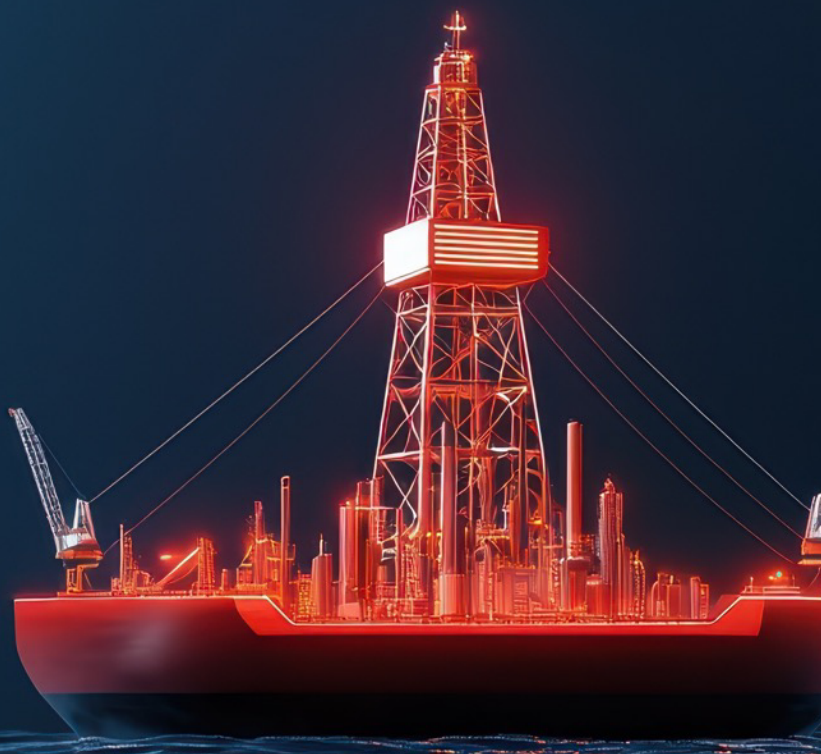
The MSP-FB oversees a comprehensive 360° review and evaluation process for completed IODP^3 offshore expeditions. These reviews are essential to IODP^3's efforts to support continuous improvement of its expedition operations and procedures.



Guidelines for IODP^3 Expedition Review Panels

MSP Facility Board

INTERNATIONAL OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAMME

Version 1.0, September 2026

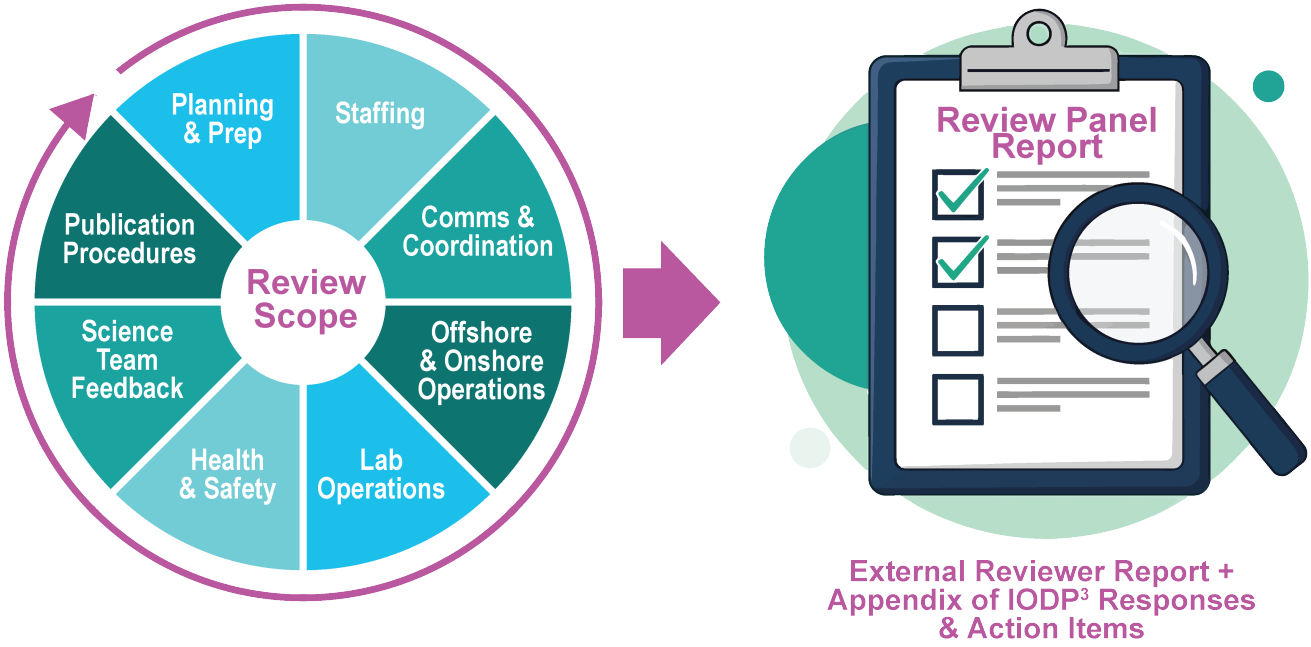
Guidelines for IODP³ Expedition Review Panels

