



## **HORIZON 2020**

**Research and Innovation action**

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**ARICE: Arctic Research Icebreaker Consortium:**

**A strategy for meeting the needs for marine-based research  
in the Arctic**

### **Deliverable 4.7**

Performance evaluation:

Satisfaction survey of the call for proposals

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## 1. Abstract

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Two ARICE calls for proposals were opened in the first half of the ARICE project lifetime, the first in 2018 (ARICE 2018) and the second in 2019 (ARICE 2019). The calls offered transnational access to three icebreakers to perform research in any field of marine-based Arctic Science during each call. Information about each call was disseminated through different media. The package of call documents was available from the ARICE website. Proposals requesting ARICE ship time were submitted via online system through a unique entry point. Each proposal was evaluated by at least three external experts, recommended by the Scientific Liaison Panel, and all applicants were informed about the evaluation results. After finalizing both calls, the satisfaction survey was conducted to evaluate the performance of the call system. The main satisfaction survey was addressed to the applicants, while a simplified version of the survey was also distributed among the external reviewers. The satisfaction surveys collected information about different aspects of the call procedure, including dissemination of the call, submission and evaluation process, and information about the calls' outcomes. The main aim was to assess the strong and weak points of the call procedure to improve performance during the potential future calls under follow-up initiatives. The survey was anonymous and consisted of 19 questions in the version for applicants while in a shorter form, addressed to external reviewers, 11 questions were asked. In total, we received 24 responses from the applicants for both calls and 14 responses from external reviewers. Results of both surveys indicated that most of applicants and reviewers was satisfied (very or moderately satisfied) with the submission and evaluation process while in the open comments they provided some specific remarks and improvement suggestions for different steps of the call process. Since nearly the half of applicants plans to apply for the ship-time if similar calls are open in future, the feedback about efficiency and transparency of the call procedure is highly valuable and should be used in planning of future calls.

## 2. Introduction

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ARICE calls were announced on the ARICE website in 2018 and 2019. Information about opening of each call was also distributed to relevant research groups and institutions via different channels, including email communication and ArcticInfo newsletter.

The ARICE 2018 call was open from 11<sup>th</sup> of April to 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2018. Ship time was offered on board of PRV Polarstern (DE), in the frame of MOSAiC, RV Sikuliaq (USA), and CCGS Amundsen (CA). Eleven proposals were submitted to the call, but one proposal did not comply with the eligibility criteria and thus was excluded from further evaluation. Six proposals requested ship time on board PRV Polarstern, three proposals on board RV Sikuliaq and one proposal on board CCGS Amundsen

The ARICE 2019 call was open from 15<sup>th</sup> of April to 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2019. Ship time was offered on board of three vessels: RV Kronprins Haakon (Norway), IB Oden (Sweden) and MSV Fennica (Finland). Altogether seven proposals were submitted applying for the ship time on two research vessels, RV Kronprins Haakon and IB Oden. No proposal was submitted for MSV Fennica, most likely due to the lesser knowledge the applicants had on the ship capabilities for research operations. Four proposals requested ship time on board RV Kronprins Haakon and three proposals on board IB Oden.

The scientific topics of the proposals submitted to both calls covered a wide range of scientific disciplines, including sea ice (partly multidisciplinary), biogeochemistry, physical oceanography, biological oceanography, atmospheric physics, and sedimentology.

All proposals had to be submitted via the dedicated the online proposal submission website. The call documents were available from the ARICE website and included: (i) general information for applicants, (ii) online submission guidelines, (iii) description of eligibility criteria, (iv) proposal template for part B, (v) CV template, and (vi) description of proposals evaluation process and evaluation criteria.

For all applications submitted to both calls, the Scientific Liaison Panel (SLP) set up by ARICE (with experts in marine-based Arctic research, less than 50% from ARICE institutions) recommended external evaluators, and each proposal was evaluated by at least three external experts.

All proposals were evaluated using the same criteria. Six main criteria have been established with different weights for the final evaluation and included: (i) scientific and technical quality of the proposal, (ii) quality of work program, (iii) impact on society and public outreach, (iv) technical capability and scientific qualifications of the PI and user group, (v) national/international collaboration, and (vi) ECS training.

At a later stage of the evaluation process, the SLP convened for the Consensus Meetings to discuss the proposals and the external evaluations. Finally SLP ranked all proposals and recommend those with highest ranking for funding.

The proposal ranking was sent to the Operational Liaison Panel (OLP), who evaluated the technical feasibility of recommended proposals, in the order established by the SLP. Once the OLP confirmed the feasibility, applicants were contacted and informed about the evaluation results, including the 'Consensus Evaluation Report' drafted by the SLP.

A detailed description of the online submission system can be found in the ARICE deliverable D.4.2 while the selection report of the ARICE calls for proposals is provided in the deliverable D.4.6. The latter document thoroughly describes the process of evaluation and selection of the proposals and provides an overview of the results of 2018 and 2019 calls.

Two satisfaction surveys were designed and conducted after finalizing the last shiptime call in the early 2020. The satisfaction survey for the call applicants collected information about different aspects of the call procedure, including dissemination of the call, information availability, submission and evaluation process, information about the calls' outcomes, and support for preparing a proposal. The second satisfaction survey was addressed to external evaluators and consisted of a shortened list of questions, mainly focused on the evaluation process. The main aim of both surveys was to assess the strong and weak points of the call procedure in order to improve performance during the potential future calls under follow-up initiatives. Both surveys were anonymous and required approximately 5-10 minutes to fill the form. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent via the ARICE Project Office to 118 applicants and 58 external reviewers. In total, 24 applicants from both calls responded to the invitation and filled the survey while 14 responses were received from external reviewers. Both surveys were conducted during the COVID-19 outbreak and we received signals that some reviewers had limited access to their offices (hence to their call and evaluation documents) and were not able to provide detailed answers to the survey.

### 3. Structure of the satisfaction surveys

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#### 3.1 Satisfaction survey for the applicants

The satisfaction survey for the applicants of the ship time calls consisted of five sections. The first section was designed to collect general information about the status of the respondent. Three following sections included detailed questions about dissemination of the ship time calls, availability and clarity of information about the call details and requirements, and a support for the proposal preparation. The final section asked about the overall opinion of the call procedures and suggestions for improvements. The radio button question type (allowing for a single answer) was used for all questions except one, which was the multiple choices question. The radio button questions offered five fixed answer options (two positive, one neutral, and two negative, e.g. strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/ strongly disagree) and one other option, allowing for free text answer. After each radio button question the open box for free text detailed comments was available.

Three questions in the first section inquired if the respondent was the lead proponent of the submitted proposal, if he/she was an Early Career Scientist, and if he/she was planning to apply for the ship-time if similar calls are to be opened in future.

The following section consisted of three questions devoted to the dissemination of the ship time calls. The respondents were asked how they obtained information about the call opening (that was the one multiple choices question), if the information about the call was distributed widely enough and if it was distributed early enough in advance to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparation.

The third section was the most comprehensive one and included eight questions focused on availability, clarity, completeness and adequacy of information about the call details and requirements. The respondents were asked whether in their opinions:

- Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible;
- Eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively;
- ARICE data policy was described clearly and comprehensively and was not in conflict with the institutional data policy of the applicant;
- Specific terms for access were clearly and comprehensively described for a vessel applied for by the applicant;
- A proposal template was well explained in the provided documentation and it was clear what information is requested and to which level of detail;
- All information required in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation;
- Online submission guidelines were helpful and easy to understand and if not, what was unclear or omitted;
- Online submission system was transparent and user-friendly and, if not, what were the shortcomings and suggested improvements.

The fourth section consisted of four questions that inquired about the support for the proposal preparation. The respondents were asked if they received information about the ARICE webinars,

related to the ship time call and planned cruises. Two questions addressed the usefulness of the proposal writing webinar and the pre-cruise preparation and risk reduction webinar. The last questions asked the opinion about the contact with the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices, in particular whether any questions regarding the proposal preparation, submission and evaluation were answered clearly and timely.

In the final section, the respondents were inquired about their overall level of satisfaction regarding the call procedures. They were also asked to provide open detailed comments, indicating what should be improved in the implementation of potential future calls.

The survey was implemented in Google Forms and the form for the applicants is included in this report in Appendix 1.

### 3.2 Satisfaction survey for the reviewers

The additional satisfaction survey intended for the external reviewers of the ship time proposals was shortened and simplified compared to the applicants' survey. The main focus was on the eligibility and evaluation criteria, adequacy and completeness of required information, and the details of the evaluation process. The first section addressed the call details and requirements, while the following section was devoted to the details of scientific evaluation. The third section focused on the support for the evaluation process and the final section asked about the overall opinion of the evaluation procedures and suggestions for improvements. The radio button question type (allowing for a single answer) was used for all questions. The same as in the applicant survey, the radio button questions offered five fixed answer options (two positive, one neutral, and two negative, e.g. strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/ strongly disagree) and one other option, allowing for free text answer. Each radio button question was accompanied by the open box where free text detailed comments could be added.

The first section included four questions focused on information about the call details and requirements. The respondents were asked whether:

- Information about the call opening was distributed widely and early enough in advance to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparation;
- Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible;
- Eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively, and were sufficient for preselecting the proposals for scientific evaluation,
- All information required in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation.

