



Calls for proposals to host the International Project Office (IPO) of the Stratosphere-troposphere Processes And their Role in Climate (SPARC) Core Project

The World Climate Research Programme (WCRP¹) is seeking applications to host an International Project Office (IPO) in support of the Stratosphere-troposphere Processes And their Role in Climate (SPARC), one of WCRP's six Core Projects. The Core Projects are long-term activities within WCRP that are dedicated to specific aspects of climate science as specified in their terms of reference. They are the foundation of WCRP and are home to the scientific communities – across oceans, cryosphere, land, and atmospheric science domains; process studies, modelling and observations; and regional climate information. SPARC is the focal point for climate science related to the atmosphere within WCRP. Atmospheric and climate sciences are increasingly a focus of decision-making across policy, research, and industry, and of wide interest to the general public. All SPARC efforts are part of WCRP's activities and embedded in its overarching WCRP Science and Implementation Plan. Hosting the SPARC IPO offers an exciting opportunity to coordinate an ambitious, international programme of atmospheric and climate science research that delivers real world impact.

In its 30-year (1992-2022) history, SPARC's activities have generated a wealth of cutting-edge research and valuable datasets. SPARC has a major role in key international scientific assessment reports, including the WMO/UNEP Ozone Assessment Reports which are requested by the Parties of the Montreal Protocol and its Amendments. SPARC is moving forward with an ambitious new strategic plan from 2023, which will further advance those achievements by taking a leadership role at the forefront of international atmospheric science research. The new strategic plan is organized around a mission to build the atmospheric science community's strengths in four key areas: (i) critical analyses and reviews of emerging scientific topics for international assessments; (ii) cross/transdisciplinary science projects that connects researchers across borders and domains, linking atmospheric science to other Earth system science; (iii) community development and capacity building of international and early/mid-career scientists, with development opportunities to participate in and lead projects; (iv) publicity and outreach for the atmospheric sciences to building an informed public and inspiring a new generation of climate scientists. The strategic plan includes new Partnerships and Outreach Advisory Panels that will facilitate SPARC's connection to organisations, groups and other projects, and to take strategic responsibility for SPARC's outreach and engagement, capacity building, training, and open science, respectively. Working closely with the SPARC Co-Chairs and Scientific Steering Group, the new IPO will have a strong role in shaping these initiatives and ensuring the successful implementation of SPARC's exciting new strategy.

The SPARC IPO is currently hosted at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, DLR) in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany until December 31, 2023 and WCRP is therefore seeking applications from potential institutions willing to host the SPARC IPO from January 2024.

¹ <https://www.wcrp-climate.org/>

² <https://www.sparc-climate.org/>

Benefits to the Host Institution

The Host Institution will significantly benefit from hosting the SPARC IPO by having a close interaction with this critical domain of research. It will serve as a great opportunity for the host to help deliver the exciting new goals of SPARC to the international community. In addition, the host institution will have the benefit of:

- enhancing their international profile through clear identification with the WCRP international community,
- underscoring the commitment of the national research community for international cooperation,
- association and participation with a range of international meetings, workshops, and regional activities,
- collaboration with other networks including those of early career scientists,
- contributing to the well-established links that the engagement of scientists from the host institute has already established through international research projects to the global community of climate researchers.
- career development for early career scientists in connecting them with the international research community and involvement in SPARC activities and outreach panel,
- playing an important role in refining and implementing WCRP's new strategy.

Further, development of an active scientific partnership between SPARC and scientists at the Host Institution is encouraged, with the aim of increased international exposure and additional scientific publications.

Hosting the SPARC International Project Office (IPO)

The primary function of the SPARC IPO is to provide management support to planning and implementation of WCRP atmospheric research priorities. It ensures both appropriate international coordination between different groups within SPARC, atmospheric research activities, and scientists as well as collaboration and liaison with other international programmes. More specifically, the IPO's role will be to support SPARC's work in close cooperation with the SPARC co-chairs and SSG, the WCRP leadership, and the WCRP Secretariat.

