

SOFIA Users Group Charter

The Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) is a major facility developed by NASA and DLR to further advance our quest for the origin of stars, galaxies, and planets, and the field of astrophysics in general. SOFIA collects data for the astronomical community that publishes the data. A committee of users is essential to maximize the science return of SOFIA. This committee advises the Science Mission Operations (SMO) Director who works with NASA SOFIA project, Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR, German Aerospace Center), and Deutsches SOFIA Institut (DSI) to implement advice.

Scope:

The SOFIA Users Group (SUG) is empowered to establish agenda items, call in outside experts, and write advisory reports. The SMO Director in consultation with the SOFIA Project Scientist requests specific feedback from the SUG in order to validate its approaches towards the scientific program of the observatory. The SOFIA Project Scientist will typically present the status of the SOFIA program at a SUG meeting. Issues that the SUG should consider include, but are not limited to:

- Feedback on (released) Proposal Calls
- Observer support (helpdesk, workshops, operations)
- User---friendliness of the observatory and of its interfaces to the community
- Effectiveness of outreach to the scientific community
- Assessing and reporting performance and efficiency of the observatory and instruments
- Balance of observatory capabilities and scientific needs of the community.
- Observation preparation tools
- Data quality
- Publication of data
- Data analysis methods

Membership & Leadership:

SUG members will be drawn from the US and German science communities in approximately an 80/20 ratio. The SUG shall normally comprise 10 members, with 2 from German institutions, and 8 from US queue institutions. The membership shall span scientific disciplines and include members from sister science centers.

Members will be appointed by the SMO Director (US queue) and the Deputy Director (German queue) in consultation with the SOFIA Project Scientist. To allow for balance between continuity and new input, the nominal term of membership shall be a maximum of 3 years starting on the date of the first meeting attended.

The SUG leadership has a chair-elect, chair and chair emeritus structure to provide continuity and backups. New chair-elects will be appointed by the SMO Director in consultation with the Deputy Director and SOFIA project scientist. The chair-elect overlaps with the current chair, then serves as chair for one year and then serves for one additional year as chair emeritus.

Observers representing NASA SOFIA Project (Project Scientist, Deputy Project Scientist and Project Manager); NASA Headquarters (Program Scientist, Program Executive); DSI (Director, Senior Scientist, Facility Scientist); and DLR (Project Scientist, Project Manager, Project Engineer) shall be invited to all meetings through the executive secretary.

Reporting, communicating and meetings:

1. The SUG will report to the SMO Director.
2. The Chair shall communicate with the SUG members to obtain agenda items and feedback.
3. The SMO Associate Director for Science Research and Outreach will serve as Executive Secretary for the SUG, organizing invitations and the agenda.
4. The SUG will write a report for each meeting. The SUG report will be distributed to the SMO Director, SOFIA Project Scientist, Executive Secretary and SMO Deputy Director.
5. The SMO shall publish a report for each meeting on the SOFIA website.
6. Meetings, either face-to-face or virtually through use of telecommunication technologies, should occur at least twice per year.
7. In person meetings will be primarily at NASA Ames.