

# INTEGRATED OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM 2003-2013

## Science Steering and Evaluation Panel (SSEP)

**1. General Purpose.** The Science Steering and Evaluation Panel (SSEP) reports to the Science Planning Committee (SPC). The panel shall interact with proponents (and Program Planning Groups, or PPGs, as necessary) to nurture submitted drilling proposals to maturity, and send mature proposals for external review before forwarding them to the SPC. Within the context of the IODP Initial Science Plan (ISP), important thematic (and initiative) areas of investigation addressed by proposals that shall be considered by these panels include: the deep biosphere and seafloor ocean (deep biosphere; gas hydrates); environmental changes, processes and effects (extreme climates; rapid climate change); solid earth cycles and geodynamics (continental breakup and sedimentary basin formation; large igneous provinces (LIPs); 21<sup>st</sup> century Mohole; and seismogenic zone); and additional themes (and initiatives) that may arise from future scientific planning and assessment.

**2. Mandate.** The SSEP shall be responsible for nurturing and evaluating proposals, and for forwarding mature proposals to the SPC after they have been externally reviewed.

*2.1 Nurturing.* The SSEP shall help proponents develop strong proposals through an iterative process. The panel shall provide proponents and the SPC with written reviews and comments through the IODP-MI Sapporo Office. As part of the nurturing process the SSEP may reject proposals at any stage. As each new proposal is received by the SSEP, the panel shall assess whether or not the proposal would benefit from evaluation by the Scientific Technology Panel (STP) and the Engineering Development Panel (EDP). If so, the SSEP shall request that the IODP-MI Sapporo Office coordinate distribution of proposals to the STP and EDP for evaluation.

*2.2 Evaluating.* The SSEP shall determine whether proposals address important scientific problems that are related to the scientific themes and initiatives outlined in the ISP, and review the scientific merits of these drilling proposals. The SSEP shall assign its own watchdogs. Taking into account evaluations by the Site Survey Panel (SSP), STP, and EDP, the SSEP shall select proposals for external review, and suggest appropriate reviewers to the IODP-MI Sapporo Office, which handles the external review. The SSEP shall provide the SPC with a summary of these external comments and a written review.

*2.3 Forwarding proposals to the SPC.* The SSEP shall decide, taking into account evaluations by the SSP, STP, EDP, and external reviewers, when a proposal is ready to be forwarded to the SPC, and provide the SPC with a grouping and a written final review. The final review shall conclude the SSEP nurturing process and shall include both a review of the current version of the proposal and an additional general review including information and recommendations to the SPC.

*2.4* The SSEP shall advise the SPC on scientific themes and initiatives that need further development through the formation of PPGs, as necessary.

*2.5* The SSEP shall facilitate communications among the SPC, PPGs, and proponents.

**3. Decisions.** The SSEP shall normally reach decisions by consensus. In cases when a consensus is not possible, decisions shall be decided by a majority of all members present and eligible to vote. A quorum shall consist of at least two-thirds of the voting members. Voting records shall be kept and reported in the meeting minutes. When grouping proposals to be sent to the SPC, all SSEP panel members are required to

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vote (yes, no, abstain), unless conflicted. A five point (or star) grouping (with five being the highest and using 1 and 5 sparingly) is recommended.

**4. Meetings.** The SSEP shall convene biannually, generally six to eight weeks after IODP proposal deadlines, and additional electronic meetings may be held as appropriate. In view of the large number of members and wide range of proposal science objectives, thematic breakout sessions are encouraged. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern its meetings. Conflicts of interest shall be declared at each meeting, and treatment thereof shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. The SPC chair shall approve meeting agendas, dates, and locations, and the IODP-MI Vice-President for Science Planning and Deliverables shall authorize the meetings.

**5. Membership.** In view of the breadth of expertise needed to evaluate and nurture proposals, the SSEP shall be composed of twice the general panel membership entitlement for SAS panels stated in the Memoranda among the IODP funding agencies. The SSEP co-chairs shall work with IODP-MI and the national and consortia committees to maintain scientific balance and breadth of expertise in the panel co-chairs and membership, and to ensure regular rotation of its membership. SSEP members shall normally serve for terms of three years. Members of the SSEP shall not be members of any PPG. Guests may be invited to SSEP meetings on an *ad hoc* basis to help with examinations and reviews of proposals. If a SSEP member misses two meetings in succession, the SSEP co-chairs shall discuss the problem of SAS representation with the SPC chair or vice-chair.

**6. Chairs.** The SSEP co-chairs shall be nominated by the SSEP membership and approved by the SPC. The terms of the SSEP co-chairs shall be two years and are normally staggered. For any given time interval, one co-chair shall be designated as the primary contact for the SSEP. The SSEP co-chairs shall be responsible for providing the IODP-MI Sapporo Office with meeting minutes within one month of each meeting.

**7. Liaisons.** The SSEP co-chairs shall be liaisons to the SPC. The SSEP shall have liaisons from the SPC, including, but not limited to the SPC chair and vice-chair. The SSEP co-chairs shall assign liaisons from SSEP membership to the active PPGs, as appropriate, and receive liaisons from other advisory panels, as appropriate. Science coordinators from the IODP-MI Sapporo Office shall attend each SSEP meeting. PPG chairs shall normally meet with the SSEP at least once per year. Representatives from the implementing organizations (IOs) shall also be invited to attend the meetings.