The five questions in the second section were designed to get the feedback on the scientific evaluation process. The external evaluators were inquired whether:

- Evaluation guidelines for reviewers were helpful and easy to understand;
- Two-step evaluation process, combining individual assessments and consensus evaluation was fair and efficient;

- The Scientific Evaluation Criteria (grouped in categories: scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) were comprehensive and sufficiently detailed to address all aspects of submitted proposals;
- A weighting for each category in Scientific Evaluation Criteria (scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) was justified by the call requirements and adequate to assess different qualities of proposals;
- The Scientific Evaluation process fully complied with principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality.

In the third section the respondents were asked how easy and helpful the communication with the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices was and if their questions regarding the proposal evaluation were answered clearly and timely.

In the final section, the respondents were inquired about their overall level of satisfaction regarding the evaluation process and call procedures. They were also asked to provide open detailed comments, indicating what should be improved in the implementation of potential future calls.

The survey was implemented in Google Forms and the form for the external reviewers is included in this report in Appendix 2.

## 4. Results of the satisfaction surveys

### 4.1 Results of the satisfaction survey for the applicants

From 24 participants of the satisfaction survey for applicants, 63% were the lead proponents of the proposal and 37% were the proposal partners. 26% of respondents were Early Career Scientists while 74% represented senior researchers. 46% of respondents planned to apply for the ship-time if similar calls would be opened in future while a similar number (46%) have not decided yet. Only 8% of respondents did not foresee participation in future calls.

Most of the respondents received information about the call opening from a colleague (67%) but also from the distributed emails (both general and personal) and from the ARICE website (each 29%). A smaller number was also reached by other channels as ArcticInfo and APECS website (Fig. 1).

The most of the respondents agreed with the statement that information about the call was distributed widely enough (67%, Fig. 2) and early enough (75%, Fig. 3). Only 8% (2 of 24) in both cases disagree with these statements. A quarter of respondents had no clear opinion on the extent of the call dissemination. This may indicate that they had been successfully reached via one of the available channels and were not interested to look further for information distributed in other media.

Information about the details and requirements of the call and a package of relevant guidelines and forms were available on the ARICE website. 87% of respondents (21 of 24) supported the opinion that information on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible (Fig. 4). No negative opinions were expressed about availability of information about the calls.

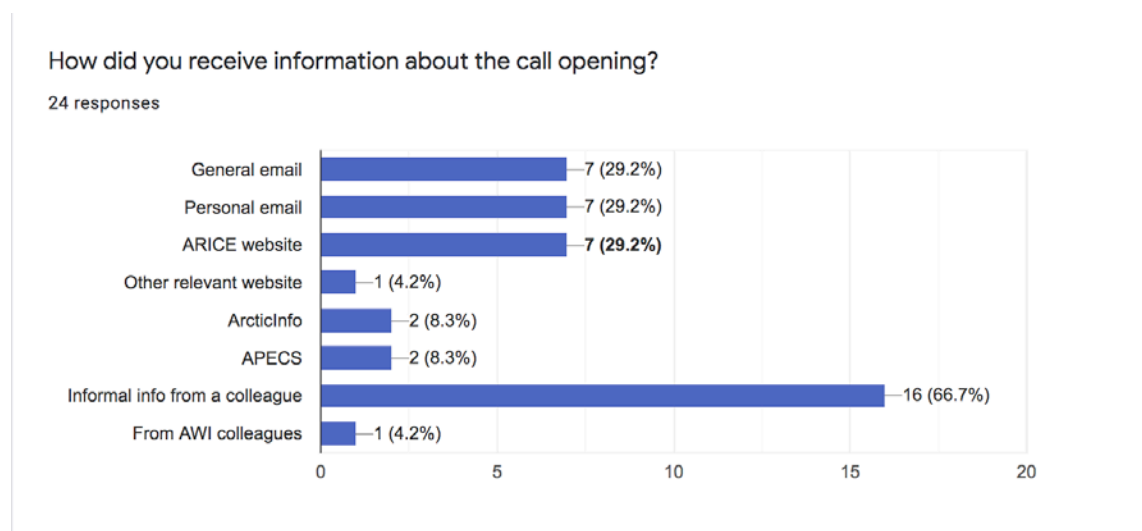


Fig. 1. Statistics of the responses about the way participants learned about the call.

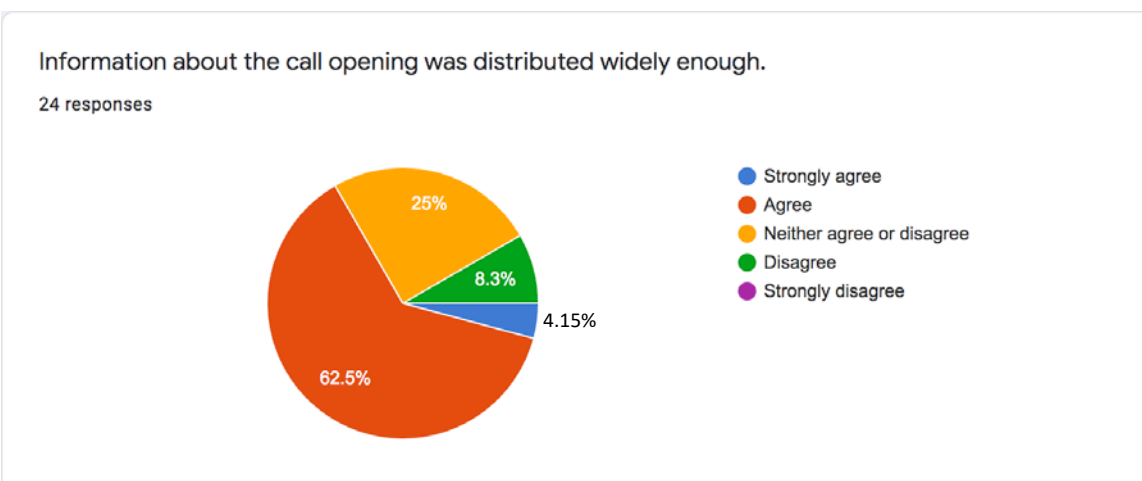


Fig. 2 Statistics of the responses about the reach of distribution of the call opening information

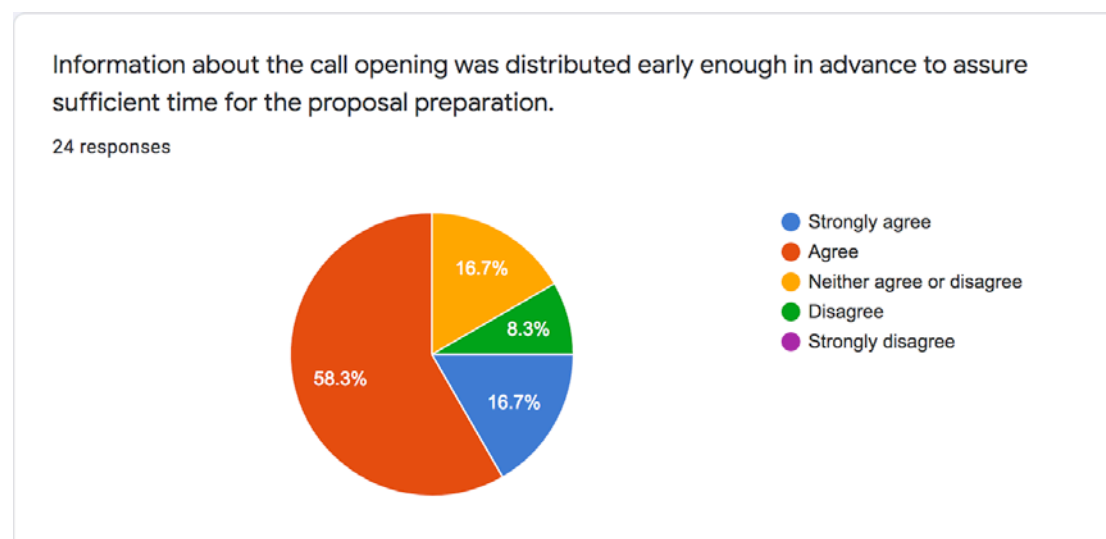


Fig. 3 Statistics of the responses about the timing of distribution of the call opening information



Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible.

24 responses

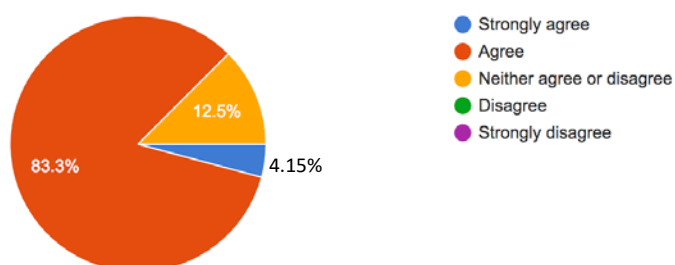


Fig. 4 Statistics of the responses about the availability of the call details and requirements

Eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively.

