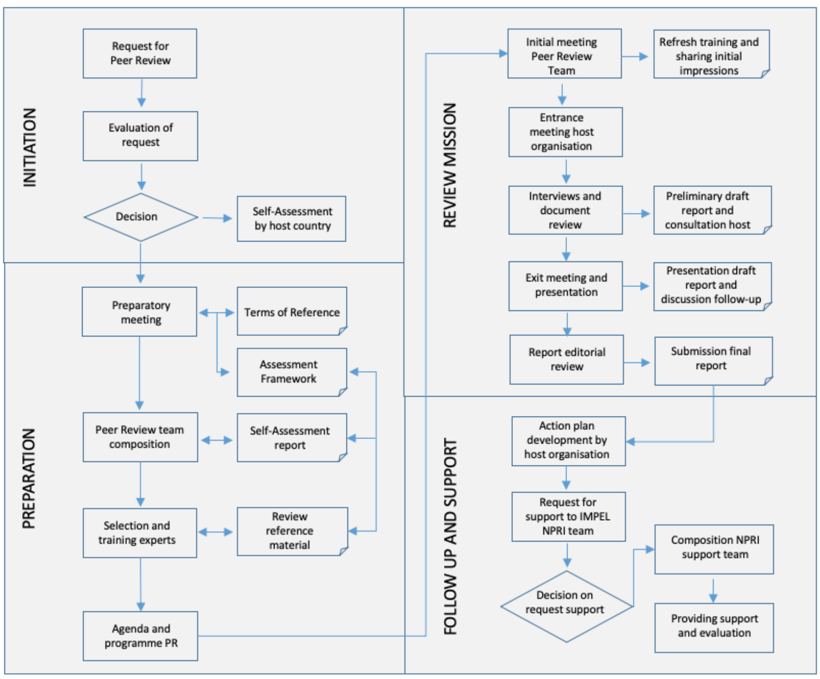
For a successful implementation of a Peer Review, it is important that the process is clearly and properly explained and described beforehand. Such a description, that can also serve as guidance, must be documented and updated accordingly. A process description contains all relevant steps and elaborates on all actions to be taken, with reference to relevant guidance material where necessary. Such a description largely prevents a divergent implementation of a peer review. It is important to note that a Peer Review in the context of the NPRI should be scalable and flexible, depending on the scope, the subjects to be reviewed as well as needs of the host organisation. Several good examples are available and can support the NPRI-team and experts in designing Peer Reviews.[5]

[5] Italian Peer Review experiences – *'A national approach'* and Dutch Regional Environmental Protection Agencies (REPA) – *Collegiate assessment;*

The process can incorporate the following phases[6] with related activities



The following diagram[7] depicts the entire process and the coherence and dependencies between the various process components, from initiating a peer review to implementation, follow-up and providing support to reviewed organisations for implementing results.



[6] The scheme and phases are modified and based on: International Atomic and Energy Agency. Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines. P. 6. Available from https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/SVS-36_web.pdf

[7] The diagram is modified and based on: International Atomic and Energy Agency. Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines. P.6. Available from https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/SVS-36_web.pdf

3. Initiation

3.1 Introduction

A peer review starts with the intention of a single organisation, or two or more organisations within a national network, or even of a network itself, to be subject to an (external) assessment through a NPRI-team, in order to assess the implementation of its assigned tasks and responsibilities in specific areas, with the aim of improving itself based on the results of the review. To this end, the organisation takes the initiative by preparing, drafting and sending a request for a peer review. Such a request may be addressed by an organisation to senior management for internal approval of the proposal to conduct a Peer Review. A request can also be addressed by an organisation to a designated NPRI coordinator at national level.

3.2 'Request for Peer Review'

A *'Request for a National Peer Review'* is basically a short letter of an applicant (national, regional or local authority or an organisation) that can be sent to organisations by an initiator or initiative group to share concerns about an identified challenge or problem and to invite them to initiate or participate in a (National) Peer Review, in order to gain insights and find ways to achieve improvements. In particular, the 'Request' is intended to raise interest in joining a National Peer Review. The addressed organisations are asked to take part in the Peer Review. The letter contains as well brief information on next steps in the starting process.

Guidance on preparing a *'Request for a National Peer Review'* is presented in Annex II (and an attached Appendix containing an example letter) accompanying this document. This guidance suggests building blocks and options for the content of a letter *(Request for Peer Review)* to be used in initiating a Peer Review, to provide information and to raise interest in starting and joining a (National) Peer Review. It is emphasized that this guidance is intended as a short list of subjects, options and suggestions for drawing up a 'Request for a Peer Review' and has the character of a 'checklist'.

In case the request is sent to the National NPRI coordinator, this official or a member of the national NPRI team will establish contact with the assigned contact person of the organisation to be reviewed, to discuss the principles of the Peer Review and to gain a first impression of the objectives and scope of the PR. The results of this conversation then form the basis for the next step in the preparation phase, namely, to discuss the request and related information regarding the objectives and scope by the members of the national NPRI team.

To concretise what has been agreed between the requesting organisation and the team that will carry out the review, Terms of Reference (ToR) will be drafted, discussed and agreed. Paragraph 4.11 and Annex III describe more in detail the set-up of a ToR.

4. Preparation

4.1 Introduction

In the preparation phase of the peer review, all steps that are needed for a high-quality and reliable assessment will be taken. This entails contact with the organisation to be reviewed, agreement on the scope and focus areas and assessment framework (scoping), drawing up a TOR and putting together a team of experts. Furthermore, the organisation to be reviewed provides all relevant information in a timely manner, often through a questionnaire or a self-assessment report, so the review team can prepare well for the mission.

4.2 Preparatory meeting

An agreed time interval (weeks/months) prior to the Peer Review mission, the NPRI coordinator and the appointed team leader will visit the host organisation and meet with the Peer Review point of contact and senior management. The purpose of the preparatory meeting is to discuss and specifying the scope and 'Assessment Framework', as well as to determine all tasks required before the Peer Review is carried out. On the part of the host organisation, the host coordinator and senior representatives of the organisation will participate in the preparatory meeting.

- Topics that can be discussed:
    - Objectives, focus areas and scope of the Peer Review
    - Assessment Framework
    - Duration of the mission
    - Timing and planning of the mission
    - Self-assessment and /or questionnaire
    - Additional information that needs to be provided
    - Logistics
    - Finances
    - Terms of Reference (TOR)

Duration of the preparatory meeting is expected to be approximately 0,5 - 1 day.

The duration of the whole Peer Review mission will depend on the scope and subjects of the peer review and is therefore flexible in time. The more exact duration will be discussed and agreed between the NPRI coordinator, team leader and the review coordinator of the host organisation. The duration of the mission will be included in the Terms of Reference.

4.3 Scoping

When an organisation wants to fulfil the ambition to 'improve continuously', it is important to know and understand the topics and their priorities that are expected where improvements are possible. This can be a diverse range of subjects. When conducting a Peer Review, it is important to apply 'scoping' to the topic to narrow issues and bring focus where improvements are desired. Scoping is important for two reasons. First, problems and challenges can be pinpointed early in the process and it is ensured that work to be carried out is focused on a topic where a need for improvement is recognized. This supports (cost) efficiency and effectiveness of the work to be done. Secondly, it

ensures that the Peer Review is focused on topics where useful and relevant results will be obtained, as well as on issues which are valued by the management as important and as priority.
The value of good scoping lies mainly in the way in which the problem or challenge to be investigated is formulated. It must be realised that it is not always possible to formulate the problem or challenge precisely because it can vary in character, content and scope over time. Nevertheless, it remains important to describe the topic on which the review is aimed as precisely as possible. Scoping occurs early in the process as an initial step in developing a Peer Review and can be carried out together with a stakeholder analysis. The scoping process supports the focus on relevant issues in order to minimise the inclusion of unnecessary issues.

'A problem well stated is a problem half-solved.' - Charles Kettering
When the step of 'scoping' has been carried out properly, it often already provides some direction towards improvements or solutions that can be further elaborated in detail through the implementation of Peer Review.

4.3.1 Scoping in the context of NPRI

Scoping in the context of the NPRI scheme can in principle take place at a few levels. These can be distinguished as follows:

<u>(Single) organisation / network level</u>

At (single) organisational and / or network level in case an organisation or network can encounter practical problems or challenges in the performance of tasks and responsibilities in specific areas and has needs or sees opportunities for improvements. Conducting a Peer Review can help identify opportunities for improvement and make proposals for their implementation. At this level where a problem or challenge is presented, a team from the requesting organisation can carry out the 'scoping' in collaboration with experts from the NPRI team.

The initiative for a Peer Review can also arise, for example, when an organisation decides to investigate whether the correct procedures are followed and / or the organisation carries out activities in a similar way to those of a similar organisation that are part of the same network. There are various reasons for a Peer Review. However, in all cases 'scoping' is an important part.

<u>National level</u>

Another level is the national level where an interdisciplinary working group such as a NPRI coordination team performs analysis of Peer Reviews carried out and develops proposals on jointly chosen priority topics as subjects for Peer Reviews in specific areas to networks or comparable authorities. A national NPRI coordination team can also be requested by organisations and networks to conduct Peer Reviews on themes that are designated as priorities nationally or regionally and where needs for improvements are identified. In fact, these topics can be included in a strategically work programme of a national NPRI team. In these cases, the NPRI coordination team can carry out the scoping, possibly supplemented with subject matter experts from the network.

4.3.2 Scoping tools and methods.

It is recommended to put together a multidisciplinary team to carry out the scoping.

Regardless the level at which the 'scoping' takes place and who is doing it, there are relatively simple tools available to assist with 'scoping', such as the 'Delphi method', SWOT analysis, stakeholder analysis, decision trees and decision support systems. In 'scoping', the approach of the 'Four W's' can be very helpful. They are:

Who?	Refers to who is facing a problem or challenge and who are the involved stakeholders
What?	Refers to what the problem/challenge is, and or need(s) of the organisation related to the challenge and how you know about the challenge and needs
Where?	Relates to the context, situation or location of the problem/challenge
Why?	Refers to why the problem/challenge needs to be solved and what the benefits are after solving it

A summary of the answers to these questions basically includes a description of the scope of the topic on which the review can focus.

4.4 End of Mission Agenda

Experiences with Peer Reviews show that often only part of the results of the review are successfully implemented. In this way, many important findings and recommendations are not used. This is unfortunate! One of the reasons is the lack of effective involvement of key stakeholders. This may concern internal stakeholders of the assessed organisation and/or the network to which the organisation belongs, but it may also concern external stakeholders with whom the reviewed organisation maintains mutual relationships. Having said this, results of Peer reviews are not always exclusively and internally aimed at the organisation that organises the review but may also be relevant for other (external) stakeholders due to their mutual relationships.
Practice of Peer Review also shows that results can be used, sometimes after generalization and anonymisation by stakeholders outside the network who have 'influence and power' to implement improvements. It is therefore important to identify and understand these stakeholders and analyse their relationships and interests as early as possible in the scoping phase of a Peer Review.

All this underlines the importance of anticipating on possible outcomes of a review when designing a Peer Review. Therefore, this anticipation must not only relate to the 'internal' and organisation-oriented topics, but also to topics and stakeholders outside the organisation or the network. Consequently, proper management of a so-called *'End of Mission Agenda'* and its elements cannot be overemphasized. This is critical to the overall success of Peer Reviews and to maximise their results.

In addition, early attention to the process of designing a Peer Review can have an incentive effect on the host organisation and senior management to address all relevant topics, including the interests of the stakeholders with whom the organisation works with or on whom the organisation depends. Such involvement and (pro) active attitude show the willingness and transparency of the organisation that organizes the Peer Review and the network to which it belongs.

Guidance on designing an '*End of Mission Agenda'* and how to integrate this in the Peer Review to be carried out is presented in Annex VI accompanying this document.

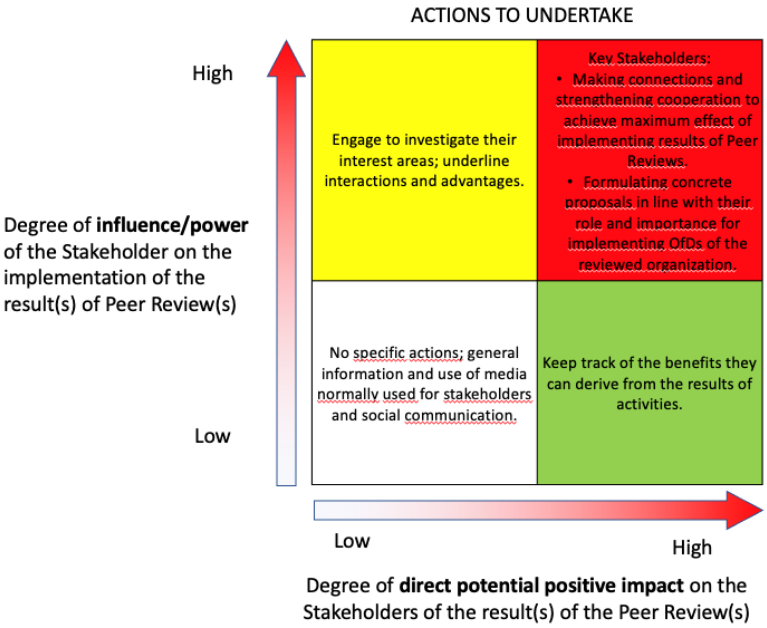
4.4.1 Stakeholder and network analysis

Any organisation must be fully aware of the general context in which it operates in order to form a clear and complete picture of the impact of its activities on society and all stakeholders operating in that society.
This awareness can be achieved through two main steps:

- performing a Stakeholder Mapping to define (the group of) subjects that can be affected by the activities of the organisation concerned.
  Mapping should be performed without predefined schemas and biases that prevents identification of important topics. This action can lead to the identification of a large number of subjects;
- performing a Stakeholder Analysis, with the aim of establishing a sort of ranking in terms of *'the importance of each Stakeholder for the organisation*'. Its purpose is to be able to estimate the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations' activities in relation to the individual or group of stakeholders. Both stakeholder mapping and analysis are important processes in every part of the existence of an organisation, and therefore especially important in the implementation of Peer Reviews results. They enable Opportunities for Development.

Therefore, performing a 'stakeholder analysis' or 'network analysis' is a good method to identify relevant stakeholders, including making an assessment of the importance of the stakeholder for the organisation that will conduct the Peer Review, as well as the interest of a stakeholder and its network, if any, in the results of the assessment.

'Influence - interest - matrix'
Various tools are available to perform a stakeholder and network analysis. One of these is the so-called *'influence - interest - matrix'*[8]. This model, modified to the NPRI process, can be applied to analyse each of the stakeholders of an organisation / network in order to evaluate the importance of their involvement in each of the results of the Peer Review and to define related actions. The following figure presents a modified *'influence - interest - matrix'* for the NPRI concept:



[8] "Mendelow matrix", as basic model on which many works on Stakeholders management have been developed. See: Botten, N. (2006). Management Accounting - Business Strategy. CIMA Publishing. pp. 3–4. ISBN 9780750680431; "Stakeholder management" Imperial College London. 21 June 2017; Babou, S. (12 March 2008). "What Is Stakeholder Analysis?". The Project Management Hut.

The matrix distinguishes 4 broad categories of stakeholders, which can be classified on the basis of their importance to the organisation and the degree of intensity of actions with which they must be influenced. The higher the stakeholder's capacity to implement the OfDs emerging from the Peer Review, and the higher the benefits the stakeholder could derive from the OfDs, the higher the stake should be to involve the Stakeholders to engage them, to inform about the Peer Review results and to attain their support to put the OfD into practice.

Specific actions should not only be targeted at stakeholders who have a maximum interest in the implementation of OfD and who derive the maximum benefit from these actions ('key stakeholders'). The context in which the organisation conducting a Peer Review includes both topics that have a high degree of power to implement OfDs, but also has less direct beneficiaries (for example: financial institutions and controllers) who are very interested in topics where improvements can be made. without having 'direct' power. Examples of these are associations of citizens or industry. The latter type of stakeholders must be aware of an organisation's efforts to improve its performance and therefore can form an opinion movement that can exert positive pressure on stakeholders who have the power to implement OfDs.

Categories of stakeholders in the context of NPRI:

1. *(Red) Stakeholders having <u>high influence/power and high benefits</u> from the implementation of OfD's*

This group of stakeholders can be characterized by their close relationship with organisations that have responsibilities in the field of policymaking and implementation of environmental legislation and related policy in a country. This includes, for example, the State, regions, provinces, municipalities, policy implementing organisations, supervision and enforcement authorities, etc.). The type of relationship that the host organisation of a Peer Review (and its network) and the interdependence has with these stakeholders, determines to a large extent the position of stakeholders in this category.

Laws and regulations, at national and local levels, and the status of an organisation, its rules of operation, planning, programming, resources and funding can be very helpful in identifying these types of stakeholders.

2. *(Yellow) Stakeholders having <u>high influence/power and low direct benefits</u> from implementation of the OfD's*

This category of stakeholders can be organized in different ways in countries. The outcome of a stakeholder analysis is therefore country specific. Countries often have more or less the same type of institutions such as a Court of Auditors, local authorities, financial institutions, Ombudsmen, etc. Actions to implement (specific) OfDs must be targeted and linked to the relevant stakeholder (s).
For a successful implementation of OfDs in which these stakeholders can play an important role, it is important that they are approached and convinced of their usefulness and that they play an important role in realizing the implementation because of their position and competences. In this category it is important to strive for consensus on the implementation of the OfDs and the removal of obstacles to their implementation.
In this case too, examining the institutional context and the rules of the organisation, can be useful to identify this type of stakeholder.

3. *(Green) Stakeholders having <u>high direct benefits and low influence/power</u> on the implementation of the OfD*'s

The organisation of this category of stakeholders can differ greatly from country to country.
Examples of stakeholders that belong to this category are: the judicial system including judges, public prosecutors, organisations working in the area of compliance assurance, such as the environmental police and, last but not least, the social society, including citizens and NGO's, entrepreneurs and their associations. Each of these stakeholders may have specific interests in certain areas, such as: coordination, information, communication, exchange of procedures, participation, appeals, etc. Indirectly, these stakeholders could influence the approval of decisions to be taken by governments and have sometimes actual control over the implementation of OfDs.

These types of stakeholders are often referred to as 'external stakeholders' because they belong to a different type of organisation than the organisation itself. They could be linked to the organisation because they have responsibilities within the same legislative framework, but with different roles and scope (e.g., Judiciary, police, other institutions working in environmental protection), or because they are subject to the impact of the activities of the organisation (e.g., association of citizens, entrepreneurs; media can also be considered as part of this group).

This also applies to public sector bodies having functions in the same policy areas or making decisions about plans and programs and/or about funding and resources of the reviewed organisation. Their positive pressure on opinions in certain situations can be 'game changers' in decision making processes of responsible governmental bodies. These stakeholders can thus be regarded as potential supporters and ambassadors of goodwill.
Consideration can be given to getting in touch (and staying in touch) by sharing general information, specific reports, regular meetings, etc.