The SPARC IPO will consist of a Director and 2 additional project staff including a dedicated communications expert. To support the vision, mission and activities related to SPARC, the Host Institution is expected to provide the funds required to support and run the IPO from its inception. The Host institution will work jointly with WCRP's Joint Scientific Committee (JSC), the WCRP Secretariat and SPARC co-chairs to establish an administrative plan that will ensure that the appropriate governance is in place, including required IPO lines of authority, and management and reporting policies.

Expected qualifications of the Host Institution

Organizations submitting a Proposal to host a SPARC IPO must fulfil the requirements outlined below and have the qualifications to cover the Terms of Reference detailed in ANNEX 1:

- Willingness and ability to host an IPO of WCRP, providing secretariat, administrative, financial, technical, and scientific support to SPARC.
- Commitment to financially support the IPO for at least 5 (five) years, and demonstrable ability to secure funding to support additional operations and activities.
- Ability to attract high level candidates for the post of Director through open, international recruitment, in consultation and mutual approval with the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee, the WCRP Secretariat and the SPARC co-chairs. The recruitment of other professional office staff will be delegated to the IPO once the Director is appointed to the role.
- Ability to provide office space and IT resources for an operational secretariat.
- Technical capacity to organize virtual and physical meetings and make travel arrangements for participants from nations and agencies around the world.

Minimum requirements of a Proposal

All proposals must be backed by a commitment for at least 5 (five) years to include the following:

- Salaries for a Director, one Programme Officer and one Science/Communication Officer positions (3 full-time equivalent).
- Dedicated administrative support for the office
- Associated office space and necessary facilities
- Operating costs for communication and outreach
- Provision of IT resources and support for IPO staff
- Annual activity budget to support travel and subsistence expenses of SPARC IPO staff

Equivalent combinations of personnel and financial resources are allowed to a certain extent. Offers beyond the above requirements, such as additional staffing, particularly for website design and development, additional activity funds, and longer commitments will enhance the chances of final selection.

We will also give full consideration to proposals which partially meet the above requirements or which have not yet received a complete funding commitment by the deadline, but this must be clearly stated in the proposal and will be evaluated accordingly. We recommend proposers provide regular updates on progress of pending funding commitments after the submission.

All financial amounts shall be expressed in local currencies and in US dollars (USD) with a clear indication of exchange rates applied at the time of submission and include all applicable overheads.

Selection Process

WCRP will establish a Selection Committee to assess the Proposals with due consideration of any potential conflicts of interest. The Selection Committee will be chaired by the WCRP JSC Chair and will include the WCRP JSC Vice-Chair, SPARC Co-chairs and a WCRP Secretariat representative.

The Selection Committee might come back to individual proponents for clarification, questions and/or confirmations of commitments during the selection process. If a proposal is ultimately accepted, detailed terms of the contract will be negotiated with the selected host institution and will be established through a Memorandum of Understanding between the host institution and the World Meteorological Organization.

Timeline

Call for Proposals January 2023

Submission deadline – **15 April 2023**

Enquiries, negotiation and notification selection - **May 2023**

Expected start of the SPARC Project Office - **January 2024**

Proposals that cannot meet the submission deadline may still be accepted after the deadline if there are justifiable reasons (such as delays in institutional approval) but the intent to submit and reasons for delay should be provided in advance. Late bids will only be considered if no other suitable bid is identified and will be treated on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the Selection Committee.

Proposals must remain valid for a period of at least 180 days after the submission deadline. However, a submitting organization may withdraw its proposal by sending a written notification.

Content of Proposals

Proposals shall address all points in ANNEX 2 and be forwarded by email to Hindumathi Palanisamy (hpalanisamy@wmo.int) in the WCRP Secretariat as a single pdf document. The size of the document shall not exceed 15 Mb nor 20 pages.

Additional supporting materials, brochures, letters of endorsement, *etc.* may be forwarded in separate emails in the same way.

