

Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum

Instructions for Conducting a Trial of the Draft Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol

1. Introduction - The Draft Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol

The Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum (the “Forum“) aims to establish a broadly endorsed sustainability assessment tool to measure and guide performance in the hydropower sector. Following release of the Draft Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (the “Draft Protocol“) in August 2009, the Forum is undertaking a three month period of trialling (September, October, November 2009) to systematically test the Draft Protocol. This is alongside a period of public consultation.

The Draft Protocol is provided in four separate documents, relevant to different stages of the project life cycle. These documents are Section I – Strategic Assessments, Section II – Project Preparation, Section III – Project Implementation, and Section IV – Project Operation. In a trial, only the section most appropriate to that stage of the project life cycle is used.

2. Objectives of the Trialling Program

The **primary objective** is to validate the Forum’s work so far by providing feedback on how well the Draft Protocol is measuring sustainability, and to inform the final revision. This is most primarily a trial of the Draft Protocol, not a trial of the project on which it is applied.

Trials will assess and provide recommendations for improvement on:

- **Objectivity and replicability.** To understand how robust the Draft Protocol is in terms of field testers arriving at consistent and unbiased results.
- **Understandability.** To identify parts of the proposed Draft Protocol that field testers find hard to understand.
- **Scope and comprehensiveness.** To obtain views on the appropriateness of the set of aspects and assessment criteria included in the Draft Protocol. To identify issues that field testers encounter but that are not covered in the Draft Protocol, or that are duplicated unnecessarily.
- **Ease of use.** To assess the level of practicability of the Draft Protocol as an assessment tool. To assess the burden of applying the Draft Protocol: for instance, whether information required to apply it is not available or available only with undue cost or effort.
- **Impact and effectiveness.** To assess to what extent field testers find application of the Protocol a useful exercise in terms of identifying weaknesses/opportunities, encouraging dialogue, and encouraging improvement of performance.
- **Applicability to a range of scale and regions.** To identify any special problems in applying the draft Protocol that arise for field testers in relation to project scale, region, developed versus developing economy, type of project, etc. Also to find out how the field testers make their scoping decisions with respect to aspect relevance, and considerations relevant to project context or scale.
- **Adequacy of implementation guidance.** To obtain views on the usefulness of the introductory section and the auditing guidance notes. To identify where additional implementation guidance would be helpful to the field testers.
- **Presentation of Results.** To obtain views on the usefulness of the Auditor Worksheet and the suggestions for summary presentation of results, both of which are provided in the Draft Protocol introduction to each section.

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3. A Preview of a Project Trial

4.1 Participants in the Trial

Trial teams undertaking the assessment will vary in composition depending on the approach chosen by the project owner. Of necessity would be one individual with sustainability assessment and/or auditing experience. Other participants could be a Forum member / alternate, and if possible in the interests of transparency and cross-sectoral engagement an external stakeholder (e.g. a representative from an NGO, civil society, or government).

The trial host would have a lead company representative available to the trial team at all times so that he/she is aware of the information gaps and needs of the trial team and how best to address them. The trial host should also make an interpreter available to the trial team.

In the trial, interviewees will vary with aspect, and would be company representatives, government representatives, community representatives and experts with particular knowledge about the aspect under focus.

4.2 Trial Schedule

For the trial itself, a typical itinerary is as follows:

- **First Day** - Initial meeting, presentations by trial team, project owners and others (such as government agencies), tour of scheme (including downstream impacted areas and resettlement areas).
- **Intermediate Days** - Interviews on technical, economic, social and environmental aspects. Number of days may be 1, 2 or 3 depending on size and complexity of the project, and also travel times.
- **Final Day** - Close out meeting involving presentation on key assessment findings and agreement on main outcomes.

4.3 Preparation and Support Requested of Project Owners

The following preparation and support activities would be requested of the owners:

Prior to the arrival of the trial team:

- provision of a lead company representative to be the main point for coordination in arranging the trial;
- identification of internal staff or external individuals who can provide information to support assessments on particular aspects, and prior briefing of those individuals;
- review of the Draft Protocol by all participants;
- identification of objective evidence that can be brought to the interviews to support ratings for each aspect;
- preparation of an agenda and interview schedule for the visit; and
- preparation of project overview presentation.

During the trial:

- availability of the lead company representative at all times;
- provision of an interpreter;
- relevant staff attending meetings and interviews;
- provision of site tour;

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- provision of relevant documentation for viewing;
- provision of room where initial and close out meetings can be held and interviews conducted, and documentation viewed; and
- provision of local transport, accommodation and meals during the trial, as appropriate.

