

**Cross-Comparison**  
**IHA Sustainability Assessment Guidelines (2004) / Protocol (2006)**  
**with**  
**Strategic Priorities / Policy Principles**  
**of the World Commission on Dams (WCD, 2000)**

Prepared as input for discussions of the  
IHA Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum (HSAF)

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<b>WCD Strategic Priority 1 - Gaining Public Acceptance</b>	<b>IHA Guidelines (2004)</b>		<b>IHA Protocol (2006)</b>	
	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Departures</b>	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Departures</b>
- Public acceptance essential for equitable and sustainable water and energy resource development	- Community acceptance of the project, particularly in the early stages, will greatly increase the successful implementation of the project (Sec 6.3)	- Public acceptance recognised as important for success and key to sustainability, but not essential (Sec 6.3)	- Level of community acceptance identified as a key factor in all three Parts (e.g. A12, B7, C7)	- No aspect states public acceptance is essential, rather it is highly desirable - Places more emphasis on local community acceptance than on public acceptance
- Stakeholder identification and inclusion process based on recognition of rights and assessment of risks	- Stakeholder identification and inclusion should be undertaken (Sec 6.3). Risk assessment should be undertaken (Sec 2.2.2). Stakeholder legitimate interests should be recognised (Sec 7.3)	- No procedure for stakeholder identification is prescribed – i.e. Rights & Risks	-Stakeholder consultation process assessed (B7, C7) -Identification of stakeholders and evidence of support (B3)	- Same as comment under the guideline
- Access to information and legal and other support to all stakeholders	- Stakeholders should be provided with opportunity to have informed input (Sec 6.3)	- No specific mention of provision of support to stakeholders for obtaining information or legal advice	Stakeholder input and feedback (B7) written agreements (C7) - interviews with stakeholders and regulators (B9)	- No reference to access to information, but implicit in consultation and documented agreements (e.g. C7, B17)
- Informed participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes	- Stakeholders have informed input into decision-making, and participation in development and implementation of mitigation measures (Sec 6.3)		Written agreements or stakeholders plans for agreements (B7)	- Informed participation implicit in stakeholder negotiation and agreement (B15,16, C7)
- Particular attention to identification, support and informed participation of indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other vulnerable groups	- Specifically identify minority and/or vulnerable groups and ensure they are adequately represented in any consultation process (Sec 6.3)	- No specific mention of tribal people	- Impacts on directly affected stakeholders including vulnerable social groups specifically addressed (A14, B9, C14). A14 has level of consultation and acceptance.	- No specific mention of tribal people
- Agreements negotiated in open and transparent process	- Open, fair and inclusive decision-making process in the eyes of the community (Sec 6.3)		Written agreements with stakeholders or plans for agreements – community support (B7)	- Notion of agreements mainly applies to decisions on project implementation and the design of environment & social components
- Free, prior and informed consent of indigenous and tribal peoples affected by large dam projects guides decisions	- Guidelines refer to early consultation on project selection and consultation, negotiation and agreement, where feasible, project features	- No specific reference to the concept of free, prior and informed consent	Same comment as guidelines	Same comment as guidelines.

