

Call for Expressions of Interest to host the International Project Office of the Integrated Marine Biosphere Research (IMBeR) project

The Integrated Marine Biosphere Research project (IMBeR; www.imber.info) is soliciting offers to host its International Project Office from April 2020 onwards.

Background

The Integrated Marine Biosphere Research (IMBeR) project, formerly the Integrated Marine Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research (IMBER) project, is a global environmental change research initiative sponsored by the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR; www.scor-int.org/) and Future Earth (www.futureearth.org/).

Since its start in 2005, IMBeR has advanced understanding about potential marine environmental effects of global change, and the impacts and linkages to human systems at multiple scales. It is apparent that complex environmental issues and associated societal/sustainability choices operate at and across the interfaces of natural and social sciences and the humanities, and require both basic, curiosity-driven research and problem-driven, policy-relevant research. This recognition underlies the IMBeR vision, *“Ocean sustainability under global change for the benefit of society”*.

The IMBeR Science Plan and Implementation Strategy

(<http://www.imber.info/resources/images/prosjekter/imber/IMBeR-Science-Plan-and-Implementation-Strategy-2017.pdf>) provides a 10 year (2016-2025) research agenda to progress the IMBeR research goal to *“Understand, quantify and compare historic and present structure and functioning of linked ocean and human systems to predict and project changes including developing scenarios and options for securing or transitioning towards ocean sustainability”* and achieve its mission to *“Promote integrated marine research and enable capabilities for developing and implementing ocean sustainability options within and across the natural and social sciences, and communicate relevant information and knowledge needed by society to secure sustainable, productive and healthy oceans”*.

Hosting the IMBeR International Project Office

The IMBeR International Project Office (IMBeR IPO) is currently being hosted at the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) in Bergen, Norway until the end of March 2020. IMBeR is soliciting offers for a new host arrangement from April 2020 onwards, for a period of at least three, and preferably five years.

The IMBeR IPO consists of an Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer and Administrative Officer whose salaries, office space, financial and IT support are provided by the host institute.

The Executive Officer works in close consultation with members of the IMBeR Regional Project Officer (RPO) currently hosted by the State Key Laboratory for Coastal and Estuarine Research (SKLEC) at the East China Normal University (ECNU) in Shanghai, China and the IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) for scientific and technical matters, and to the host institution for administrative matters.

The host institution benefits from hosting the IMBeR IPO, thereby enhancing their international profile, through connection with the IMBeR international community, association with a range of international conferences, summer schools, regional programmes and working groups and a network of early career scientists. We would seek an active scientific collaboration between IMBeR and scientists at the host institution with the aim of increased international exposure, scientific publications and policy relevance.

Terms of reference for the IMBeR IPO

The primary function of the IMBeR IPO and RPO is to provide management support to planning and implementation of IMBeR activities. The offices ensure both appropriate international coordination between the network of IMBeR scientists as well as collaboration with related international projects and programmes.

The IPO will

- assist the IMBeR SSC in planning and carrying out scientific research;
- serve as a channel of communication between scientists working in different countries on various aspects of global change; and
- assist the SSC in collating information on national and regional programmes of global change research relating to IMBeR, to ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication of effort and that the Project makes effective use of existing knowledge in its analysis of processes and change at global scales.

The tasks of an IPO are as follows:

- administering the Project on a day-to-day basis, under the long-term guidance of the SSC;
- provide day-to-day support to the work of the SSC, both to individual members and the SSC collectively;
- securing financial and human resource support for IMBeR activities (meetings, summer schools, conferences, etc.);
- provide the technical Secretariat for meetings of the SSC and other meetings convened by the SSC within the IMBeR framework;
- providing project advocacy and promotion, enlisting wide international participation in the Project;
- maintaining and developing connections with relevant national and regional projects and with the host institution;
- ensuring effective co-ordination with other components of the sponsors SCOR and Future Earth, and other relevant international research programmes;
- disseminating information and research results;
- monitoring and assessing progress of the Project and the activities of the SSC; and
- establishing a data management and archiving system for the Project. This system should address issues of data quality, creation of data sets, metadata and catalogues, data archiving, data standards, external co-operation and linkages to data agencies, networking and distribution of data, and future instrumentation needs.

IMBeR International Project Office requirements

1. Hosting by an institution with a strong connection to interdisciplinary marine biosphere research

In view of the envisaged synergies between host institution and the IPO, preference will be given to hosts with a strong record of interdisciplinary marine biosphere research.

2. Salaries and benefits for IMBeR IPO staff

Currently, the IMBeR IPO consists of a full-time Executive Officer, a full-time Deputy Executive Officer and a part-time Administrative Officer with financial, IT and HR administrative support provided by the host institution.

3. Office space, internet, telephone and other necessary office equipment

Office space with associated computers, telephones and other office equipment should be provided. IMBeR IPO staff will be considered as full-time staff and will have access to the same working conditions and institutional facilities as other staff.

4. Supplies and consumables

Office supplies and consumables are provided by the host.