24 responses

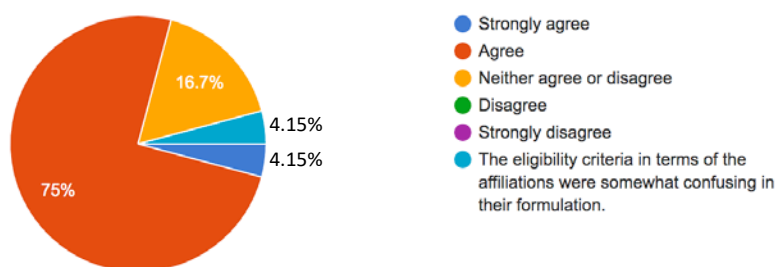


Fig. 5 Statistics of the responses concerning eligibility criteria

ARICE data policy was described clearly and comprehensively and was not in conflict with the institutional data policy of the applicant. If not, what was unclear or in conflict (please indicate in Detailed comments below)

24 responses

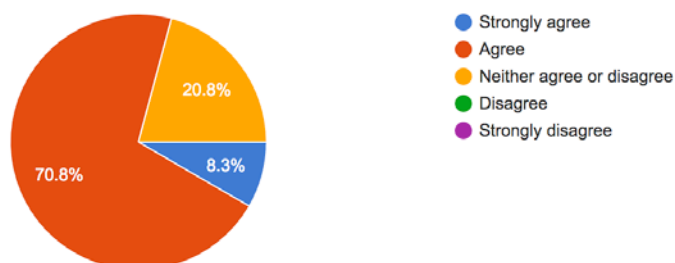
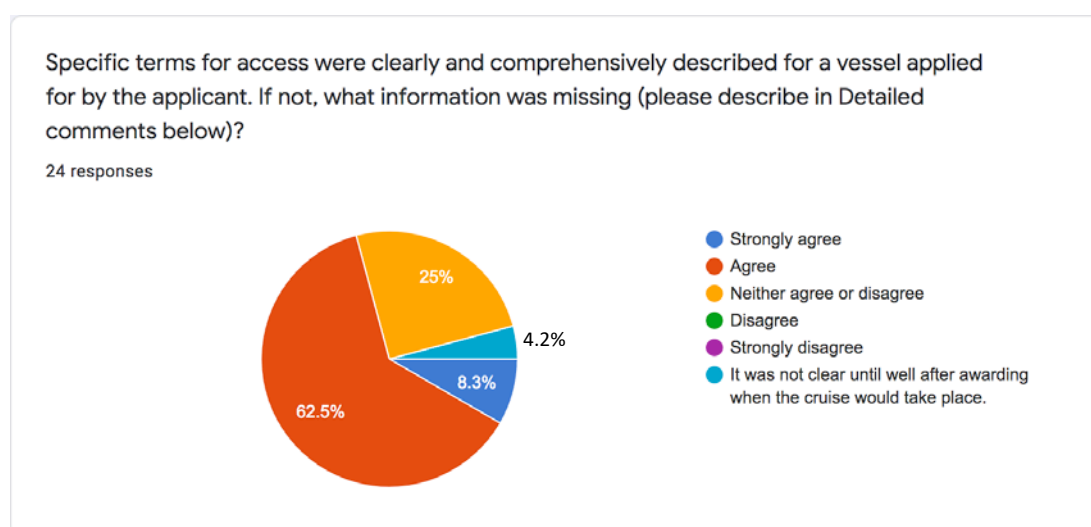


Fig. 6 Statistics of the responses concerning ARICE data policy

Eligibility criteria, including affiliation, international cooperation, training and dissemination, were described on the ARICE website and in the relevant document available for download. A majority of responding applicant (79%, 19 of 24) agreed that eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively (Fig. 5). However, one respondent stated in the detailed comment that the eligibility criteria related to the affiliation were somewhat confusing in their formulation.

ARICE data policy was also clear and well explained for most of applicants (79%, 19 of 24) and it was not in conflict with their institutional data policy (Fig. 6). 21% of respondents (5 of 24) were of the neutral opinion what may indicate that some elements of the data policy were problematic or unclear or this issue was generally not relevant to the respondent. However, no detailed comments were offered on that topic.

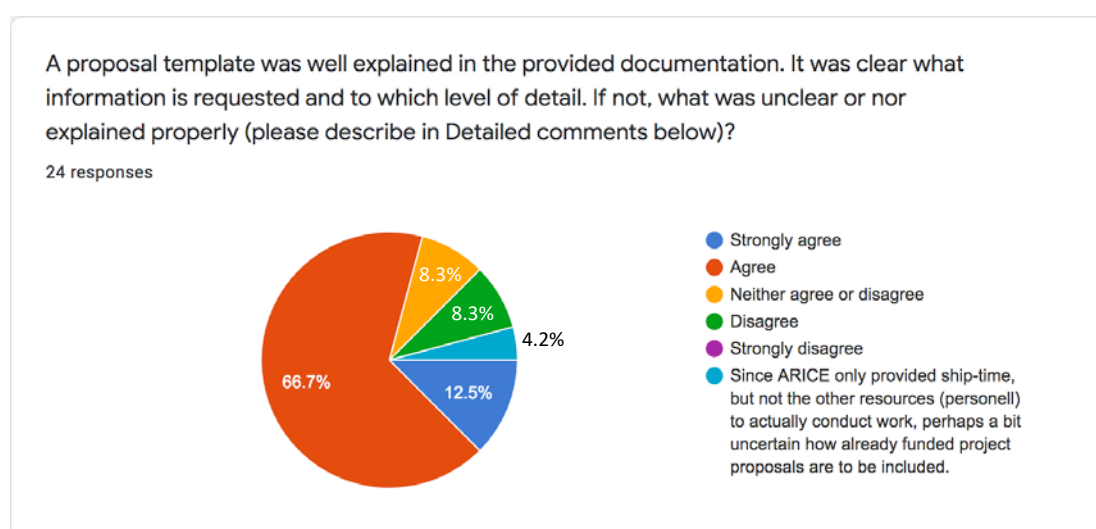


*Fig. 7 Statistics of the responses about the specific terms of access*

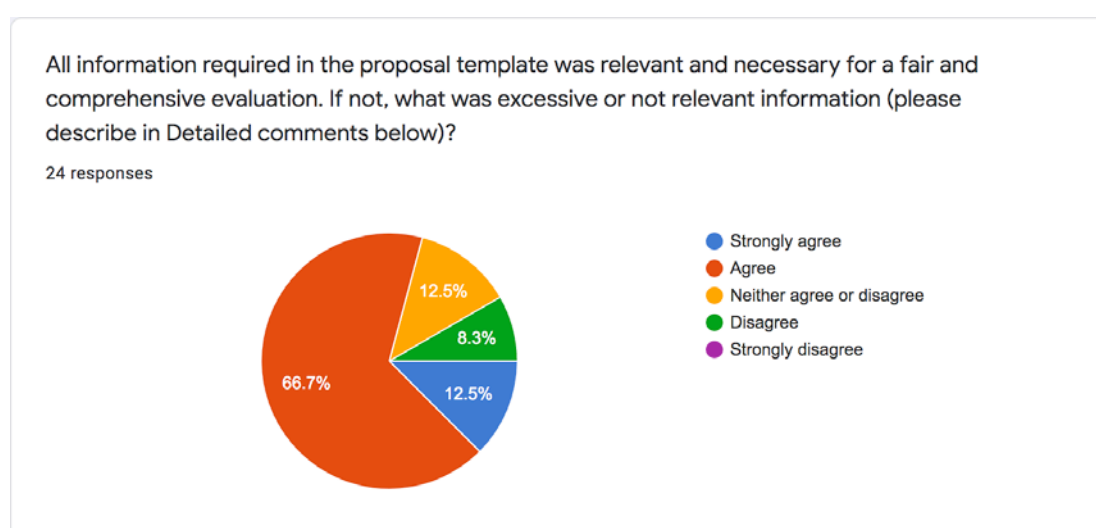
For each vessel that was offered in the ARICE calls, the specific terms for access were described on the ARICE website. Scientific disciplines that could be supported were indicated as well as scientific limitations. The area of operation and an approximate timing of the cruise were provided together with a number of days and berths available. 71% of respondents (17 of 24) found that a description of the specific terms for access was clear and comprehensive, while 25% (6 of 24) neither agreed nor disagreed with the survey statement (Fig. 7). This may indicate that while in general the description was clear enough, some specific points were not explained satisfactorily or the terms of access were problematic to comply with in the proposal. One of the respondents stated that not knowing the exact time of the cruise until well after awarding the shiptime was a problem for the proposed activity. Other detailed comment criticized too high number of different criteria and complied that it was difficult to keep an overview if they were all met. Perhaps in the future calls, some sort of a checklist, summarizing all requirements and criteria, could be provided to applicants to help them keeping track during the proposal writing phase. The support by the vessel operator was explicitly praised as excellent by one respondent.

To the majority of respondents (79%, 19 of 24), the proposal template was well explained by the provided documentation and it was clear what level of details was requested (Fig. 8). However, 8% of respondents (2 of 24) did not agree with that statement and another 8% were ambiguous about it. The main issues that were complained about in the detailed comments included the information on risk assessment that could not be found (or missing) and participant information that was only little available. It was also brought forward that since ARICE only provided shiptime but not the other resources (personnel) to actually conduct the work, it was uncertain how already funded projects were to be included.

Most respondents (79%, 19 of 24) agreed that all information required in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation (Fig. 9). 8% of respondents (2 of 24) disagreed with this view and another 8% neither agreed nor disagreed. However, only one detailed comment was offered to indicate the problematic issue. It was stressed that having a detailed station plan was difficult to accomplish when the ship itself did not have one at the point of submission.

