

## Call for Expressions of Interest to Host an International Project Office (IPO) of the Integrated Marine Biosphere Research (IMBeR) project

Integrated Marine Biosphere Research (IMBeR; [www.imber.info](http://www.imber.info)) is soliciting offers to host one of its International Project Offices from March 2024 onwards, to continue the role fulfilled by IPO-Canada where the Executive Director is based.

### Background

Integrated Marine Biosphere Research (IMBeR), which was preceded by the Integrated Marine Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research (IMBER), is a global environmental change research initiative sponsored by the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR; [www.scor-int.org/](http://www.scor-int.org/)) and Future Earth ([www.futureearth.org/](http://www.futureearth.org/)).

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](#) 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”*.

For further information, please see the [information package for potential hosts](#).

### Hosting the IMBeR International Project Office

The IMBeR International Project Offices (IMBeR IPOs) are currently hosted at the Ocean Frontier Institute, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and the State Key Laboratory of Estuarine and Coastal Research, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China.

**IPO-Canada**  
Halifax, Canada



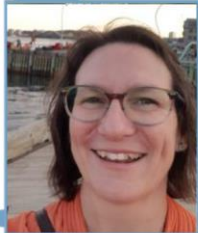
**IPO-China**  
Shanghai, China



Executive Director



Deputy Director



Administrative Assistant



Deputy Director



Strategy Director



Administrative Assistant

IPO-Canada will close at the end of March 2024, and therefore, IMBeR is soliciting offers for a new host from 1 March 2024 onwards (including a one-month overlap with IPO-Canada for the transition of responsibilities). The science plan that governs the current activities of IMBeR ends in August 2025.

**The IMBeR IPO-Canada consists of an Executive Director, a Deputy Director and an Administrative Assistant whose salaries, office space, travel costs, and financial, information technology and human resources support are provided by the host institute.**

**Benefits to host institution**

The host institution benefits from hosting the IMBeR IPO by enhancing their international profile, through connections with the IMBeR international community, associations with a range of international conferences, summer schools, regional programmes and working groups and a network of early career scientists. We would seek active scientific collaboration between IMBeR and scientists at the host institution with the aim of increased international exposure, scientific publications and policy relevance. For further information, please see the [information package for potential hosts](#).

**Terms of Reference for the new IMBeR IPO**

The primary function of the IMBeR IPOs is to provide management support for the 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 new IPO will perform the following responsibilities with collaboration from IPO-China based on a pre-arranged division of responsibilities.

- 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 IMBeR makes effective use of existing knowledge in its analysis of processes and change at global scales.

The tasks of the new IPO are as follows:

- administering the Project on a day-to-day basis, under the guidance of the SSC;
- providing day-to-day support for 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.);
- providing the logistical and administrative support 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; and
- disseminating information and research results.

### 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-Canada consists of a full-time Executive Director, a full-time Deputy Executive Director and a part-time Administrative Assistance with financial, information technology and human resources 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 new IMBeR IPO by the host.

IMBeR welcomes expressions of interest to host the new IPO from 1 March 2024. Co-financing or partnerships between institutions are permissible. To send an expression of interest, please

complete the table at the end of this document together with a brief letter of intent to John Claydon, IMBeR Executive Director, [John.Claydon@dal.ca](mailto:John.Claydon@dal.ca). The deadline for expressions of interest is **15 September 2023**.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by a selection committee, and competitive bids will be invited to submit a full proposal by **3 November 2023**.

#### *Selection criteria*

Expressions of interest will be assessed with regard to the following criteria, based on the application found at the end of this document:

- Capabilities to deliver against the role specifications, taking into account:
  - Willingness to host a global research coordination and management entity
  - Willingness to work collaboratively with IPO-China and assure the continuity of the existing hosting arrangements and shared responsibilities
  - 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 to cover the hosting period of 1 March 2024 to 31 August 2025. The funding is expected to support the staff required for the IPO to fulfil its role; office space; information technology and furniture; operating and travel expenses (national and international).

Provision should be made for the current Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director 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 more detailed description of the plan outlined in the expression of interest:

- A description of capabilities to deliver against the role specifications, taking into account:
  - Willingness to host a global research coordination and management entity
  - Willingness to work collaboratively with IPO-China and assure the continuity of the existing hosting arrangements and shared responsibilities
  - Experience in managing international research programmes/projects
  - Logistic, information technology 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 (1 March 2024 to 31 August 2025).
- 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 new 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 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 Director, and Deputy Executive Director 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 will establish a selection committee, with due consideration to avoid any potential conflicts of interest with the existing arrangements of the involved parties. The selection committee will have two co-chairs: the Chair of the IMBeR SSC and a second co-chair to be appointed by SCOR. The committee will use the selection criteria set out above. Further external advice from SCOR and Future Earth will be sought as appropriate.

**Proposed timeline**

- a. Call for Expressions of Interest (July 2023)
- b. Deadline for Expressions of Interest (15 September 2023)
- c. Assessment of Expressions of Interest (22 September 2023)
- d. Call for full bids (25 September 2023)
- e. Deadline for full bids (3 November 2023)
- f. Assessment of full bids (by end of November 2023)
- g. Decision (December 2023)
- h. Start of new IPO Operations (March 2024)



### Expression of Interest to Host a new IMBeR International Project Office

To submit an expression of interest to host an IMBeR International Project Office, please complete the table below and send it along with a brief letter of intent to John Claydon ([John.Claydon@dal.ca](mailto:John.Claydon@dal.ca)), Executive Director of IMBeR, by **15 September 2023**.

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 March 2024):	
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	
Organisation(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:	
--------------------------	--

For further information, please see the [information package for potential hosts](#).