4. Specific Instructions for Undertaking a Draft Protocol Trial

The following steps are involved in undertaking a Draft Protocol trial:

1. Identify the project to be assessed, and the relevant Section of the Draft Protocol;
2. Identify a lead contact person on behalf of the project developer/owner/operator to be coordinator of the assessment, and ensure the lead person makes him or herself familiar with the relevant Section of the Draft Protocol;
3. Submit by email an Expression of Interest to the Forum Coordinator, Helen Locher (hl@hydropower.org), so that the project can be listed on the Forum's database and that you can discuss any details about trialling arrangements;
4. In dialogue with the Forum Coordinator, determine the level of external involvement in the assessment. Options are:
 - a. self-assessment undertaken by the project owner;
 - b. self-assessment with Forum member or external observers;
 - c. Forum-member led assessment, with or without additional members of the assessment team or external observers; or
 - d. assessment undertaken by a professional auditor, with or without Forum members or external observers.
5. Consider and determine the level of information documentation and disclosure that will be associated with the trial (see Sections 5 and 6 below). Options are:
 - a. a single publicly available report providing feedback to the Forum with recommendations on the Draft Protocol;
 - b. a single publicly available report providing feedback to the Forum with recommendations on the Draft Protocol as well as scoring results on the project;
 - c. two reports, one publicly available providing feedback to the Forum with recommendations on the Draft Protocol, and the second an internal report for the project owner not provided to the Forum which documents the scoring results on the project.
6. Determine assessment team members. The Forum strongly encourages involvement of other parties. The Forum is interested in all Forum members being involved in at least one trial, and that cross-sectoral trial teams are provided for as much as possible. Ensure assessment team members make themselves familiar with the relevant Section of the Draft Protocol. Agree on the individual who will be responsible for writing and submitting the trial report.
7. Prepare the logistics of the assessment, including:
 - a. dates;
 - b. schedule – site visit, opening and closing meetings, schedule of interviews with appropriate experts for the different Protocol aspects. In the interests of

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- time, the schedule of interviews will have to be set up as efficiently as possible;
 - c. venues for meetings/interviews and appropriate facilities;
 - d. interpreters if required;
 - e. accommodation, meals and local transport for the assessment team; and
 - f. any materials required (e.g. print-outs of the Protocol section or specific aspects).
8. Determination of and agreement on costs. This will be case specific, and will need to be based on the project owner's evaluation of the logistical requirements. Low cost to the Forum's own budget is a criterion for the Forum in selecting those assessments that it can participate in; relevant considerations will be whether the project or the Forum members themselves would fund travel costs of the Forum member(s). If professional auditors are involved, their costs would need to be directly arranged with project owner. The project may want to consider supporting participation costs for external stakeholders, either as members of or observers to the assessment team, or as interviewees.
 9. Ensure all participants in the trial are prepared. This means they have reviewed the Draft Protocol and the aspects relevant to them, understand the points that they will be interviewed on, have identified relevant evidence, and are prepared to bring that evidence with them to the interview. Preparation is key to ensuring the assessment process can be undertaken as efficiently as possible.
 10. Prepare some introductory/overview information about the project to provide to the assessment team in advance, and prepare a presentation about the project for the assessment team at the opening meeting.
 11. Undertake the assessment as per schedule, including a closing meeting for the assessment team to review the results with the project owner.
 12. Prepare report on the assessment using the standard trialling report template provided as an attachment to this document. If the assessment is undertaken by a professional auditor or a Forum member as the lead auditor, they will provide the report, and get sign-off by the owner before submission.

5. Provision of Scoring Information

The credibility of the individual trials and the Forum process as a whole will be enhanced by assessments that are as inclusive and transparent as possible; however it is up to the project owner how much information they want to disclose. The standard reporting template does not require submission of information on project scores. However, the assessment should be undertaken in as realistic a manner as possible, in which scores are assigned. A generic Auditor Worksheet is provided in the Draft Protocol introduction. If used, the owner has the option of submitting these worksheets for each aspect as appendices with the trial report. Note that these worksheets document proposed scores and reasons for the scores given. For a summary presentation of scoring results, the formats given in the introduction to the Draft Protocol may be used. The project owner may want two separate reports, one on feedback to the Forum with recommendations on the Draft Protocol, and an internal report on project performance. This would need to be discussed and agreed with the assessment team.

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6. Confidentiality

The trial report that is sent to the Forum documenting the outcomes of the trial will be a public report. Project owners can restrict information if they feel confidentiality is necessary. This could be done internally by restricting information provided to the assessment team, by having external participants sign confidentiality agreements, by reporting back in a limited way, etc. The minimum information required by the Forum is that outlined in the attached Reporting Template, Parts 1 and 2.