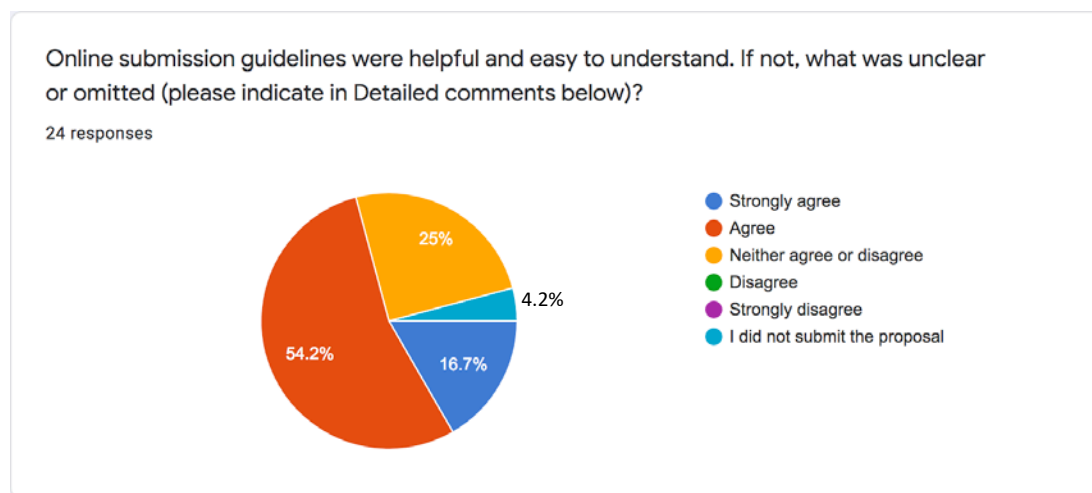


*Fig. 8 Statistics of the responses about the proposal template*



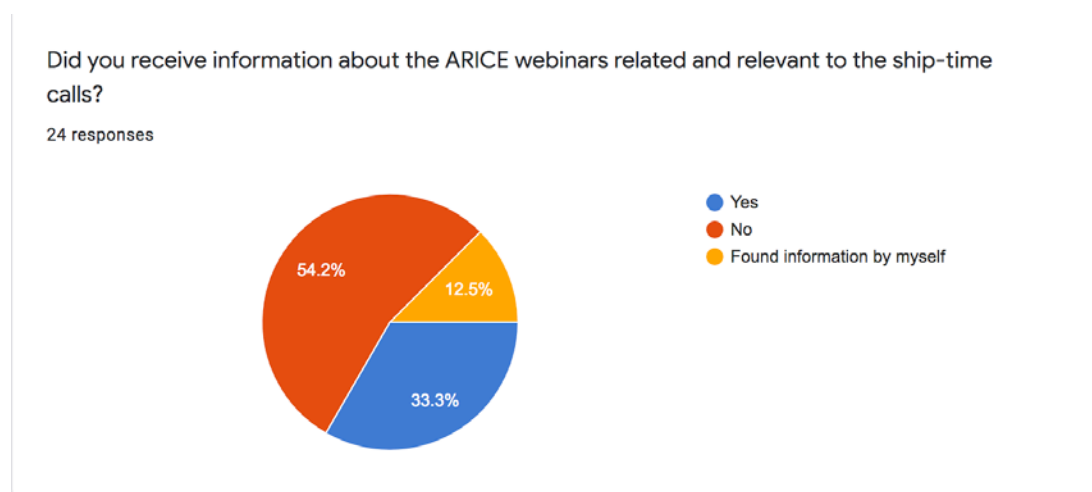
*Fig. 9 Statistics of the responses about the scope of information required in the proposal template*

Over a half of respondents (54%, 13 of 24) agreed and 17% (4 of 24) strongly agreed that the online submission guidelines were helpful and easy to understand (Fig. 10). A quarter of respondents neither agreed nor disagree what may indicate that they had some problems with the submission system or found the guidelines not fully helpful. The respondents complained that the online system could not be easily edited. According to another respondent, the fact that an acronym was necessary should have been mentioned before the submission process was started. In future, the request for acronym will be also added in a template.



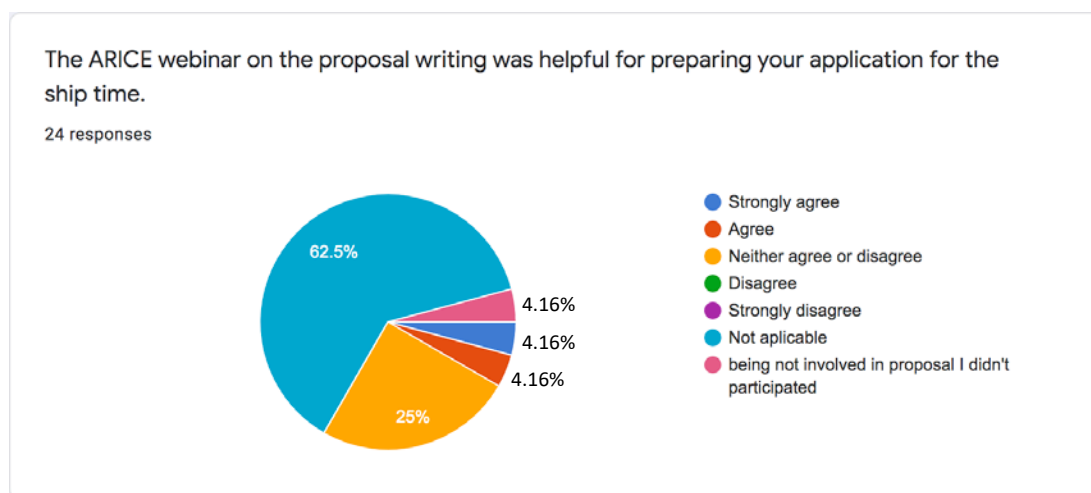
*Fig. 10 Statistics of the responses about the online submission guidelines*

Two ARICE webinars related to the ship-time calls were offered: one focused on the proposal writing and second one addressing pre-cruise preparation and risk reduction. Information about the webinars was distributed through the same channels as the call information. However, only 33% of respondents (8 of 24) received the information on webinars through these channels while 13% (3 of 24) had to find it by themselves (Fig. 11). 54% of respondents (13 of 24) indicated that they were not notified about availability of the ARICE webinars relevant for the proposal preparation. This result suggests that dissemination of information about training and support available to the call proponents should be improved in future calls.

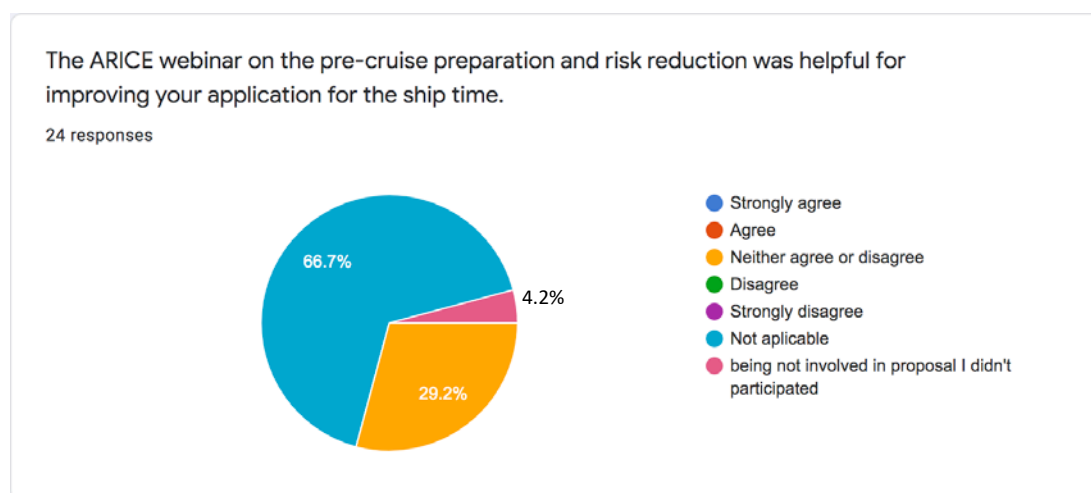


*Fig. 11 Statistics of the responses about information availability about ARICE webinars*

A relatively low number of respondents that were informed about the ARICE webinars resulted in the high percentage of 'not applicable' answers for two questions about usefulness of both trainings, 63% and 67% (15 and 16 of 24) for the proposal writing and pre-cruise preparations webinars, respectively (Figs 12 and 13). 25% and 29% of respondents (6 and 7 of 24) expressed ambiguous opinion about both webinars what probably indicates that they were informed but did not participate in the webinars or that the webinars were of limited help for the submitting of a proposal. The result was slightly better for the proposal writing webinar that was found helpful by 8% of respondents (2 of 24).



