

The Proposal Review and Observing Process

George Bendo

UK ALMA Regional Centre Node
Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics
The University of Manchester



A large, dark-colored ALMA telescope dish is shown against a clear blue sky. The dish is composed of many smaller panels and is supported by a complex metal truss structure. The perspective is from a low angle, looking up at the dish. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

ALMA uses roughly the same timeline in every cycle for handling proposals.

mid-March

Call for proposals

mid-April

Proposals due

May-June

Distributed peer review process

mid-August

Grades for proposals are announced

September

Phase 2 of proposal submission (review of the Scheduling Blocks); end of observations from the previous cycle

beginning
of October

Observations start for new cycle



The schedule for Cycle 10 has been affected by the cyberattack in late October.

12 April

Call for proposals

10 May

Proposals due

May-June

Distributed peer review process

mid-August

Grades for proposals are announced

September

Phase 2 of proposal submission (review of the Scheduling Blocks)

30 September

End of observations from the previous cycle

01 October

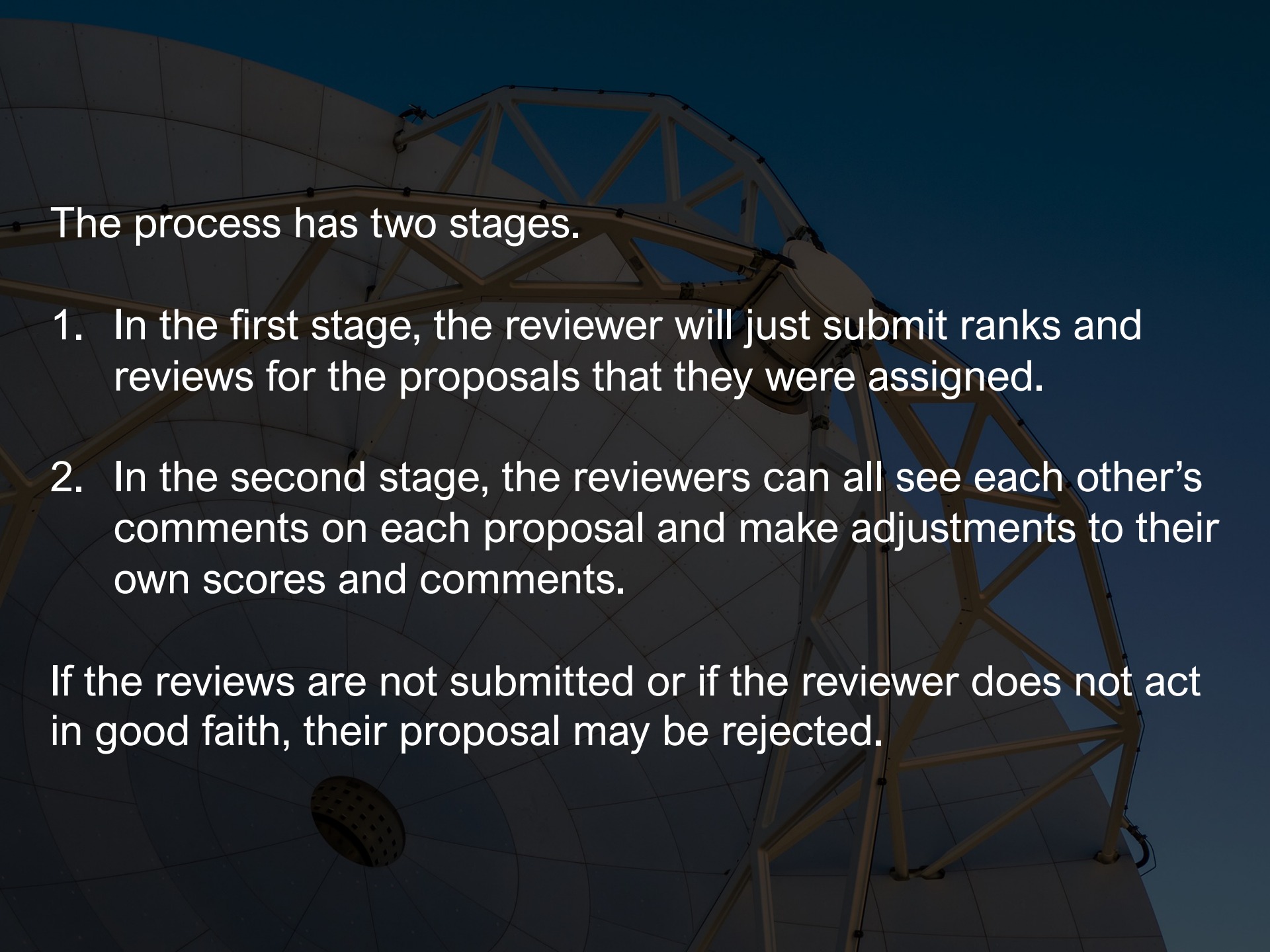
Observations start for new cycle



Most proposals undergo the **distributed peer review** process.

In this process, each submitted proposal will have 1 person (usually the PI) who is responsible for anonymously reviewing 10 other proposals, which are assigned based on the reviewer's technical expertise as stated in the ALMA Science Portal.

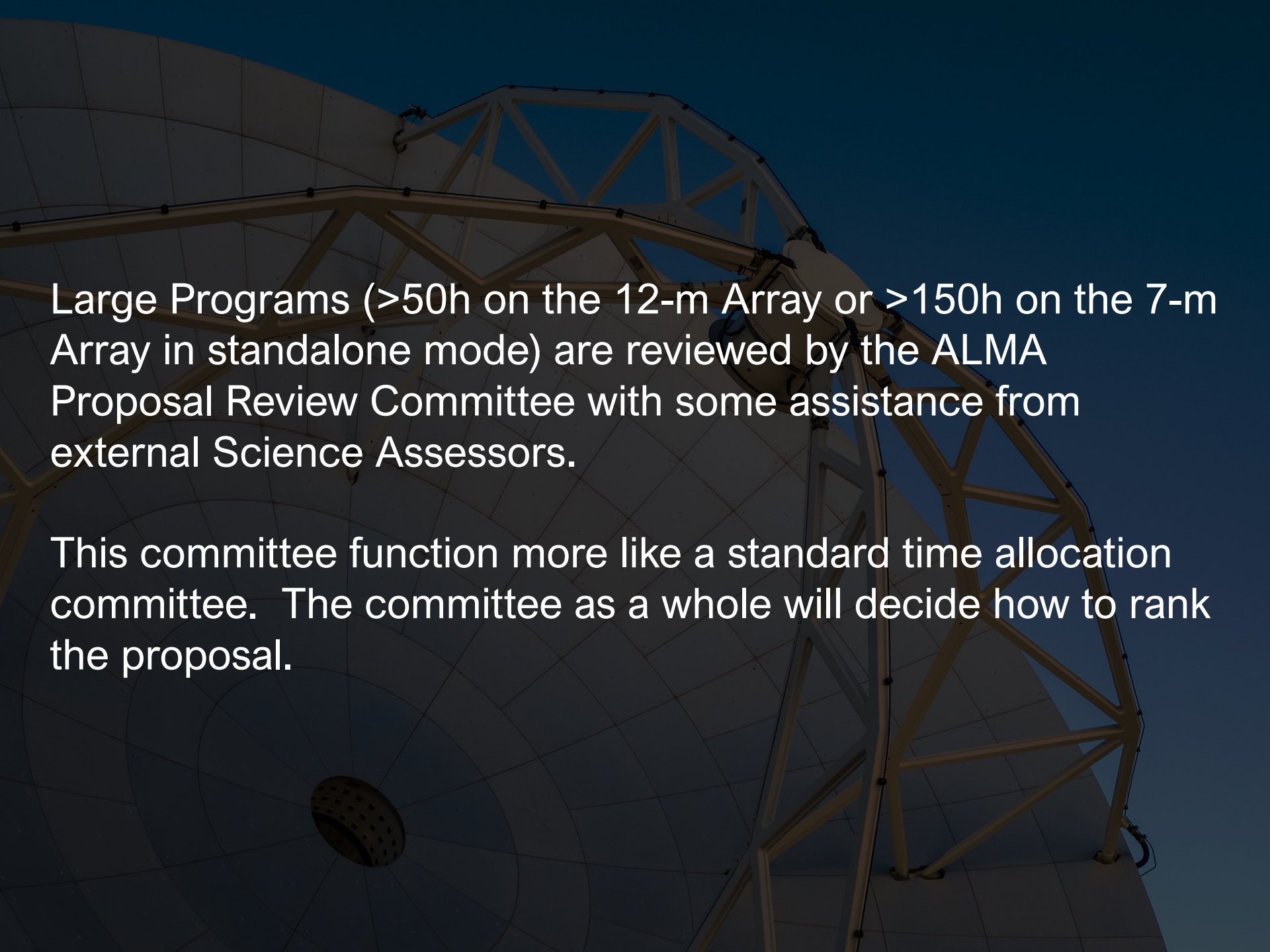
The reviewer needs to rank the proposals from 1 to 10 and write a brief review for each.



