

Dr E.R. Urban
Executive Director
Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research
College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment
Robinson Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716 USA

18 September 2009

Subject: SOLAS support for SCOR Working Group on Sea Ice Biogeochemistry

Dear Ed,

With this letter SOLAS expresses its strong support for the proposal, recently submitted by Dr. Stefels, to establish a SCOR Working Group on Sea Ice Biogeochemistry. As you are aware, the SOLAS SSC has identified a short-list of key research areas that are at the cutting edge of science, within the domain of SOLAS, and justify and require a coordinated, international research effort. The biogeochemical processes operating within, in and under sea-ice are one of these selected areas.

A range of recent studies has shown that sea ice is more than simply a reflective cap on the ocean surface: rather it is host to a range of biogeochemical processes affecting both the atmosphere and the ocean. In particular, sea-ice represents an important link between the surface ocean and the lower atmosphere in terms of surface reactions and exchange processes involving gases and particles. The research questions addressed by the proposed working group are broad in nature as well as logistically difficult so that coordinated, international collaboration is required if progress is to be made within a reasonable amount of time. Given the current large changes in sea ice distribution, such a proposal is very timely indeed.

The SOLAS IPO, as you know, has limited financial resources and at the same time has to address and support activities across the full scope of the SOLAS Science Plan. As a result, there are insufficient resources available for SOLAS to fund an activity of the scope proposed by Dr. Stefels. However, what we can offer is to sponsor Dr Stefels to attend the WG meetings. Also, the IPO will support this group to the best of its ability; ensure that it has access to the communications and organizational capabilities of the IPO, and that the Working Group's activities will be linked to the other ongoing SOLAS planning activities. For example, this topic will be the focus of a Discussion session at the forthcoming SOLAS Open Science Conference in Barcelona, and we expect that regular communiqués on the group's activities can be published via the SOLAS Newsletter and e-Bulletin. Assistance with website hosting and maintenance can also be provided.

I am impressed by the scope of Dr. Stefels' proposal and the impressive team of scientists that she has assembled to participate. I hope sincerely that SCOR will be able to support the proposal and I look forward to this becoming one more area in which SOLAS and SCOR can cooperate.

With very best regards



Prof. Doug Wallace
Chair, SOLAS SSC