4. *(White) Stakeholders who has <u>lower benefit</u> from the OfD's and have <u>little influence</u> on the implementation of OfD's*

This category concerns stakeholders who can have some benefit from the OfDs as a result of the Peer Review but have little influence on their implementation. It is important to keep this target group informed through common and targeted information and communication channels. The results of Peer Review activities can be communicated through these media to individual stakeholders and to the entire network. Press releases can also be provided in this way. The general message that can be delivered is the organisation's pursuit of improvement and the concerted action of the network to which it belongs. Examples of this type of stakeholder are professional networks, international volunteer associations to which the organisation belongs, educational institutions, suppliers, etc.

How to carry out a Stakeholder Analysis?

- Stakeholder analysis should be considered an important activity, not only for public relations purposes, but throughout the existence of an organisation, and therefore should be performed by or on behalf of the higher decision-making level of an organisation (Director General, Board of Directors, Board of Directors).
- In the absence of this type of analysis, a stakeholder analysis can be performed as part of the preparation of a Peer Review, by a simplified approach. The stakeholder analysis could be carried out into a way in which each part of the organisation, regardless of its role, is examined which and what type of contacts it has with external parties.

- The stakeholder analysis could be conducted under the supervision of a relevant internal body, using different methods. The advantages and disadvantages of each available instrument must be taken into account. Examples include a systematic written research into the points of view of parts of the organisation, organising discussions and brainstorming sessions. All these instruments can be used in an appropriate way.
- Internal stakeholders are important for the implementation of Peer Review results. This class of stakeholders should be carefully considered in the context of organising a Peer Review, taking into account the role, position, and degree of power and influence they can have on the performance of the Peer Review and the implementation of OfDs.

4.5 Assessment framework

Peer review within the NPRI context is an instrument to assess performance of tasks and responsibilities of an organisation, goal achievements, a process or performance of (members of) a network of organisations. Focus of a peer review can also be on equivalent topics of a number of members of a network within a country.

To assess performance, a well-designed scope and 'assessment framework' with indicators are essential to determine to what extent the conditions that apply to the performance are met. Therefore an 'assessment framework' has an important and central position in the peer-review and should provide answers about what is to be reviewed and gives focus, direction and borders to the review process.

It is important that the development of an Assessment Framework takes place at the beginning of the process, after determining the scope of the Peer Review. Involvement of the host organisation in its development is essential. In this step of the process, it is recommended to put together a small expert group that, based on the scope and the results of a stakeholder analysis, draws up an Assessment Framework and presents this (for approval) to the management of the host organisation. It is important that experts from the host organisation are part of the expert group.

This paragraph outlines the rationale and (the importance of) an assessment framework and its elements. Furthermore, reference is made to Annex IV *(Guidance to design an Assessment Framework)* accompanying this document. Annex IV outlines in detail guidance and steps of a process that can be considered in designing an Assessment Framework. In addition, in this annex two examples of an assessment framework are described as used by international organisations.

4.5.1 What is an assessment framework?

The following characteristics of an 'Assessment Framework' can be mentioned.[9] An Assessment Framework:

- Provides a structured conceptual map of what is to be assessed and articulates the construct(s) to be assessed;
- Functions as a reference system against which to evaluate whether (individual) tasks meet set standards and/or requirements, and collectively represent the desired coverage of assessment content;

[9] https://www.academia.edu/18484652/The_rationale_for_and_use_of_assessment_frameworks_improving_assessment_and_reporting_quality_in_medical_education; p. 110, 111, 112

- Details how an assessment is to be operationalized. It explains both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’. Thus, assessment effectively means measuring achievement against a construct;
- Provides a common language and set of understandings of assessment outcomes in a specific context to participants of the peer-review, which is crucial;
- Encourages the critical, reflective development of instruments, increases accountability and transparency and can reduce bias in assessment practice. The clearer the borders of the assessment framework are, the more focused the results of the NPRI will be.

Furthermore, the use of a consistent assessment framework enables benchmarking across (equal) organisations, regions, provinces and potentially countries. Although the NPRI does not aim to compare outcomes in terms of ranking organisations, it definitely will facilitate an ‘equal treatment’ and to extract from findings of conducted missions, opportunities for development and good practices that can be used and implemented by other organisations.

It is important to note that there is no single, unique and totally including comprehensive assessment framework for measuring performance.

The reason is that the focus and subject of a peer review can vary broadly. The consequence of this is that the scope and assessment framework of the peer review must be tailored to the topic(s) that are the subject(s) of the assessment. These are based on the needs as expressed by organisations to be reviewed. Flexibility in designing an assessment framework is therefore essential. Design, nature and content of an assessment framework therefore largely depends on the subject, goals and situation of a peer review to be carried out.

Examples of subjects of a peer review:

- Performance of permitting, inspection and enforcement (output)
- Professional standards
- Policy (national, regional) and e.q. its effectiveness
- Programming (also ‘doing the right things’)
- Costs and other financial aspects
- Outcome, contribution to environment or society
- Management and organisation of the agency
- Innovation

4.5.2 Measuring performance: performance principles and performance indicators

When performing a peer review, it is important that findings can be 'measured' to determine whether what has been assessed meets applicable conditions or standards. In addition, it is important that, regardless of who carries out the peer review, the results (observations and findings) of the review are reproducible. To ensure a consistent basis for an assessment framework, general performance principles and performance indicators help to guide the NPRI to develop an assessment framework. The following ‘performance principles’[10] are considered to be taken into account when designing an assessment framework:

[10] ‘Performance Measurement Framework’, Canadian Transportation Agency; Available at: https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/publication/performance-measurement-framework

Performance principles

- Outcomes and results must be clearly defined;
- The performance measurement system, including data collection, should be simple and cost-effective;
- The performance measurements system should be positive, not punitive.
- Performance indicators should be simple, valid, reliable, affordable and relevant to the activity or process being measured; and
- Performance indicators will be reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis. It is only by gaining experience measuring performance that you can really refine and improve the process.

According to these principles, performance indicators may be developed, based on using the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound).

4.5.3 Assessment framework: standards and performance indicators

A major issue in designing an assessment framework is the availability of *standards and performance indicators* to be used as *benchmark* and reference to evaluate performance.

Standards or performance indicators can for instance be derived from:

A. Laws, legislation and/or Directives, such as:

   - the 'Model Regulation on the quality of permits, supervision and enforcement of environmental law'[11] as used by the Dutch Association of Provinces in the Netherlands;
   - European Parliament and Council Recommendation providing for minimum criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)[12].

B. Quality management systems, such as: Quality systems such as ISO 9001.

C. Organisation's internal (process) procedures and standards

If legal or quality management system standards and indicators are not available, it is necessary to use principles that allow that an assessment and evaluation to be carried out, are not simply related to the experience and point of view of the group of reviewers visiting the organisation to be reviewed. It also has to be noted that there is no absolute set of indicators that can be applied to all situations. As consequence: what works for one country, authority, organisation or one regulation might not work for another. Therefore, performance criteria and indicators need to be adapted to specific circumstances. In those cases, an assessment framework with 'standards' and 'performance indicators' will have to be developed which is tailored to specific subject(s) to be reviewed. As a result, an assessment framework is therefore to be designed on the basis of customisation.

[11] Wabo Kwaliteitscriteria. Available from https://www.infomil.nl/publish/pages/75656/vth_wabo_kwaliteitscriteria_versie_2_2_2019_deel_b.pdf
[12] RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 4 April 2001providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States(2001/331/EC; Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001H0331&from=EN

4.5.4 Developing an 'Assessment Framework'

Reporting actual results against the performance indicators should demonstrate the extent to which the organisations' objectives are achieved. Agencies and authorities are encouraged to develop and set targets for performance indicators where possible.

It is advised to consider the following minimum criteria[13] for developing and selecting performance indicators[14]:

Relevance	Is it relevant to the activity, product or process being measured; does it reflect the goals and needs;
Transparent	Promoting the understanding about organisation's operation and performance and ensuring accountability;
Comprehensive	Addressing the important programmatic and operational aspects;
Reliable, credible and feasible	Based on data that are complete and accurate, as well as incorporating advanced information technology;
Functionable and feasible	Encouraging constructive behaviour among staff members and balancing the cost of measurement, data collection and analysis with the value of this information.
Validity	Does the indicator allow you to be precise in measuring the results (quantity, quality, timeframe)?
Reliability	Is it a consistent measure over time? This is particularly important when selecting quantitative indicators?
Simplicity	Is the information available and will it be feasible to collect and analyse it?
Affordability	Can we afford to collect and analyse the information?

Annex IV *(Guidance to design an Assessment Framework)* outlines in detail guidance and steps of a process that can be considered to design an assessment framework. In addition, two examples are given of an assessment framework as used by international organisations.

4.6 Self-assessment and questionnaire

The host organisation may be asked to perform a self-assessment based on the defined scope, agreed Assessment Framework and stakeholder analysis performed. In order to provide guidance to the preparation of the self-assessment, a questionnaire can be drawn up that is derived from it and can consist of a general and a specific part. The report of the self-assessment will further serve as the basis for the Peer Review that will be carried out. As soon as the report of the self-assessment is ready, it will be made available (via the NPRI coordinator) to the team leader of the review in preparation for the implementation of the Peer Review. The report may be accompanied by relevant documents that

13 Queensland Government - Performance Management Framework Strategic Planning Toolkit P.6; Available at https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/pmf-strategic-planning-toolkit.pdf?v=1613624159

14 Recommendations on Performance Measurement for Environmental Enforcement Authorities of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia, first draft, 1 June 2006, P.7; Available at: http://www.oecd.org/environment/outreach/38137583.pdf;

may be required in preparation for the Peer Review (see paragraph 4.7). Furthermore, it should be possible to request additional information if necessary.

4.7 Documentation and reference Material

Before the mission, the host organisation can be asked to provide a completed set of reference material, as agreed during the preparatory meeting. The nature of the reference material will depend on the subject and scope of the Peer Review. It is recommended that this material includes, as one of its key references, the most updated version of a self-assessment or answers to a dedicated questionnaire (with general and specific sections). The reference material may include (as examples and non-limited) within the scope of the Peer Review:

- Most recent version of a self-assessment and/or answers to the agreed upon questionnaire;
- A chart of the organisation
- Policy and (draft) Action Plans
- Relevant procedures related to the subject and scope of the review
- Internal training programmes and curricula of staff
- Performance reports
- Communication strategy

In principle, the documents provided will be in the native language of the country where the Peer Review will take place. In case of involvement of (international) experts there can be made specific arrangements on the language to be used.

It is recommended that all documentation will be made available on or uploaded to a shared workspace accessible to all reviewers. The advantage of this is that all parties involved in the different stages of the Peer Review are continuously updated with the most recent and relevant information.

4.8 Selection of Review Team

A skilled team leader will be appointed to lead the Peer Review team.
Team members will be recruited by the NPRI team in consultation and cooperation with the host organisation. It is important that their expertise and experience covers the entire scope of the mission. This means that a team is assembled with experts in the field of the specific topics that are under review. Team members can be a mix of 'generalists' who are experienced in governance procedures and processes, as well is experts on the matter. It is important that the composition of the team is agreed well in advance of the mission to allow sufficient time for preparation if necessary. In the process of selecting team members, it is important to specify in advance likely requirements and expectations regarding the experience and expertise of experts. Such a reference will prove useful when considering and selecting a potential candidate to be appointed as a member of a review team.

A NPRI Peer Review team combines senior experience in the topics related to the scope of the mission. In principle, irrespective of the specific subject, every review team and team member are expected to meet a number of basic requirements, such as:

- Having an excellent and thorough knowledge of the matter and objectives of the Peer Review;
- Being familiar with the NPRI scheme, structure, protocols etc
- Representing a diverse group of experts, with evidence-based knowledge and experience reviews and appraisals of operational, regulatory and policy aspects, with emphasis on experience in the actual implementations of arrangements and requirements and the performance of the responsible organisation(s);
- Having practical experience with similar reviews, preferably by having participated as an expert or observer in previous review missions;
- Having an eye for the functioning of the own organisation and have ideas or views of those things or parts that are missing or can be improved;
- Being able to independently determine whether the activities performed at other organisations or tools that others use can be used in their own organisation;
- Having good interpersonal skills and an open attitude towards systems and approaches that are different from the ones with which they may be familiar;
- Being adaptable to and flexible on cultural aspects of organisations, regions etc;
- Being able to perform the work objectively and with integrity;
- Paying meticulous attention to detail;
- Having an eye for continuous process improvement;
- Being curious;
- Being a team player;
- Being open for giving and receiving feedback;
- Having demonstrated good written and oral communications skills. In addition, the ability of team members to present the outcomes of the Peer Review to the reviewed organisation at all appropriate levels should be mentioned.
- Being able to handle a writing style which is concise (to the point) and precise.

4.8.1 Cultural aspects

Peer Reviews in the context of the NPRI will be mainly conducted within a country at the national, regional, local or organisation level. If a peer review team is composed by experts originating from the country where the review will be carried out, the cultural aspects of the country, region or organisation, should be taken into consideration, and where needed, to be reflected in the team composition.

In case of involvement of international experts, a high degree of cultural sensitivity is essential. Therefore, experts should become familiar with national and cultural context in the host state and organisation, with special attention for differences with expert's current culture.

There are several sources available that support the experts to be prepared for the mission and then in particular regarding the cultural aspects of the host country:

- Countries and their cultures: http://www.everyculture.com/
- Wikipedia: http://www.wikipedia.org/
- The CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

4.9 Logistics and finances

The point of contact of the host organisation is responsible for coordinating all host organisation logistical arrangements for the preparatory and the main Peer Review mission. The ToR provides information on the expected logistical arrangements.

In general, it is expected that organisations that participate in the NPRI-team cover their own costs in regard to traveling, meeting facilities, catering etc, when the team has its meetings and related activities.

During Peer Reviews, the host coordinator is responsible for the timely and proper allocation – if needed – of sufficient budget by the host of the mission according to the TOR. The NPRI coordinator is responsible for arranging the finances in case international experts are involved. Options for in-kind contribution may also be investigated.

When providing expert support to an organisation to implement 'Opportunities for Development' or 'Good Practices', separate financial arrangements may be needed. These will be subject to discussion and negotiation between the recipient of support and the organisation that provides the expertise.

4.10 Training

In order for a mission to be as effective as possible, it is important that all members of a review team are optimally prepared, and that every team member has the same understanding of what is expected and what needs to be done in implementing a Peer Review. In this regard members of a review team need to have expertise to conduct a peer review efficiently and effectively in such a way that its results contribute to the realisation of the goals as set for the review. In addition to the necessary expertise of the subject of the review, it is important to have a (theoretical) basis about the principles and process of a (NPRI) peer review, background to it, techniques to be applied, reporting of the results and the provision of support in follow up activities. Hence it is advised that a basic training is followed by each team member to ensure that everyone has the same basic knowledge and is well prepared. Such training is also important to guarantee consistency in the approach not only for the mission carried out, but also for future missions in the context of the NPRI scheme. There can be a distinction between a training for team members, 'train the trainer' and the host country.

Accordingly, all team members could be asked to complete a basic training. A dedicated training module may cover amongst others the following main topics (with detailed elements):

- Understanding Peer Review and NPRI
- Qualifications and expectations of the review team and its members
- (NPRI) Peer Review process
- Gathering information
- Facts and findings
- Writing the report
- Presentation of the outcomes
- Implementation of findings and (optionally) support
- Examination and final test

In addition to the training as proposed and described, it has to be noted that 'training on the job' is essential for the experts that participate in the 'core group of experts'. Apart from completing the basic training, it is important to learn through experiences gained from participating in Peer Reviews and to also learn from experienced colleagues. In that sense it is advised to compose a 'balanced' team with experienced and less experienced members.
Annex VII to this document contains an outline for a training. Although the training is not developed yet, the Annex provides the elements as requirements that are proposed to be included in the training.

4.11 Terms of Reference (TOR)

It is advised that reached agreement on all subjects discussed between the host organisation and those who will carry out the review, is reflected in a Terms of Reference (TOR). ToR is a governance document that sets out working arrangements between organisations on the implementation of the proposed project or activity.
The TOR will be agreed by a mandated official of the host organisation and the NPRI coordinator.
In the TOR the following information may be included (as examples):

- Introduction
- Context and background
- Dates
- (NPRI) Peer Review objectives
- Scope
- Assessment Framework
- Composition of the (NPRI) team
- Management and coordination
- Conduct of the Peer Review (Review Process)
- Reporting and outputs
- Workplan and indicative time schedule of deliverables
- Finances
- Schedule
- Report confidentiality
- Bibliography
- Annexes

After acceptance and endorsement of the request and ToR, the NPRI team will designate a team leader for the mission, and he/she will be the main point of contact for organising the Peer Review.

A *'Guidance on drafting Terms of Reference (ToR)'* is as Annex III attached to this document.

5. Peer Review mission

The Peer Review mission can start once all conditions are present and working to perform the review according to the plan, the self-assessment, answers to a questionnaire and additional reference material are available; all logistics are in place and working; the team members are trained and prepared and fully informed.

5.1 Mission Agenda

The programme of a Peer Review can follow a standardised procedure, however, it should always be discussed and agreed in advance with the host organisation. Although the programme is flexible, it is recommended that the team leader follows this programme as much as possible to safeguard that all work is done within the available time and with the quality that is required and expected. As an example, the programme could contain the following elements:

Nr.	Activity
1	Review team initial meeting: - Briefing, review of mission plan - Review of preliminary findings - Assessment Framework - Assignment of priorities - Refresher training
2	- Entrance meeting: - Presentation to review team about approach and methodology of peer review and assessment framework - Presentation by host organisation of the questionnaire and self-assessment - Presentation by host organisation on frameworks related to the subject and scope of the peer review
3	- Visits and interviews
4	- Report writing by the review team
5	- Preliminary report submitted to peer review coordinator of host organisation and brief presentation of findings
6	- Host organisation reviews report and prepares comments - Peer review team drafts executive summary and presentation for the exit meeting
7	- Coordinator of host organisation submits (written) comments to peer review team - Revision of draft report
8	- Meeting with representatives of host organisation to discuss comments
9	- Peer Review team finalises the draft report
10	- Meeting of peer review team with host organisation (senior level) representatives to present the findings and delivery of agreed draft report - Preliminary discussion on follow-up and support

5.2 Initial Review Team Meeting

It is important that all members of the team are fully prepared for the mission. This means that each team member has a clear understanding of the scope and process of the mission, the assessment framework and its indicators, the division of tasks and responsibilities and all logistics. It is of particular importance that all members have gained the necessary knowledge about the organisation to be reviewed based on the self-assessment report and/or the answers to the questionnaire.
Reviewers are responsible for making necessary preparations for the mission, on the basis of information from the NPRI coordinator and Team Leader and the training as described in paragraph 4.10.

The team members **r**eview the Self-Assessment report or the answers to the questionnaire, as well as Reference Material that is provided by the host organisation in advance and prepare a brief first impressions report. Each team member is asked to present their preliminary findings to the other team members at an initial team meeting one day prior to the peer review mission. This approach stimulates engagement, ensures that all members have studied the material in advance, helps where further clarification is needed and brings focus. It also supports the alignment of all members to the peer review to be carried out.

