

Summary

The Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (the Protocol) provides a methodology to deliver an assessment of the performance of a hydropower project, based on scoring criteria related to ‘basic good practice’ and ‘proven best practice’ for each of over 20 sustainability topics. It is a globally-applicable methodology, governed by a multi-stakeholder council.

Leading organisation: International Hydropower Association

Applicable sectors					Award types				
General civil	Hydro. only	Buildings	Public realm	Community / precinct	Design	As built	Operation	Planning	Other

Country	Globally applicable	Sustainability criteria	The Protocol is design around four key "perspectives": 1. Environmental 2. Social 3. Technical 4. Economic/financial. There are 24 topics covered within these perspectives.		
Deployment & developments	<p>The Protocol development was led by the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum (HSAF). It was officially launched in Brazil in June 2011. It is now governed by a multi-stakeholder council that reflects the broad stakeholder groups of the HSAF.</p> <p>The four Protocol assessment tools – Early Stage, Preparation, Implementation, and Operation – are designed to be stand-alone assessments applied at particular stages of the project life cycle.</p> <p>Protocol assessments have been conducted using the latest version of the Protocol in Kazakhstan, Australia, Iceland, Germany, Malaysia, Norway, Canada, Brazil and France.</p>		Assessment: scoring, performance levels, evidence collection	<p>There are six criteria that may be utilised for the scoring statements on each topic – Assessment, Management, Stakeholder Engagement, Stakeholder Support, Conformance/Compliance, and Outcomes. These provide an ability to assess both the processes in place to ensure sustainability of the project or operation, and the performance of that project or operation on that particular sustainability topic. In the Preparation, Implementation and Operation assessment tools, each topic is scored from Level 1 to 5. Level 1 = significant gaps to basic good practice Level 3 = basic good practice Level 5 = proven best practice. The score for each sustainability topic is assigned by an independent, accredited assessor based on review of objective evidence.</p> <p>The assessors review a wealth of documentary evidence carefully, interview a range of internal company perspective and local stakeholders, and visit the project site.</p> <p>Considerable preparation, in the order of one month for multiple representatives of the project, would be expected prior to an assessment, although this should diminish as users become more familiar with the Protocol.</p> <p>The Protocol does not provide a system of certification or awards. There is no overall score or award given. Instead, performance is summarised in a ‘Sustainability Profile’ displaying the score of 1 to 5 for each topic.</p>	
Applicants	Potential users include governments, financial institutions, NGOs, developers, civil society and companies involved in the design or operation of hydropower facilities. The Protocol can provide a common basis for dialogue on sustainability issues.			Tailoring	Not every topic will be relevant to every project. For example, if there is no resettlement then resettlement does not need to be assessed. Assessors can identify a topic as "Not Relevant" if evidence presented supports such a conclusion.
Government endorsement	There is no ‘government endorsement’ as such, but the EC Life Programme provided co-funding which has allowed the Protocol’s launch and promotion in the EU.				Fee
Support to applicants	<p>The HSAF developed an online knowledge base to capture information considered by the HSAF during development of the Protocol. This knowledge base identifies a number of important reference standards for the different topics and themes addressed in the Protocol.</p> <p>Accredited assessors complete Protocol assessments.</p> <p>For each assessment topic, the Protocol provides statements of description and intent, scoring statements that guide how to allocate scores and assessment guidance which includes specific examples.</p>				

Case study

Refer to website address provided for examples of assessment reports.