*Fig. 12 Statistics of the responses about the ARICE webinar on proposal writing*



*Fig. 13 Statistics of the responses about the ARICE webinar on pre-cruise preparation and risk reduction*

The contact with the ARICE Project and Evaluation offices was evaluated as easy and helpful by 58% of respondents (14 of 24) who agreed that questions regarding proposal preparation, submission and evaluation were answered clearly and timely (Fig. 13). 21% of respondents (5 of 24) expressed the neutral opinion and another 21% indicated 'not applicable' answer (5 of 24, including one answer registered erroneously as 'other'). The most likely the both groups did not have a direct need to

interact with the Evaluation and Project offices and therefore did not evaluate their support. One critical comment stated that formal and contractual requirements should be minimal so work could focus on the science. However, it was not elaborated which requirements were the most burdensome nor how they hindered the science-focused activities. The support from the Project office was explicitly praised in the detailed comments by a few respondents, who stated that:

*“The communication with the project officer was very good and the response time to different inquiries about proposal preparation and other topics was short. Many thanks.”*

*“All my questions were answered really helpfully and very quickly, so it was very useful for the submission process. Many thanks for that!”*

*“The support from the ARICE project office was excellent.”*

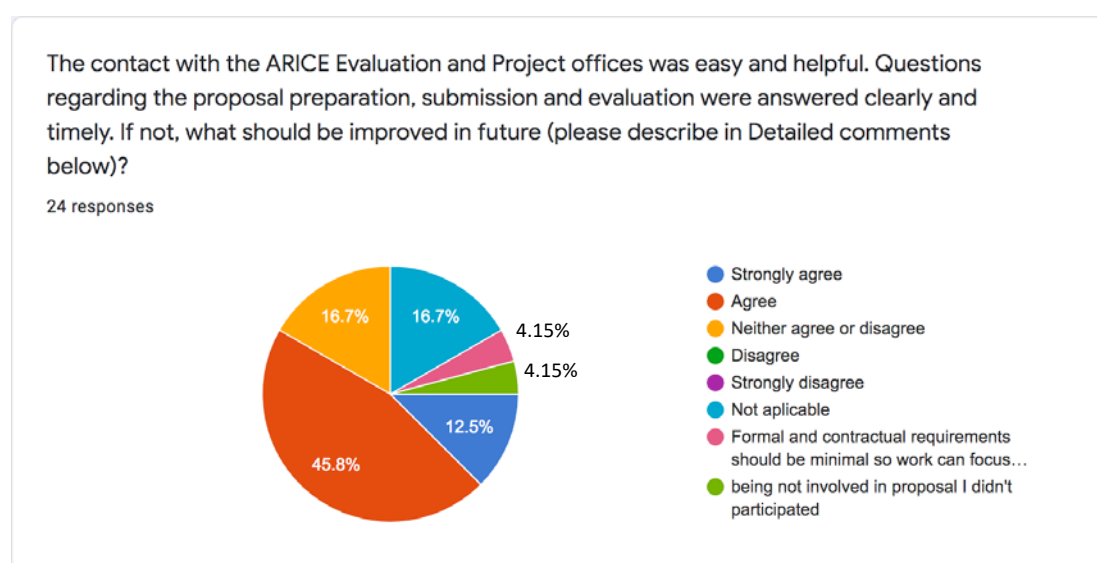


Fig. 13 Statistics of the responses about the support from the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices

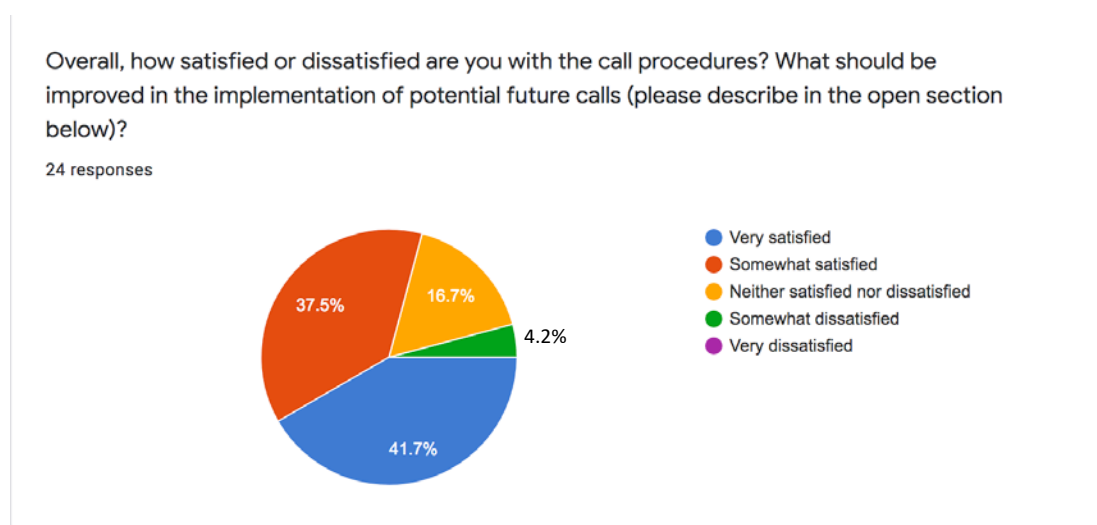


Fig. 14 Statistics of the responses about the overall satisfaction level of the applicants

The final survey question asked about the overall satisfaction with the call procedures. 42% of respondents (10 of 24) were very satisfied with the call process while 38% (9 of 24) were somewhat satisfied (Fig. 14). 17% of respondents were ambiguous about the call procedures and only 4% (1 of 24) was somewhat dissatisfied. In the final question the survey participants were also asked to provide suggestions for improvements in the implementation of potential future calls. The recommendations and open comments touched upon a wide range of different issues (partially mentioned in the earlier answers) and are listed below:

- A lot of work went into preparing the proposal together with the consortium. I feel that the degree of detail requested was a bit over the top and also that the information from the ARICE office about the potential outcomes was slightly misleading.
- The call should be announced early enough and perhaps two-stage. First short expressions of interests (PI and group, type of work, geographical area etc.) to see whether multiple projects could be merged into one proposal. Thus more projects/groups can be accommodated on the same vessel at the same time.
- Ship operators need to be as closely involved in the proposal preparation as possible. Proposal formats, the level of detail and the provision of background information on vessel equipment and logistics are very vessel specific and need to be provided up front in order for proposals to be realistic.
- As mentioned before, the only point I found confusing was the formulation regarding the affiliations of the participants with respect to the country, which administers the vessels. Other than that, I am satisfied with the call because the application process was very efficient and transparent.
- It was not totally clear what level of detail the proposal should lay out in terms of technical requirements by the consortium from the vessel and the calculation of station time and travel time.
- Coordination with other project PIs for shared cruises should be improved. Seven days of ship time are not sufficient for a stand-alone cruise if it takes 3 days just to travel to the study site (and 3 days to get back). As currently structured, this poses a burden for potential partners whose cruise may be extended by a week or more and technicians have to be paid for the additional days. There needs to be some kind of agreement on how to handle these costs for joint cruises or we may run out of willing partners. Within the US, UNOLS has an established protocol, but there is no clear protocol for international collaborations.
- Evaluation criteria need to be improved to maximize the result in terms of enlargement of network and increase the level of the whole community.
- It was extremely useful to have contacts with people that planned measurements on the MOSAIC experiment for which we applied for Polarstern ship time. It was essential to coordinate with them our planned measurements to be complementary.

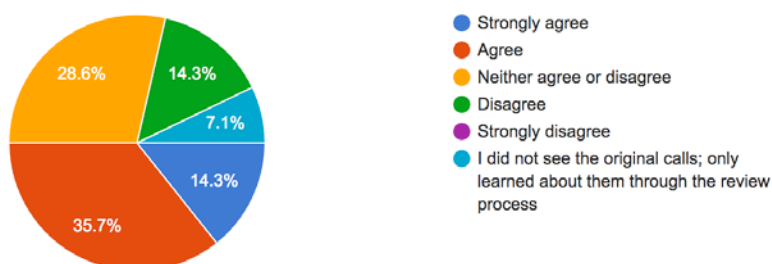
## 4.2 Results of the satisfaction survey for the external reviewers

The half of interrogated external reviewers (50%, 7 of 14) agreed that information about the call opening was distributed widely and early enough to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparations (Fig. 15). 14% of respondents (2 of 14) disagree with this statement and 29% (4 of 14) provided the neutral answer. One respondent indicated that he/she did not see the original calls and learned about them through the review process. One external reviewer expressed the opinion that the proposals were not given long enough before the deadline.

79% of respondents (11 of 14) found that information about the call details available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible (Fig. 16). One external reviewer complained again that he/she did not see the original calls and learned about them through the review process. 14% of respondents (2 of 14) provided the neutral answer, implying some limitations in the availability or clarity of information about the call.

Information about the call opening was distributed widely and early enough in advance to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparation. If not, what should be improved in future (please indicate in Detailed comments below)?

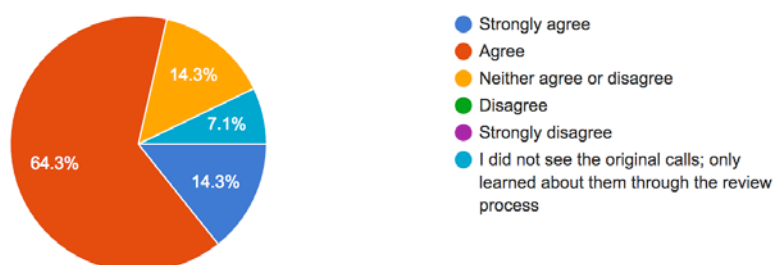
14 responses



*Fig. 15 Statistics of the responses about the information about the call opening*

Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible. If not, please describe what should be improved in Detailed comments below.

