

INTEGRATED OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM 2003-2013

Environmental Protection and Safety Panel (EPSP)

1. General Purpose. The Environmental Protection and Safety Panel (EPSP) reports to the Science Planning Committee (SPC). The panel shall provide independent advice to the SPC, IODP Management International (IODP-MI), and the implementing organizations (IOs) with regard to safety and environmental issues that may be associated with general and specific geologic circumstances of proposed drill sites. The EPSP shall also provide advice on appropriate drilling technologies for avoidance of drilling hazards and protecting the environment.

2. Mandate. This panel shall review all prospective drilling in the IODP and advise on safety requirements and appropriate technology needed to meet these requirements. All drilling operations involve safety and environmental issues. The principal geologic safety and a significant environmental hazard in ocean drilling is the possible release of substantial quantities of high-pressure fluids and volatiles including hydrocarbons from subsurface reservoir strata. IODP riser capability will permit the application of blow out prevention (BOP) technology to mitigate this hazard; for non-riser platforms, careful planning and appropriate site surveys reduce or eliminate the risk of hydrocarbon release. IODP proposal proponents are initially responsible to carefully assess proposed drill sites in terms of safety and environmental protection. The EPSP shall independently examine and review each proposed site, including site survey data and operational plans, to determine if and how drilling operations can be conducted to maximize safety and minimize environmental impact.

3. Decisions. The panel shall recommend among the following options:

1. site approval as proposed, for riser/BOP or non-riser drilling,
2. amendment of a proposed site with respect to location and/or depth of penetration,
3. a specific drilling order for an expedition,
4. a specific drilling platform or well program,
5. acquisition of additional data to complete the safety review, or
6. denying approval.

Approval shall be based on the judgment of the EPSP that a proposed site can be safely drilled in light of the available technology, information, and planning. Recommendations of the panel shall be based on consensus or voting, as decided on a case-by-case basis. Votes 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.

4. Meetings. The EPSP shall convene biannually, generally approximately mid-way between SPC meetings, and additional electronic meetings may be held as appropriate. 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. Members of the EPSP shall be specialists who can provide expert advice on maximizing safety and minimizing environmental impact associated with drilling of proposed sites, including sites in hydrocarbon prone and biologically sensitive areas. Members of the EPSP shall be primarily selected on the basis of this

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specific expertise. National and consortia membership entitlements for SAS panels are stated in the Memoranda among the IODP funding agencies. The EPSP chair shall work with IODP-MI and the national and consortia committees to maintain scientific balance and breadth of expertise in the panel's membership, and to ensure regular rotation of its membership. EPSP members shall serve for terms of three years, renewable at the discretion of the EPSP chair/vice-chair and the relevant national/consortia program. If an EPSP member misses two meetings in succession, the EPSP chair or vice-chair shall discuss the problem of SAS representation with the SPC chair or vice-chair.

6. Chair and Vice-Chair. The EPSP chair and vice-chair shall be nominated by the EPSP membership and approved by the SPC. Their terms shall be two years, and may be renewed. The EPSP chair shall be responsible for providing the IODP-MI Sapporo Office with meeting minutes within one month of each meeting.

7. Liaisons. The EPSP chair shall be liaison to the SPC, with the vice-chair as alternate. The SPC chair shall be a liaison to the EPSP, with the SPC vice-chair as alternate. The EPSP vice-chair shall be a liaison to the Site Survey Panel (SSP), and a designated SSP member shall attend its meetings, as does a representative from the IODP Site Survey Databank. A science coordinator from the IODP-MI Sapporo Office shall attend each EPSP meeting. Representatives from the implementing organizations (IOs) shall also be invited to attend the meetings.