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Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research
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Subject: SOLAS support for SCOR Working Group on Sea Ice Biogeochemistry

Dear Ed,

With this letter SOLAS expresses strong support for the proposal to establish a SCOR Working Group on Sea Ice Biogeochemistry, which was recently submitted by Dr. Jacqueline Stefels. As you know, the SOLAS SSC has identified a short-list of key research areas that require a coordinated, international research effort. Understanding the biogeochemical processes operating within and under sea ice is one of these selected areas.

Sea ice represents an important and poorly understood link between the high latitude surface ocean and lower atmosphere. Understanding the full climate forcing and response of sea ice requires a full understanding of its biogeochemistry and associated ocean/atmosphere exchanges of gases and particles. The research questions addressed by the proposed working group are broad and multidisciplinary in nature, and field efforts to study sea ice are logistically difficult. For both reasons, coordinated, international collaboration is required if progress is to be made within a reasonable amount of time. Given the very rapid pace of change in sea ice distribution, such a proposal is very timely indeed.

The SOLAS IPO, as you know, has limited financial resources with which it must 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. The IPO can sponsor Dr Stefels to attend the WG meetings. The IPO will support the group to the best of its ability, ensure access to the communications and organizational capabilities of the IPO, and help link the that the Working Group's activities to other ongoing SOLAS planning activities. For example, sea ice biogeochemistry will be the focus of a plenary session at the forthcoming SOLAS Open Science Conference in the USA, 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. Eric S. Saltzman
Chair, SOLAS SSC