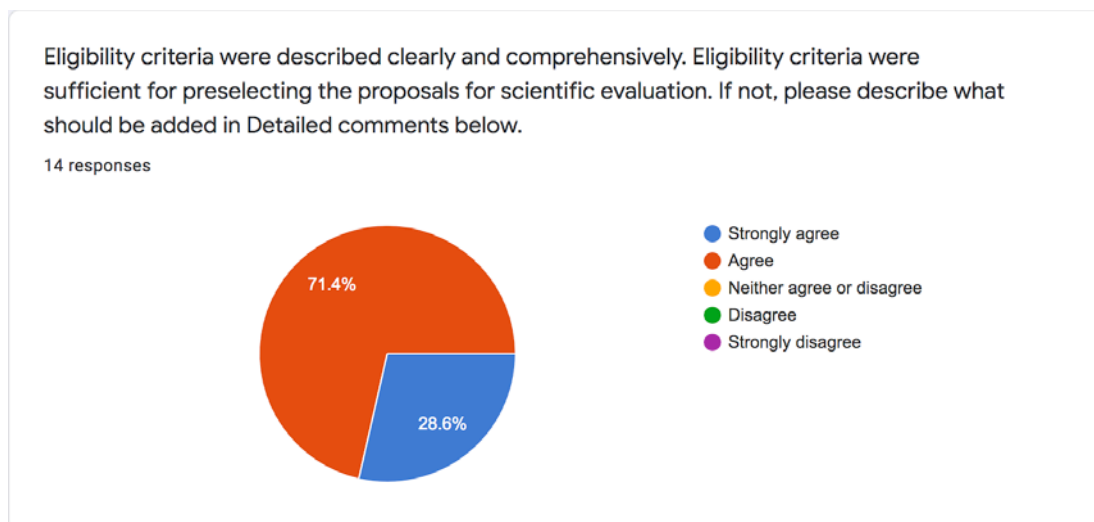
14 responses



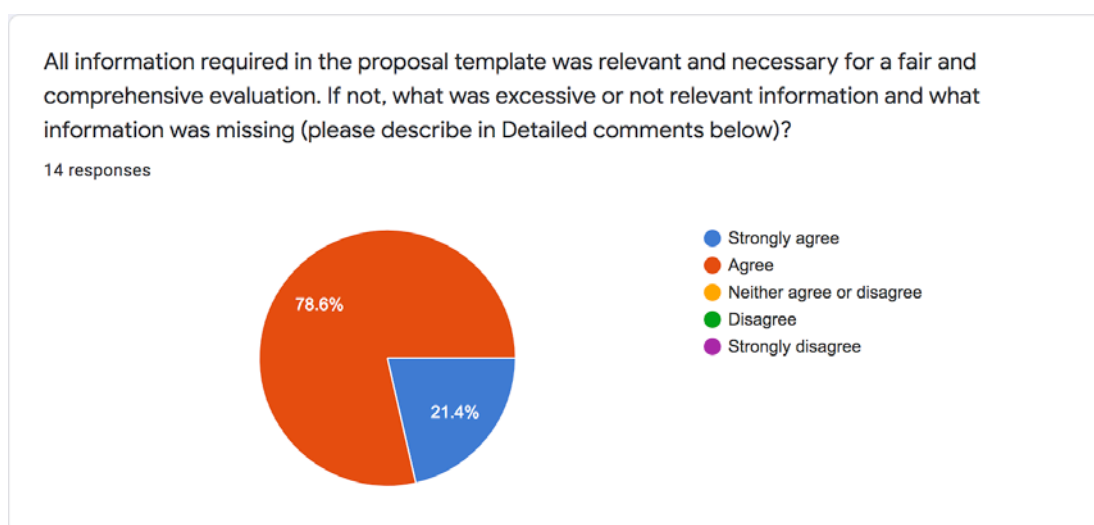
*Fig. 16 Statistics of the responses about the information on the call details and requirements*



All participants of the reviewers' survey agreed that the eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively, being sufficient for the efficient preselection of proposals for further evaluation (Fig. 17). A detailed comment was provided on the lack of a clear statement as to the eligibility of non-EU PI's for submission of a proposal to this EU funded program. According to this respondent, the ambiguity was perhaps more evident on seeing two North American ships in the roster.



*Fig. 17 Statistics of the responses about the information on the eligibility criteria*



*Fig. 18 Statistics of the responses about the information required in the proposal template*

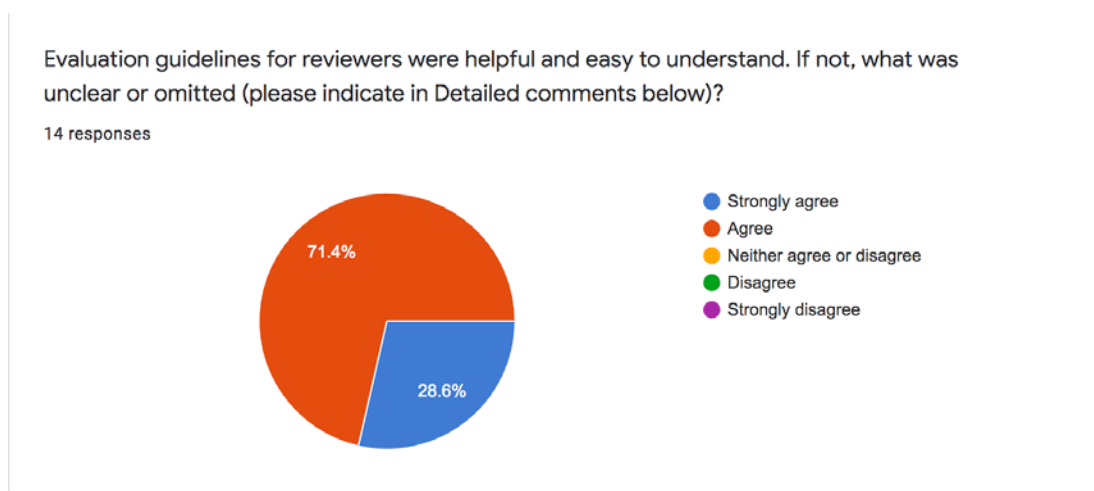
100% of respondents also shared the opinion (29% of them strongly) that all information requested in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation (Fig. 18). One reviewer suggested that it would be useful if it were indicated in the template whether the project requested sole use of the ship or it can share shiptime with other projects.

Other comment provided by one of the respondents, stated that the review process worked pretty well and was not overly burdensome. There were some challenges in implementing some of the projects, e.g. on the Amundsen, but the reviewer thought that was unfortunately part of process and may improve over time if the program is continued. Some of the proposed projects were also not as competitive as might be expected, but because the goal of improving international ship use in the

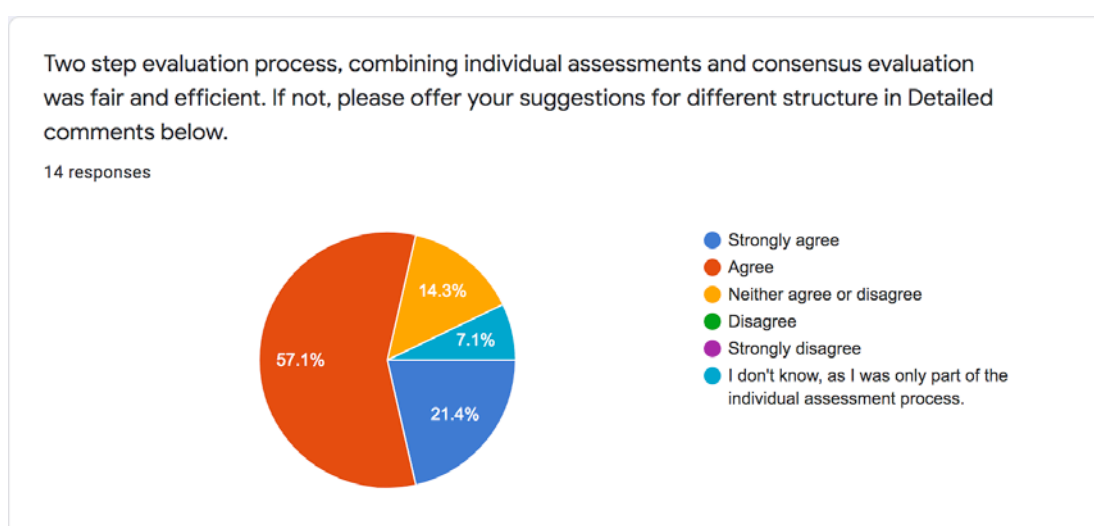
Arctic is critical, competitiveness should also increase as the program becomes better known through implementation.

The evaluation guidelines were found helpful and easy to understand by all reviewers (Fig. 19). 79% of respondents (11 of 14) also agreed that the two-step evaluation process that combined individual assessments and consensus evaluation, was fair and efficient (Fig. 20). 14% (2 of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed, but they did not offer any comments. One respondent stated that he/she was not able to judge efficiency of the two-step process, being involved only in the individual assessment.

All participants of the reviewers' survey agreed that the Scientific Evaluation Criteria (grouped in categories: scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) were comprehensive and sufficiently detailed to address all aspects of submitted proposals (Fig. 21).



*Fig. 19 Statistics of the responses about the evaluation guidelines for reviewers*



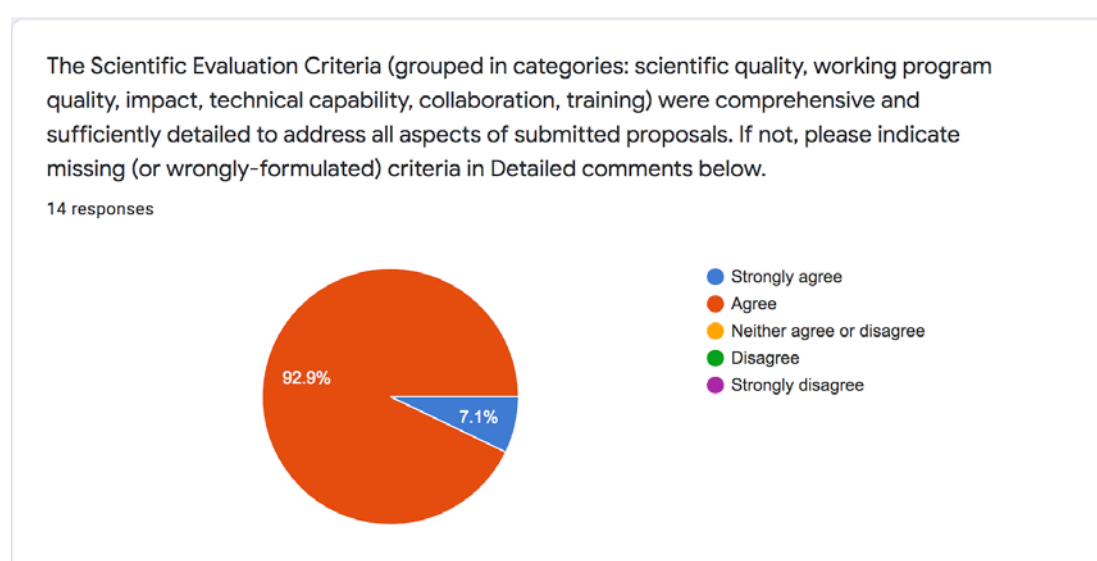
*Fig. 20 Statistics of the responses about the two-step evaluation process*

The following questions addressed in more details a weighting used for each category in Scientific Evaluation Criteria. 71 % of interrogated evaluators (10 of 14) agreed (and two of thereof strongly agreed) that individual weights prescribed to scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, and training were justified by the call requirements and adequate to assess different qualities of proposals (Fig. 22). The remaining 29% of respondents (4 of 14) provided the neutral opinion but no suggestions how to improve the weighting scheme.

