

August 2023

Support and advice for Special Interest Groups (SIGs)



The purpose of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) is to bring members together to work on thematic issues related to the activities of ATLAS. Currently, there are 13 active SIGs within ATLAS. Proposals for the formation of new special interest groups should be submitted to the ATLAS Administration.

The SIGs cover a broad range of topic areas and unite academics, researchers and practitioners from the wide range of ATLAS member organisations.

ATLAS sees the role of the SIGs as one that not only maintains strong links with other areas of the ATLAS network, but one that publicises the diverse nature of the ATLAS forum to an international audience.

Expectations

SIGs are formed to bring ATLAS members together to work on specific areas under the ATLAS remit. As such, it is expected that each SIG will work towards defined goals and be a positive part of the ATLAS forum. Each SIG has a dedicated coordinator (or coordinators) who manage the membership and organise events and publications to promote the SIGs activities.

ATLAS has many resources available to assist the SIGs and their coordinators in achieving their goals and these are outlined in more detail below.

Meeting and events

ATLAS will provide resources to help organise meetings or events organised by SIGs. Please see the separate 'Guidelines for SIG meetings and events' for full details. It is expected that SIGs will organise regular events, for instance on a yearly or an every other year basis.

ATLAS will provide help with:

- Marketing of the meeting or event;
- The collection and collating of all abstracts and papers, both before the meeting and afterwards;
- Registration and invoicing processes.

ATLAS has successfully hosted conferences, meetings and events around the world and can provide assistance and advice on many matters relating to the organisation, financial management and outputs of such events.

Annual conference

During the ATLAS annual conferences, SIGs are given the opportunity to report about its activities. ATLAS realises that it is not always possible for SIG coordinators to attend the annual conference. However, ATLAS does expect SIG coordinators to produce an annual report, which is included in the ATLAS Reflections publication. This report should include details of the activity of the SIG during the previous year and give an indication of upcoming targets.

The ATLAS administration will ask for these reports in good time before the annual conference and it is appreciated if these could be submitted before the given deadline.

Websites and e-mail lists

ATLAS has a webpage set up for each of the SIGs and this can be accessed through the ATLAS homepage. SIGs are invited to update their webpages and provide up to date reports and information.

If any SIG has a separate webpage, please contact the ATLAS administration to ensure that this is linked to the ATLAS site and to discuss the management of this page.

ATLAS does offer all SIGs their own e-mail information list. All people who are member of the SIG and are known at the ATLAS administration, can participate in the e-mail SIG information list.

Membership of SIGs

Only people working at ATLAS member institutions can become a member of a SIG. SIG coordinators will in first instance create a list of the members of the SIG membership and contact them when necessary. ATLAS will in general keep a list of all the members of the SIG. New members and other people interested in being kept informed about the SIGs activities can contact the ATLAS administration and ask to be added to specific e-mail lists.

ATLAS sees the SIGs as playing an important role in disseminating information about ATLAS and the SIGs and is willing to work with SIG coordinators to maximise the potential of each SIG.

SIG Coordinators

SIG coordinators play a vital role in keeping the SIG members involved and informed about future events, meetings and publications.

ATLAS suggests that each SIG consider succession planning for the current coordinator to ensure that the vibrancy and activity of the SIG continues for the longer term. ATLAS would also suggest preparing a 3 to 5 year plan of events, meeting and activities for each SIG. This will help ATLAS in longer term planning and will allow momentum to continue within the SIGs.

Publications

ATLAS has a successful online bookshop and also has avenues for publication. SIG coordinators should liaise with the ATLAS administration to investigate all possible avenues for publication from meetings and events.

ATLAS also appreciates all donations of royalties. Publications from SIG meetings and events can help fund further meetings and events through donating royalties to ATLAS.

Research

The SIGs are an ideal way to form international research collaborations. ATLAS may be able to offer small amounts of financial support for research undertaken by SIG members and is always open to further funding opportunities.

Proposals for new SIGs

Proposals for the formation of special interest groups should be submitted to the ATLAS administration. Proposals can be put forward by full members of the association, but to be formally established as a special interest section, they must have the support of at least four full members, and should have a clear set of aims and objectives, as well as an annual work plan. No funding can be provided at this early stage from ATLAS, but subject to approval from the Executive special interest groups may make funding applications using the ATLAS name. All the participating institutions within a special interest group should be ATLAS members.