It is therefore important that an initial team meeting is conducted a day prior to the actual start of the review. This meeting, chaired by the team leader may discuss the following subjects[15]:

- Introduction of the team members;
- A brief refresher training on (NPRI) Peer Review;
- A presentation on the assessment framework of the review;
- A five minutes presentation by each team member of his/her first impressions report based on a review of the self-assessment report, questionnaire and the reference material;
- Discussion of first impression reports and room for questions and clarifications;
- Information about the mission schedule and logistics
- Report writing procedures and assignments;
- Special arrangements and last-minute announcements;
- Additional information by host organisation.

The host representative can be invited to this meeting as an observer and may provide additional information regarding the mission, as well as explain logistical arrangements. It also gives an opportunity to factually clarify issues which come up during the five-minute presentations of the team members.

5.3 Entrance meeting with host organisation

The entrance meeting of the review team and the host organisation is an opportunity for the team to meet senior officials in one venue and for the senior officials to demonstrate their support and engagement in the peer review process. Such a meeting can be scheduled on the morning of the second day of the review. Furthermore, this meeting aims to ensure a common understanding amongst all key mission stakeholders of the objective and the process of the review mission. It is

[15] Modified based on: INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines, Services Series No. 36, IAEA, Vienna (2018), P.15; Available from https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/SVS-36_web.pdf

important that the entire review team attends that meeting, as well as the host coordinator and senior representatives of the organisation that will be reviewed. As an example, the entrance meeting could cover the following topics:

- Introductions
- Presentation by host organisation on overall frameworks for performance
- Presentation by the host organisation of the results of the self-assessment
- Presentation by NPRI representative on mission objectives, assessment framework and review process

During the entrance meeting the (NPRI) team leader will emphasize that the Peer Review is not an inspection or an audit. It will be highlighted that the review will be conducted in cooperation with the host organisation.

5.4 Review Method and Assessment Framework

In summary, the implementation of a Peer Review comprises the following elements, which can be divided into 'prior to the mission' and 'during the mission'.:

Prior to the mission:

- Drafting a questionnaire (general and more detailed questions);
- Review of the self-assessment report and/or results of a questionnaire;
- Review of reference material that is shared in advance;
- Consultation of other or previous Peer Review reports of the host organisation if available.

During the mission:

- Interviews with representatives of the host organisation;
- Review of additional documents that can be requested by the reviewers or offered by the reviewed organisation during the mission;
- Site visits if they are considered to add value to the mission;
- Consolidation of observations by all reviewers during daily team meetings;
- Drafting the report;
- Presentation of the findings to the host organisation.

5.5 Review of self-assessment report, results questionnaire and reference material

In preparation of the mission, reference materials (see paragraph 4.7) can be asked to be shared in advance with the reviewers. It is expected that all relevant documents are studied by the reviewers in advance to the review. In case additional documents may be needed during the mission, they can be made available to the reviewers on their request. In the event that the documents are not available in the language used during the mission, the host organisation will ensure that an oral explanation is provided on the content of the requested document and, if necessary, additional questions are answered.

5.6 Interviews

Interviews are held to collect information aiming at clarifying, confirming or deepening the understanding of the reviewer of specific issues and focus areas.

A two-way exchange of information which is relevant to the Peer Review mission will provide the best results. Interviews in the context of peer reviews are discussions and dialogues, and not interrogations. It is important that interviews are held in an open and cooperative atmosphere between the interviewer and interviewee.

The interviews find their basis in the self-assessment reports, results of the questionnaire and additional reference information and need to be prepared well in advance to the mission by the interviewers. Interviews can be structured in a way that gathering all relevant information is ensured. The use of a checklist or a list with bullet points which can be prepared by the interviewer in advance can help to guide the discussion. However, it is not recommended to standardise the interviews too much as this may lead to a limitation of the outcomes of the interview. It is precisely the discussion and dialogue that contribute to the acquisition of complete images and findings.

5.7 Site visits

Depending on the character of the mission and the focus areas of the Peer Review, it could be proposed by the reviewer or host organisation to carry out a site visit. A site visit may through its observations contribute to a better understanding of the operations of an organisation, its way of working etc. In case of a site visit, the visit must add value to the Peer Review. The expectations and purpose of a site visit must be clearly communicated between the reviewer and the host organisation. Preferably, the decision for a site visit should be made already before the mission. However, it should be noted that a site visit, including travel time, can significantly reduce the time available for the review. This needs to be considered when a decision for a site visit is made.

5.8 Daily Team Meetings

It is recommended that at the end of each day the review team meets to discuss their observations and findings of the day.[16] Also work for the next day can be prepared. These meetings also contribute to the cohesion of the team. The team leader leads the meeting and focuses on facts, issues and key points, such as[17]:

- Observations and findings, and in particular those that can form a basis for drafting ‘OfD’ and ‘Good Practices’; It is recommended to distinct the ‘OfD’ and ‘Good Practices’ to the agreed review areas;
- To discuss data gathered in light of quality assurance. Verification of data is important through the host organisation, comparison of information from one person to another and comparison of data from one document source to another. Through this the findings can be validated, which is of utmost importance;
- To discuss, draft, and if necessary, to revise text of opportunities for development and good practices;

[16] IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI). Available from https://www.impel.eu/tools/impel-review-initiative-tool/

[17] Modified based on International Atomic and Energy Agency. Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines, p. 19. Available from https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/SVS-36_web.pdf

- To discuss identified cross-cutting issues that need to have attention of all reviewers;
- To discuss issues where the information as obtained so far is not sufficient, unclear, inconsistent and/or where additional information should be requested;
- Discussion and agreement on writing responsibilities;
- Priorities and division of work for the next day.

6. Reporting

6.1 Report Writing Process

The (immediate) output of a Peer Review mission to a reviewed organisation is the drafting of the (assessment) report, including a presentation of findings and observations in terms of 'opportunities for development (OfD)', elaboration on 'Good Practices' and a discussion if and how support can be provided on the implementation.

It is advised to consult in this regard as well Annex VI to this document (*Guidance on designing and 'End of Mission Agenda'*) – paragraph 3.2.1 *('Before finalizing the Peer Review Mission'*).

From day one, the review team starts with writing the report of the peer review. The structure of the report is guided by a template. Review activities take place during the day and writing of the report is an activity for the evening.

Annex V to this document provides guidance for writing a report (style, choice of words, language, length, clarity about relevant information etc.). Tasks concerning the writing of the report or parts thereof can be divided among the team members. It can also be decided that one or two rapporteurs are responsible for collecting the information from the team members and consolidate the information in a draft report. The division of these tasks is the responsibility of the team leader.

6.2 Style of writing

The language and structure of the report should make the access to and comprehension of the information easier. Meaningful headings and subheadings can help the reader grasp important information as quickly as possible and easily navigate through the document. The reports should have concise executive summaries to give managers and policy makers, and other stakeholders, an overview of the main findings, such as 'Opportunities for Development' and 'Good Practices'.

Writing styles should be clear and simple, so the contents are easily and quickly understood by the reader. The use of simple, plain language is essential for clear communication in a multi-organisational and/or multi-cultural setting. The information should be factual and limited to that which supports the findings. Information of a general nature is not useful unless it provides an essential context for the findings.

Annex V (*'Guidance for experts/reviewers in writing reports of a Peer Review'*) to this document provides detailed information on the structure, formatting, 'style and tone' and possible table of contents of the report.

In a training of team members attention will be paid as well on the process of writing a report.

7. Findings

Study and review of documentation such as a self-assessment report and information from a questionnaire, as well as information from additional reference material, the results of the interviews and other observations during the peer review, form the basis for findings and further analysis thereof. These findings will be formulated as 'Opportunities for Development' (OfD's) and 'Good Practices' and. See for guidance Annex V *('Guidance for experts/reviewers in writing reports of a peer review'*).

7.1 Opportunities for Development

OfD's are primarily intended to make arrangements more effective or efficient and to improve operations and performance.

OfD's have their basis in different types of observations, namely:

3. Aspects of the arrangements, procedures etc. are <u>not</u> fully consistent with the requirements and/or standards as included in the agreed assessment framework;
4. The requirement is <u>largely</u> met but the arrangements are not entirely consistent with the requirement according to the standards as included in the assessment framework, and/or
5. The requirement <u>is met</u>; however, it is deemed that tangible improvements could be made to the manner in which the arrangements are consistent with the requirements.

It is important that an OfD is clearly documented in conjunction with a requirement as included in the assessment framework. Furthermore, it is important to note that 'opportunities for development' can only be successfully implemented if they are realistic, feasible and implementable.

7.2 Good Practices

An important category of findings is 'Good Practices.' A Good Practice reflects a process or procedure, arrangement, programme or performance of an organisation, superior to those generally observed somewhere else. A good practice goes beyond meeting requirements or expectations and can be important to bring to the attention of other organisations.
Any of the requirements or guidance as contained in the agreed Assessment Framework of the review could be the basis of Good Practices.

7.3 Consultation final (draft) report with host organisation

Before ending the mission, a draft version of the preliminary report has to be shared with the coordinator of the host organisation for comments and reflection. Furthermore, it is advised to hold a meeting between the review team and representatives of the host organisation. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and agree on all observations, and to correct any misunderstandings or inaccuracies.

After ending the mission there will be an opportunity for commenting the report within an agreed timeframe following the completion of the mission. Comments on the report are welcomed and the final report will be made available to the host organisation.

8. End of mission and exit meeting

The mission concludes with an exit meeting. Normally this meeting is attended by a similar group to the one that attended the entrance meeting. It is essential that senior management participates in this meeting.
The team leader presents the report to the management of the host organisation with a clear presentation of the findings. It needs to be explained that this version of the report includes the observed ‘Opportunities for Development’ and ‘Good Practices’. Furthermore, it will be explained that the draft report will require further review and subsequent approval by both the host and the review team, before a final report is issued. However, from this point on, it is not expected that the main concept of OfD’s and ‘Good Practices’ will significantly be changed anymore.

The team leader will mention that support can be offered to implement the findings if requested. The conditions for providing further support will be explained. If applicable, a possible follow-up could be discussed. In case there is agreement about publishing the report after adoption, this should be discussed and confirmed as well.

The financial settlement takes place with the host country and where necessary with the participating team members. The final version of the report will be officially sent to the reviewed organisation.

The end of mission / exit meeting can last between two to four hours, depending on the scope of the Mission.

For reference also please consult Annex VI (*Guidance on designing an ‘End of Mission Agenda’*).

9. Publication and Confidentiality

A starting point is to work as if the final report of the peer review will be made public.

Disclosing performance can be important in order to show value and raise an agency's credibility, establish a positive public image and increase society's support. Greater transparency of an environmental authority can be ensured with different audiences as their needs may vary significantly. Although public access to results is an important principle, the host organisation makes the final decision! Whether or not the findings of the peer review will be made public is also included in the TOR.

In case of publication, the final version of the report, after adoption, can be placed on the website of the organisation involved, and/or the host organisation can also decide to share the findings of the peer review with the public through a press release or a press conference.

Important to note:

Environmental (enforcement) authorities have to be aware of certain limitations on disclosing information about environmental compliance assurance programmes and their results. These limitations will be mainly caused by:

- <u>Danger of abuse of public information by the regulated community:</u> It is possible that putting data and agency strategies online will reveal too much information to regulated entities, allowing them to adapt their behaviour to avoid enforcement actions;
- <u>Confidentiality and security limits of information disclosure:</u> Very little information cannot be reported publicly because of its confidentiality. At the same time, there can be security concerns in publishing facility locations, especially for plants with hazardous material.

It is recommendable to develop internal guidelines on dealing with media inquiries. In this context is it advised to consult the provisions as well of the *'Convention on Access to Information, public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters'*.[18]

In case the organisation decides to publicly disclose information, it is recommended that the information is simple, however not simplistic. It should be provided in a context that allows meaningful interpretation and visualised to facilitate understanding. Statistics about non-compliance or enforcement actions should be accompanied with brief narrative information. Active information distribution at the time of significant events will stimulate interest in issues reviewed.

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[18] *'Convention on Access to Information, public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters',* done at Aarhus, Denmark, on 25 June 1998; Available from: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf

List of abbreviations

EIR	–	Environmental Implementation Review
EPR	–	Environmental Performance Review
EPREV	–	Emergency Preparedness Review
EU	–	European Union
IMPEL	–	European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law
IAEA	–	International Atomic and Energy Agency
IRI	–	IMPEL Review Initiative
NPRI	–	National Peer Review Initiative
OECD	–	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
REPA	–	Regional Environmental Protection Agency
TAIEX	-	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
UNECE	–	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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Annexes

Annex I

Guidance on implementation of a NPRI scheme through a National NPRI Network

Table of Contents

Guidance on implementation of a NPRI scheme through a National NPRI Network

1 Introduction

Implementation of a NPRI concept and scheme can take place in various ways. Most desirable is to do this in a uniform manner. However, due to how countries have organised their own governmental and coordination structures, it will be necessary to adjust and tailor the implementation of NPRI to countries' specific situation. In general, countries have coordination and aligning structures in place on subjects such as permitting, enforcement of environmental legislation and performance of environmental inspections. This because various organisations are involved in these activities, such as policy and legal departments, inspectorates, but also law enforcement authorities (police and public prosecutors). They work together and adjust their ways of working and these structures have often been set up to safeguard uniformity, legal certainty and legal equality in approaches as well as for effectiveness and efficiency reasons.

Regarding the implementation of a NPRI concept, it is advised to connect to these structures or platforms, often organised as 'national networks'. In case such coordination platforms are not available, it is recommended to encourage cooperation between organisations and if possible, to setup a national (NPRI) team or network of experts and representatives of various organisations.

This annex aims to offer countries (taken into account the variety of the coordination structures in the European countries), networks and related organisations guidance on:

- Actions to promote and implement the NPRI scheme by (national) networks
- Institution of a NPRI Network and the main steps that could be taken to set up its own NPRI system and governance
- How IMPEL could assist countries, networks and organisations in these actions.

It needs to be noted that this guidance aims to be used as open, flexible and non-prescriptive and contains options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs. This means that organisations in a country that wish to set up a national network can consider using elements of this guidance in addition to their own methodology. IMPEL is available in providing support.

2. A 'National Network' within the context of NPRI

It is important and relevant to have a shared understanding what is meant by a 'National Network' within the context of NPRI. This because the term *network* can have different meanings. In connection with NPRI a 'network' is defined as: *'a group of organisations with largely the same characteristics, aims, roles and responsibilities who are willing to improve their processes and performance through peer reviews, discussion, dialogue and mutual learning.'*

Networks in the context of NPRI can be broadly distinguished into the following categories:

- a formal voluntary network, in which members are linked by rules and legal requirements and having relevance at administrative level (e.g.: IAEA)
- a formal network, instituted by law, in which members are equal but remain independent organisations (e.g., SNPA in Italy and Network of Regional Environmental Protection Agencies (REPA) in the Netherlands)
- a network which members belong to the same organisation or authority (e.g., a national organisation with regional or territorial offices, departments or delegations of the same authority)
- An informal network of organisations that work together and have the need to coordinate goal realization and working methods. This from their experience that this contributes to a more efficient and effective task performance.

The type of networks as cited could carry out peer reviews having, as scope, an evaluation on outputs, outcomes, and, in general terms, on 'modus operandi'. The nature of the network partly determines how and to what extent the goal, scope and assessment framework of the review are determined. The flexibility of the NPRI scheme makes it possible to tailor the review while taking into account the specific needs of the requesting organisation.

2.1 NPRI scheme

The NPRI scheme has its focus on national and regional networks and equivalent organisations, rather than only single agencies or authorities within a country. However, single organisations are not excluded from the NPRI scheme. Furthermore, the NPRI scheme is carried out independently managed at country level by a dedicated team, hence the whole review process, its related activities and potential outcomes are managed by the country (or country institution) itself.

An important goal of the NPRI scheme, which entails assessing, improving and harmonizing of work processes and procedures of comparable and equivalent organisations, is to improve their performance. Peer Reviews prove to be an efficient instrument to gain an extended/in-depth insight into tasks and responsibilities, the achievement of legislation-based objectives and requirements and whether quality standards are being realised. A network of experts at national level can facilitate and coordinate the process of conducting Peer Reviews by and between organisations in a country. The activities of such a 'NPRI-network' can be broadly distinguished in activities at 'coordination' and 'executive and operational' level. See for more details the appendix to this annex.

2.2 National NPRI Network

A NPRI network of experts and representatives of organisations at national level can play an essential role in the execution of the NPRI scheme, which can be distinguished as follows:

- Promoting and coordinating implementation of Peer Reviews by (more or less) comparable or equivalent organisations;
- Identifying and engaging with target audiences, such as environmental protection agencies of regions, provinces, municipalities and water quality management organisations;
- Discussing the need for and designs of methodologies, tools, training of officials etc.;

- Discussing requests for Peer Reviews from a group of organisations or single organisations that belong to the same network, as well as assessing and endorsing requests;
- Acting as a repository of peer reviews carried out at national level, i.e. a platform where accumulated experience, knowledge and methodological approaches are gathered;
- Acting as a national platform or interdisciplinary Working Group, tasked with drawing up a (multi) annual programme Peer Review that focuses on preparing and implementing the design, coordination and application of Peer Reviews, as well as allowing and promoting the discussion of their results and findings, also by converting them into more generic recommendations, from which other organisations (also at international level) can substantially benefit
- Discussing requests for support on the implementation of findings of a Peer Review
- Strategical scoping and developing Assessment Frameworks.
- Evaluating performed peer reviews and translating obtained results into generalized recommendations that can contribute to an improved (effective and efficient) performance of organisations.

3. Implementation of a NPRI Scheme

The most ideal way to implement a NPRI scheme is that an existing network of collaborating organisations adopts the NPRI scheme. However, not every country has such networks. In those countries where this is not the case, it may be considered to encourage the establishment of a network.

There are several officials who could have an important role in promoting NPRI, and establishing or joining a network, such as:

- Members of a network who are familiar with NPRI and share the NPRI concept with other members aiming at promotion and subsequently the implementation of NPRI
- Central managers of organisations who are informed about NPRI, have experiences with Peer Review and who are interested in applying the tool within their network
- The IMPEL National Coordinator (NC), IMPEL members and/or supporting (representatives of) organisations who have experiences or interest in Peer Reviews and are willing to promote the NPRI concept.

If the added value and importance of an NPRI scheme are recognized by organisations and if there is the will to implement the scheme, it is recommended to appoint an NPRI coordinator at national level. This officer can then commit to take on the implementation process. In this process, a distinction can be made between seeking affiliation with an existing network or, if this is lacking, developing activities that help to set up a network.

