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# SPOTLIGHT 5. The New IODP Advisory Structure

With the introduction of the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) in 2013 came a new advisory structure that is designed to be more agile, allow for regional planning while maintaining a global focus, and speed up the proposal submission and review cycle. Each drilling platform is now overseen by both a Platform Provider (e.g., a funding agency) and a Facility Board that determines scheduling of expeditions and oversees operations (see the chart below). The two are tightly connected through international collaborations under the auspices of the IODP Forum, which provides a venue for exchanging ideas and views on the scientific progress of the IODP.

In this second phase of IODP, proposal evaluation involves a simple but comprehensive two-step process governed by policies and guidelines developed and approved by the *JOIDES Resolution* Facility Board (JRFB); the European Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD) Facility Board (EFB) and the *Chikyu* IODP Board (CIB) make use of the JRFB evaluation system as well. For the first step, proponent teams of no more than 20 scientists write proposals responding to two program deadlines per year and submit them to the Science Evaluation

Panel (SEP) via the proposal database maintained by the IODP Science Support Office (SSO; <http://iodp.org>). For each proposal, SEP vets the science objectives and their concordance with the IODP Science Plan (<https://www.iodp.org/about-iodp/iodp-science-plan-2013-2023>), the hypotheses to be tested, drilling strategies, and the availability, quality, and applicability of the required site characterization data. SEP allows for one pre- and one full proposal; the latter may be revised only once. Finally, SEP also incorporates the outcome of a round of external anonymous peer reviews. After applying this extensive review process, SEP determines if the proposal is scientifically exciting and the drilling strategy sound, rates the proposal, and then forwards it to the appropriate Facility Board(s) for scheduling and implementation.

For the second step, each proponent team submits a safety package to the Environmental Protection and Safety Panel (EPSP). This package is presented during an EPSP meeting, allowing the proponent team to describe the sites to be drilled using 2D/3D multichannel seismic and other supportive geophysical data. The EPSP determines if the selected primary and alternate drill sites can be safely occupied, and if not, they reject sites or alter the target depth and/or location of these sites. Over the last five years, SEP and EPSP reviewed a total of 145 proposals from 1,650 proponents, with proposals taking on average 4.5 years from first submission to execution; the fastest proposal went through this new system in 2.5 years.

This nimble IODP advisory system allows the program to react to new and exciting opportunities by implementing expeditions rapidly, for example, to collect samples and critical geophysical data concerning a recent event such as a major earthquake. Minutes are posted on <http://iodp.org> as are lists of the current membership of the JRFB and the SEP/EPSP advisory panels; links to other IODP websites provide additional information. All scientists, shipboard participation, workshops, panel meetings, and small IODP-related proposal grants are supported through the various international program member offices.

– Anthony A.P. Koppers and James A. Austin Jr.