1. Purpose

IODP³ conducts comprehensive post-operational reviews of all aspects of the implementation and delivery of its offshore drilling/coring expeditions. Reviews are conducted by an Expedition Review Panel convened by the Co-Chairs of the MSP Facility Board (MSP-FB) in conjunction with the Director of the IODP³ Managing Agency (IMA). Each Panel should include independent external reviewers with expertise relevant to the operational objectives of the expedition under review. The purpose of Expedition Review Panels is to identify lessons learned and develop recommendations that will improve the planning and implementation of future expeditions. Review Panels are therefore essential to IODP³'s efforts to support continuous improvement of expedition operations. Expedition Review Panels are not approval bodies and do not audit or assess the performance of those involved in expeditions at any individual level.

2. Scope of Reviews

Expedition reviews adopt a 360° approach that considers all aspects of an expedition from planning, through operational implementation to publication procedures, as well as feedback from those involved at all levels (including scientists and science communicators, the IODP³ Operators and their staff, and the programme leadership):



Each Expedition Review Panel may therefore consider aspects such as:

- pre-expedition planning, preparation and communication, including contracting (if appropriate) and permitting
- expedition staffing procedures
- offshore operational procedures and logistics (drilling, coring, logging, as appropriate)

- onshore operational organisation and sampling
- offshore and onshore laboratory operations (including analytical and IT support)
- communication and coordination among the Science Team, Co-Chief Scientists and the Operator
- anonymous feedback from Science Team members and other participants, collected by the Operator
- health, safety and operational management
- coordination and implementation of science communication and outreach activities
- publication and editorial meeting procedures
- any other issues relevant to the successful implementation of the expedition

Scientific results are outside the primary scope of the review panel, except where they are directly relevant to expedition operations.

3. Membership

Each Expedition Review Panel shall normally consist of:

- external reviewers nominated by the MSP-FB on a case-by-case basis, and who submit an independent review report after the end of the review meeting. The MSP-FB should ensure that nominated external reviewers have broad knowledge of scientific ocean drilling and sufficient experience to provide advice on both scientific implementation and operational or technical aspects of the expedition. To ensure this, the MSP-FB should seek advice from the Operators on the appropriateness of potential reviewers from an operational perspective and/or consider any candidates proposed directly by the Operators
- representatives from both IODP^3 Operators, to ensure programme-wide awareness of improvements to practice arising from the review. Operator representatives may include directors, managers, superintendents, drilling engineers, Expedition Project Managers (EPMs) and other key personnel
- the Expedition Co-Chief Scientists
- the Director of the IMA, Co-Chairs of the MSP-FB, Directors of the IODP^3 Science Office and the Co-Chairs of the IODP^3 Communications Task Force
- other participants, as appropriate, depending on the specific needs of each expedition.

In addition, attendance at Expedition Review Panel meetings is optional for all other members and liaisons of the MSP-FB.