Communication and enquiries related to this call

All communication, material and enquiries regarding this call shall be directed in English to Hindumathi Palanisamy (hpalanisamy@wmo.int) the WCRP Secretariat. Unless stated otherwise, enquiries and replies will be posted publicly on the call web page for the benefit of all interested parties.

Thank you for your interest in WCRP!

ANNEX 1 - Terms of Reference - SPARC International Project Office

1. *The SPARC IPO consists of a Director, qualified professionals and support staff. The SPARC IPO will work closely and under the direction of the SPARC Scientific Steering Group, with oversight from the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) and the support of the WCRP Secretariat in Geneva.*
2. *The SPARC IPO is located in ##### (city, country) and hosted by ##### (institution).*
3. *The Director of the SPARC IPO shall report to the SPARC SSG for the overall activities to be developed.*
4. *The Director of the SPARC IPO shall report to its host institution for administrative matters.*
5. *The primary function of the SPARC IPO is to provide overall support to planning and implementation of SPARC priorities, infrastructure and overall governance, to ensure appropriate international coordination and communication between SPARC and the other WCRP Core Projects and Lighthouse Activities (LHAs), and other international programmes.*
6. *The SPARC IPO supports the work of SPARC in the coordination, organizational, communication, and dissemination aspects of SPARC. This includes the following responsibilities:*
 - a. *To provide secretariat, administrative, financial, technical and scientific support to the SPARC SSG and projects under SPARC;*
 - b. *To work with the SPARC SSG on the coordination and planning of SPARC activities;*
 - c. *To lead the logistical organization of relevant sessions, meetings, workshops, conferences, training sessions, teleconferences and other activities relevant to SPARC;*
 - d. *To coordinate travel support towards workshop participants including budget organization and preparation of payments*
 - e. *To prepare corresponding reports, correspondence and publications;*
 - f. *To coordinate associated communication and outreach, including newsletters;*
 - g. *To provide oversight, update maintenance of associated web pages;*
 - h. *To assist in mobilizing funds for SPARC activities;*
 - i. *To secure resources for SPARC IPO staff and operations;*
 - j. *To promote recruiting secondments to join the SPARC IPO;*

ANNEX 2 - Expressions of Interest template (selection criteria weights in %)

1. Cover page with full name and contact details of legal representative of organization submitting the proposal (1 page)
2. Executive summary (max 1 page)
3. Vision and strategy for the *SPARC* Project Office (max 1 page) – 10%
4. Host institution (max 3 pages) – 20%
 - a) Full address
 - b) Duration of commitment
 - c) Employees benefits (work permits for foreigners, taxation, wages, health coverage, etc)
 - d) Administrative capacity to run the office
 - e) Area and number of offices
 - f) Meeting rooms (area, capacity, teleconference)
 - g) Catering service and/or nearby restaurants
 - h) Visitor's support (travel, accommodation, visa, local transport, help-desk)
 - i) IT (hardware, software, internet bandwidth, web site, conference call tools)
 - j) Accommodation options nearby (location, rooms, average cost and negotiated rates)
 - k) Transport (International access, local transports)
5. *SPARC* relevance of the host institution (max 2 pages) - 10%
 - a) Experience of current *SPARC* -related activities
 - b) Experience in hosting and managing large science programmes
 - c) Local ecosystem relevance
 - d) Potential to contribute to *SPARC* outreach
6. Benefits for the host institution (max 2 pages) - 10%
 - a) International exposure
 - b) Scientific added-value
 - c) Financial leveraging potential
 - d) Partnerships
7. Staffing plan commitment (max 3 pages) - 30%
 - a) Director, programme officer, science and communication officer and any other staff
 - b) Dedicated or in-kind administrative support
 - c) Seconded experts (full-time equivalent, expertise, role)
 - d) Fluency in English and other WMO languages (well, moderate, poor)
8. Operating funding commitment (max 3 pages) - 20%
 - a) Annual budget for office facilities and operations
 - b) Annual budget for *SPARC* activities (meetings and travel - including office staff)
9. Free section with relevant material (max 4 pages)