3.1 Governance and support levels NPRI

In general, three Governance and support levels could be envisaged in the implementation of a national NPRI scheme:

1. A coordinator of the NPRI Network at national level – acting as a secretariat - acting as point of contact for internal and external contacts and actions (e.g.: prepare and organize a meeting at national level, drafting programs, supporting the execution of NPRI’s (e.g.: assembling teams of

experts). See for more hypothesis and details par. 1.3.3 in the 'Methodology and Guidance' document)

2. A NPRI group of representatives from each one of the members of the Network, with the role of being the point of contact for both the organisation/office they belong to, and for the rest of the Network and the Coordinator or Secretariat. Such a group will make it easier to plan activities, to present the needs of the organisation they represent. The organisation of the NPRI would take place at his organisation.
3. A NPRI group of Experts, with two meanings:
   - Experts in conducting Peer Reviews
   - Experts in the topics that will be the subject of the Peer Reviews

3.1.1 How IMPEL could help in this phase

- Discussing proposals and the possible models
- Sharing views and experiences of other IMPEL Members
- Developing and implementing training for experts in the execution of a NPRI

3.2 National NPRI coördinator

As mentioned in paragraph 3.1 of this annex, a NPRI coordinator at national level is of utmost importance and could be designated with the role and responsibility of promoting and establishing a group or interdisciplinary team of officials/experts, each representing a sub-network of organisations or an individual national organisation, institution or agency. Once established, the NPRI coordinator can play an important facilitating role in organizing Peer Reviews, assembling expert teams, supporting the reviews and coordinating support – upon request – for the implementation of findings and opportunities for development by the reviewed organisations. In case role and position of a national NPRI coordinator are accepted by the network, it is preferable to formalise and document this.

3.3 Process steps of implementation

In the process of implementation of a NPRI scheme, the following steps and activities could be considered:

1. Conduct a brief analysis of equivalent or comparable organisations, such as environmental protection agencies of regions, provinces, municipalities and water quality management organisations, inspectorates and other authorities and, if applicable, their networks. In particular focus could be on organisations and authorities dealing with topics as policymaking, permitting, surveillance, inspections and law enforcement. Other topics are of course not excluded.
2. Engage with the organisations, explain the reason, rationale and benefits of the NPRI scheme. If interest is expressed, interact with a contact person from the specific organisation(s). The organisation could be requested to take a seat in a committee to be formed, that will coordinate the NPRI;
3. Prepare and organise a meeting at national level with the participation of representatives of all interested organisations.
4. Provide an agenda for the meeting that could contain the following items:

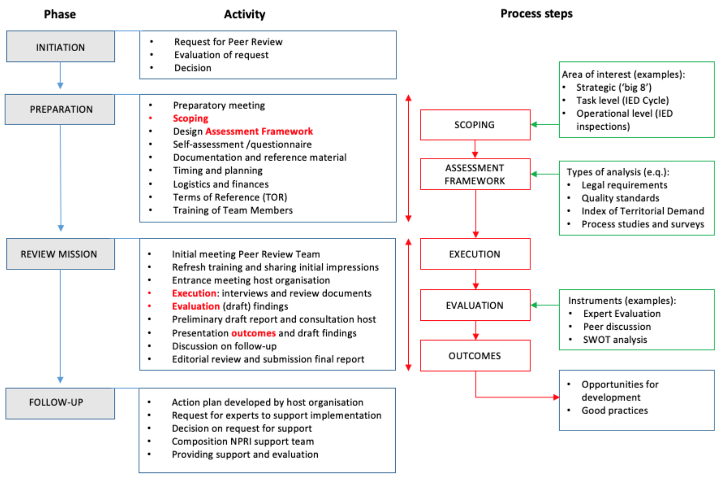
   a. Opening by explaining the purpose and reason for the meeting;
   b. Tour de table and introduction of the participants;

c. Presentation of the NPRI concept;
d. Discussion about the expectations of the participating organisations;
e. Discussion on the establishment, composition, role and mandate of the NPRI team (members coming from participating organisations) that will coordinate the implementation of the NPRI scheme. The NPRI team can be seen as an interdisciplinary team of officials/experts, each representing a sub-network of organisations or an individual national organisation, institution or agency;
f. A national NPRI coordinator, its role, task and responsibility;
g. Explanation of the NPRI Peer Review concept, aim, methodology and its implementation;
h. Identification and inventory of needs of organisations on a variety of subjects;
i. Availability of expertise/experts and time of the partners;
j. Training of experts;
k. Discussion about a Peer Review work programme (networks, topics, themes, Assessment Framework);
l. Organisational aspects (requests for NPRI from network members, involvement management, how to perform a NPRI, when, teams, experts, schedule, finances, background documents, etc.);
m. Discussion on how results of a Peer Review will be managed and used, such as:
    i. Management output and outcome of Peer Review
    ii. Confidentiality (yes/no)
    iii. Follow-up
    iv. Making findings available for others to benefit from it (after anonymising)
    v. How to convert findings into a process of (strategic) prioritization

5. Evaluation and feed-back;
6. Providing support on implementation of findings of Peer Reviews.

3.3.1 How could IMPEL help?

Besides providing support and assistance on the implementation of the NPRI scheme as described in paragraph 3.3, IMPEL can offer support in all phases, activities and process steps regarding the implementation and execution of peer reviews according to the following scheme:



As examples, support from IMPEL can consist of:

- Supplying documents containing strategies and guidance;
- Participating in discussions to promote and support the establishment of networks;
- Providing support in preparing discussion documents;
- Discussing and reviewing the documents produced by a National Network in preparation of its peer review activities with regard to the documents that are produced within the NPRI project and by sharing the experiences and opinion of the members of the NPRI Project Team;
- Participating with experts in sessions on (strategically) scoping, assessment frameworks, assessing performance and connected review activities;
- IMPEL members and representatives of organisations with experiences with peer reviews can make an important contribution to promoting as ‘ambassadors’ the NPRI concept and stimulating partnership between organisations;
- The IMPEL NC of the IMPEL Member Country can play an important facilitating role and could provide assistance to the national NPRI coordinator (if appointed). This, because the NC has a good overview of existing structures of various authorities that are active in the field of policymaking, permitting, inspections and law enforcement. In addition, they have extensive knowledge of the matter;
- The IMPEL NPRI Project Team can help by providing expert input through strategy.

3.4 NPRI project: a flexible scheme

The content of the 'NPRI Methodology and Guidance', as well as the process outlined in this annex to implement an NPRI scheme, must be seen as the 'ideal' scheme. In this light it is noted that the NPRI scheme is flexible and that when applied it must be in line with the nature and needs and of the networks. This is necessary because the IMPEL members are not equal in terms of organisation and coordination structures and therefore customization is necessary. From the application of an NPRI scheme by two countries with the use of the then available (minimal concepts and guidance documents) it can be concluded that implementation is a matter of 'learning by doing'.

3.5 Evaluation

A national NPRI team has excellent capabilities to analyse and evaluate past Peer Reviews. It is recommended that these types of assessments be a regular activity. The lessons learned from this can contribute to improvements of the National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Methodology and Guidance 'and its annexes. The method and annexes must therefore be seen as 'living documents'.

Appendix: NPRI network at coordination and executive/ operational level

The activities of an NPRI network can be broadly distinguished in activities at 'coordination' and at 'executive' level. Both levels are outlined in brief in this section as:

- Coordination level *(National team of representatives of networks and or governmental organisations and agencies)*
- Execution and operational level *(core group of experts on the matter)*

<table>
<tr><th>Coordination level</th><th>Execution and operational level</th></tr>
<tr><td>National team of representatives of networks and or governmental organisations and agencies</td><td>Core group of experts on the matter</td></tr>
<tr><td>Establishing national NPRI team</td><td>Establishing core team of experts</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conduct a brief analysis of equivalent or comparable organisations and their networks.
Approach the organisations, explain the reason, rationale and benefits of involvement in the NPRI scheme; when interest is expressed, request for the appointment of a contact person from the specific organisation, as well as request the organisation takes a seat in a committee that will coordinate the NPRI.
Prepare and organize a meeting at national level with participation of representatives of all interested organisations.
Promoting and coordinating implementation of the NPRI scheme.
Offering peer review training to participants of the network.</td><td>Establishing a core group of experts with a variety in expertise, who are available for participating in Peer Review teams and/or providing support in implementing findings of Peer Review missions.
Making agreements (including financial arrangements if applicable) with supporting organisations that are volunteering to make their experts available for peer review activities and missions.
Participating in a (basic) training in the field of peer review, performance measurement and related assessment frameworks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Planning</td><td>Planning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Setting up a yearly NPRI programme, based on an inventory of needs of single and/or a group of organisations in a network, and on the specifics of subjects to be reviewed and timing of Peer Reviews.
Discussing and developing assessment frameworks, tailored to the specifics of a requested Peer Review.</td><td>Planning of peer review missions and/or support activities and the selection of experts.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Coordination</td><td>Preparation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Assistance in discussing and developing Terms of Reference (TOR) with organisations who requested a Peer Review.</td><td>Preparing a questionnaire related to the subject of the peer review.</td></tr>
</table>

• Assisting in assembling review teams and facilitating the participation of experts. • Agreeing on TOR's and making arrangements with organisations where a peer re view will be performed. • Supporting strategical scoping related to relevant policies, implementation of legislation etc. • Assisting in designing Assessment Frameworks related to subjects of a Peer Review	• Sending out a request and outline of a self-assessment report to the organisation(s) to be reviewed • Studying a self-assessment report and additional relevant documentation ('advanced reference material') as provided by the organisation(s) to be reviewed.
Implementation	**Implementation**
• Reaching out to organisations to make expert resources available as experts in peer review teams.	• Preliminary assessment by each team member of the organisation(s) to be reviewed, on the basis of the self-assessment report and 'advanced reference material' and a brief reporting of the observations to the team members. • Carrying out the peer review on the basis of the of the self-assessment report, advanced reference material, interviews, observations etc. • Preparing a draft report of the peer review mission. • Presentation of the findings (good practices and opportunities of development) to the reviewed organisation(s).
Feedback loop	**Feedback loop**
• Evaluating outcomes of Peer Reviews and converting them into generic findings, good practices and opportunities for development from which other organisations can benefit. • To promote, assist and schedule follow-up peer reviews to be determined in order to 'measure' progress.	• Evaluation of the process of the peer review. • Translating results of the peer review into generalised and anonymised observations and providing these to the national NPRI team
Support	**Support**
• Discussing opportunities for providing support based on requests of reviewed organisation. • Consultation with the reviewed organisation(s) and the involved review team about the kind and magnitude of desired support. • Reaching out to participating organisations in the network to discuss the availability of needed expertise to provide expert support. • Making arrangements with the organisations that request support on implementation and the organisations that provide expert support.	• Discussing suggestions for support on implementation of the findings towards the reviewed organisation and being an intermediate on this subject to the national NPRI team. • Providing expert support to organisations that requested assistance in implementing findings of conducted peer reviews.

Annex II

Guidance on drafting a ‘Request for a National Peer Review’

Guidance on drafting a ‘Request for a National Peer Review’

Introduction

This annex presents guidance on drawing up a ‘Request for a National Peer Review’. This guidance suggests building blocks and options for the content of a letter (Request for Peer Review) to be used in initiating a Peer Review, to provide information and to raise interest in starting and joining a National Peer Review. It is emphasized that this guidance is intended as a short list of subjects, options and suggestions for drawing up a ‘Request for a Peer Review’ and has the character of a 'checklist'.

> ***This guidance can be applied by an initiator or initiative group and intents to be used as an open, flexible and non-prescriptive template of a Request with options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs.***

What is a ‘Request for a National Peer Review

A 'Request for a National Peer Review' is basically a short letter that can be sent to organisations by an initiator or initiative group to share concerns about an identified challenge or problem and to invite them to initiate or participate in a (National) Peer Review, in order to gain insights and find ways to achieve improvements. In particular, the ‘Request’ is intended to raise interest in joining a National Peer Review. The addressed organisations are asked to take part in the Peer Review. The letter contains as well brief information on next steps in the starting process.

Who is sending a Request to whom?

Who sends a request to whom is a strategic question and depends on specific circumstances in the country, the governance structures and the topics where a Peer Review can be applied? Various situations are possible. This may, for example, be a request from a group of administrators to a national authority, an umbrella organisation, or an organisation of professionals and vice versa. A request can also be made by a coordinator of a network at national level to organisations that are part of the network. Furthermore, a request can be initiated by involved staff members, a manager, etc. An important question in this context is whether there is an existing network, a central umbrella organisation or whether there are enthusiastic people who can accomplish or support a National Peer Review and find this a useful method to tackle problems and finding solutions.

A 'Request for Peer Review' <u>can be used internally</u>, i.e., within an organisation, to draw the attention of senior management to an identified problem or challenge that hinders adequate implementation. The 'request' then contains a substantiated request for permission to perform a Peer Review. When permission has been given, this is the starting point for the organisation to start the further internal processes for organizing a Peer Review.
A 'Request for Peer Review' can <u>also be used externally</u> as a host organisation to request, for example, a national NPRI team to carry out a Peer Review on them.

What can be the subjects in the Request for a National Peer Review

The following topics can be considered as elements to be included in the request. The order may differ, of course, but the order below may make sense. Some example formulations or options of the topics are outlined in the appendix. These are intended as possible building blocks:

a. Who is requesting?	e. The Scope of the Review
b. What is the subject/challenge/problem?	f. Naming the next step (meeting – ToR) and forming a team
c. How can a National Peer Review help to meet the challenge?	g. g. Availability of the IMPEL NPRI team for support
d. What is a Peer Review?	h. Last motivating line

Appendix I

(DRAFT) REQUEST FOR A NPRI PEER REVIEW

DRAFT REQUEST
of a National Peer Review Initiative Review to ….. (*name organisation or authority*)

(version ……)

A. WHO IS REQUESTING

This section outlines:

- The requesting organisation in brief summary and its general objectives;
- If relevant in relation to the start of a National Peer Review, the way the requesting organisation is organized and the position of the person or group who is requesting.

B. WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE/PROBLEM

Here, briefly the subject, challenge or the problem why a Peer Review is requested can be outlined:
- What kind of challenges the organisation(s) encounters and to which constricts or 'problems' do this lead in the daily practice?
- What is the rationale of starting a Peer Review?

C. HOW A NATIONAL PEER REVIEW CAN HELP TO EXPLORE AND SOLVE THE CHALLENGE

- Why is a Peer Review from the perspective of the requesting organisation a good method to help to improve their way of working or to solve their problems, etcetera?

Examples:

a. *A Peer Review is a general and flexible methodology which can be applied in different situations, with different goals. The method helps to increase the quality of the execution (permitting, inspections, enforcement), to streamline procedures, standards and working methods, or to improve effectivity or efficiency in equivalent organisations.*
b. *To improve achievements of permitting, control and enforcements by Administrations, Public Services, etcetera, it is useful to apply the method of the National Peer Review.*

D. WHAT IS A PEER REVIEW AND WHAT IS NOT?

- Short description of goals and method of Peer Review

Example:

The National Peer Review method is developed by the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Project Team. This initiative is applied in several Peer Reviews in the Netherlands and Italy.

Peer Review is a flexible methodology that intends to set the basis for a better understanding of the common needs within a network (e.g., departments or organisations) and to determine mutual help that could be delivered within or by a national network to achieve these results. The flexible process can involve training, use of a questionnaire, knowledge exchange, common procedures and document evaluation, type of instruments and technical support. The aims of a Peer Review can be the start of a dialog between the participants, to learn from each other, measuring performance and to gather 'Best Practices'. Peer Review is <u>*not*</u> *an audit or a judgement. It helps to understand challenges and find the most suitable solutions to overcome identified difficulties through a process that allows learning from each other. The setting of specific standards to be achieved will also allow to measure the service performance and can contribute to continuous improvement model.*

E. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

- Scoping in peer review is important. This can partly take place prior to the peer review by the organisation making the request and can be further refined with those involved if they agree to carry out a review.
- If possible, write a few lines in the request about the proposed scope or subject of the peer review, and/or refer to the challenge as expressed in B, or to a (major) part of it.
- The scope can relate to specific subjects, such as water or air pollution, but also organisational themes or procedures, such as quality systems, improvement of performance, effectiveness, governance and public affairs, licensing, inspections and innovation. Furthermore, the purpose of the Peer Review can be further elaborated on, such as entering into a dialogue, learning from each other, measuring performance, or a combination of these.

Example:

As the scope of this overview, we propose the permitting process for the use of water resources, namely for wastewater discharges and water abstraction. The aim is to develop uniform procedures to similar situations throughout the country and to use the National Peer Review to start a dialogue and to learn from each other.

F. ANNOUNCING NEXT STEP AND FORMING A TEAM

- Proposal to organize a first meeting with involved parties to exchange ideas on the implementation of the request. The result of this may be the drawing up of a Term of Reference in which the arrangements for the implementation of the Peer Review are agreed.
- Give an idea about the time schedule of the process of the Peer Review.
- Underline the importance of collaboration when applying a National Peer Review. Composing a peer review team is important in this regard.
- Describe commitment of management/board
- Name of contact person

Example:

We invite your organisation to take part in a meeting next month to discuss the principles of performing a Peer Review and to discuss necessary arrangements to be included in Terms of Reference (ToR). As a next step a team can be formed with participation of various experts and managers from the intended partners and to make a start with the Peer Review in September. Commitment and Involvement of the management and the board of the participating organisations is important, and we rely on their availability.

Contact person is [name, email address and phone number]. He/she can be contacted for any remaining questions.

G. AVAILIBILTY SUPPORT OF THE IMPEL NPRI-TEAM

- The IMPEL NPRI-project team is able and willing to provide support and advice if needed.

Example:
In case a Peer Review will be performed, IMPEL can provide technical support and/or advice.

H. LAST MOTIVATING LINE

- One last summarizing motivating last line.

Example:

A National Peer Review is an import instrument for or organisations to discus and exchange experiences and practices in an atmosphere with collegial confidentiality. By learning from each other, we improve. Therefore, my organisation will join this project with full conviction, and I hope other involved organisations will be even enthusiastic.

Appendix II Letter of Expression of Interest

Date: 15/02/2021
To,
Vice-President of
Portuguese Environment Agency

Subject: Expression of Interest for a National Peer Review Initiative for Portuguese Environment Agency to be applied in the water resources uses permitting process, namely wastewaters discharges and water abstraction

As known, the Portuguese Environment Agency (APA) is a public institute, within the scope of the Portuguese Ministry of the Environment and Climate Action. Its mission is to propose, develop and monitor, on an integrated and participated manner, the public policies for the environment and sustainable development, in close cooperation with other sectoral policies and public and private entities. One of the main areas of APA intervention is water.

To APA strategic goals are increasing the level of protection, recovery and enhancement of ecosystem, increasing the level of protection of people and goods in risk situation, improving the knowledge and information about the environment, reinforcing public participation and ensuring the involvement of the institutions and to guarantee the excellence of performing in all assignments.