The process has two stages.

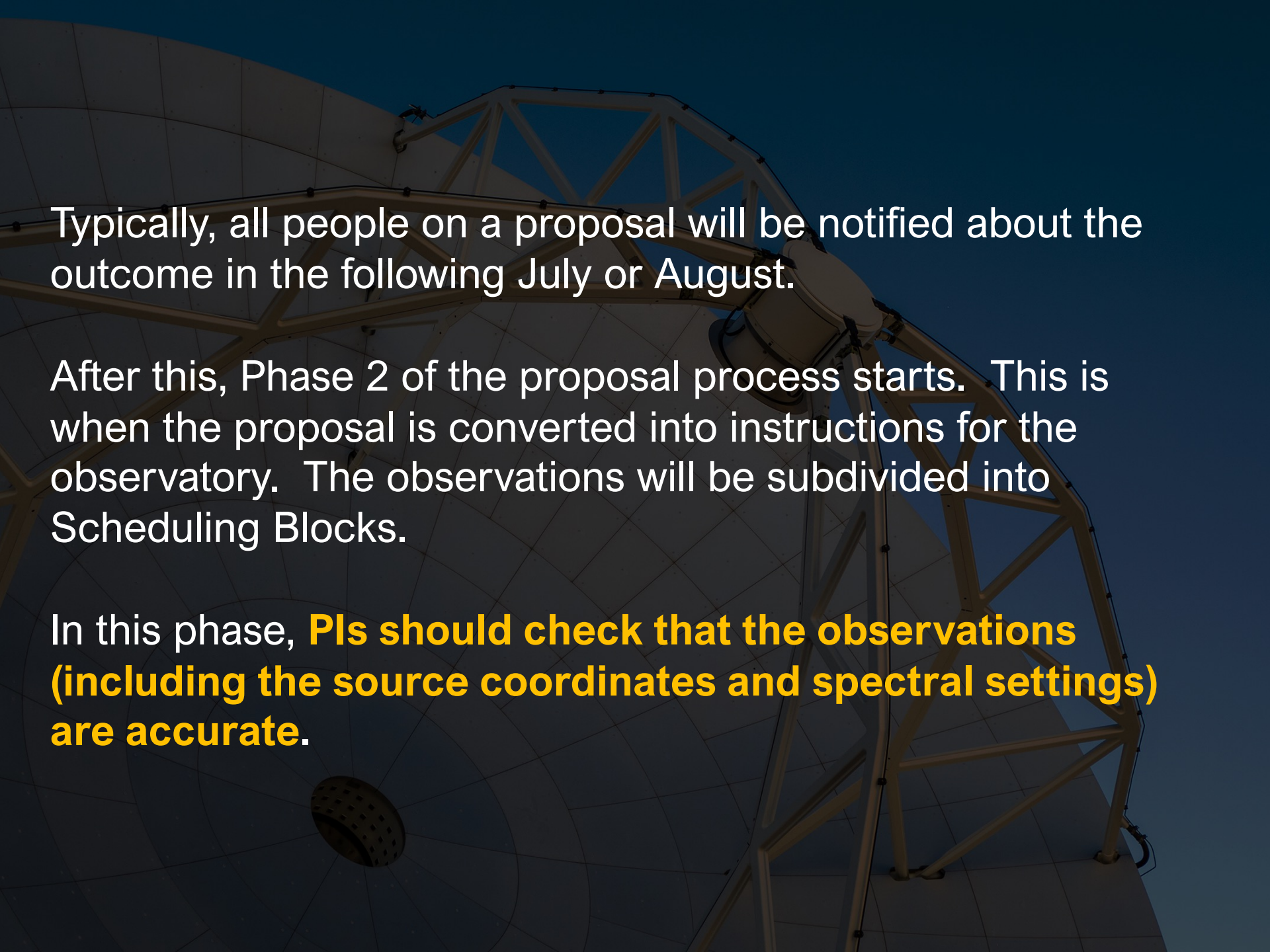
1. In the first stage, the reviewer will just submit ranks and reviews for the proposals that they were assigned.
2. In the second stage, the reviewers can all see each other's comments on each proposal and make adjustments to their own scores and comments.

