

Guidelines for Reviewing Cruise Proposals

We ask you to provide a written preliminary assessment of each cruise proposal assigned to you as a rapporteur, and send it back to GPF Office about one week ahead of the meeting. Your assessment will serve as a basis for the discussion at the GPF meeting and will also help in preparing the minutes of the meeting by the GPF Office. The decision on each individual proposal will be taken by the panel as a whole and cannot be traced back to the applicants to individual rapporteurs. The applicants will receive the minutes of the panel's voting on their proposal together with the letter informing about the decision.

As explained in the Information for GPF Panelists, the GPF also serves as the review panel for DFG's Infrastructure Priority Programme SPP 2520 "Research Vessels", which offers funding for expedition costs and initial evaluation of cruises in connection with a corresponding core cruise proposal. Both elements, the SPP 2520 grant proposal and the corresponding core cruise proposal, are reviewed as one unit. For SPP 2520 grant proposals, in addition to the general review criteria for cruise proposals some further aspects have to be considered, notably the adequacy of the funding requested, and the fit of the proposal in the scope of the SPP.

Before you begin, please consider the following points:

- Please examine whether circumstances exist that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest. These include proposals from first-degree relatives, spouses etc., a current or planned close scientific cooperation with one of the authors or such a cooperation within the last 3 years, or a dependent employment or supervisory relationship that ended within the last 6 years. If you are not sure if a certain circumstance would classify as a conflict of interest, please contact the GPF Office. If there is a potential conflict of interest, we will release you from reviewing the proposal.
- Please treat the documentation confidentially and do not make it available to third parties. We ask you not to identify yourself as a reviewer to the applicant or to any third party. The scientific content of the proposal must not be used for personal and/or other scientific purposes. If you have any questions about the proposal, please contact the GPF Office only.
- Please base your assessment of the cruise proposal on the documents you have received. You may also refer to the publications cited in the proposal; however, the bibliography of cited works and the manuscripts are not per se the subject of the review. Please note that the applicants may not list more than 10 representative publications in their CV.
- Please use the review questionnaire provided by the GPF Office to structure your review. At the end, please provide a clear recommendation as to whether you believe the cruise should be granted.

In the following, you will find explanations on the individual evaluation criteria, which we would like you to rate unambiguously. Please justify your rating in detail in the respective description field in the questionnaire.

Regarding criteria 1 to 3, please note:

Regular cruise proposals that are earmarked by the applicants as being an integral part of a project reviewed and financed by another funding program must present a discrete scientific question of the cruise in context with the corresponding project. The scientific aims and hypotheses of the corresponding project and the significance of the cruise for that project should be further explained in an appendix but not repeated in the actual cruise proposal. In addition, the applicants should provide an excerpt from the original proposal of the corresponding project that presents the justification for the need of the cruise (including distinct objectives, hypotheses, and an accordingly derived work program of the cruise). Please assess based on this information whether the scientific merit, objectives, and gain of knowledge of the cruise have already been thoroughly reviewed in the review process of the corresponding project. If yes, you should focus on assessing the adequacy of the requested work days at sea of the proposed cruise; if not, please evaluate criteria 1 to 3 as in other regular cruise proposals or SPP 2520 grant proposals.

1) Scientific merit of the proposed work

How would you assess the quality of the project, especially with regard to originality and scientific relevance? Is the state-of-the-art adequately presented, and has the scientific case been made clear?

2) Objectives of the cruise

To what extent do the objectives convincingly reflect clear working hypotheses and an appropriately distinct topic? Are the objectives clearly defined and realistically achievable?

3) Expected gain of knowledge

Please assess whether the gain in knowledge that can be expected from the proposed work is of scientific relevance and corresponds to the objectives and work program of the cruise and, if applicable, the initial evaluation of data and samples collected.

4) Quality of the work program

The quality of the work program is critical to the success of a regular cruise proposal or SPP 2520 grant proposal. Therefore, it can be expected that the description of the work program has the largest share of the proposal.

Please assess whether the work program corresponds to the objectives of the cruise, and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the planned investigations. The applicants need to justify the choice of the working area and the time period of the cruise, as well as the envisaged stations or transects. The work program must explain which methods and equipment are intended to be used. Please comment also on the suitability of the methods and the appropriateness of the schedule. If applicable, please assess also the on-shore work program after the cruise (especially for SPP 2520 grant proposals that request funding for the initial evaluation of data and samples collected).