One of the respondents offered a more detailed comment on the evaluation criteria and their weighting. He/she stated that the evaluation criteria covered a broad range of desired attributes for each proposal. While desirable in principle, this requested broad scope of activities did increase the need for berths for any specific project on board a ship. The consequence may be that, for lack of berths, fewer projects can be supported on any cruise, or that specific types of projects - perhaps those less dependent on specialized scientific and technical skills - are not so attractive. The reviewer suggested that it should be a subject for discussion whether it is necessary for each successful proposal to qualify across the broad spread of requirements, as at present, or whether it would be better simply to ensure that the supported suite of projects provided that span, so that the strength of some in one area would offset weakness of others with strengths in other areas.

A vast majority of respondents (86%, 12 of 14) agreed and strongly agreed (in equal proportions) that the Scientific Evaluation process fully complied with principles of transparency, fairness, and impartiality (Fig. 23). One respondent complained that he/she was only involved in one phase of the evaluation process and did not see the final results therefore was not in the position to answer the last question.

The communication with the ARICE Project and Evaluation offices was positively evaluated by the respondents. 43% of them agreed and another 43% strongly agreed (86% in total, 12 of 14) that questions regarding the proposal evaluation were answered clearly and timely. 14% of respondents (2 of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating that their interaction with the offices were probably limited or not needed.



*Fig. 21 Statistics of the responses about the Scientific Evaluation Criteria*

A weighting for each category in Scientific Evaluation Criteria (scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) was justified by the call requirements and adequate to assess different qualities of proposals. If not, please provide suggestions for improvement in Detailed comments below.

14 responses

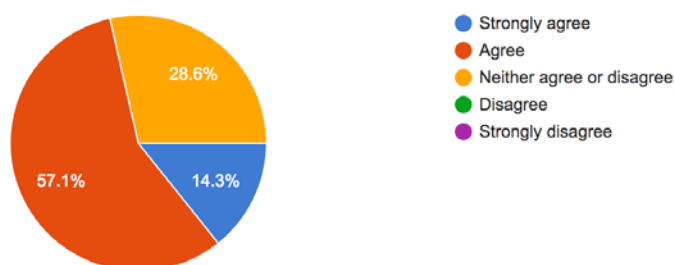


Fig. 22 Statistics of the responses about the weights of each category in Scientific Evaluation Criteria

Scientific Evaluation process fully complied with principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality. If not, please indicate its shortcomings and a way for improvement in Detailed comments below.

14 responses

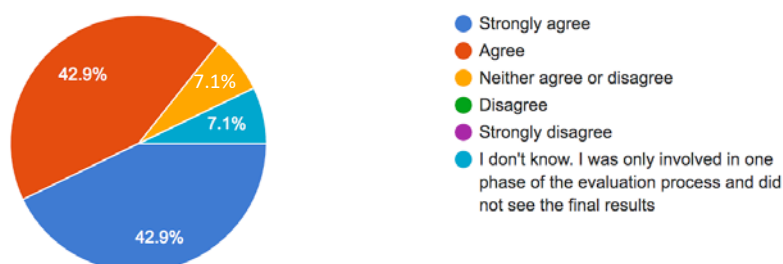


Fig. 23 Statistics of the responses about the principles of transparency, fairness, and impartiality

The communication with the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices was easy and helpful. Questions regarding the proposal evaluation were answered clearly and timely. If not, what should be improved in future (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

14 responses

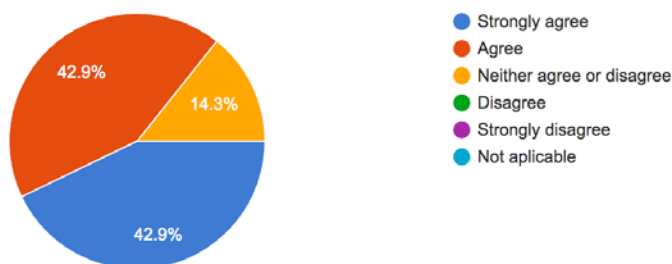
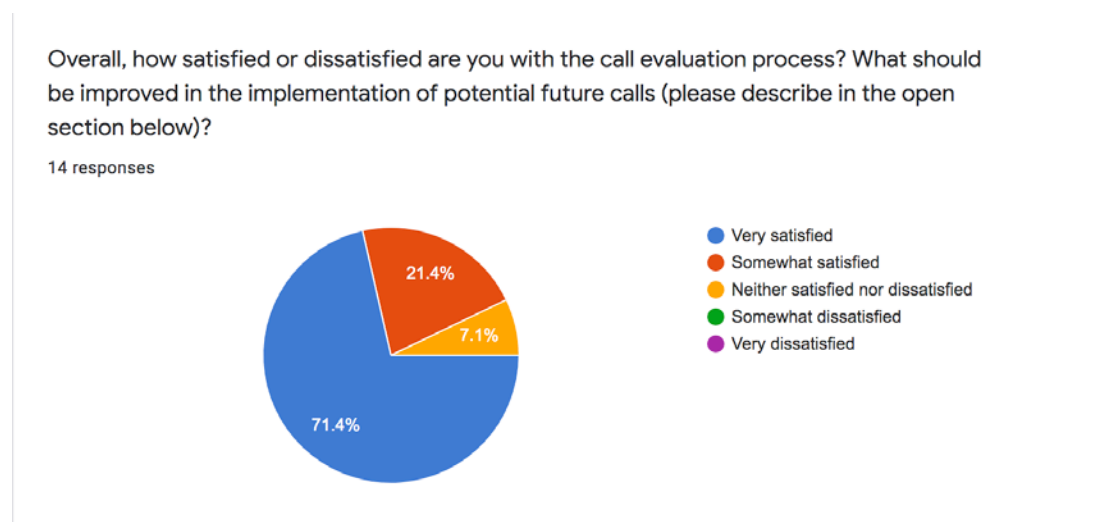


Fig. 24 Statistics of the responses about the communication with the ARICE offices



*Fig. 25 Statistics of the responses about the overall satisfaction level of the external reviewers*

In general, the external reviewers were either very satisfied (71%, 10 of 14) or somewhat satisfied (21%, 3 of 14) with the evaluation process (Fig.25). Only 7% (1 of 14) gave the neutral answer. More feedback was provided in the final comments and recommendations from the external reviewers. Overview of detailed comments is presented below:

- A few reviewers stated that it would be nice to have a feedback on the final result of the evaluation (was the project accepted or not).
- It would be helpful to do more advertisement. There still are people out there who would like to participate but didn't know how, when and where.
- One of the reviewers had to give his/her opinion only by memory. His/her laboratory was closed until May 11 and he/she did not have access to my documents on which I had taken notes on the projects I had to evaluate. Overall everything was very well organized.
- It was also suggested to better explain the entire process to the external reviewers providing an individual assessment). The reviewer should have been informed what the final outcome was, even if the individual proposal evaluated by him/her was not selected for funding. The email with the invitation to the survey was the first and only time to learn what the outcome of this process has been. According to the reviewer, with only 18 proposals over a two-year period, it should not be very difficult to notify the reviewers of the general outcome once selections have been made. The conclusions of this questionnaire/evaluation should also be shared with past reviewers and proposers for the benefit of future proposers and reviewers.

Regarding the last comment, the link to the website with the call outcomes was actually sent to each reviewer after finalizing the selection of proposals for funding and announcement of the results. To make the final outcomes more transparent and easily accessible to external reviewers in future calls, a separate summary document should be perhaps put together and distributed directly to their email addresses in addition to the notification with the link.

## 5. Final conclusions

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In general, two conducted satisfaction surveys, one for the call applicants and one for the external reviewers, revealed that most of respondents were satisfied with the procedures for the preparing and submitting the call applications and with the following evaluation process of the submitted proposals.

According to the majority of responses, the call was announced widely enough and early in advance, allowing sufficient time for the proposal preparation. Generally, the call applicants were better informed about call opening than the external reviewers. Most of respondents agreed that the call details and requirements as well as eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively, and were easy to find on the ARICE website. ARICE data policy was generally acceptable for all applicants. The specific terms of access were described comprehensively according to the majority of reviewers albeit a part of applicants indicated problems with some specific issues. However, terms of access were defined by the vessel technical and operational capabilities and could not be adjusted on demand for different users. The support by vessel operators was highly regarded.

