

98. The independence provisions set for IPN members are of high standards in line with the independence afforded to this body. The Resolution (World Bank, 1993) provides that Board officials, staff and consultants are ineligible to serve on the IPN unless “two years have elapsed since the end of their service in the Bank Group” (World Bank, 1993; 83). Panel members may only be removed by “decision by the Executive Directors, for cause” (World Bank, 1993; 84). In contrast with IEG, which also reports to the Board, IPN members serve a 5-year nonrenewable term. In the consultations held in the course of the Review, internal and external stakeholders overwhelmingly pointed to this provision as the single most important independence pillar.

99. The selection practice followed for the appointment of the current Executive Secretary should be institutionalized. The Resolution (World Bank, 1993) states that “[t]he President, after consultation with the Executive Directors, shall assign a staff member to the Panel as Executive Secretary” (p. 2). In light of the key role that the Panel’s Secretary has in this independent body, the selection procedure should reflect full ownership by the Panel. In practice, this procedure was reportedly followed in the appointment of the current Secretary through a selection process led by the Panel and including the Chair of CODE and a representative of civil society, as an observer. The selected candidate was then approved by the President. In institutionalizing such a practice, the Panel should be asked to consult with the President and the relevant Board Committee, that is, CODE, with a civil society representative serving as a full fledged member of the selection committee.

100. The independence provisions for the role of Executive Secretary need to be tightened. The position description for the current Secretary states that “it is desirable that the Executive Secretary be a final position for a person in the World Bank.” The IPN’s Secretary is, in fact, allowed to re-join the Group staff upon termination of his or her service with the Panel, as the Resolution (World Bank, 1993) is silent in that regard. This is in contrast, for instance, with the (two-year) cooling-off period required for the two senior staff in CAO (see Sub-Section E). Moreover, this gap is inconsistent with the very high bar set for the Panel members who are prevented from joining the Group staff for life. As the Secretary has a fundamental role in reviewing complaints, assessing their eligibility and carrying out investigations if warranted, he or she should be prevented from immediately joining or re-joining the Group staff upon termination of service with the Panel. This could be achieved by imposing a satisfactory cooling off period as done by CAO.

⁸³ See World Bank (1993).

⁸⁴ “The President, in consultation with Executive Directors, would appoint a selection committee to lead the process. The committee would include the chairman of the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), and the Dean or co-Dean of the Board, one Managing Director or Regional Vice President and the General Counsel.” See Selection Procedures for Members of the Inspection Panel (World Bank, 2003).