If the reviews are not submitted or if the reviewer does not act in good faith, their proposal may be rejected.



Large Programs (>50h on the 12-m Array or >150h on the 7-m Array in standalone mode) are reviewed by the ALMA Proposal Review Committee with some assistance from external Science Assessors.

This committee function more like a standard time allocation committee. The committee as a whole will decide how to rank the proposal.



Typically, all people on a proposal will be notified about the outcome in the following July or August.

After this, Phase 2 of the proposal process starts. This is when the proposal is converted into instructions for the observatory. The observations will be subdivided into Scheduling Blocks.

In this phase, **PIs should check that the observations (including the source coordinates and spectral settings) are accurate.**



For reference, a Scheduling Block (SB) is a set of observations grouped together according to the following criteria:

- Specific array / array configuration
- Specific spectral tuning
- Specific set of fields / targets
- Specific sensitivity and angular resolution goals

One Science Goal from a proposal may be subdivided into multiple SBs.

Each SB may need to be executed multiple times. Each of these executions are called Execution Blocks (EBs).



The proposals are all inserted into an observing queue. Each EB will be performed according to the following criteria:

- Proposal grade
- For the 12m array, array configuration / angular resolution
- Observing conditions
- Elevation in the sky

Each array (the main 12m array, the ACA, and the total power array) has its own observing queue.

Observations can be tracked using SnooPI (<https://asa.alma.cl/snoopi/>).

The screenshot displays the SnooPI web application interface. On the left is a dark blue navigation sidebar with the following items: SnooPI, NAVIGATION (Home, My Projects, My SchedBlocks), QUICK LINKS (Science Portal, Archive Query, Helpdesk), and a double-headed arrow icon. The main content area has a white header with the SnooPI logo, the user name 'Adam Ginsburg, EU Executive, EU ARC', and two filters: 'All projects' and 'Contact scientist'. The dashboard features four metric cards: '5/8 PI Projects', '9/9 PI Scheduling Blocks', '22/34 Co-I Projects', and '58/60 Co-I Scheduling Blocks'. A fifth card shows '0 Tickets'. Below the cards is a news section titled 'i Since 2015-07-02' with a 'More news...' button. The news items are: '2015-10-23 ObsUnitSet Member OUS (w51) of project 2013.1.00308.S is now Delivered', '2015-08-30 All data taken for Scheduling Block w51_a_06_TE of project 2013.1.00308.S', and '2015-07-02 All data taken for Scheduling Block SgrB2_a_03_TE of project 2013.1.00269.S'.

SnooPI Adam Ginsburg, EU Executive, EU ARC All projects Contact scientist

5/8 PI Projects **9/9** PI Scheduling Blocks

22/34 Co-I Projects **58/60** Co-I Scheduling Blocks

0 Tickets

i Since 2015-07-02 [More news...](#)

2015-10-23 ObsUnitSet **Member OUS (w51)** of project **2013.1.00308.S** is now Delivered
2015-08-30 All data taken for Scheduling Block **w51_a_06_TE** of project **2013.1.00308.S**
2015-07-02 All data taken for Scheduling Block **SgrB2_a_03_TE** of project **2013.1.00269.S**

PIs should communicate with their Contact Scientists through the ALMA Helpdesk (<https://help.almascience.org/>).

ALMA Science

Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array
Observer Support

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We have returned services to ALMA online tools but the ALMA Helpdesk is still waiting for restoration to our reply by email service. Please login to the Helpdesk to reply to a ticket.
<https://almascience.org/news/restart-of-alm-a-cycle-9-observations-and-cycle-10-pre-announcement-status>

News