Within the intervention area for water, the APA has competencies in the permitting of water resources uses according the Law n.º 58/2005, 29th December, in its latest version in conjunction with the Decree Law n.º 226-A/2007, 31st May (transposition into national law for the Water Framework Directive). These processes are taken by the five regional departments, i.e., the River Basin District Administrations (ARH), where different procedures can be applied to similar situations through the country, which may disrupt in certain situations the environmental compliance goals, and subsequently may jeopardize the effective purposes of permits.
Therefore, to contribute to the strategic goal the excellence of performing in APA assignments, the Water Resources Department hereby submit this Expression of Interest (EoI) for a National Peer Review Initiative for the water resources uses permitting process, namely for the wastewater discharges and water abstraction, which are developed by the River Basin District Administrations (ARH). In this way, and since the water resources department usually develops guidelines to be used at national level, is proposed a meeting with ARH to discuss the principles to establish a Peer Review and prepare the respective Terms of Reference (ToR).

The aim is the development of a Peer Review, in line with the method developed by the IMPEL European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law, National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Project Team, which has been used in several Peer Reviews in the Netherlands and Italy. The Peer Review is a flexible methodology that intends to set the basis for a better understanding of the common needs within a network (e.g., departments or organisations) and to determine mutual help that could be delivered within or by the national network to achieve these results. The process is flexible and can involve training, use of a questionnaire, knowledge exchange, common procedures and documents evaluation, type of instruments and technical support to understand the challenges and find the most suitable solutions to overcome the identified difficulties, through a process that allows learning from each other. The setting of specific standards to be achieved

will also allow to measure the service performance and contribute to a continuous improvement model.
With this specific NPRI, is aimed to develop uniform procedures for the permitting process, applied to wastewater discharges and water abstraction, to ensure the application of similar criteria through the country, in line with the APA competencies and responsibilities as the National Water Authority, In this way, is intended the definition of a methodology that allows to use permits as a water management item and inline, as match as possible, with EU strategies, such as the environmental compliance action plan, the circular economy and the green deals.
The Water Resources Department states that the information provided with this EoI are true and accurate and may make available to the NPRI IMPEL project Team any additional information it may consider necessary or required to supplement this EoI.
Hence, the Water Resources Department would like to ask for formal agreement of the current proposal for a NPRI within water resources permitting process to be taken with the five regional departments (ARH). This Peer Review is intended to be developed during the second semester of 2021 and is expected to take a total of 150 to 200 h divided through a minimum of six people. The majority of the work is expected to be done remotely with virtual meeting. However, at least one live meeting/workshop should occur and, therefore, the respective travel expenses and daily allowance must be covered by the APA.

This Peer Review is intended to be developed under the IMPEL NPRI Project and counts with its team for technical support and/or advice. Should be noticed that this process is not intended to certify or inspect procedures, but instead promote a flexible approach to improve and motivate APA “water experts” for a better performance to achieve efficient permits for water resources uses.

The Water Resources Department,

………..

Annex III

Guidance on drafting a Terms of Reference (ToR)

Guidance on drafting a Terms of Reference (ToR)

Introduction

This annex presents guidance on drawing up a Terms of Reference (ToR) in which the agreements are laid down between organisations with regard to performing a peer review within the framework of the NPRI. It is emphasized that this guidance must be understood as a list of subjects, options and suggestions for drawing up and compiling a ToR and in fact has the character of a 'checklist'.

This guidance intents to be used as an open, flexible and non-prescriptive template of a ToR with options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

What is ‘Terms of Reference’?

Terms of Reference (ToR) is a governance document that sets out working arrangements between organisations on the implementation of a proposed project or activity. It defines and shows the purpose and structures of a project and establishes and determines the relationships between those who agreed to work together to accomplish a shared goal. Terms of reference is to be understood as establishing a framework for voluntary cooperation and do not create any legally binding obligations between or among the Partners.

TOR provide a documented basis of the arrangement and confirms or develops a common understanding of the scope among the involved stakeholders and specifies vital information about the project, such as its background, goals, scope, activities to be done, and it indicates schedules, logistics, and deliverables. Furthermore, it should clearly describe the roles, expected inputs and outputs, project budget, and obligations of all involved.

After a project has been identified, discussed, defined and planned, a ToR will be prepared upon mutual agreement by the involved partners in the cooperation.

Content of this guidance on TOR

The topics and its proposed elements are based on a brief research of outlines of ToR’s as used by various organisations[19] and experiences from involvement in Peer Reviews where ToR’s were the basis for the agreements between the involved organisations.

[19] Organisations as IMPEL, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

GUIDANCE TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) FOR A NPRI PEER REVIEW

TERMS OF REFERENCE
of a National Peer Review Initiative Review to ….. (*name organisation or authority*)

INTRODUCTION

This section outlines:

- The requesting organisation in brief summary and its general objective
- In brief: the rationale for conducting a NPRI
- Names of the organisations that are parties in the ToR

This section could also include the intended audience and users of the review.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

This section could briefly:

- Provide a brief explanation of the history and need behind the proposed review.
- Present the subject, challenge or problem to be reviewed within the national, regional, local or organisational context and what is aimed with the peer review
- State of the need for conducting a peer review.
- Address who has requested, when the request was sent and to whom?
- Describe between whom this ToR was discussed and basically agreed.
- The date of agreeing on the ToR.

DATES

- Add the agreed time period when the peer review will be implemented.

(NPRI) PEER REVIEW OBJECTIVES

This section could:

- Describe and detail the (general and specific) objectives of the peer review to be carried out. This could be (examples):
    - Assessing and reviewing performance
    - Assessing progress made on implementation of policies, rules, regulations, procedures etc.
    - Feedback on (implementation) processes through the exchange of views and experiences through dialogue
    - Knowledge exchange and mutual learning
- Describe the intended achievements to be gained at different stages of the review
- Clearly identify and define what is expected from the review and who the target audience is

SCOPE

In this section:

- Describe (precise) on which specific topics or areas the peer review will be focused as well as to which it will be limited
- Also describe the aspects where the NPRI will <u>not</u> focus on

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This section could describe:

- The agreed assessment framework (if applicable) and its references that will be used to carry out the review, such as:
    - The basis of the assessment
    - Criteria and indicators
    - The initial review questions and review criteria
    - Evaluation and validation of the results
    - How the results will be valued

COMPOSITION OF THE NPRI TEAM

In this section:

- Describe the composition of a Review Team that is fit for purpose (multi-skilled and multidisciplinary). For example: the team could consist, tentatively, of the following members:
    - Team Leader
    - Experts
    - Members with general expertise and experience
    - Rapporteur (if applicable)
- Specify the composition, number and qualifications of the team members who carry out the peer review.
- Detail the roles of:
    - The team leader, with overall responsibility for providing guidance and leadership, and in coordinating the draft and final report.
    - The team members and experts and their expected responsibilities, who will provide thematic expertise (in the core subject area/s of the review) and review expertise and be responsible for drafting key parts of the report.
    - Other members as appropriate.

MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

This section can indicate:

- Who from the involved organisations is responsible for the coordination of activities, such as:
    - The Host organisation (NPRI) Coordinator as main contact point for all formal arrangements regarding the peer review (add contact details of the coordinator). Include at least name, position affiliation, address, mobile phone number and email.
    - The team leader of the peer review team that will carry out the review (add contact details of the coordinator). Include at least name, position affiliation, address, mobile phone number and email.

CONDUCT OF THE PEER REVIEW (REVIEW PROCESS)

This section could broadly:

- Define the key phases of the project implementation process of the review and describe the content and duration of project activities. For example: preparation, scoping, design of an assessment framework, questionnaire, self-assessment, review methodology (interviews, dialogues, etc.), assessment, reporting, presentation.
- Specify the required level of stakeholder involvement (such as: management, operational).
- List the information collection tools necessary for monitoring purposes (such as data bases, (quarterly) management reporting etc.
- Describe the expected time spent/consumption by the organisation being reviewed

Questionnaire and self-assessment

- If agreed that the organisation(s) to be reviewed will carry out a self-assessment, the peer review team will draft a questionnaire[20] that could contain general and specific questions that match with the agreed objectives, scope of the review and connection with the Assessment Framework.
- If then, based on the questionnaire the host organisation will carry out a self-assessment in advance of the actual performance of the peer review and will provide a report to the NPRI peer review coordinator (add a specific date if possible).

Advanced reference material

It can be needed that the review team has to prepare the review by studying reference material such as internal rules, policies, procedures etc. In that case and if agreed, it is important that the organisation that will be reviewed will make this 'advanced reference material' available. The ToR could include a section that lists the items that will be studied in advance, such as (not limited):

- Self-assessment report
- Organisation chart
- Relevant procedures related to the subject and scope of the review

[20] The IRI questionnaire of the IMPEL Review Initiative contains a good example of such a questionnaire. The questionnaire however needs to be adjusted to the objectives, subject and scope of the NPRI.

- Performance reports
- Policy and (draft) action plans
- Internal training curricula
- ……

Additional documents may be requested by the peer team during the review. If possible, the reference material could be provided by the Host organisation onto a web-based platform that is accessible by the review team.

Way of working of the peer review team

- Brief description or mentioning of the methods that will be used (documentation review, interviews, dialogues, group sessions, reflection, validation etc.)

REPORTING[21] AND OUTPUTS

The main output from Peer Review is a brief report of the findings to the Host organisation with special attention for 'Opportunities for Development'[22] and 'Good Practices'[23], each supported by factual and validated information and related to the agreed scope and Assessment Framework.

In this section could be described:

- The design and Table of Contents of the review report
- Submission dates, time- and deadlines
- References to the presentation (debriefing) of the report to senior management
- Process of reflection and approval
- Other information such as number of copies to be created,
- Clarity about ownership of the report
- How will be reported and presented

WORKPLAN AND INDICATIVE TIME SCHEDULE OF DELIVREABLES

This section could outline specific activities and milestones of the review, as well as deadlines for each of the phases of the peer review and its deliverables (including the draft(s) of the report, as well as the planned submission date of the final report).

Ideally, the time schedule would be in a table format for easy reference.

[21] Reference to Annex II of the NPRI Guidance and Methodology (annex on 'writing')
[22] Opportunities for Development are primarily intended to make arrangements more effective of efficient and to improve operations and performance.
[23] A Good Practice goes beyond the fulfilment of current requirements or expectations. It is unique or noteworthy and worth being brought to the attention to other organisations as a model in the general drive for excellence. A good practice is identified in recognition of a specific organisation, arrangement, programme or performance superior to those generally observed elsewhere. The basis for good practices should be any of the requirements or guidance contained in the assessment framework.

LOGISTICS

In this section information about the logistical arrangements of the review, such as:

The Host organisation will provide or arrange for the following:

a. A continuously available meeting room for NPRI team members;
b. Access to a projector, internet for all team participants, printing and photocopying facilities as well as shredder in the meeting room;
c. Arrangements for lunch;

FINANCES

The NPRI Coordinator, in consultation with the coordinator of the Host organisation, is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to finance the review.

SCHEDULE

A tentative review schedule of the whole process could be described in a separate Appendix to the ToR. This schedule may be modified prior to and during the review by mutual agreement between the coordinator of the Host organisation and the NPRI Coordinator.

REPORT CONFIDENTIALITY

In this section could be mentioned:

- Description of the ownership of the report
- Restrictions regarding the report's initial distribution
- Detailed described agreement on the confidentiality of all aspects of the process

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section can include a list of documents and websites to be consulted by the NPRI review team.

ANNEXES

Annexes may differ, but generally can include:

- Agenda initial meeting
- Tentative list of advanced reference material
- List and contact details of all involved in the NPRI
- Time schedule review

European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

IMPEL NPRI

ANNEX IV

Guidance to design an assessment framework

Table of contents

Annex IV

Acknowledgment

This Annex, commissioned by IMPEL and conducted by a National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) team, was prepared as a part of the development of a peer review approach that can be used by countries and authorities to support them in their improvement.
The document is based on a study on Peer Review methods used by various organisations. The content of this annex is in particular inspired by work in this area of:

- The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) - the IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI)
- International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA) - Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) - Environmental Performance Review (EPR) and the Industrial Accidents Convention (TEIA)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Environmental Performance Review (EPR)

The NPRI-team acknowledges the work, policies and methodologies of the aforementioned organisations on the subject 'Peer and/or Performance Review' and is grateful for the use of their free accessible information, as well as kindly provided oral and written information and the approval of the use of specific information. Adequate reference to consulted literature and documents has been made in this document.

Disclaimer

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this document, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The authors do not accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned, or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any person acting, or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this document. This document intends as a contribution to development of a peer review instrument within the framework of the IMPEL project National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI).

GUIDANCE TO DESIGN AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

As described in paragraph 4.2 of the NPRI methodology, an assessment framework has an important and central position in the Peer-review. An assessment framework should provide answers about what is to be reviewed, brings focus, direction and borders to the process of the Peer Review. Therefore, an assessment framework is an important link between the scope and the instruments of the peer-review methodology. A crucial function of the assessment framework is that it enables a common language to the participants of the peer-review.

This annex outlines more in detail guidance and steps of a process that can be considered in designing an assessment framework. In addition, in this annex two examples of an assessment framework are described as used by international organisations.

It needs to be noted that this guidance aims to be used as open, flexible and non-prescriptive and contains options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs. This means that organisations in a country that wish to perform a Peer Review can consider using elements of this guidance in designing an Assessment Framework in addition to their own methodology. IMPEL is available for providing support.

2. What is an assessment framework?

An assessment framework functions as a consistent reference system against which to evaluate whether (individual) tasks meet set standards and /or requirements, as well as it provides a structured conceptual map of what is to be assessed and measured.[24] Furthermore, it gives insight in the links between 'what is to be assessed' and the design and content of the instrument(s), such as a questionnaire, a review framework, a SWOT-analysis etc. Furthermore, an assessment framework details how an assessment is to be operationalized. It explains both, the 'what' and the 'how'.

3. Need for flexibility

Paragraph 4.2 of the NPRI methodology notes that there is <u>no</u> single, unique and totally including comprehensive assessment framework for measuring performance. The consequence of this is that the scope and assessment framework of the peer review must be tailored to the topic(s) that are the subject(s) of the assessment. The reason for this is that focus, and subject of a peer review can vary broadly. The subjects are based on the needs and wishes as expressed by organisations to be reviewed. Flexibility and customisation in designing an assessment framework is therefore essential.

[24] https://www.academia.edu/18484652/The_rationale_for_and_use_of_assessment_frameworks_improving_assessment_and_reporting_quality_in_medical_education; p. 110, 111, 112

4. Principles and choices

It is important to make a number of fundamental choices early on in the development of a peer review and an assessment framework that relate to the focus and purpose of the review. Is it a comparison between the performance of comparable organisations, and / or is the intention that the review is aimed at initiating dialogue for improvement of performance through dialogue? The involvement of senior management is necessary in making these choices and determining the aggregation level of an assessment framework. This is explained as follows:

4.1 Involvement management

Customization is necessary in designing a peer review and assessment framework. This can in fact only be delivered if:

- needs and wishes of the organisation to be reviewed are discussed, clear and agreed
- the nature and scope of the peer review are clear and agreed by the reviewers and the organisation to be reviewed
- there is agreement on the assessment framework and its basis on which the review will be performed, and the performance will be 'measured'.

The involvement of top management of an organisation from the very first moment in the different phases of this process is indispensable and their full support for the implementation is crucial. Finally, their commitment radiates confidence to the organisation and its staff that there is a willingness to take the results of the peer review seriously and to implement them aiming at achieving improvements.

4.2 Benchmark or dialog?

It is important to provide focus on the nature and aim of a peer review through the discussion as mentioned in paragraph 3.1. Clarity is needed whether the peer review is carried out as a comparison between organisations as participants in a network, or assessment of performance of the implementation of a variety of tasks, or if the peer review will focus through dialogue on the exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices. This will also influence its operationalisation. If the approach is aimed at dialogue to inspire each other to enter into a conversation about 'to do the good things (and not only doing the things good); an 'assessment framework ' and the review method chosen for this purpose could serve much more as a guide for a conversation and interview.

In case the approach is on comparing the performance of tasks or processes of organisations, a combination of a qualitative and quantitative approach is also possible.

4.3 The aggregation level of an assessment framework

The choice of whether a peer review is developed for a group of organisations that belong to a (national) network or for an individual organisation, largely determines the aggregation level of the assessment framework. In the case of a (national) network it is recommended to develop an assessment framework at national level, based on national legislation or regulations of national associations of subnational and regional organisations, such as environmental protection agencies. In fact such an assessment applies to legal binding principles.

An assessment framework at national level enables comparison of results between equivalent organisations and to provide advice to policymakers of the national authorities.
It is also possible to develop an assessment framework tailormade for a host organisation if they express a strong need to improve their performance or for a smaller group of regional protection agencies.
Furthermore, it may be possible to combine a peer review at national and at regional level. Amongst others, one part of the peer review could use a national assessment framework and a second part could use a tailored assessment framework based on a self-chosen subject by a regional organisation, such as the performance of the execution of tasks.

5. Standards and performance indicators

A major issue in designing an assessment framework is the availability of standards and performance indicators to be used as benchmark and reference to evaluate performance.[25]

Broadly speaking, standards or performance indicators can have the following basis:

	Basis performance indicators	Examples
A	***Laws, legislation and/or Directives***	• The 'Model Regulation on the quality of permits, supervision and enforcement of environmental law'[26] as used by the Dutch Association of Provinces in the Netherlands; • European Parliament and Council Recommendation providing for minimum criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)[27].
B	***Quality management systems***	• ISO 9001 and other certification systems.
C	***Organisation's internal (process) procedures and standards***	Procedures for: • Policy plans; • (multi) annual work plans; • Control cycles (goal achievement, resource management etc); • Health, safety and environment (HSE) aspects; • Data collection and analysis.

5.1 Performance indicators extracted from A (legislation) and B (quality systems)

In particular, performance indicators can be derived from subjects as mentioned under A and B, to design an assessment framework, whether or not tailor-made. It is therefore important to analyse existing regulations or procedures in this regard. The conditions that apply to the implementation of the RMCEI are presented as an example and are relatively easy to extract from the relevant regulations.

[25] Suggested reference: OECD (2003), *Peer Review: An OECD Tool for Co-operation and Change*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264099210-en-fr.

[26] Wabo Kwaliteitscriteria. Available from: https://www.infomil.nl/publish/pages/75656/vth_wabo_kwaliteitscriteria_versie_2_2_2019_deel_b.pdf

[27] RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 4 April 2001providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States(2001/331/EC; Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001H0331&from=EN

See appendix 1 to this annex. In fact, this also applies to performance indicators that can be derived from quality management systems and from other formal, established and documented agreements and procedures.

5.2 Performance indicators extracted from C (internal procedures and standards)

If legal or quality management system standards and indicators are not available, such as described in the table under C, it is necessary to use principles and indicators that are not simply related to the experience and views of the group of experts, visiting the organisation to be reviewed. In those cases, an assessment framework with ‘standards’ and ‘performance indicators’ has to be developed based on performance indicators derived from internal procedures. Based on an analysis of these procedures the assessment framework can be tailored to specific subject(s) to be reviewed.

