

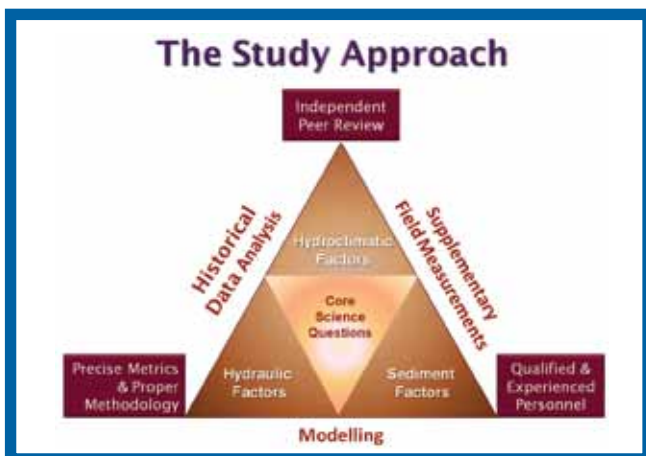
The Review Process

The Study review process requires that every level of research conducted under the International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLS) adheres to a high level of scientific rigor. This process includes both internal reviewers from among Study scientists and engineers and external reviewers who are independent of the Study. It employs an unprecedented level of external and internal peer review, encompassing both methodological strategies for analysis at the outset of the Study, as well as the technical reports and Board synthesis outcomes of the analytical strategies.

Internal Review

The St. Clair River Task Team and the Lake Superior Regulation Task Team are supported by Technical Work Groups (TWGs) that focus on fundamental scientific disciplines. Each TWG includes scientists and engineers from Canada and the U.S. and is supervised by two co-leads. Reports prepared by the TWGs are reviewed by the group members, co-leads and Task Team. In addition, reports are often reviewed by the agencies and academic institutions in which the scientists are employed.

Study Board approval is the final step in the internal process – after external peer review is conducted on selected reports (see below). The Study Board then determines when reports are ready for public release. Ultimately, the Study Board analyzes and synthesizes the information that has been developed by the multiple researchers serving on the TWGs and Task Teams into a **draft report**. Following the release of the draft report for public review, the Board works to see that the **final report** reflects the results of the scientific review process, external peer reviews, public comments, and any additional research conducted after the release of the draft report.



The IUGLS is benefitting from the most rigorous peer review process of any binational study in IJC history. The Independent Peer Reviews of the reports are continuous and ongoing in each of the core research areas and are conducted independently of the IJC and the Study Board.

External Independent Peer Review

For the first time, an IJC binational study is benefitting from a continuous and on-going independent scientific review of work plans, technical research, and reports. Unlike other peer review processes that only subject a final report to review when changes cannot be made, a key benefit of this approach is that recommendations and advice from peer reviewers can be incorporated into the Study process.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) contracted with the Environmental and Water Resources Institute (EWRI) of the American Society of Civil Engineers and with the Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA) to provide Independent Peer Review (IPR) of the work of the IUGLS. The IPR is conducted at arm's-length from the Study and the IJC with neither the IJC nor the Study Board influencing the selection of peer review panelists or the outcome of the peer review process.

Independent Review Plan

Over the duration of the Study, the EWRI and the CWRA will engage experts to review six methodological reports, 14 to 18 scientific reports, six to seven synthesis documents and the two final reports.

Methodological Reviews determine if the appropriate study questions have been posed and if well-grounded study components have been developed to answer those questions. These reviews enable the Study Board to develop an overall approach to the research that will ultimately link multiple efforts into a cohesive work plan.

Technical Report Reviews assess whether Study scientists conducted their analyses according to the approved methodological strategy previously peer reviewed and whether the Study scientists' interpretations and conclusions are supported by the analyses for public decision making.

Synthesis Product Reviews focus on whether the conclusions reached by the Study Board reasonably reflect the integrated findings of the various technical reports used and that the recommendations are supported by the analysis results.

Draft Final Report Reviews evaluate the extent to which the draft report addresses the main Study issues and Study questions, see that the scientific results are presented appropriately and assess how accurately the draft report reflects Study findings.

This sequential process allows for consistency in approach and promotes a more complete and integrated analysis.

IUGLS Peer Review Stages

Internal:

- Study Board
- Technical Work Groups
- Task Teams
- Agencies, Academic Institutions

External:

- American Society of Civil Engineers - EWRI
- Canadian Water Resources Association

Moving Forward

Publication of the first portion of the Study, the St. Clair Draft Report, was accelerated by one year. Over 40 individual scientific reports are included in this first portion of the Study and have been released as they are finalized to reflect internal and external reviews. Information regarding the peer review process, the names and affiliations of the review team, and the review documents are available at: <http://content.ewrinstitute.org/committees/IUGLS.cfm>.

The second portion of the Study is ongoing and will conclude in 2012. After each draft report has gone through the peer review process and considering public comments, the Study Board will submit its final report to the IJC. After reviewing each of the final reports, the IJC may choose to hold a series of formal public hearings. Following the completion of the public hearings, the IJC will make its recommendations to the Governments of Canada and the United States.



photo: T. Lawrence, GLFC