WCD Strategic Priority 2 - Comprehensive Options Assessment	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- Clearly formulate development objectives and needs before identification of options	- Refers to consideration of need for electricity and water to alleviate poverty and enhance living standards (Sec 2.2 & 3.2) and national planning systems		- Demonstrated need for the project (A1)	- Demonstrated need is in respect to need for a new energy project, not a development objective per se
- Open and participatory process for needs assessment	- Needs assessment included in reference to Strategic Assessment process, including that it should be participatory (Sec 3.2)		- Assessing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of stakeholder consultation (A10, A13)	
- Options assessment undertaken before decision to proceed with project or program	- 11 criteria to assess energy options (4.1) - Strategic Assessment should be built into national and/or regional energy policies, including options assessment (Sec 3.2)	Proponents need to demonstrate their recommended option is sustainable (Sect 4.1)	- Parts A & B designed to assist with project options assessment on macro scale. A4 & B6 refer to local scale site selection and design options. Options assessment (b14)	- Protocol is not as explicit linking options assessment to decisions as in the guidelines
- Options assessment covers full range of planning approaches to meet development objectives (policy, institutional, management, technical...)	Broad energy options assessment should be part of the energy development strategy (Section 4.1)	- Options assessment is limited to energy demand and supply options; WCD identifies options broadly as policy, institutional and technical options, etc.	- evaluation of a range of alternative options including practicable efficiency measures to meet requirements (A1)	- Options assessment criteria are in Parts A and B and are site selection or project focussed
- Social and environmental considerations given equal significance as technical, economic or financial factors in options assessment	-Balancing economic, social and environmental aspects is fundamental - There are 11 key criteria for selecting among energy options include 6 social, environmental and economic criteria (Sec 4.1 (i.e. criterion 2, and 7 to 11)	- No specification of relative weighting of criteria	-Assesses aspect-by-aspect - Parts A & B cover social, environmental, technical, economic and financial criteria -Social and environmental aspects outnumber economic	- Does not stipulate criteria should be of equal significance - Rather the balance should be contextualized in stakeholder dialogue, written agreements, etc.
- Priority given to increasing effectiveness of existing infrastructure for water, irrigation and energy	- Prioritising upgrading of existing facilities in considering alternative hydropower options (Sec 4.2)		- Preference given to projects on previously developed rivers (B14) - Program of asset upgrade (C5) - Optimum practical efficiency and reliability (A10, A11, B4)	
- Options assessment for dams also apply social and environmental principles throughout life cycle	- Life cycle analysis emphasised (Sec 2.2). Principles for sustainability considerations are set out for new and operating facilities		Parts A to C represent infrastructure life cycle	

WCD Strategic Priority 3 - Addressing Existing Dams	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- Project monitoring and evaluation process and periodic review process (ex-post evaluation considering the project as implementation phase)	- Monitoring, measuring and review are components of an environmental management system (EMS) encouraged for hydropower operators (Sec 4.5.2)	Encourages benefit sharing to complement environment, social and economic performance.	- Section C as a whole is all about assessing operation phase management processes and performance based on sustainability criteria (e.g. C5 and C6, C13 and C15) - Periodic review (C5)	
- Programmes to restore, improve and optimise benefits	- Planning and programs are built into an EMS (Section 4.5.2). - Priority to existing system upgrades		- Additional economic benefits, with best opportunities maximised (C3) - Specific aspects for social and environmental issues refer to management programs and plans. - Periodic Reviews and program of asset upgrades (C4)	- Protocol goes further to identify other measures: o operational efficiency and reliability (C5,C6) o Dam Safety (C8) o Employee safety opportunity, equity etc. (C8, C9, C10) o Sharing the benefits with the local community (C3)
- Include Identification, assessment, evaluation and mitigation measures for social and environmental issues when technical rehabilitation and upgrading are undertaken	- Section 5 (environmental) and Section 6 (social) address specific issues and their management and mitigation - Environment management systems (EMS) provide a comprehensive operational framework (Section 4.5.2)		- Part C as a whole assesses operation phase with 14 of 20 aspects covering social and environmental monitoring and commitments. - Comprehensive management systems (C1)	- No explicit statement that environment and social upgrades should occur at same time as technical rehabilitation - Imbedded in environment management system (EMS)
- Formalized operating agreements with time-bound licensing	- Section 4.5.1 refers to legal and institutional arrangements for existing hydropower schemes, including licences	- No specific reference to time-bound licensing. - Approach is to comply with existing regulation. - No advocacy on regulatory reform and licensing	- Stresses that regulation needed to imbed sustainability aspects and have commitment to continual improvement (C1)– which underlays this WCD principle	- Same comment as under guideline