Instruments that can be helpful to support this process and which are widely used:

- The 'Plan, Do, Check and Act - PDCA' cycle, the so-called 'wheel of Deming'[28], as a supportive instrument to carry out assessments. The respective elements of this instrument can help in setting up a peer review and in developing an assessment framework in situations involving internal procedures that are set out in internal organisational arrangements.
- The approach of the 'Big 8 policy cycle' is also particularly useful as a basis for developing and
- Conducting a peer review including an assessment framework and is used by IMPEL, among others, in the implementation of the IRIs. Documentation such as 'Doing the right things'[29] can be very helpful in this regard.

5. Steps in developing an assessment framework

Taking into account the information in the aforementioned sections, the following steps can be considered to develop an assessment framework:

- Programming and preparation
- Scoping
- Designing an assessment framework

Programming and preparation

1. Establish an interdisciplinary working group at national level, composed of experts from different (network) organisations, tasked with drawing up a ‘(multi) annual program Peer Review.’ The program may contain:
    a. Peer Reviews aiming at participants in a network of organisations. The goal may be benchmarking, of which the findings serve:
        - To improve performance on various topics throughout the network (peer review aiming at assessment and improvement of the system);
        - To identify and advise potential improvements to the management of the individual members of the network;
    b. (Assisting in) developing assessment frameworks for a variety of peer reviews at national level and at subnational and/or organisational level;
    c. Peer Reviews aiming at an individual organisation (the scope of the peer review can be diverse);
    d. A program aiming at providing support to the network and the individual organisations in the implementation of results of performed peer reviews.

Scoping

- At national level: discuss and decide on the jointly chosen priority topics that will be subject of peer reviews conducted at equivalent organisations that are part of a national network;
- Contact the organisation(s) that has / have requested to perform a peer review;
- Discuss the purpose and subjects of the peer review. Consider topics such as:
  - Performance of permitting, inspection and enforcement (output)
  - Professional standards
  - Policy (national, regional) and e.g. its effectiveness
  - Programming (also 'doing the right things')
  - Costs and other financial aspects
  - Outcome, contribution to environment or society
  - Management and organisation of the agency
  - Innovation
  - Other
- Discuss wishes and needs of the organisation to be reviewed and jointly determine the scope of the peer review. Record and agree between parties involved on what the scope is.
- Discuss that an 'assessment framework' will be developed on the basis of the scope, which will be presented to the organisation to be reviewed in draft.

Designing an assessment framework

- Determine whether the peer review is intended for organisations within a network or an individual organisation
- Determine whether it is a 'measurement' of performance or if it is primarily a dialogue aiming at exchanging experiences / good practices. It can be as well a combination of both.
- Determine whether the subject (parts of the scope) of the peer review have established standards according to:
  A. laws and regulations and / or
  B. quality management systems
  C. organisation's internal (process) procedures and standards
- In case of:
  A. perform an analysis of the applicable laws and regulations and transform these into measurable units (performance indicators) that are related to the relevant parts of the scope of the peer review
  B. perform an analysis of the applicable conditions that are included in the quality management system, relate these to the relevant parts of the scope of the peer review and transform these into measurable units (performance indicators).
  C. discuss with the organisation to be reviewed which internal rules and procedures should be part of the peer review, request these and subject them to an analysis and extract units that can be made 'measurable' as performance indicators.
- When developing the performance indicators, consider the 'performance principles' and the minimum criteria for 'performance indicators' and use these as starting points. Also make sure that the SMART criteria are used when developing the indicators.

SMART criteria:

• Specific	• Must describe what is intended to be measured and does not include multiple measurements. Well defined, clear and unambiguous.
• **Measurable**	• Regardless of who uses the indicator, consistent results should be obtained and tracked under the same conditions. Specific criteria are used that measure the progress toward the accomplishment of a goal.
• **Attainable**	• Collecting data for the indictor should be simple, straight forward, cost-effective and not impossible to achieve.
• **Relevant**	• The indicator should be closely connected with each respective input, output or outcome and needs to be realistic and within reach.
• **Time-bound**	• The indicator must be valid for a specific and defined time frame (starting and target date).

Performance principles

During the process of scoping and designing an assessment framework, the following performance principles should be considered and could give guidance in the specific phase of the process:

1. Outcomes and results of the review must be clearly defined;
2. The performance measurement, including data collection, should be simple and cost-effective;
3. The performance measurement should be positive, not punitive;
4. Performance indicators should be simple, valid, reliable, affordable and relevant to the activity or process being measured;
5. Performance indicators need to be reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis. Evaluation and implementation will support to refine and improve the process.

Minimum criteria[30] for developing and selecting performance indicators[31]

Performance information needs to be collected and used at all levels in an organisation and help to understand how well the organisation, parts of it, and individuals are performing. Performance information should help to inform decision-making, as well as describing whether the required level of performance has been achieved. Performance indicators show the extent to which the outcomes achieved by an organisation are meeting the objectives in their strategic plan, goal achievements and/or task performance. The information obtained helps to develop opportunities for development.

[30] Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting Performance – Reference Guide, Queensland Government; Available at: https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=measuring%2C+monitoring+and+reporting+performance+queensland; p.5

[31] Recommendations on Performance Measurement for Environmental Enforcement Authorities of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia, first draft, 1 June 2006; Available at: http://www.oecd.org/environment/outreach/38137583.pdf; p.7

There is no absolute set of indicators that can be applied to all situations: what works for one country, an organisation or one regulation, might not work for another. Therefore, these criteria need to be adapted to country or organisation specific circumstances. In developing performance indicators, the following principles are to be considered in the specific phase of the process of developing an assessment framework:

Relevance	- Is it relevant to the activity, product or process being measured; does it reflect the goals and needs;
Transparent	- Promoting the understanding about organisation's operation and performance and ensuring accountability;
Comprehensive	- Addressing the important programmatic and operational aspects;
Reliable, credible and feasible	- Based on data that are complete and accurate, as well as incorporating advanced information technology;
Functionable and feasible	- Encouraging constructive behaviour among staff members and balancing the cost of measurement, data collection and analysis with the value of this information.
Validity	- Does the indicator allow you to be precise in measuring the results (quantity, quality, timeframe)?
Reliability	- Is it a consistent measure over time? This is particularly important when selecting quantitative indicators?
Simplicity	- Is the information available and will it be feasible to collect and analyse it?
Affordability	- Can we afford to collect and analyse the information?

6. Making an assessment framework measurable

An important function of an assessment framework is that it serves as a reference system against which to evaluate whether (individual) tasks meet set standards and/or requirements, in fact to measure performance.

By using measurable performance indicators, it is important to realise that there are several ways to shape this measurability. This can be done in a quantitative or qualitative way, or a mix of both. It is important in this context to understand for what purpose the peer review will be conducted. This largely determines how the results of a peer review are assessed. When the peer review focuses on a dialogue, the conversation will mainly be about sharing knowledge, experiences and good practices and identifying opportunities for development through the conversation. When the peer review is aimed at determining whether an organisation has achieved its goals and / or has complied with conditions and standards, a (value) estimate or judgement of performance is relevant information. Based on this, after analysis of the findings, observations can be shared and opportunities for development can be proposed. Several methods are available to make such a measurement.

The two examples (UNECE[32] and IAEA[33]) as detailed in this Annex, provide summarised information how a qualitative assessment framework is used by reviewing and assessing the performance of countries and organisations on specific topics.

6.1 Prioritised scale

Performance indicators can be measured by the use of empirical qualitative judgment to assess the 'relative value' of specific factors used in the process. For instance, 'relative values' can be obtained by a direct prioritised scale, such as 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent or by a hierarchical analytical process based on an importance scale 1 - 9, as described by Saaty,[34] where values can be attained by comparison between judgments over factors. In this scale 1 is low importance, 3 is weak and 5 is essential or strong importance, 7 is demonstrated importance, 9 is absolute importance and for intermediate levels between two judgments may be assigned values of 2, 4, 6 or 8.

Two examples of assessment frameworks (UNECE and IAEA) are included in this annex.

To design such a scale, it is advised to:

- Establish a multi-disciplinary group of experts, tasked with the preparation of the peer review or more specifically with designing an assessment framework;
- Identify performance indicators related to standards derived from subjects that will be reviewed;
- To objectify, describe and document the 'relative values' connected with individual standards or conditions and include these in a prioritised scale;
- To discuss the scale and its rationale with the network of organisations or management of an individual organisation, revise if necessary and agree on its application;
- Train the experts on the use of the prioritised scale and its methodology.

6.2 Validation of findings

When conducting an assessment with mainly qualitative aspects, there is a risk that the results can be arbitrary. It is therefore important to formulate the results of the peer review as unambiguous as possible and avoid subjectivity as much as possible. By using unambiguous standards and an assessment by subject matter experts, deviations can be kept to a minimum. In fact, this means that the results of an assessment are validated. It is important that this process takes place during the peer review at those times when the findings are discussed. This means that there is an important role for the team leader of the review team and of course for all team members to be able to conduct the discussions as accurately as possible. The validation topic should therefore be a separate part of the training for all team members to safeguard consistency in ways of operating.

In fact, the following sequence is followed in this validation process:

- Collecting the findings;
- The reviewer (expert) assesses the findings against the standards and requirements as included in the assessment framework;
- The expert prepares a draft opinion or judgment;

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[32] Suggested reference: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/TEIA/Assistance_Programme/Benchmarks_user_friendly_version_English.pdf

[33] Suggested reference: INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines, Services Series No. 36, IAEA, Vienna (2018). Available at: https://www.iaea.org/publications/13417/emergency-preparedness-review-eprev-guidelines

[34] Saaty, T. L. (1980). The analytic hierarchy process: Planning, priority setting, resource allocation. 1st ed. NY: McGraw-Hill, New York.

- Review of the findings and draft opinion/judgment through discussion by the group of experts. In particular attention is paid to the nature and degree of deviation from the standard;
- Reaching consensus on the final opinion/judgment through discussion;
- Formulating an ‘opportunity for development’ and/or ‘good practice’ to be included in the final report.

Examples of ‘assessment frameworks’

Example I[35]

UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA)

The UNECE developed an interesting instrument *(Benchmarks in the implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents – Self assessments and Action Plans[36])* to measure the progress in the implementation of requirements of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA). Although the instrument primarily is designed for countries to conduct self-assessments on the implementation of the convention, the principles of the tool can be considered to modify and transfer them into a methodology for designing an assessment framework within the NPRI-context.

The instrument allows to assess the actual situation of countries and organisations in implementing the conditions of the Convention (is legal base). It is a tool for tracking progress and identifying possible shortcomings, which provide the basis for the development of plans of activities and needs-driven (external) assistance to overcome the shortcomings and to enhance improvement.

Assessment framework

Priority working areas are identified and link with priority requirements or conditions included in legislation. Each working area is operationalized into to a small set of indicators. These indicators indicate the topic to be implemented. Each indicator is then briefly described or defined to provide clarity on what is to be implemented.

Each priority working priority area specifies the criteria for meeting the Convention’s obligations for each indicator. Countries and their organisations measure their progress on their level of implementation of the Convention for each indicator by determining which progress stage corresponds to the country’s situation.

As a next step, each indicator has been converted to a definition with minimum criteria, which together assess the extent to which the requirement has been implemented. Each criterion has 6 stages, where stage 6 is the highest level of achievement and obviously stage 1 is the lowest.

[35] The description of this example is a highly abbreviated summary of the complete and official UNECE document on this specific subject. For the complete and official text, suggested reference: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/TEIA/Assistance_Programme/Benchmarks_user_friendly_version_English.pdf

[36] http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/TEIA/Assistance_Programme/Benchmarks_user_friendly_version_English.pdf

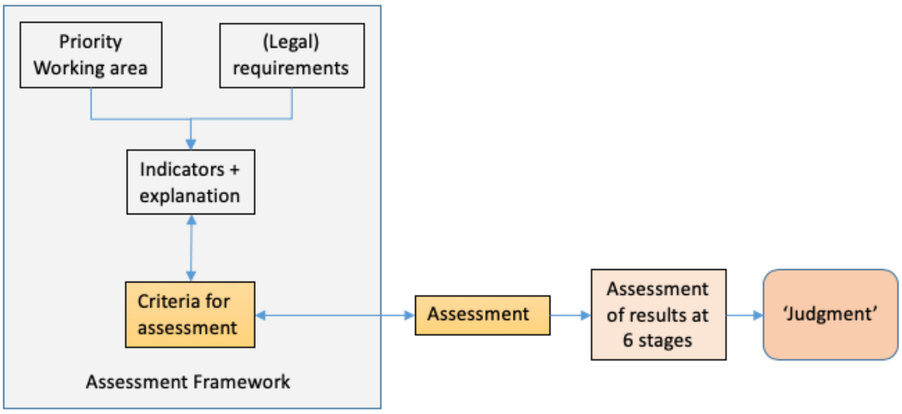
As an example: ‘Criteria for (self) assessment’:

Progress Stage	Criteria for self-assessment of progress
6	The indicator is fully operational and implemented by the competent authorities, the operators or both.
5	The indicator has been adopted and covers all the minimum elements, but is only partly operational in practice (due to lack of resources).
4	Intensive and detailed discussions take place among stakeholders on the content of legislation and specific procedures.
3	A decision has been taken at the level of policymakers to introduce or update the indicators. Relevant stakeholders are identified.
2	Initial discussions at the national level or among authorities, experts and operators are leading to the introduction of the indicators.
1	Little awareness among competent authorities of the need to introduce the indicator or of the requirements for setting it up.

By using this tool, the current situation of implementation or achievement can be measured among the six progress stages. The outcome of this process is the basis for evaluation and action plans aiming at improvement if necessary.

It should be noted that the 'determination' of the level of implementation or goal realization is done by factual determination (evidence by documentation or otherwise) and especially by a discussion (dialogue) between experts involved. So, it is not a mathematical exercise, but a validating process that provides a reliable picture of the situation and gives a direct picture of what needs to be changed or improved.

As scheme:



The results of the assessment are reported in a motivated report to the UNECE. Based on the assessment and an action plan that accompanies the report, the UNECE can decide about granting financial resources for projects that support the enhancement of the implementation of the Convention.

Example II[37]

IAEA: Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV)

The International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA) conducts peer reviews, so called 'Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV)' aimed at reviewing the Host State's preparedness arrangements for effectively responding to nuclear and radiological emergencies. The reviews are based on relevant guidelines and IAEA safety standards and take into account the Host State's situation in terms of practices and legal framework.

Basis for the EPREV peer review and assessment framework

The peer reviews are conducted on the basis of 25 requirements established in the IAEA Safety Standards[38]. These Standards reflect an international consensus on what constitutes a high level of safety for protecting people and the environment from harmful effects of ionizing radiation. The standards can be used by States as a reference for their national regulations in respect of facilities and activities. They are used as well as basis for review services and in support of competence building, including the development of educational curricula.

An integrated and consistent set of Safety Requirements establishes the requirements that must be met to ensure the protection of people and the environment, both now and in the future. If the requirements are not met, measures must be taken to reach or restore the required level of safety. Many of the requirements are expressed as 'shall' statements, which implies a mandatory condition.

Assessment framework EPREV

The assessment framework of the peer review (EPREV), based on documented Safety Standards, consists of a set of requirements with the following characterisation:

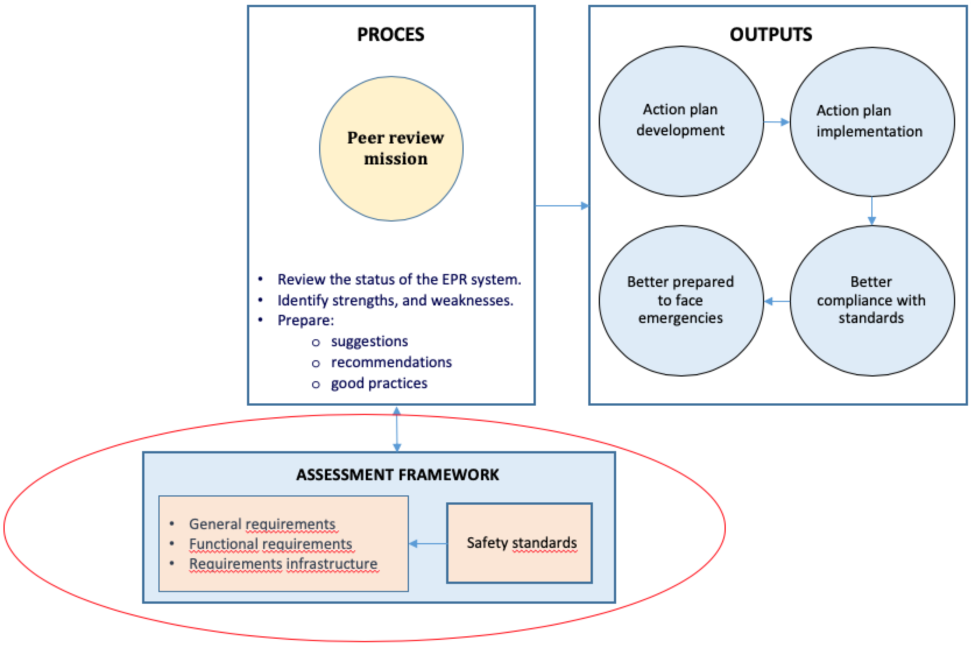
- Requirements of a general nature that must be met before effective preparations can be started;
- Requirements that address the functions that are critical for performing an effective emergency response;
- Requirements that refer to the infrastructure necessary to develop and maintain adequate arrangements for preparedness and response.

The assessment framework is based on 25 safety defined and documented requirements. Each requirement has a number of indicators that concretise the requirement individually and in their mutual relationship.

[37] The description of this example is a highly abbreviated summary of the complete and official IAEA document on this specific subject. For the complete and official text, suggested reference: INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines, Services Series No. 36, IAEA, Vienna (2018). Available at: https://www.iaea.org/publications/13417/emergency-preparedness-review-eprev-guidelines

[38] FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION, INTERPOL, OECD NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY, PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION, UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION, Preparedness and Response for a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency, IAEA Safety Standards Series No. GSR Part 7, IAEA, Vienna (2015).

Position of the 'assessment framework in the EPREV peer review process:



Measuring performance

Each requirement and the related performance indicators are carefully examined by reviewers, for example through interviews, document research and site visits. Based on the expertise of the reviewers, an expert opinion is made as to whether the organisation meets the relevant requirement and performance indicators. Because a qualitative assessment by an individual researcher can be arbitrary. To exclude subjectivity as much as possible, a discussion amongst several subject matter experts takes place whether or not each requirement is met. The discussion aims to reach consensus about the opinion/judgment. In fact, this approach validates the assessment.
The result of this, a draft judgment, is formulated based on assessment and reference against the following 'levels' of performance for the arrangements in the Host State relating to the standardized requirements:

- The requirement is fully met;
- The requirement is almost fully met;
- The requirement is partially met but the gap is not so significant. There is an Action Plan to address the gap;
- The requirement is partially met, and the gap is somewhat significant, but there is an Action Plan to address the gap;
- The requirement is partially met, and the gap is very significant
- There is no arrangement in place and no initiative to meet the requirement.

All 25 requirements are assessed against these levels of performance. The outcome of that is the basis for the reporting of the findings and level of performance.