Please assess also whether the deployment of large equipment as requested is necessary to achieve the objectives of the cruise. Is the operation schedule comprehensible and does it correspond to the objectives and work program of the cruise? If there are inconsistencies, please make recommendations on reductions of the program.

5) Adequacy of the required ship time (works days at sea)

Research vessel deployment days are a valuable tax-funded resource that should be used economically. In the case of oceanic and global vessels, one day of operation costs about €50,000 of funding. The duration of an expedition should therefore be appropriate to the anticipated research outcomes.

Please assess whether the work days at sea requested by the applicants, the required time for the deployment of equipment, and the required time for the application of the planned methods are comprehensible and correspond to the objectives and work program of the cruise. If there are inconsistencies, please make recommendations on cutting or increasing ship time. Please note: "Work days at sea" is the time from the first to the last station of a work program (including in-transits), but excludes steaming time from and to the ports. Contingency days usually cannot be granted.

6) Institutional and personnel resources

How would you assess the work and research environment at the institution where the project is intended to be carried out? Is there sufficient personnel for the analysis of samples and data, and do the applicants have access to the infrastructure and equipment needed? In particular, the applicants should have comprehensibly explained the availability and financing of cruise equipment (especially large equipment such as ROV, AUV etc.).

In addition to work days, the required berths are another resource that is to be deployed according to criteria of necessity and economic efficiency. Please check whether tasks corresponding to the work program have been specified for all participants and whether personnel deployment is plausible. If the number of berths requested seems too high, you may vote for reduction. Similarly, the research vessels should be well utilized – if a larger proportion of berths remain unused, this must also be plausible.

7) Qualification and previous work of the applicants

How would you evaluate the soundness of the previous work, the quality of publications and the qualifications of the applicants – both in general and in terms of the proposed project? Are the applicants qualified to independently lead the proposed project and accomplish its objectives? Please note that the applicants may not list more than 10 representative publications in their CV.

8) Integration in international and national programs

Please assess whether and to what extent the proposed work is a contribution to the scientific and/or policy objectives of larger framework programs. Contributions to peer-reviewed and funded coordinated projects (such as DFG Collaborative Research Centers, Priority Programmes, Clusters of Excellence, EU programs, BMBF joined research project, HGF program-oriented funding, etc.) should be taken into account, but also contributions to other framework programs (e.g., IGBP, GEOTRACES, etc.). For SPP 2520 grant proposals, please assess also whether the project fits into the scope of the program as described in the current call for SPP 2520.

9) Data and sample handling

In order to improve the long-term archiving and curation of research data and samples, cruise proposals should seek to achieve an efficient reuse of these data and samples. The proposal should describe a cogent plan for long-term archiving and management of the data and samples obtained. Wherever possible, research data and samples should be made available for re-use by others in accordance with FAIR principles. Please regard existing standards and data repositories or archives in your discipline where appropriate. Particularly, the length of the moratorium period in which the cruise participants have priority access to data and samples should be assessed. How do the institutions participating in the project contribute to data, sample, and information management? Regarding samples (such as tissues, specimens, rock samples, drill cores etc.), please comment also on the proposed storage of such objects.

Overall rating

Please summarize your evaluation of the general quality of the cruise proposal and provide a clear recommendation as to whether the proposal should be approved. Please indicate whether you think the proposal is a clear case for inclusion in the cruise schedule and, in case of SPP 2520 grant proposals, being funded (category A); has potential for being included (and funded) but needs to be discussed at the panel meeting (category B); or is a clear case for being declined (category C).

Adequacy of the budget plan (SPP 2520 grant proposals only)

Please comment on whether the requested funds are justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project, and make recommendations for adjustments to the budget as necessary. All requested budget items should be plausible and justified based on the work programme. You may make justified suggestions for the reduction or rejection of funding items if these appear too high or

unjustified, or if funding can be expected from the core support of the respective institution. For staff positions, the cruise proposal must include a sufficiently detailed work plan in each case justifying the planned duration of employment and the level of qualification (e.g. doctoral students or postdocs).