WCD Strategic Priority 4 - Sustaining Rivers & Livelihoods	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- Understanding, protecting and restoring ecosystems at river basin level, including understanding of communities and livelihoods which depend on and influence them	Impact of the environmental footprint assessed in relation to associated aquatic and terrestrial ecological impacts and degree to which they can be mitigated and/or compensated (Section 4.1) - Prioritise alternatives on already developed river basins based on cumulative environment impacts (Sec 4.2)	- Notion of dam planning and management in the context of river basin planning and management (IWRM) is not explicit in the Guidelines.	- comprehensive understanding of downstream issues and risks, maximum participation in catchment planning (C20) - Embodied in environment and social impact aspects (e.g. B9, B18, C12, C17, C18)	- emphasizes comprehensive management and protection, ecosystem values - Does specifically elaborate ecosystem restoration concepts
- Ecosystem, social and health issues are considered integral parts of the project and decision-making about it	- Ecosystem, social and health issues are identified as important for sustainable hydropower (Section 4.2, 5, 6)		- Ecosystem & social issues addressed in Parts A to C. Health addressed in B10, C9	
- Avoidance of impact is prioritised with a precautionary approach, followed by minimisation and mitigation of impact	- Precautionary approach and avoidance of impact is addressed (Sec 2.2). Avoidance, minimisation and management/mitigation are key elements of section 4.2 and 5 - Significant damage to areas of high conservation value should be avoided when adequate M&C not feasible Section 4.2		- Embodied in site selection and design optimisation (A4, B6) - impact avoidance, minimisation and opportunity maximisation are key elements in many aspects (e.g. B15, C14)	- No specific reference to a precautionary approach in the Protocol, rather it is embodied
- National policy is developed for leaving high ecosystem value rivers undisturbed	- Priority should be given to already developed river basins (Section 4.2)	- No direct reference to national environmental policy in Guidelines	- Preference to sites on previously developed basins if cumulative impacts less (B14) -Assess environment value of area impacted and degree it can be avoided (A14)	- No specific mention of intact river policy, but cumulative impacts and threshold impacts are addressed in B14 which partially embodies the concept
- Good site selection and project design, with priority given to locations on tributaries	- Prioritise alternatives on already developed river basins applicable in some situations (Section 4.2)	- No specific prescription that sites on tributaries should be development priority before main stem sites	- Site selection and design optimisation (A4, B6) - Options assessed on regulated and unregulated rivers embodies some aspects (B14)	- Same comment as under the guidelines
- Avoidance of significant impacts on threatened and endangered species; where impacted ensure measures for net gain to species.	- Minimising impacts to threatened species is a priority (Sec 4.2). Avoidance, minimisation and management of threatened species impacts (Section 5).	- No mention of the concept of net gain to species. Refers mainly to ecological value	-Aspects B17 and C18 address biodiversity	- No specific reference to concept of species net gain, though concept is embodied on E-Flow Assessment (B18, C17)
- Release of tailor-made environmental flows	- Environmental flows should be developed (Sections 4.2 & 5).		- Aspects B18 and C17 address environmental flows	

WCD Strategic Priority 5 - Recognising Entitlements & Sharing Benefits	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- Identification of adversely affected stakeholders through recognition of rights and assessment of risks	- Stakeholder identification and inclusion should be undertaken (Sec 6.3). - Risk assessment should be undertaken (Sec 2.2.2). Stakeholder legitimate interests should be recognised (Sec 7.3)	- Guidelines tend to have a more narrow and traditional definition of risk. WCD emphasizes risks to all stakeholders including poverty risk of affected people, rights at risk etc.	- Stakeholder consultation process assessed (B7, C7) - Survey and other measures of stakeholder concern (B18)	- No prescribed method for stakeholder identification - No direct citation of rights, entitlements, etc. except for industry suppliers (C11)
- Joint negotiations with adversely affected stakeholders on decisions relating to mitigation, resettlement and development	- A negotiated and agreed outcome is achieved wherever possible (Sec 6.3)		- Written agreements with stakeholders on community acceptance (C7) - Community & regulator support features in many aspects in Sections A to C - Records of stakeholder negotiations (B20)	- References to agreements on project design aspects or mitigation / enhancement / benefit sharing etc. - Agreements imply joint negotiation
- Adversely affected stakeholders are beneficiaries of the project	- Adequate resources are available to enable the displaced groups to share in the benefits of the project (Sec 6.2). Communities and/or groups that are impacted by a project should be the first to benefit (Sec 6.3)		- Demonstrating benefits are delivered to both affected stakeholders and broader community (A8) - Directly affected stakeholders addressed (A14, B9, B10,C14)	- Benefit sharing part of additional benefits
- All adversely affected stakeholders will improve their livelihoods	- Affected communities are provided with improved living conditions. Livelihoods of displaced people and the host community are improved (Sec 6.2)	- Specifies at minimum, displaced groups are re-established at no disadvantage (Sec 6.2)	- Directly affected and wider community addressed and enhancement programs and additional economic benefits. (A14, B3 B9 and C14); - Independent assessment and evidence of stakeholder support (B3). Opportunities maximized (C3)	
- Negotiated entitlements are mutually agreed, formal and legally enforceable	- A negotiated and agreed outcome is achieved wherever possible (Sec 6.3). - Otherwise stresses conformance with regulation, law etc.	- No reference to entitlements being formal nor legally enforceable	- Written agreements with stakeholders on community acceptance (C7)	- No specific reference to entitlements in Protocol, only implied in agreements

