

Independent Peer Review Process

An independent peer review process has been set up to provide NETS researchers the opportunity for anonymous peer review. The IWR has established through its contractor a list of independent specialist with technical expertise in a variety of areas related to navigation economic analysis. The technical areas include but are not limited to; modeling, econometrics, surveys and sampling.

When a NETS product is ready for independent review, IWR submits to the contractor the item to be reviewed with a suggested list of the technical expertise required to properly review the item. The contractor then selects up to three independent reviewers from the list that have the appropriate technical expertise. The number of reviewers selected is determined by IWR and reflects both budgetary considerations and the level of importance the item has to the overall program. To the extent possible, reviewers are selected randomly from the set or subset of reviewers that have credentials in the necessary specialty area.

The contractor then manages the review process. Comments are provided to IWR anonymously. The IWR knows neither the names of the reviewer selected nor the author of any comment provided¹. The IWR then communicates the review comments to the project team for review response.

A more detailed step through of this process is provided below:

The process through which reviews are performed involves the following sequence of actions:

1. Obtain study or written product from IWR, accompanied by purpose and objectives statement that defines sufficiently the topic/specialty area
2. Refer to reviewers list under corresponding specialty or sub-specialty for pertinent pool of review resources and select up to 3 persons (where possible) to contact. On occasion, IWR may name select a reviewer for a project. This will be documented in the review report.
3. Contact the prospective reviewers, discuss the nature of the review, and invite them to participate
4. For those who are interested, obtain hourly labor rates and propose and agree upon a fixed number of hours or lump sum cost for the review
5. If less than 2 reviewers are interested, then refer back to list, and repeat sequence until at least 2 and no more than 3 reviewers have agreed to participate at a reasonable cost
6. Set up subcontract documents, obtain necessary signatures, and execute the contracts for the reviews
7. Send IWR documents (email where possible) to review group along with required format instructions

¹ The IWR has the option of name selecting a specific reviewer. When this is done it is part of the review process documentation.

8. Obtain written review documents from review panel in electronic form within a goal period of 5 working days (it is anticipated that actual reviews will take no more than three working days in elapsed time on average)
9. Compile review comments into a single consolidated review document, maintaining the required format and deliver to IWR
10. As necessary, Contractor acts as liaison for follow-up discussions and issue resolution

The following outline represents the required outline for the review documents that will be prepared by the reviewers in generic form:

- I. Purpose and Objectives Statement - completed by IWR at onset of review
- II. Summary of Conclusions - to be completed by reviewer in paraphrased form
- III. Summary Review Statement on Validity and Quality of Findings - summary of the reviewer's overall assessment of the piece being reviewed
- IV. Individual Comments and Issues for Resolution –specific comments on specific sections of the piece being reviewed