

Policy for the Establishment of Expert Panels

June 2005

An Expert Panel (EP) is comprised of experts, appointed by the commission, who bring specialized knowledge to bear on a problem of significance within the Great Lakes. Recent, successful EPs include the Large Vessel Program Review and the Review of Lake Erie Percid Harvest Procedures. The decision as to whether an EP is formed lies with the commission and is based upon a formal letter of request from the partners who will benefit by the establishment of an EP. Prior to the formation of an EP, a letter to the Executive Secretary must be submitted that describes the rationale for the formation of the EP, including (at a minimum):

1. Problem statement (the issue)
2. Justification
 1. Describing why, explicitly, an EP is necessary
 2. Detailing the questions the EP is to answer
3. Detailed exposition of the expected product(s), for example,
 1. Written report with recommendations
 2. Proposed implementation measures
 3. Other products, such as oral presentations
4. Suggested panel members, including contact information
5. Approximate timeline, taking into account the depth of the required review
6. Description of the feedback the partners will provide to the commission upon their review of the EP report

The partners also must agree to respond to the Executive Secretary in writing and in a timely fashion following the acceptance of the final EP report. Each EP recommendation must be evaluated, either accepted or rejected, and the response justified. The commission will use the decision-making criteria described below to give precedence to those requests that truly demand an Expert Panel.

1. Importance of the problem, as judged by the breadth of the issue, i.e., partner involvement, application to the Great Lakes, extent of stakeholder interest, etc.
2. Appropriateness for an EP, as judged by the extent of problem, its tractability, level of difficulty, etc. (Could this issue be resolved by a single reviewer or does it require a full-fledged review that extends beyond the scope of an EP?)
3. The extent to which the proposed products can be realized within the context of an EP (Can the EP process provide the types of recommendations requested by the partner agencies?)
4. The appropriateness of the EP products to the problem identified by the partner agencies (Do the products have a high probability of resolving the problem?).
5. Available expertise (Do experts exist?)
6. Reasonableness of the timeline (Is it feasible?)