Output peer review

The output of the EPREV Peer Review[39] consists of:

- *Recommendations*, intended to enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities and arrangements – 'obligatory' to follow up by the Host State;
- *Suggestions*, intended to enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities and arrangements, 'advised' to follow up by the Host State;
- *Good practices*, that can be used by other Member States to enhance their own emergency preparedness and response arrangements.

More described in detail:

Recommendations	• Recommendations address aspects of the EPR arrangements that are not fully consistent with the IAEA Safety Requirements contained in the Safety Standards
	  ◦ They should be specific, realistic and designed to result in tangible improvements
	  ◦ They should state "what" needs to be achieved, not "how"
	  ◦ It is up to the Host State to determine the best method for achieving the desired outcome
	  ◦ They should be succinct and self-explanatory
	  ◦ They should be practicable and implementable
	• The basis for the recommendation must be clearly documented
	• Reviewers should be sufficiently open to understand that the intent of the requirement may be met even if the terms, detailed arrangements or method used are somewhat different from the precise text of the requirement

Suggestions	• Suggestions address two types of observations:
	  ◦ The requirement is met but the arrangements are not entirely consistent with the guidance contained in the safety standards on EPR
	  ◦ The requirement is met but it is deemed that tangible improvements could be made to the manner in which the arrangements are consistent with the requirements
	• Suggestions are primarily intended to make the arrangements more effective or efficient
	• A suggestion may be proposed in conjunction with a recommendation or may stand on its own
	• The basis for the suggestion must be clearly documented

Good Practices	• A good practice reflects an organisation, arrangement, programme or performance superior to those generally observed elsewhere • A good practice goes beyond the fulfilment of current requirements or expectations • It should be worthy of the attention to other Member States • The basis for good practices should be any of the requirements or guidance contained in the IAEA safety standards on EPR. • A good practice need not be exclusive or unique to the Host State, but it should not be common to many

The results of the assessment are reported in a motivated report to the host country and its organisations. The host country is expected to implement the findings of the review. A follow-up will be scheduled to monitor the progress in implementation of the findings.

[39] INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, Emergency Preparedness Review (EPREV) Guidelines, Services Series No. 36, IAEA, Vienna (2018). Available at: https://www.iaea.org/publications/13417/emergency-preparedness-review-eprev-guidelines; p.24 – 25.

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European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

IMPEL NPRI

Annex V

Guidance for experts/reviewers in writing reports of a peer review

Guidance for experts/reviewers in writing reports of a peer review

1. Introduction

The (immediate) output of the Peer Review mission to the reviewed organisation is the drafting of the (assessment) report, including a presentation of findings and observations in terms of 'Opportunities for Development (OfD)', elaboration on 'Good Practices' and a discussion if and how support can be provided on the implementation.

In the pursuit of uniformity, a guidance as detailed below can assist in writing a report in a timely manner and being consistent with the overall purpose of the NPRI programme. This annex provides guidance for reporting, paying attention to the style, format and length of the report.

The guidance also aims to support uniformity within the NPRI scheme. Taking into account the flexible character of a NPRI scheme, drawing up reports can be adjusted to the target group and objectives pursued by the peer review. However, in case a peer review is implemented within a network with comparable organisations, it has to be noted that uniformity enables benchmarking.

It needs to be noted that this guidance aims to be used as open, flexible and non-prescriptive and contains options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs. This means that organisations in a country that wish to perform a Peer Review can consider using elements of this guidance in addition to their own methodology. IMPEL is available for providing support.

2. Content of this guidance on writing a report

The content and its proposed elements as presented in this guidance are based on a research of 7 peer review approaches as applied by international organisations[40]. This guidance presents options and examples and can be adjusted and tailored to own and specific needs.

3. Writing the report

Drafting of the report can start from day one. The structure of the report is guided by a template, to be adjusted to specific situations and/or subjects and purpose of the review. The review activities take place during the day and writing of the report can be an activity for the evening. When writing the assessment, it is important to know and understand:

1. to whom the assessment is addressed (the audience),
2. its purpose and
3. the expected output

[40] Preliminary study Peer Review approaches: 'a comparison of 7 different Peer Review and assessment approaches or methodologies, aiming at identifying approaches and good practices that can contribute to the development of the 'National Peer Review Initiative'; version 16 June 2020.

3.1 The audience

The Peer Review report is addressed primarily to senior managers and decision makers of the reviewed organisation. When writing the assessment report, it is important that the style and tone are adjusted to this audience. The content and elements of the report needs to be in line with the agreed Terms of Reference (TOR).

In case of being a part of a peer review programme, involving equivalent or comparable organisations, it is advised to adjust the style of the report as well to the ‘umbrella organisation’, such as an association of organisations. Furthermore, the ‘NPRI coordinator’ at national and /or network level could be addressed because of his/her role to draw general conclusions for the peer reviews as input for the NPRI programme.

3.2 The purpose

The purpose of the Peer Review can be the following:

- To provide collegial feedback on work processes, implementation and performance;
- To learn from each other by exchanging experiences and expertise;
- To help organisations to improve their performance by identifying and implementing OfD;
- To support the reviewed organisation in complying with established standards and principles;
- To help to adopt and implement good and best practices;
- To support strategy and policy development or revisions;
- To support benchmarking in case of the review of equivalent and comparable organisations;
- To support the improvement of the network in terms of homogeneity, the adoption of common good practices and to test the implementation of improvements.

3.3 The expected output

The output of the peer review is a report that is primarily intended for the senior management of an organisation or in the case of a benchmark of similar organisations for both the senior management of each individual organisation and the management of the umbrella organisation. The report could result in a description of findings in terms of OfD’s' and 'good practices'. In the case of a benchmark of comparable organisations, the report may include a generalization and abstracting of the findings that can be used by an umbrella organisation to provide feedback on the practicality and effectiveness of (national and/or regional) policies. Furthermore, the report may give advice on providing support in implementing OfD. Another important output of the peer review is the acquired knowledge and experience of the various processes on which the review focused. In addition, the output may support the improvement of the network in terms of homogeneity, the adoption of common good practices and to test the implementation of improvements.

4. The Drafting Process

The overall responsibility of writing the report lies at the leader of the peer review team.

Writing the report can be done in different ways and depends how the tasks are divided within a team regarding the preparation of the report. Possible options:

- A dedicated rapporteur can be appointed and tasked with drafting the draft report in close cooperation with the Team Leader. Each expert as team member provides in writing the rapporteur the findings of his/her part of the review. The rapporteur compiles and edits the text and transfers the information into a draft report. In case of writing of the report by a rapporteur, the team leader and rapporteur are advised to work closely together.
- Each expert as team member prepares a section or paragraph for the assessment related to his or her area of expertise and provides the draft text to the rapporteur or team leader who drafts a consolidated (draft) report of all contributions.

4.1 Daily cycle

In case the peer review lasts 2 days or more, a daily cycle is suggested to be followed by the team:

1. Each expert/reviewer collects all the notes relevant to the sections for which they are responsible and will draft those sections. Notes and questions can be inserted in the text, which will need to be resolved prior to final drafting. Their daily draft of their section of the report will be sent to the team leader at the end of each day. If an expert has specific inputs or observations on a requirement for which they are not the primary author, their first priority is to send that input to the team leader and/or to the primary author as agreed during the team meeting.
2. The evening of each day will be used to evaluate the findings, and to discuss if more work is needed to complete the findings, and if yes, to whom these are addressed.
3. The same evening the team leader and rapporteur consolidate the inputs into a single, harmonised and consistent draft report and send it back to the team. The draft report may contain questions and comments to be addressed by the experts/reviewers.
4. At the following daily meeting, the same sequence as described under 1, 2 and 3, can be repeated.
5. After each daily meeting, each reviewer modifies the relevant section of the report in the latest version sent to them by the team leader and the cycle continues.
6. The second last day of the mission, the team will complete the draft report and prepares a presentation of the findings for the senior management.

4.2 Recommended 'rules' and style report

- The style of writing should be concise (to the point) and precise. In their drafting, experts/reviewers are advised to use active voice as often as possible.
- Every effort should be made to avoid merely summing up policies, strategies and laws or providing long lists of policy and legal elements and procedures without comment. Rather, it is important to describe and clarify the relationships among the various policies, strategies and laws, and explain what they really mean in the context of the organisation under review.
- Describe objective evidence and observation and identify and site the requirement
- Write as simple as possible. The use of simple, plain language is essential for clear communication. Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that a Peer Review report is not a report for the outside

world. It is recommended that the information should be limited to that which supports the findings. Use information of a general nature only if it provides an essential context for the findings.

- If possible, especially when the assessment framework is based on a quantitative approach, the use of tables/graphs that compare expected and actual outputs/outcomes is advisable. Also if qualitative approach is pursued, the use of tables/graphs with suitable indicators may help the readers.
- A clear distinction is advised to make between intentions, achievements, good practices and OfD. Experts/reviewers should try not to mix facts and assessment. Every topic starts with a factual description, which fully substantiates the assessment.
- Avoid risks that the results are arbitrary and formulate the results as unambiguous as possible and avoid subjectivity[41];
- The report ends with conclusions, 'OfD' and examples of good practices. It is important that no new information is provided here, as conclusions and 'opportunities for development' should follow logically from the facts and assessments. Each OfD should be preceded by a brief introductory text that will justify the corresponding OfD.
- Where possible, each OfD should indicate to whom it is addressed. OfD's must be concrete, measurable and realistic. They also should be as concise as possible.
- The report may give advice on providing support in implementing OfD.

In writing a report it is recommended to pay attention to the following:

- Some words can/have more than one meaning. In English this is definitely the case.
- Unusual or very specific technical words can be difficult to understand by non-native speakers or by not technical experts.
- Fancy words used to demonstrate expertise make some statements less clear.
- Multiple adjectives or adverbs make sentences more difficult to understand.
- Too many conditional clauses also make the meaning less clear.

4.3 Do's and don'ts when writing the report

It is advised to consider the following 'Do's and Don'ts in writing a report:

Do:	**Do not:**
• Use factual statements • Ensure accuracy of source information • Be specific and avoid general statements • Group similar observations • Use terminology familiar to the organisation • Distinguish between something that is not documented and things that are not done • Prove that you were there. Did the people know the plans and procedures? • Validate and explain validation of findings	• Criticize • Overstate facts • Include conflicting messages (i.e., positive & negative messages in the same finding) • Offer legal opinions • Use derogatory descriptive adjectives • Use too many acronyms

[41] See for this as well paragraph 6.2 'Validation of findings'; Annex 'Guidance to design an Assessment Framework.

4.4 Formatting

To strive for uniformity in the nature and form of the report, the following format is recommended:

Length	If possible, try not to exceed 15 – 20 pages of the report, including graphs and tables, except if there is a need based on the agreed Terms of Reference (TOR).
Language	The report should be written in the native language. Editing by an involved secretariat or editor could be considered.
Format	Provide the report in a WORD file. Use font 'Calibri standard, font size 11; single line spacing. Write abbreviations at least once in full and add a list of references and their sources, including the visited Internet websites). Footnotes can be helpful.
Figures and tables:	Where possible, the figures and tables, including the data, should be provided in a EXCEL file. Always indicate sources of the data. An explanation and analysis of the tables and figures should be provided in the text.
Vote of thanks:	Include in the report a vote of thanks and acknowledgement to the host organisation for their hospitality.

4.5 Table of contents of a report – some examples of elements to be included

The following elements can be considered to include in a report. The report must of course be designed according to what is included (scope, purpose, etc.) in the TOR.

- Title Peer Review
- Acknowledgement
- Executive summary
- Introduction
    - *The NPRI scheme*
    - *Purpose of the Peer Review*
    - *Scope of the Peer Review*
    - *Assessment Framework and performance indicators*
- Brief description of the findings and their rationale based on the elements of the scope. Description per element!
- Description site visit (if applicable)
- Conclusions
    - *Good practices*
    - *Opportunities for development*
- Advice on follow-up and support
- List of involved people (names and positions) from the reviewed organisations and the Peer Review team
- List of abbreviations and references

ANNEX VI

Guidance on designing an 'End of Mission Agenda'

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Guidance on designing an ‘End of Mission (EOM) Agenda’

1. Introduction

Decisions by organisations to conduct a Peer Review (PR) and its realization are made in the perspective of obtaining various results and information from which to benefit. These benefits can relate directly or indirectly to multiple topics. This applies not only to the reviewed organisation, but also to the network of which the organisation is a part and is involved in peer review activities in the network and various stakeholders who have an interest in the efficiency and effectiveness of the network.
The nature, number, size and relationships with and between these topics are determined by stakeholders who have an interest in or can be influenced by the activities of members of the network. It is therefore important that the 'promoters' of NPRI activities identify and know the key stakeholders and understand their interests in the network they are part of and how they can benefit from the network. This also concerns the benefits that members of a network can obtain from peer reviews.

Knowing and understanding stakeholders and their interests make it possible to use this knowledge strategically to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network. With this knowledge, Peer Reviews can be better prepared in order to obtain the best possible result from the reviews.
Due to the diversity of stakeholders and the diversity of their interests in a network, the motivation of members of a network to implement NPRI will be different.
The program of these initiatives, their objectives and their content, form the agenda for the 'End of Mission' of a NPRI activity. In fact, it does mean that in all phases of a Peer Review, from the planning and start of the review and presentation of the results, the interests of all those involved must be taken into account and must be a structural part of the NPRI. process.

The aim of this Annex is to provide guidance to this process and to provide guidance on how the concept of 'End of Mission' can be part of the process.
It must be noted that reference needs to be made to the ‘National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Methodology and Guidance’ in which all steps of the NPRI process are described, including the ‘End of Mission’. This Annex explains more in detail the aspects of the ‘End of Mission’ agenda.

This guidance can be applied by an initiator or initiative group and intents to be used as an open, flexible and non-prescriptive template with options and examples, which can be chosen, applied and adjusted according to own insights, own specific situations and needs.

2. The importance of the End of Mission Agenda

Experiences with Peer Reviews show that often only part of the results of the review are successfully implemented. This is unfortunate! Lack of effective involvement of key stakeholders, even when it concerns internal stakeholders of the reviewed organisation and the network to which the organisation belongs. This includes, for example: senior management, support departments, network coordinators, etc. In this way, many important findings and recommendations are not used. However, if used, the results of Peer can actually contribute to significant improvements in various areas.

All this underlines the importance of anticipating possible outcomes of the review when designing a Peer Review. This anticipation must then not only relate to the 'internal' and organisation-oriented topics, but also to topics and stakeholders outside the organisation or network.

Practice of Peer Review also shows that results can be used, sometimes after generalization and anonymization by stakeholders outside the network who are in a position to have 'influence' and 'power' to implement improvements. Having said this, proper management of the 'End of Mission Agenda' and its elements cannot be overemphasized. This is critical to the overall success of Peer Reviews.

In addition, paying early attention to the process of designing a Peer Review can have an incentive effect on the host organisation, and its senior management, to pay attention to all relevant topics, including the interests of the stakeholders the organisation works with or depends. Such involvement and (pro) active attitude show the willingness and transparency of the organisation that organizes the Peer Review and the network to which it belongs.

3. Designing an End of Mission Agenda

The preparation of an End of Mission Agenda deserves special attention, as every communication process focuses on developing actions, reactions and participation processes. This means that the development of an 'End of Mission Agenda' can be regarded as a structural part of the NPRI process. It is therefore important that this process and its components need specific positions in all phases of the development and implementation of a (national) NPRI. That is why:

- It is advisable to include a general model of an 'End of Mission agenda' in the NPRI manual used by the network, and
- That at the time of the design of each of the Peer Reviews to be performed, an 'End of Mission Agenda' is defined and included in the ToR.

3.1 Targets and contents of an 'End of Mission Agenda'

It is important to realize that NPRI activities can simultaneously focus on:

- meeting needs of individual members of a network,
- meeting needs of a network as a whole, where these needs are inventoried and selected via, for example, surveys, questionnaires, results of projects and previously carried out Peer Reviews, advice from (national) coordination committees of networks, etc.

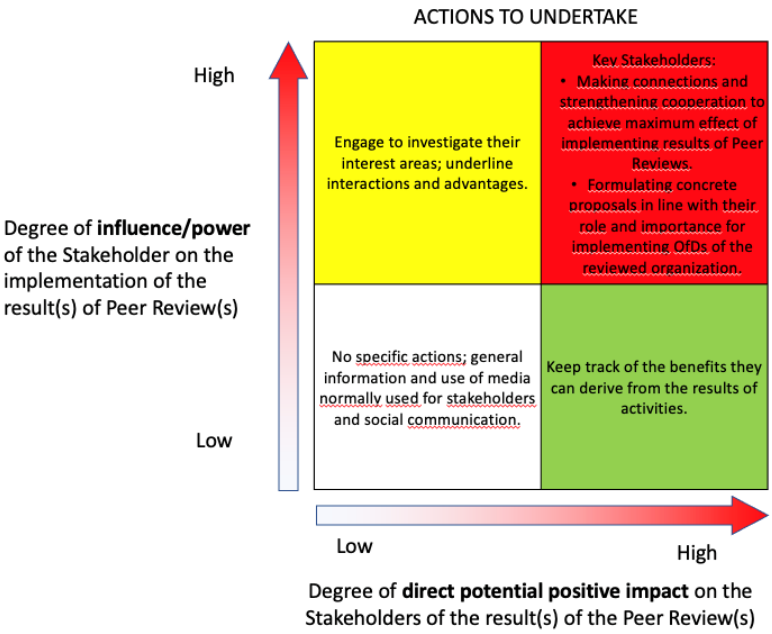
These needs are not exclusively 'internally oriented' at an organisation that organizes a Peer Review and / or are aimed at the network with similar organisations to which it belongs but can also be directly or indirectly relevant to other organisations. In the scoping phase of a Peer Review, awareness should in principle already be taken into account of the possible effects of its results and the role of 'external' stakeholders. When designing an 'End of Mission Agenda', it can in principle already be predicted how the Peer Review tool can be used to maximize the results of the Peer Review.

3.2 Stakeholder and network analysis

It is important to know the relevant stakeholders and understand their interests. Conducting a network and stakeholder analysis at the beginning of the process is therefore important, including an assessment of the importance of the stakeholder for the organisation conducting the Peer Review as well as the interest that a stakeholder and their network, if any, may have in the results of the review.

3.2.1 'Influence - interest - matrix'

Various tools are available to perform a stakeholder and network analysis. One of these is the so-called 'influence - interest - matrix'[42]. This model, modified to the NPRI process, can be applied to analyse each of the stakeholders of an organisation / network in order to evaluate the importance of their involvement in each of the results of the Peer Review and to define related actions. The following figure presents a modified 'influence - interest - matrix' for the NPRI concept:



Within a reviewed organisation and the network to which it belongs (i.e. internal stakeholders), different organisational units and levels may have an interest in or play a crucial role in the implementation of the results of a Peer Review.

This also applies to external stakeholders. They, too, can have significant interests and roles. For example, other public sector bodies having functions in the same policy areas or making decisions about plans and programs and / or about funding and resources of the reviewed organisation. Examples are organisations that work on topics in related segments of environmental protection (e.g.: prosecutors, environmental police, administrative bodies, ...).