WCD Strategic Priority 6 - Ensuring Compliance	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- All commitments must be met	- Section 4.5 on management of existing hydro schemes refers to adoption of an Environmental Management System as a way to monitor management commitments	- Statements generally refer to legal compliance requirements and regulations.	- Aspect C13 specifically addresses compliance with social commitments. Aspect - C15 specifically addresses compliance with environmental commitments. - Written agreements (e.g. C13, C18)	
- Clear criteria and guidelines to ensure compliance	- Legal and institutional arrangements are addressed in Section 4.5.1 for compliance with laws, policies, permits, agreements and codes of practice		Compliance with regulations (Scoring for aspects) assess performance guarantees (C6)	- Compliance not specifically incorporated into the Protocol for all aspects.
- Compliance subject to independent and transparent review	- Independent review of meeting project commitments is an element of an EMS		- Independent auditing of the EMS in C15 addresses environmental commitments. - Independent audit of compensation (C14) - Independent review of social commitments (C13)	
- Compliance Plan prepared prior to project commencement	- Compliance with regulations stressed - EMS system for operation phase compliance	- No specific mention of an overall Compliance Plan, but it would be considered a key component of an EMS.	Independent audit compliance as above.	- No reference specifically to an Integrated Compliance Plan for the project, though EMS would embody many elements
- Binding agreements are specified for project-specific technical, social and environmental commitments		- No specific reference to binding agreements	Agreements with shareholders (B2) written agreements with stakeholders for community support (B7, B7 and others)	
- Corrupt practices are avoided		- No specific mention of anti-corruption measures or impacts of corruption.	Ethical standards /codes of conduct referenced (C1)	
- Incentives for compliance are developed		- No mention of incentives for compliance		- No mention of incentives for compliance other than comprehensiveness - No mention of incentives in Protocol

WCD Strategic Priority 7 - Sharing Rivers for Peace, Development and Security	IHA Guidelines		IHA Protocol	
	Key Elements	Commonalities	Departures	Commonalities
- Basin agreements in shared river basins are provided for in national water policies	- Collaborative decision-making and shared water management policy in shared river basins is supported (Sec 3.2)		Reflected only in part, e.g. - Options assessment for regulated and unregulated rivers in the region (b14) as input to policy / planning generally. - Comprehensive understanding of downstream issues and risks and maximum participation in catchment planning (C20) – promoting a basin approach - Comprehensive environment management system for construction and operation independently certified to a relevant international standard (B13) - Catchment management agreements or planning (B16) and records of negotiations or agreements between water users (B20, C19)	- No specific reference to agreements on internationally shared river basins
- Agreements are based on good faith among riparian States		- No specific reference to good faith agreements		- as above
- Negotiations and agreements for sharing of rivers and their associated benefits	- Collaborative decision-making and shared water management policy in shared river basins is supported (Sec 3.2)			- as above
- No development where riparian States raise objections that are upheld by an independent panel or good faith negotiations are contravened		- No reference in the Guidelines		- as above