

SIS Mtg #1 02/03 March 2017

Bonn Germany

Opinions/Recommendations/Conclusions

The SOFIA International Summit (SIS) had its inaugural meeting in Bonn Germany 02 & 03 March 2017. As a result of presentations and discussions, the SIS (membership below) met in Executive Session on 03 March and in subsequent correspondence and came to the following opinions, recommendations, and conclusions.

1) SIS views on upcoming SOFIA Senior Review

- The SIS is encouraged to see SOFIA entering a regular Senior Review (SR) process that will provide stable planning horizon for long-term project success.
- Given the scope and nature of the SOFIA operations, the SIS believes a stand-alone/site visit SR conducted in Palmdale would be most appropriate. A stand-alone review will facilitate presentations by experts from across the project, highlighting the scientific, technical, and financial benefits of the Program's international cooperation.
- Given instrument procurement cycle time and the international partnership, the SIS believes a three-year Senior Review cycle and six-year planning horizon (consequence of three-year SR review cycle) best promotes mission success for all partners. This cycle naturally matches typical timescales for instrument development.
- Preparation for the SR is the top-priority for the project, and will require a corresponding level of commitment and resource allocation. Science case must be strong, compelling, and appealing to a broad section of community. SIS recommends care in how the science case language is framed (i.e. emphasize what SOFIA can do rather than what it cannot) to engender positive perceptions.
- SOFIA Project holds responsibility for developing the SR science case. SIS sees our role as supportive -- a "sounding board" and specialized expertise to review and critique the science case. Given experience with prior SRs of other NASA missions, SIS recommends the SR science and instrumentation presentation be top-level supported by two-to-three specific, detailed scientific topics SOFIA will address in the SR planning horizon.
- The SIS recognizes that NASA convenes a SR to evaluate programs as they exist within NASA scientific and programmatic goals and constraints. The makeup and organization of the review team is consequently the responsibility of NASA HQ. The makeup and organization of the presenting team is the responsibility of the SOFIA project team. The SOFIA team should carry out that task as best benefits the entire SOFIA team, subject only to limitations provide by NASA that might affect the review. Such SR review considerations are typically the length of the review in time or page limits, access to export-sensitive material, etc. Highlighting the contributions and value both partners contribute to the overall success of the SOFIA project is very important in the written review material and, to the extent possible, in other presentations.

- The SIS also anticipates that SR findings will be important to the DLR and other German funding agencies. Enabling bilateral insight into the SR process will significantly improve the programmatic climate for ongoing German investment in new instrumentation and other potential avenues for research support.
- SIS concurs and is concerned that the present SOFIA publication record is not a strength. We recommend SOFIA take every opportunity to strongly encourage SOFIA users to publish studies based on SOFIA data ASAP.

2) SOFIA Instrument Procurement

- SIS recognizes issues with instrument procurement and subsequent productivity. SIS would like to return to discuss this issue further in the near future. SIS endorses the SOFIA Project Manager's desire to create a more flexible and efficient approach to instrument procurement.
- SIS notes that the division of support between the DLR for aircraft operation, and other funding sources (e.g. DFG, institute internal funds) for instrumentation development and science exploitation can cause mismatches that hinder the overall project development. Thus SIS encourages the DLR to support the German community in finding long-term solutions for instrument and science programs.

3) The SIS discussed the perception that an important fraction of SOFIA observing projects are not being fully completed as scheduled. Providing investigators with the full sample or maps they proposed will spur analysis and publication. This completion fraction may well be improving as the Program matures, but the SIS endorses the proposed "will do" category that will explicitly ensure completion of high-priority projects. Such a category would also promote inclusion of students, young scientists, and others with strictly bounded timescales.

There were no dissenting or minority opinions expressed among the SIS for this report.

Attendees physically present:

SIS Members
A. Boden
J. Stutzki
M. Greenhouse

A.Harris
K.Menten
H.Moseley
J.Nousek
L.Storrie-Lombardi
[Not in attendance J. Lockman]

SOFIA Project Representatives

E.Zavalla (ARC)
K.Ennico-Smith (ARC)
H.Yorke (SMO/USRA)
T.Roellig (ARC)
H.Hammes (DLR)
H.Jacob (DSI)
H.Zinnecker (UStuttgart/former SOFIA SMO Deputy Dir)
C.Plank (DLR)

NASA
K.Sheth

Other
R.Güsten (MPIfR Bonn)
A.Pagels-Kerp (DLR)