The proposal template and requested information were generally found appropriate and well explained in the submission documents. A few critical remarks referred to detailed information that was required but could be difficult to know precisely without prior knowledge of the exact route or timing of the cruise. Most of respondents agreed that the online submission system was well documented by the provided guidelines. However, some applicants complained that the information in the system could not be easily edited.

Two ARICE webinars related to the ship-time calls were offered but only a small share of respondents received information about available training. The proposal writing webinar was generally found more helpful than the pre-cruise preparation one but generally only very few applicants participated in the ARICE webinars. Therefore, dissemination of information on available trainings should be improved in future calls and they should be perhaps more oriented towards questions and topics, suggested by potential participants.

Eligibility criteria and the choice and details (weighting) of Scientific Evaluation criteria were found adequate, fair and efficient to assess different qualities of the proposals by most of the external reviewers.

The support from the Project and Evaluation offices was highly appreciated by the interrogated applicants and external reviewers. Great majority of applicants and reviewers were satisfied with the submission and evaluation process. They also agreed that the Scientific Evaluation process fully complied with principles of transparency, fairness, and impartiality. While the Scientific Evaluation guidelines were found helpful and transparent by the majority of respondents, some of them suggested that the entire process could have been better explained to the external reviewers and they should have received more extensive and detailed feedback about the final outcomes of the selection process. While the external reviewers were notified when the call outcomes were available on the website, the survey showed that some of them would prefer to receive more detailed and directly sent information.

Some specific recommendations were offered by applicants and external reviewers, participating in both surveys:

- To reduce the workload for preparation of the proposals, two-stage procedure could be considered. During the first step, the expressions of interest should be used for identifying potential group that could be merged together to increase the efficiency of shiptime use;
- Ship operators should be more closely involved in the proposal preparation since all information requested in the proposal is highly vessel specific;
- The level of detail for the requested information on technical requirements should be adjusted if the general information about the cruise (exact area of operation and cruise period) is not available to the applicants;
- Coordination with other project PIs for shared cruises should be improved to increase efficiency of shiptime use and need for technical personnel;
- A prior contact with other groups for shared cruises is extremely useful and allows to increase complementarity of measurements, It should be clearly recommended for the preparation of proposals;
- While the evaluation criteria covered a broad range of desired attributes for each proposal, it could be individually assessed whether it is necessary for each successful proposal to qualify across the broad spread of requirements, as at present, or whether it would be better simply to ensure that the supported suite of projects provided that span, so that the strength of some in one area would offset weakness of others with strengths in other areas.
- The entire selection process of proposals recommended for funding should be better explained to external reviewers and the feedback to the external reviewers about the final outcomes should be more comprehensive in future.

Summarizing, the conducted satisfaction surveys provided valuable information about the strong and weak points of the proposal preparation, submission and evaluation process and should be used for improved planning of future calls. Additional practical recommendation for future shiptime calls is to perform the survey within a short time after closing a call to increase participation (in particular of the external reviewers) and get the relevant feedback when the impression of the call procedures is still fresh and more detailed.

## Appendix 1

### ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls

Two ARICE calls for ship-time were announced in 2018 and 2019. Ship-time was offered on three vessels (RV Sikuliak, PRV Polarstern, and CCGS Amundsen) in the 2018 call and on three vessels (RV Kronprins Haakon, IB Oden, and MSV Fennica) in the 2019 call. In total 18 proposals were submitted for two ship-time calls. 10 proposals submitted to the 2018 call and 7 proposals submitted to the 2019 call complied with the eligibility criteria and were evaluated by at least three independent reviewers for each submission. Based on external reviews, the Scientific Liaison Panel recommended 3 proposals in 2018 and 5 proposals in 2019 for implementation.

This satisfaction survey collects information from all applicants about different aspects of the call procedure, including dissemination of the call, submission and evaluation process, and information about the calls' outcomes. The main aim is to assess the strong and weak points of the call procedure to improve performance during the potential future calls under follow-up initiatives.

The survey is anonymous and it takes only a few minutes to fill it. We appreciate your help!

Were you the lead proponent for the submitted proposal?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you an Early Career Scientist?

☐ Yes

☐ No


Do you plan to apply for the ship-time if similar calls will be opened in future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I do not know yet

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls

### Dissemination of the ship-time call

How did you receive information about the call opening?

☐ General email

☐ Personal email

☐ ARICE website

☐ Other relevant website

☐ ArcticInfo

☐ APECS

☐ Informal info from a colleague

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about the call opening was distributed widely enough.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about the call opening was distributed early enough in advance to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparation.

☐ Strongly agree


☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls

### Information about the call details and requirements

Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

ARICE data policy was described clearly and comprehensively and was not in conflict with the institutional data policy of the applicant. If not, what was unclear or in conflict (please indicate in Detailed comments below)

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on data policy (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Specific terms for access were clearly and comprehensively described for a vessel applied for by the applicant. If not, what information was missing (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on terms for access (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

A proposal template was well explained in the provided documentation. It was clear what information is requested and to which level of detail. If not, what was unclear or not explained properly (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on proposal template (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

All information required in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation. If not, what was excessive or not relevant information (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on required information (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Online submission guidelines were helpful and easy to understand. If not, what was unclear or omitted (please indicate in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on submission guidelines (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Online submission system was transparent and user-friendly. If not, what are the shortcomings and suggested improvements (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree


☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree


☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on online submission system (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls

### Support for the proposal preparation

Did you receive information about the ARICE webinars related and relevant to the ship-time calls?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Found information by myself
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The ARICE webinar on the proposal writing was helpful for preparing your application for the ship time.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The ARICE webinar on the pre-cruise preparation and risk reduction was helpful for improving your application for the ship time.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The contact with the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices was easy and helpful. Questions regarding the proposal preparation, submission and evaluation were answered clearly and timely. If not, what should be improved in future (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on the support from the ARICE Project and Evaluation offices (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls

### Overall opinion

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the call procedures? What should be improved in the implementation of potential future calls (please describe in the open section below)?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied

☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied


☐ Somewhat dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please offer your suggestions and recommendations for improving an implementation of potential future calls for ship-time.

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



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## Appendix 2

### ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls - External Reviewers

Two ARICE calls for ship-time were announced in 2018 and 2019. Ship-time was offered on three vessels (RV Sikuliak, PRV Polarstern, and CCGS Amundsen) in the 2018 call and on three vessels (RV Kronprins Haakon, IB Oden, and MSV Fennica) in the 2019 call. In total 18 proposals were submitted for two ship-time calls. 10 proposals submitted to the 2018 call and 7 proposals submitted to the 2019 call complied with the eligibility criteria and were evaluated by at least three independent reviewers for each submission. Based on external reviews, the Scientific Liaison Panel recommended 3 proposals in 2018 and 5 proposals in 2019 for implementation.

This short survey collects information from all reviewers about the evaluation process of proposals submitted during 2018 and 2019 calls. The main aim is to assess the strong and weak points of the evaluation process to improve performance during the potential future calls under follow-up initiatives.

The survey is anonymous and it takes only a few minutes to fill it. We appreciate your help!

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### ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls - External Reviewers

#### Call details and requirements

Information about the call opening was distributed widely and early enough in advance to assure sufficient time for the proposal preparation. If not, what should be improved in future (please indicate in Detailed comments below)?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Information about the call details and requirements available on the ARICE website was easy to find, comprehensive and accessible. If not, please describe what should be improved in Detailed comments below.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on information availability (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility criteria were described clearly and comprehensively. Eligibility criteria were sufficient for preselecting the proposals for scientific evaluation. If not, please describe what should be added in Detailed comments below.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on eligibility criteria (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

All information required in the proposal template was relevant and necessary for a fair and comprehensive evaluation. If not, what was excessive or not relevant information and what information was missing (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on proposal template (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls - External Reviewers

### Scientific evaluation process

Evaluation guidelines for reviewers were helpful and easy to understand. If not, what was unclear or omitted (please indicate in Detailed comments below)?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on evaluation guidelines (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Two step evaluation process, combining individual assessments and consensus evaluation was fair and efficient. If not, please offer your suggestions for different structure in Detailed comments below.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on the structure of evaluation process (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

The Scientific Evaluation Criteria (grouped in categories: scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) were comprehensive and sufficiently detailed to address all aspects of submitted proposals. If not, please indicate missing (or wrongly-formulated) criteria in Detailed comments below.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree or disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on Scientific Evaluation Criteria (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

A weighting for each category in Scientific Evaluation Criteria (scientific quality, working program quality, impact, technical capability, collaboration, training) was justified by the call requirements and adequate to assess different qualities of proposals. If not, please provide suggestions for improvement in Detailed comments below.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on the individual weights for different categories in Scientific Evaluation Criteria (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Scientific Evaluation process fully complied with principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality. If not, please indicate its shortcomings and a way for improvement in Detailed comments below.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on transparency, fairness and impartiality (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls - External Reviewers

### Support for the evaluation process

The communication with the ARICE Evaluation and Project offices was easy and helpful. Questions regarding the proposal evaluation were answered clearly and timely. If not, what should be improved in future (please describe in Detailed comments below)?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed comments on the support from the ARICE Project and Evaluation offices (optional)

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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## ARICE Survey for the Ship-time Calls - External Reviewers

### Overall opinion

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the call evaluation process?  
What should be improved in the implementation of potential future calls (please describe in the open section below)?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please offer your suggestions and recommendations for improving an implementation of potential future calls for ship-time.

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



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