

Terms of Reference for the Interdisciplinary Marine Early Career Network (IMECaN)

Last update May 2025

Background and aim

On 3rd December 2016, the IMBeR Executive Committee endorsed the establishment of an IMBeR Early Career Researcher (ECR) network (from herein referred to as ‘the network’). The aim of the network is to create a forum for interdisciplinary marine ECRs working on topics related to the IMBeR Grand Challenges. A core focus of the network will be capacity sharing and opportunity access, especially in the Global Majority. Specifically, this network will:

- Provide an international networking platform for young marine scholars to develop collaborations;
- Provide training and development in areas not traditionally provided through formal ECR training; and
- Provide leadership opportunities for ECR marine researchers, particularly from the Global Majority.

For the purpose of IMECaN, ECR is defined as “an individual who graduated from the highest academic degree less than ten years prior. These durations exclude career leaves (e.g., for family care or health reasons)”.

Governance

The IMECaN network will be accountable to the IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee (SSC). The network itself will be overseen by an Organising Committee consisting of no more than 12 ECR members. At least one member will represent each host institution of the IMBeR International Project Office (IPO). Organising Committee members will serve for a three-year term from the date of appointment. Serving time can be extended for another three years (two terms maximum), pending approval of committee members. Eligibility tracking should be the responsibility of each committee member. Between one and three members of the Organising Committee will be appointed as Chair. Members who represent the IMBeR IPO cannot be chairs. Members of the Organising Committee will join “task forces” on different topics determined by the Organising Committee.

Appointment of the Organising Committee

Appointment to the Organising Committee will be made by the Organising Committee itself, based on nominations from the network and from the IPO host office(s). IMECaN is committed to diversity and inclusion and will consider gender, geographic, and disciplinary diversity when selecting members of the network Organising Committee. Specifically, the Organising Committee should, at all times, prioritize that the members are representing different geographies either by identifying country of origin or residence. Moreover, gender and disciplinary diversity should also be priorities when selecting new members.

The selection process will start with a public call issued inviting applicants to submit a CV and a short motivation letter. All applications received will be reviewed by the Organizing Committee, with each member participating in an initial evaluation and ranking process based on predetermined criteria. Following the committee’s review, the candidate(s) who

score higher will be invited to join. In cases where multiple strong candidates exist, the ones not accepted can be directly contacted and given priority over the next selection process. While members of the Organising Committee are encouraged to invite colleagues they think are fit to join, if there is any kind of conflict of interest during the selection process, it must be specified and addressed by the Organising Committee as a whole. For further details and documentation regarding the evaluation criteria and process, please refer to the Recruitment folder.

Role of Organising Committee

The Organising Committee, in collaboration with the IMBeR IPO, will be responsible for the operation of the network. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Developing and maintaining a platform that promotes interaction and knowledge exchange through the network (e.g., website, social media accounts, etc.);
- Developing and maintaining a strategy to promote and grow the network;
- Contributing towards the design and implementation of the ECR training events at IMBeR conferences (e.g., IMBIZOs and Open Science Conferences);
- Providing a summary of activities and achievements from the preceding 12 months for the annual IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee meeting, along with a plan for activities in the next 12 months. The IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee will provide feedback and guidance to the network to support its growth and development.

While it is the responsibility of all members of the Organising Committee to support IMECaN activities, IMECaN acknowledges that this is a voluntary position, and this should always be present when considering committee members' participation in IMECaN-related activities.

On the role of the IPO-Member

The role of the IPO-Member is to serve as a liaison between the Organising Committee of IMECaN and IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee through the IPO. The member is responsible for reporting back to the IPO on IMECaN-related activities and the IMECaN on any IPO update. The IPO-Member will not have a vote within IMECaN internal decisions and will not directly benefit from the funding allocated to IMECaN. Any expense should be provided by IMBeR-IPO.

On the role of the Chairs

The chair(s) is/are responsible for overseeing the activities of the organizing committee and ensuring that it is reaching its goals. While the chair(s) is not responsible for “things to happen”, it is their responsibility to “make things happen” with support and collaboration. Moreover, whenever possible, the Chair(s) will represent the network on the IMBeR Scientific Steering Committee.

Eligibility of IMECaN members

The network is open to Master's and Doctoral students, as well as ECR. Membership in the network will be granted by the network Organising Committee, following the completion of an online membership application.