7. Further Information

If you are interested in nominating a hydropower project as a candidate for trialling of the Draft Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol, please email the Sustainability Forum Coordinator, Dr. Helen Locher, at hl@hydropower.org. Contact by no later than end September 2009 would be most appreciated. Please bear in mind that after 30th November 2009, results of any trial will not be able to be summarised in the Forum's Draft Protocol Trialling Outcomes report.

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REPORTING TEMPLATE

Trial of the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol

This Report is based on the Draft Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (the “Draft Protocol”). It is intended to provide feedback to the Forum on practical experiences with the Draft Protocol. This feedback will be used, together with that from other participants in the trialling program, as input to the final revision of the Draft Protocol.

The Report is primarily designed for those trials conducted or observed by HSAF members. Project owners are also encouraged to participate in the Trialling Program through self-assessments, or assessments involving invited external experts and partners. In these cases, they are invited to utilize or adapt this template. All trial reports submitted to the HSAF will be made public on the HSAF’s website, and so assessment teams should only provide the information they want to be in the public domain. The assessment team may choose to produce two separate reports, with the public report back to the HSAF focusing on experiences with the draft Protocol, and the internal report to the project owner focusing on project performance. The credibility of the individual trials and the overall HSAF process will be enhanced by assessments that are as inclusive and transparent as possible.

Each assessment should be conducted by a designated assessment team. All members and a nominated representative of the owner (who could or could not be a team member) should sign the assessment report. Where there are divergent views, they should be made explicit in the report. We ask that reports be submitted to Dr. Helen Locher, HSAF Coordinator, before the end of October, 2009.

Assessment Team and Owner’s Representative¹

¹ Name, function, organization & signature for each individual. This does not include interviewees.

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Trialling Report Part 1 – Introductory Information

Company²

Project³

Current Status of Project, and Protocol Section Applied

Motivation for and Purpose of the Assessment

Disclaimers and Confidentiality Agreements, if any⁴

Schedule of the Assessment⁵

² Basic information on the company, such as country of operation, public/private ownership, installed hydro capacity and annual generation. Membership in the IHA and other associations, and formal commitments to and reporting on sustainability etc. would also be of interest. For a Section I assessment, this would be replaced by who is undertaking the assessment.

³ Basic information on the project, such as location, physical lay-out, single-/ multiple-purpose, installed capacity, etc. Note for a Section I assessment where there is not a project of focus, this would describe the focus of the assessment.

⁴ Any qualifications the assessment team wishes to make regarding the information provided (e.g. limited number of stakeholders interviewed, depth of review of documents etc.); scope of confidentiality agreements, if any. Note these can also be made as relevant to particular aspects in the body of the report.

⁵ Dates with travel schedules, persons interviewed, site visits, presentations etc.

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Trialling Report Part 2 –

Assessment Results from the Draft Protocol Trial – General

This part of the trial report is about general observations on the assessment results, while the following section provides aspect-by-aspect results and observations. The purpose of this part of the report is to provide feedback on the following issues. Where possible, examples for problems encountered should be given and improvements suggested.

Objectivity and replicability. How robust do you feel the Protocol is in terms of assessment teams arriving at consistent and unbiased results?

Understandability. Which parts of the Protocol did the assessment team find hard to understand?

Scope and comprehensiveness. Do you feel the Section includes the right aspects? Which issues did the assessment team encounter that are not covered in the Protocol, or that are duplicated unnecessarily?

Ease of use. How practicable do you feel the Protocol is as an assessment tool? Is any information required to apply the Protocol not available or available only with undue cost or effort?

Impact and effectiveness. To what extent did the assessment team find the application of the Protocol a useful exercise in terms of identifying weaknesses/opportunities, encouraging dialogue, and encouraging improvement of performance?

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Applicability to a range of scale and regions. Did the assessment team identify any special problems in applying the Protocol in relation to project scale, region, developed versus developing economy, type of project, etc.? How did the assessment team make its scoping decisions with respect to aspect relevance, and considerations relevant to project context or scale?

Adequacy of implementation guidance. How did you find the introductory section and the auditing guidance notes? Where would additional implementation guidance be helpful to the assessment teams?

Presentation of Results. How useful did you find the auditor worksheet and the suggestions for summary presentation of results provided in the Introduction?

Trialling Report Part 3 –

Assessment Results from the Draft Protocol Trial – Aspect by Aspect

The intention of this part of the trial report is to provide an aspect-by-aspect summary of who was interviewed; what evidence was brought forward; and views of the assessment team on how well the Draft Protocol addresses that particular aspect.

This section of the report would provide the following summary comments for each aspect:

- **Aspect name**
- **Comprehensiveness:**
- **Understandability:**
- **Difficulties or Issues:**
- **Recommendations for Improvements:**