5. Allowance for travel and similar expenses

An annual allowance for travel and subsistence expenses will be provided for the IMBeR IPO by the host

IMBeR welcomes expressions of interest to host the IPO from 1 April 2020 for a period of at least three years. Co-financing or partnerships between institutions are permissible. Please send a letter of intent by **30 June 2018** to Lisa Maddison, Acting IMBeR Executive Officer, Lisa.Maddison@imr.no.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by a selection committee, and competitive bids will be invited to submit a full proposal by **1 December 2018**.

Selection criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

- Strong ability to actively engage in IMBeR research activities
- Capabilities to deliver against the role specifications, taking into account:
 - Willingness to host a global research coordination and management entity
 - Experience in managing international research programmes/projects
 - Capacity to enable effective collaboration and international research exchange
 - Capacity to enable interaction with a range of stakeholder groups (e.g. academia, funders, governments, international organisations, development groups, business and industry, civil society, and the media)
- Proposed funding strategy
- Ability to enable and support national and international travel of IMBeR staff

All full proposals must be backed by a robust funding strategy for at least three, and preferably five years. The funding is expected to support the staff required for the IPO to fulfil its role; office space; IT and furniture; operating and travel expenses (national and international).

As part of its provision of the IMBeR IPO, the host institution is expected to employ, and provide the salary of the IMBeR Executive Officer (EO), a Deputy Executive Officer (DEO), and administrative support staff.

Provision should be made for the current EO and DEO to relocate to these positions. In the event that they do not wish to move, then recruitment should be by open, international competition, and the host institution together with the IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee will be engaged in the recruitment process.

Call for full proposals and criteria

Full proposals will include:

- A clear vision for a successful IMBeR IPO supporting the IMBeR mission
- A statement of interest to actively engage in IMBeR research activities
- A description of capabilities to deliver against the role specifications, taking into account:
 - Willingness to host a global research coordination and management entity
 - Experience in managing international research programmes/projects
 - Logistic, IT and other support capacity
 - Capacity to enable effective collaboration and international research exchange
 - Capacity to enable IMBeR to interact with stakeholder groups including academia, funders, governments, international organisations, development groups, business and industry, civil society, and the media.
- A detailed funding plan for the envisaged hosting period of at least three years
- A plan outlining the expected staffing of the office, logistical, administrative and in-kind support

Additional assessment factors

The following factors will also be taken into account in host selection:

- Experience of the host organisation/institution in networking and fostering and managing interdisciplinary research; and creating opportunities for the involvement of scientists and other stakeholders beyond the host institution (including intergovernmental organisations, funders and civil society).
- Access – is the host institution easy to get to? What are the visa formalities for international visitors to the IPO? There must be no barriers to involvement of scientists of whatever nationality/background.
- Little or no overhead charge by host institution on funding and services provided in-kind as well as on funding received by the IPO (from whatever source).
- Willingness and experience of the host to join the IMBeR SSC and IPO in their fundraising efforts
- Provision of a suite of fully equipped offices, access to appropriate meeting facilities, provision of administrative/accounting and communication/outreach support, and access to public transportation.
- Unhindered access to, and transfer of, scientific information/literature through high speed Internet connection; tele/video conference facilities; ability to set up and run an independent website devoted to the IMBeR project.
- If required, the ability to attract excellent candidates for the post of Executive Officer, and Deputy Executive Officer through open, international recruitment. Ease with which other qualified staff can be recruited locally or internationally, noting that English is the main language of communication in this international project.
- Administrative and financial management processes and regulations that are conducive to the running of the IPO, providing the necessary financial accountability required by funders, and including the facility to receive and transfer funds from and to institutions and individuals outside of the host country.
- Bidders will be asked to consider the possibility of establishing the IPO as an independent legal entity, in order to support its international role and ability to engage actively in international project proposals.

Selection

The IMBeR SSC and current IPO will establish a selection committee, with due consideration to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. The selection committee will be chaired by the Chair of the IMBeR SSC and

use the selection criteria set out above. External advice from SCOR and Future Earth will be sought as appropriate.

Proposed timeline

- a. Call for Expressions of Interest (May 2018)
- b. Deadline for Expressions of Interest (30 June 2018)
- c. Assessment of Expressions of Interest (July 2018)
- d. Call for full bids (August 2018)
- e. Deadline for full bids (December 2018)
- f. Assessment of full bids (January 2019)
- g. Decision (March 2019)
- h. Start of new IPO Operations (April 2020)

Expression of Interest to Host the IMBeR International Project Office

Institute and Contact Information	
Point of contact for Expression of Interest (name, email, phone, position):	
Proposed IMBeR IPO host institution:	
Proposed operational starting date (proposals are primarily sought for a starting date of 1 April 2020):	
Expected hosting period:	
Existing and/or past hosted national or international programme offices or initiatives:	
Synergies with host institution	
Host institution key programmes and activities in marine biosphere research:	
Any supporting information:	
Financial and timeline information	
Organization(s) providing funds for the IMBeR IPO:	
Estimated annual overall cost/budget:	
Additional in-kind or other support:	
Timeline of funding, approval, start process:	
Any additional comments:	