Topics included in an EOM agenda should be as specific as possible to ensure that each of the outcomes of a Peer Review can be described in a way that justifies the degree of relevance to a particular stakeholder or topic.

[42] "Mendelow matrix", as basic model on which many works on Stakeholders management has been developed. See: Botten, N. (2006). Management Accounting - Business Strategy. CIMA Publishing. pp. 3–4. ISBN 9780750680431; "Stakeholder management" Imperial College London. 21 June 2017; Babou, S. (12 March 2008). "What Is Stakeholder Analysis?". The Project Management Hut.

Identification of stakeholders to be involved in the EOM agenda should be made as early as possible in the process and as noted above, be part of the NPRI process. The elements of the EOM agenda are also explained in the 'NPRI Guidance and Methodology' in a more general description and then concretely included in the ToR of the Peer Review.

3.3 Actions aimed at the organisation to be reviewed

3.3.1 Before finalising the Peer Review mission

An EOM agenda includes activities that are functional for a correct completion of the mission, just before finalizing the final content of the Mission Report. In fact, the mission report as prepared by the visiting team must be shared with the relevant units of the visited organisation prior to publication. Its purpose is:

- to ensure that the content of the review falls within the scope of the PR expected by the visited organisation, which was in fact agreed in the ToR;
- to ensure that the report does not contain factual inaccuracies and to safeguard that revision takes place in case these are identified;
- check that the report does not contain information considered sensitive by the visited organisation, in case the intention is to publish the report;
- ensure that the report is fully understandable and unambiguous with regard to the specific context in which the report will be delivered.

These activities should be considered a substantial part of the EOM agenda as they contribute to the final outcome of the Peer Review and the possible subsequent actions and plans.
In principle, there are two different target groups within the visited organisation that can be involved in the Peer Review and its results through reports or presentations and discussion through meetings:

- the officers who participated in the Peer Review activities
- the top / senior management of the visited organisation

When drawing up the overall program of the Peer Review and the EOM agenda, it is important to decide in advance whether the two target groups should be involved at the same time, or whether a meeting with the top / senior managers should be held after the presentation and coordination of the final draft report with the officials who participated in the Peer Review. There are both advantages and disadvantages to involving both target groups at the same time.
Whatever choice will be made, we have to realise that the involvement of top and senior management is essential for the implementation of the final results. However, when considering whether to make a good choice, it must be taken into account that the technical dialogue between the reviewers and the officials with whom the interviews were conducted is not compromised by a direct influence of the management. Everyone benefits from final results that are not influenced by 'strategic interests'. If necessary, this step can take place after the final report has been delivered.
An agenda of the meeting (s) can contain the following topics:

- Presentation of the findings of the Peer Review and particularly identified 'Opportunities for Development' (OfD), followed by a substantive discussion about its content and scope;
- A discussion on options and ways to implement the OfD and the identification of stakeholders who can play a role in the implementation as involved or interested parties;
- Presentation of identified 'Good Practices' and a substantive discussion about their content and scope, as well as discussing which 'Good Practices' can be more widely communicated and disseminated so that other organisations can also benefit from them;

- Evaluation of the implementation of the Peer Review, identified weaknesses and strengths and a discussion on how these points can be used to improve future NPRI activities through the network and IMPEL;
- Discussion about topics and information that could be disseminated to other identified stakeholders, whether, and where support from the national NPRI team and / or IMPEL is desired with regard to the implementation of the OfD resulting from the Peer Review;
- Discussing an Agenda for possible follow-up meetings with the Peer Review team;
- Other topics that come up.

3.3.2 Mission follow-up

Where possible, follow-up initiatives at / by the reviewed organisation should be done at the end of the Peer Review. The final report could already make suggestions for this. It is not only a way to keep progress in the implementation of the OfDs and possibly other actions. It is also a way to reinforce a structural role of NPRI and the importance that the network attaches to improving the performance of members of the network.
A 'follow-up delegation' can be composed of members of the Peer Review team, or a selection of members and / or officials who are part of the national NPRI network.
As previously described, it is recommended that a 'follow-up agenda' and its timing accompany the final report of the Peer Review and its content, accordingly, including an assessment of whether, and if so, what external support is needed.
A report containing the results of a follow-up meeting can be considered an addendum to the Peer Review report and will follow the same approval pathway within the reviewed organisation in terms of approval of follow-up actions.

3.4 End of Mission Agenda - Activities aimed at external Stakeholders

The decision to take initiatives towards external stakeholders based on the findings of the Peer Review is the responsibility of the organisation that hosted the Peer Review. That responsibility rests with the managers who maintain relationships with stakeholders. The national NPRI network can also collaborate and provide support on these initiatives upon request.

The *'influence - interest matrix'* as described in paragraph 3.2.1 can be a good tool to identify through analysis those stakeholders who must be involved in the light of the 'End of Mission Agenda' with an indication of their role and their importance. The purpose of this involvement is mainly aimed at optimizing the implementation of the results of the Peer Review.
This activity will be included in the 'NPRI Guidance and Methodology' with reference to this Annex. Careful planning of the initiatives described is important. A detailed inclusion of this section in the ToR of each Peer Review to be performed should be recommended in this regard.

3.4.1 Stakeholders having high influence/power and high benefits from the implementation of OfD's

This group of stakeholders can be characterized by their close relationship with organisations that have responsibilities in the field of policymaking and implementation of environmental policy in a country. This includes, for example, the state, regions, provinces, municipalities, implementing organisations, supervision and enforcement authorities, etc.). The degree and type of relationship that the host organisation of a Peer Review and the network of which the host organisation is a part has with these stakeholders, determines to a large extent the position of stakeholders in this category.

As an example, a government organisation that is simultaneously responsible for approving a statute, plans and programs of activities of the reviewed organisation and providing its funding should be considered as belonging to the group of these stakeholders. The level, type and timing of involvement in an activity must be carefully studied and planned and recognized in advance. The Peer Review activities and their results should be presented to those stakeholder (s) as an instrument that can contribute to a continuous improvement process to the realization of the direct and strategic needs of the stakeholder (s).

In dialogue with other stakeholders, the host organisation of a Peer Review can clarify which internal improvement actions can be realized and which actions can be taken by an (external) stakeholder to enable implementation of OfDs. This could include for example topics as: knowledge, approval procedures and agreements, changes in regulations that directly affect the organisation visited, specific funding, resources etc. It is advised that these types of topics should be discussed through direct dialogue, confrontation and if needed negotiation, supported by demonstrated evidence.

3.4.2 Stakeholders having high influence/power and low direct benefits from implementation of the OfD's

This category of stakeholders can be organized in different ways in different countries. The outcome of a stakeholder analysis is therefore specific to each country. Countries often have more or less the same kind of institutions. Some examples of this are the Court of Auditors, local councils, financial institutions, etc. Actions to be carried out must be precisely targeted, linking specific OfDs to relevant stakeholder (s).
These stakeholders must be approached and convinced of the general usefulness of the OfDs affected by their competences. In this category it is important that an attempt is made to reach consensus about the implementation of the OfDs and to remove obstacles that could hinder their implementation.

3.4.3 Stakeholders having high direct benefits and low influence/power on the implementation of the OfD's

Just as described in the previous section, the organisation of this category of stakeholders can differ greatly from country to country.
Examples of stakeholders that belong to this category are: the judicial system including prosecutors; organisations working in the field of compliance assurance, such as the environmental police and, last but not least, social authorities, including citizens, entrepreneurs and their associations. Each of these stakeholders may have specific interests in certain areas, such as for example: coordination, information, communication, exchange of procedures, participation, appeals, etc. Indirectly, these stakeholders could influence the approval of decisions to be taken by governments and have sometimes actual control over the implementation of OfDs. As an example, their positive pressure on opinions in certain situations can be 'game changers' in decision making processes of responsible governmental bodies. These stakeholders can thus be regarded as potential supporters and ambassadors of goodwill.

The manner and nature of the contacts with this type of stakeholders partly determine the influence they can have on the implementation of the OfDs. Consideration can be given to getting in touch (and staying in touch) by sharing general information, specific reports, regular meetings, etc.

3.4.4 Stakeholders who has lower benefit from the OfD's and have little influence on the implementation

This category concerns stakeholders who can benefit significantly from the OfDs as a result of the Peer Review but have little influence on their implementation. It is important to keep this target group informed through common and customary information and communication channels. The results and descriptions of Peer Review activities can be communicated through these media to individual stakeholders and to the entire network. Press releases can also be provided in this way. The general message that can be delivered is the organisation's pursuit of improvement and the concerted action of the network to which it belongs.

3.5 End of Mission Agenda - Activities by the Network to which the reviewed organisation belongs

The NPRI scheme is based on the common interest of networked organisations to achieve improvements through peer analysis of their performance based on an open, collegial, friendly, although structured approach.
The actions that follow a Peer Review performed within a network should not be limited to the identification of OfDs by the reviewers but may also relate to areas and topics of increasing strategic level and importance. In fact, there are possible results of a Peer Review that go further and have a broader scope than the actions that can only be deployed at the level of the single organisation that the Peer Review was aimed at.
Unfortunately, the analysis and sharing of results of Peer Reviews where basically all members of an NPRI network can benefit of, is often a secondary activity, if not completely forgotten.

The importance in doing evaluations should not be underestimated. An important task in this context is for the coordination body of the NPRI network at the national level. Analysing, generalizing and anonymizing OfD's and 'Good Practices' and transforming them into recommendations for improvements are extremely important in this respect and can contribute substantially to significant improvements, also at an international level.
In addition, suggestions can be made via the national coordination body to improve NPRI procedures based on experiences with the implementation of Peer Reviews. At the network level, these improvements can be benefited.

3.5.1 Actions by the NPRI network Coordination Body

Analyses aimed at the goals described in the previous section can be performed at the national NPRI coordination level. However, some conditions must be met, namely that:

- On the basis of agreed procedures between organisations involved in the coordination and implementation of Peer Reviews, it is important that specific topics of Peer Reviews can be evaluated in order to make the results thereof available to other stakeholders. This is because of the general interest that this serves for the individual organisations and networks.

- The coordinating body of the NPRI can be closely involved in these evaluations as well as in making agreements between and with organisations to be reviewed. Support can also be provided in drafting Terms of Reference that include these aspects.
- That a clear feedback mechanism has been defined in which it is laid down in which way evaluations are carried out and a brief description of the method of evaluation, analysis and reporting and communication of the results, including the assigned responsibilities.

3.5.2 The analysis of the topics at the NPRI network level and the consequent Agenda

Topics of potential interest to the entire NPRI network from Peer Reviews conducted are numerous. These important topics, derived from the study and analysis of Peer Review reports and dialogues with the review teams, deserve evaluations that can result in actions, embedding in plans and setting priorities. In this context, a specific analysis of stakeholders is needed, with the aim of identifying the most important stakeholders in order to discuss with them how the general OfDs resulting from these strategic analyses can be implemented and what role they can play in in this regard.
The analysis made at the NPRI coordination level can lead to the following 3 types of proposals:

1) Proposals that could be implemented by autonomous decision of the Network or of its members.

- Regularly informing the network members about the results of Peer Review activities;
- Establishing programs for the implementation of common OfDs and Good practices based on decisions made by network decision makers or at their coordination level;
- Conducting evaluations and proposing improvements to the NPRI scheme.

2) Proposals to Networks that require an action of a body that has a decisional capacity on the Network in its entirety.

OfDs developed by the NPRI Coordinating Body are submitted for approval with proposals for next steps to the decision-makers of the Network or the NPRI Coordination Level to take motivated initiatives towards relevant stakeholders.

3) Proposals regarding laws and/or national rules - not only to the Network but with potential consequences for other Stakeholders.

Taking actions by the network decision makers or at the NPRI coordination level with regard to identified OfDs of interest to be presented to responsible high-level administrative bodies (e.g. government, ministries, etc.) and/or legislative bodies with the request to consider recommendations that may lead to improvement of certain instruments, procedures or laws and regulations.

European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

IMPEL NPRI

Annex VII

Outline NPRI Training

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Outline ‘NPRI TRAINING’

1. Introduction

It is important that members of a review team are optimally prepared, and that every team member has the same understanding of what is expected and what needs to be done to make a Peer Review. In this regard members of a review team need to have expertise to conduct a peer review efficiently and effectively in such a way that its results contribute to the realisation of the goals as set for the review. In addition to the necessary expertise of the subject of the review, it is important to have a (theoretical) basis about the principles and process of a (NPRI) peer review, background to it, techniques to be applied, the reporting of the results and the provision of support in follow up activities.

Hence, within the framework of the NPRI approach it is advised that a basic training is developed and followed by each team member to ensure that everyone has the same basic knowledge on Peer Reviews and in particular the NPRI. Such a training is also important to safeguard consistency in the approach not only for the mission to be carried out, but also for future missions in the context of the NPRI scheme.

It is therefore advised that all experts involved in the NPRI complete a training on ‘Peer Review’ in advance of their participation in a NPRI Peer Review. This training, to be developed and administered by IMPEL, could cover, besides some theoretical background on Peer Review, the basic NPRI processes, the conduct of the review and the documentation of observations, Opportunities for Development and best practices**.** To distinct the training into a ‘train the trainer’ programme and a training for team members could be considered. Furthermore, It can also be considered that representatives of the host organisation have access to the training.

2. Target audience

In the context or the NPRI it is important to consider a training from perspectives of two different target audiences:

- a ‘train the trainer program’, in which dedicated officials of organisations are trained on the basis of a special curriculum to enable them to train others involved in the implementation of a NPRI scheme within a country or network of organisations;
- A training program for (future) members of NPRI teams to be trained on the basis of a curriculum.

It could be considered to develop a training that also serves the IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI). NPRI and IRI are part of the same ‘family’ and it should be noted that the same training applies to a great extent to both initiatives. It is believed that an ‘integrated’ training can be seen as a ‘win-win’ opportunity.

3. Basic requirements of a review team and its members

Team members are expected to meet basic requirements for taking part in NPRI missions. It is therefore recommended that the content of a training program (to be developed), where possible, meets and matches with these requirements. To be mentioned, the team members need to:

- Have an excellent and thorough knowledge of the matter and objectives of the Peer Review;

- Represent a diverse group of experts, with experience in operational, regulatory and policy aspects, with emphasis on experience in the actual implementations of arrangements and requirements and the performance of the responsible organisation(s);
- Have an eye for the functioning of the own organisation and have ideas or views of those things or parts that are missing or can be improved;
- Being able to independently determine whether the activities performed at other organisations or tools that others use can be used in their own organisation;
- Have practical and previous experience related to the review objectives, scope and related activities, preferably as an expert or observer in previous missions;
- Have good interpersonal skills;
- Being able to perform the work objectively and with integrity;
- Meticulous attention to detail;
- Have an eye for continuous process improvement;
- Are curious;
- Be a team player;
- Have an open attitude towards systems and approaches that are different from the ones with which they are familiar;
- Be open for giving and receiving feedback;
- Have the ability to communicate clearly;
- Be adaptable and flexible in organisations with various organisational cultures;
- Have good written and oral communications skills;
- Being able to handle a writing style which is concise (to the point) and precise.

The content of the training to be developed must connect seamlessly in terms of subjects and theory with the aforementioned basic requirements.

4. Content of a training curriculum

A dedicated and modular (online) training could be developed and administered by IMPEL that may be composed of the following sections and content elements (not limited) as a provisional outline:

Section	Topic	Elements
1	Understanding Peer Review and NPRI	- What is Peer Review - Peer Review principles and conditions - Effectiveness of a Peer Review - PDCA-cycles (e.g., ‘Doing the Right Things’) - What is NPRI (and what is it not) - Scope and objectives NPRI - Role and responsibilities host country and/or organisations - Role and responsibilities review team and its members - Essentials of an assessment framework within the context of the NPRI - Quality assurance
2	Qualifications and expectations of the review team and its members	- Basic requirements as listed in paragraph 3 - Background, expertise and experience on the matter - Interpersonal) skills and open attitude - Objectivity and integrity - Confidentiality

		- Open minded / Curiosity / Keep asking - Motivated and willingness to provide and receive feedback - Eye for cultural aspects - Team players
3	NPRI process	- NPRI Peer Review Process and its elements (all steps from request for NPRI till presenting results and providing assistance in implementation) - Preparation - Start-up meeting, defining subjects and scope - Terms of Reference (TOR) - Developing a (specific) Assessment Framework for measuring performance - Writing a questionnaire o Generic and system level o (work) process level o Self-assessment - Self-assessment report - Team meetings and agenda - Use of templates and standards - Reference material - Various arrangements (location, finances, logistics)
4	Gathering information	- Methods for gathering information: o Interview (five times Why?) o Documentation research o Consultation other reports o Site visits - Quality assurance: verification and validation
5	Facts and findings	- Facts and findings - What is the basis for findings? - Quality assurance: verification and validation - Distinction between 'opportunities for development, suggestions and good practices'
6	Writing the report	- Writing principles (style and tone) - How to formulate opportunities for development and good practices (and other observations) - Evidence based and references
7	Presentation of the outcomes	- End of mission agenda - Presentation of findings at the end of the mission - Confidentiality - Communication and publicity
8	Implementation of findings and (optionally) support	- Provision of support - Follow-up missions
9	Examination	- Final test at the end of the training

5. Form of the training

The training can take different forms and may be adjusted to the target audiences (trainers and team members). The following could be considered:

- A classroom training in which trainer and (future) team members come together and go through and discuss orally the material with each other. Background material with (links to) in-depth theory is then developed in advance and shared. A trainer will train the audience through presentations, videos, to present and discuss examples, conducting a writing exercise, etc.
- An online webinar training can also be offered which opportunities for presentations and interaction (questions and discussion). Also, here background material with (links to) in-depth theory is then developed in advance and shared with the participants.
- A fully 'home-based' training (without interaction with a trainer). In this situation a home-based training is fully prepared with thorough background documentation, links and references to important literature. Short explanatory text and supplemented with 'self-assessment questions'. Such a 'home-based training' could even be concluded by conducting a short test with an automatically generated certificate.

Regardless the form the training will have, it is advised to include in the training, as well as in the information packages, the elements of the training curriculum as proposed in paragraph 4.

‘Training on the job’

In addition to the training as proposed and described, it has to be noted that ‘training on the job’ is essential for the experts that participate in the ‘core group of experts’. Apart from completing the basic training, it is important to learn through experiences gained from participating in Peer Reviews and to also learn from experienced colleagues. The composition of the review team should balance the experienced members and a member who is in the learning phase.

6. Development and maintenance of the NPRI training

As mentioned in paragraph 4, a dedicated and modular (online) training could be developed along the lines as proposed in this document. While the NPRI (and IRI) are initiatives of IMPEL and the network has the ambition to provide its members with tools to support them to implement the EU legislation, IMPEL is advised as the responsible organisation to develop and administer the training, as well as being responsible for maintenance and keeping the tool up to date.

The development of a training as described should be handled as a separate project. Phase II of the NPRI project and neither Phase III of the project do include the development of a NPRI training.