4. Review Process

The review process shall normally be initiated within 6-12 months following completion of the expedition operational phase(s). It consists of: (i) a pre-meeting phase where reports and other evidence are prepared; (ii) a virtual meeting of the Expedition Review Panel; and (iii) a post-meeting reporting and response phase.

Pre-meeting preparations: The review shall be based primarily on reports submitted by the Co-Chief Scientists and the Operator, together with feedback from Expedition Science Team members and other participants, and any additional information requested by the Review Panel or provided by the IODP[3] leadership. The set of review documents and any other evidence should be emailed to the Director of the IMA at least four weeks before the review meeting, who will then make them available to Review Panel members for consideration.

Expedition Review Panel meeting: The date(s) and times of the virtual review meeting shall be arranged by the Co-Chairs of the MSP-FB in conjunction with the Director of the IMA. The IODP[3] Science Office will assist in setting up the virtual meeting sessions. The meeting may be scheduled over a single day or over multiple shorter sessions spanning two or more days (e.g. to assist with time zone differences). The meeting should be chaired by the Director of the IMA or one of the MSP-FB Co-Chairs, and include presentations by the Co-Chief Scientists, EPM and the Operator, for subsequent discussion by panel members.

Towards the end of the meeting, the external reviewers shall be given an opportunity to discuss their findings independently and formulate recommendations without the participation of the Co-Chief Scientists, EPM or Operator representatives. They should then present their findings to the whole review panel in a final plenary session.

Reporting and response phase: This involves preparation and submission of a written report by the external reviewers that forms the basis for programmatic responses aimed at improving future practice, as outlined below.

5. Reporting of Review Outcomes

Following the review meeting, the external reviewers shall prepare a concise written report summarizing:

- major findings
- lessons learned
- and their recommendations for future expeditions

The external reviewers' report shall normally be submitted to the Director of the IMA no later than one month after the review meeting (unless agreed otherwise in advance), for subsequent circulation to all Expedition Review Panel members. The Co-Chairs of the MSP-FB and Operator representatives on the review panel may also share the report with the other MSP-FB members and relevant other Operator staff, respectively, and use their feedback to produce an agreed set of responses to the external reviewer recommendations and planned follow-up actions. Such responses shall not alter the reviewers' findings or recommendations. The agreed responses and action items will form an appendix to the external reviewers' report, and both documents will be combined into a complete and formatted "Expedition XXX Review Panel Report" by the IODP[3] Science Office. Once finalized, this will be sent to the Director of the IODP[3] Managing Agency for

subsequent approval by the IODP[3] Executive Board (ExB). The ExB-approved report will then be published by the IODP[3] Science Office on the IODP[3] website.

A summary of the review and follow-up actions shall also be reported at the next MSP-FB meeting as part of the Operators reporting process.

6. Confidentiality and Anonymity

All members of an Expedition Review Panel must abide by the principles of confidentiality that apply to the handling of IODP[3] proposals and data, as described in the **Standard IODP[3] Confidentiality Policy**. All documents provided to inform the review process must remain strictly confidential within the panel membership.

The primary goal of reviews is programmatic learning to improve future expedition planning and implementation. To encourage open feedback, final reports must focus entirely on systemic findings and **must not identify any individuals** or attribute specific comments to individual staff members or Science Team members. It is the responsibility of the relevant Operator, therefore, to ensure that the feedback they collect from expedition participants is fully anonymised in any feedback summary that they provide to the Expedition Review Panel. In collecting such feedback, Operators must make it clear to participants that all issues raised in feedback will be treated anonymously and in strict confidence and that there will be no consequences for individuals reporting issues.

Consultation with other MSP-FB members and relevant Operator staff outside the review panel membership after submission of the external reviewers' report must also be treated confidentially. This must involve sharing only the external reviewers' report to solicit feedback used to inform the agreed responses and action plan and not the wider set of documentation it is based on.

While the final ExB-approved report will be made public, preparatory materials, individual submissions, and discussions are protected to ensure a candid and robust evaluation. Upon conclusion of a review and the publication of the final Review Panel Report, the full set of meeting documentation will be archived on behalf of the MSP-FB by the IODP[3] Science Office. However, all personal notes and confidential background documents held by individual review panel members must be securely deleted or destroyed.