

SODCO Advisory Board Terms of Reference

Approved by SODCO Advisory Board: 3/11/26

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General Purpose

An overarching advisory structure for the U.S. National Science Foundation Scientific Ocean Drilling Coordination Office (SODCO) is critical for ensuring that the science community continues to set the course for U.S. scientific ocean drilling (U.S. SciOD). The invaluable knowledge and experience of the science community will play a vital role during the next stage of U.S. SciOD. This is best accomplished through an active and engaged advisory committee structure that represents the full range of ocean science community interests and that actively solicits and synthesizes community input. This will ensure that community members are able to advance U.S. research interests in a broad and systematic fashion and that they are informed about program developments and opportunities.

The SODCO Advisory Board (SAB) is charged with formulating long-range scientific and policy recommendations pertaining to U.S. SciOD, evaluating SODCO operations and accomplishments, reviewing community proposals and applications related to SciOD, providing advice to SODCO, and stimulating and coordinating broad participation by an active SciOD community within the U.S. through outreach and community-building activities.

The SAB will comprise 15 U.S.-based members from a wide range of career stages with broad institutional representation. The SAB will meet in person twice a year, with meeting logistics and travel support provided by SODCO. Additional board or subcommittee meetings will be held remotely, if required.

Mandate

- | Formulate scientific and policy recommendations with respect to the U.S. SciOD program and SODCO.
 - | Develop and monitor policies for data collection and curation, pre- and post-cruise publications, and core curation associated with the U.S. SciOD program.
- | Recommend priorities within the U.S. SciOD program to allocate resources to support U.S. participation in SciOD.
- | Evaluate SODCO accomplishments and operations against program plan goals and objectives.
- | Stimulate and coordinate broad participation by the U.S. scientific community in the U.S. SciOD program.
 - | Evaluate workshop, training, and funding opportunities through SODCO.

- | Evaluate scientific participant applications for SODCO expeditions.
 - | Evaluate and nominate prospective SAB members for appointment by SODCO.
- | Provide oversight of the SODCO Advisory Panel/s:
 - | Monitor the functionality of the SODCO Safety and Environment Panel (SSEP) with respect to the advice provided to SODCO on safety, environmental, and technical issues.
- | Assist SODCO in maintaining communications and developing collaborations with other national and international scientific drilling programs and offices; and promoting linkages with other large, national and international science programs.
- | Communicate to policy makers and the public the strategic importance of SciOD to the nation's overall science and education goals.

Membership

The SAB will comprise 15 U.S.-based members from a wide range of career stages and scientific expertise, with broad institutional representation. Membership will include geoscientists not specifically involved in SciOD, and representatives from other organizations, with the goal of broadening participation and sharing knowledge.

Chair

The Chair of the SAB will have broad experience in SciOD and be selected to provide scientific and managerial leadership. The Chair will serve a 2-year term. If development of the new U.S. drilling program would be best supported by extending the Chair's term, it may be extended to a 3rd year, as determined by SODCO and with concurrence by the Chair. In the Chair's final year, the SAB will either appoint a successor from one of the scientific representatives on the board or choose to seek nominations and applications from the U.S. scientific community. The Chair is expected to attend meetings of the SODCO SSEP, the international Scientific Drilling Forum, Chief Scientist reviews, and select national and international scientific conferences. The Chair is provided with appropriate salary and logistical support through the SODCO.

Scientific Representation

The SAB will consist of 14 members (in addition to the Chair) drawn from academic institutions, government, and industry. Members will serve on a 3-year staggered rotation to ensure regular rotation of its membership. SODCO will appoint new members of the SAB based on recommendations from the SAB. Members will be selected based on a statement of interest and CV, with the goal of assembling a group of scientists who represent the breadth of expertise and experience relevant for SciOD.

Liaisons

Liaisons to the SAB meeting will include the SSEP Chair, the U.S. Co-Chair of the Scientific Drilling Forum, and NSF Program Officers. Observers to SAB meetings may include additional representatives from U.S. SciOD program facilities or initiatives.

Decisions

The SAB will generally reach decisions and develop recommendations through consensus. If a vote is required, SAB shall act by majority vote of members present at any scheduled meeting, or by a majority electronic vote, provided all members are notified of the issue at hand. In the event of a tie, the vote of the chair will not be counted.

Conflict of Interest

The SAB will follow the SODCO Conflict of Interest Policy. Actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be declared at the start of each meeting and resolved by the SAB Chair and SODCO Leadership.

Modifications to Terms of Reference

SODCO Advisory Board Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by SODCO and the SAB Chair and updated as needed.