Annex 1: Establishing a preferred process of review

Offices with sufficient Design Review capacity may establish an alternate process of Design Review that is administered locally and eliminates the cost of reviews administered by IPMG.

A preferred process does not exempt an office from compliance with the applicable design planning manual; it provides the opportunity for an office to control the Design Review process instead of administering it via IPMG.

IPMG will continue to provide a Unique Identification Number for the purposes of internal procurement activities and will maintain an oversight and spot check verification role. Where necessary, the Design Review team will continue to provide senior technical experts for specialized tasks if necessary.

The method for establishing a preferred process is as follows:

1. A Regional Director initiates the set-up of a preferred process by making a request to the Head of Portfolio Delivery Support, IPMG.
2. This initiates a maturity assessment of the Design Review capacity and practice in the relevant country or countries.
3. In order to qualify for a preferred process for review, a country office or group of offices must demonstrate either: 1. the existence of robust national controls over review processes for the quality of design documentation[1], or 2. the following:
    a. Existence or establishment of a panel of technical experts able, qualified and available to independently review medium and high risk designs. Members of the panel cannot review designs that were developed with their involvement.
    b. Training of the panel members on the contents of the applicable design planning manual.
    c. Agreement to submit design and review documentation to IPMG, together with review checklists, for issue of the Certificate of Design Review Compliance.
4. Upon meeting the necessary criteria for Design Review capacity and practice, a review process may be approved by the Head of Portfolio Delivery Support, IPMG. This notification shall be issued to the Regional Director, Country Director, and other relevant personnel.
5. To verify compliance with the review requirement and to ensure that the preferred process is sufficient for the management of design risk, IPMG may request design and review documentation at any time.

Footnote

1. These national controls must be clearly identified and mapped. Proof is to be provided that the controls exceed or are equivalent to all aspects identified in the applicable design planning manual to enable approval of the preferred process.

Annex 2: Escalation Process

The escalation process exists to resolve bottlenecks and fundamental disagreements that may arise during the design review process. Judgment should be exercised in escalating issues as the escalation route described below will lead to a decision by the Regional Director where accountability and responsibility will ultimately rest. It is assumed that escalation may be appropriate, among others, under the following conditions:

The project team may escalate under the following circumstances:

a. Project team believe that they have delivered a complete design package but unable to move forward procurement activities without a Design Review Certificate.

b. Project team believe that no Design Review is required and that the design element is exempt as per OI.IPS.2025.04: Design Review of Infrastructure Works (but the Design Review team believe that a design review is required).

c. Project team believe that the level of scrutiny placed upon the design by the reviewer is not commensurate with the complexity of the design nor the risk exposure to sustainable outcomes.

d. Project team believe that context considerations should be taken into account and as a result a complete design package is unnecessary as lack of progress on the works will have an immediate effect on life safety.

e. Design review is taking longer than expected or is more expensive than expected. Note: Specific explanatory note should be compiled to justify this escalation

The Design Review team may escalate under the following circumstances:

a. Design Review team believe that there is a capacity issue in the delivery of a competent design and as a result the project is being inappropriately delayed and significant redundant work is being carried out during the review cycle.

b. The level of design review being carried out is not in alignment with the complexity of design. For example, a design has been incorrectly assessed as low risk and reviewed at that level rather than being reviewed as a medium or high risk design.

c. Project Manager and the IPMG Design Review Regional Focal Point disagree on the appropriate actions to be taken to rectify the design package prior to issuance of a design certificate.

d. The Peer Reviewer repeatedly does not carry out competent design reviews for low risk reviews and there is a systematic failure in the Peer Review processes exposing both the beneficiary and UNOPS to uncontrolled risk.

The escalation process can be triggered by either party, the Project Manager or the IPMG Design Review Regional Focal Point. An escalation of an issue will produce a risk-based discussion and provide guidance to the Regional Director on the most appropriate way forward.

Annex 3: Seismic Hazard Classification

When considering the effect of seismic load conditions, the assessment must be undertaken only by professional structural and geotechnical engineers with specialist experience.

Establishing the seismic design parameters is a critical part of the designer's task and all information required must be obtained from national codes, seismic hazard maps, or other recognized worldwide sources.

Where local or national seismic codes do not exist or are in need of updating to recognize the recent hazard information, then the most onerous seismic conditions shall be used by the designer.

The following resources can be used:

1. https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/maps/hazards/
2. https://hazard.openquake.org/gem/
3. http://thinkhazard.org/en/

Should clarification or interpretation be required, please consult with the Design Review team for further guidance.