

December 1, 2006

OBIS Executive Director Search

. The web-based, international Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), seeks an Executive Director. OBIS is a network of organisations around the world that publish online data on marine species locations and associated information. At present, over 10 million records of 78,000 species are published through a common portal (www.iobis.org) that enables seamless integration of data from 146 interoperable databases. Users have a choice of maps, and can predict species ranges using 52 layers of ocean environment data.

The OBIS Executive Director will: 1) have overall responsibility for day-to-day OBIS matters; 2) work closely with the OBIS Board, Portal Manager, and others as required to ensure the effective development of OBIS into a quality-assured resource for distribution data on marine species used by researchers, students, government staff, and the public. OBIS aims to become a permanent component of the global online infrastructure in biodiversity and ocean sciences. Goals within the next two years include obtaining long-term funding commitments, serving distribution data for all marine species, and producing new insights into ocean biodiversity of scientific and/or management significance.

This management and coordination position requires the individual to be highly organised, with excellent communication skills, both spoken and written; editorial experience is highly desirable. A good understanding of the sciences underlying OBIS, such as ecology, oceanography, biogeography, taxonomy, and/or online informatics is desirable. Proven ability to coordinate or manage complex multi-partner

projects is essential and experience in software management and/or development would be advantageous. The informatics that enables OBIS is rapidly evolving and OBIS operates in an uncertain funding environment. Thus, the Executive Director must have the business skills of adaptability, entrepreneurship, and tolerance of uncertainty. Fluency in English is essential, but applicants need not be native speakers of English. Examples of the responsibilities are outlined below:

OBIS Secretariat

- Communicate with OBIS participants, including Data Providers, Regional OBIS Nodes, etc. as required and in response to enquiries.
- Keep OBIS Board and committee members well-informed of progress, and facilitate their involvement in OBIS activities.
- Participate in hiring and supervising of OBIS staff, including allocating work and priorities, tracking leave taken and hours worked, and assessing performance.
- Delegate tasks to other staff.
- Approve expense claims for OBIS-sponsored travel.
- Plan, monitor, and report on OBIS finances.
- Report monthly to OBIS Board on progress.
- Organise OBIS meetings, conference calls, etc.; including drafting of agenda with meeting Chair, preparation of short-style minutes (typically drafted within 1-3 weeks of the meeting and mentioning items discussed, decisions made, and action points).
- Interact with CoML Secretariat as required.

- Prepare news items for OBIS Board (or its nominees) to approve, then display these on the OBIS website and send to CoML news.
- Maintain OBIS files and records, including contact details of all OBIS Board and committee members, minutes and agenda of meetings, significant correspondence, copies of proposals and reports submitted, OBIS related publications, meetings where OBIS was represented, Agreements between OBIS and other organisations, personnel records, etc.
- Oversee the work of the OBIS Portal Manager to aid interpretation and monitor user feedback, manage the OBIS web pages, and plan developments and improvements to the website and portal.

OBIS development

- Represent OBIS, including presenting talks and handouts at meetings, and preparing articles and promotional brochures and posters.
- Prepare funding proposals with members of OBIS community, including assisting in external proposals that may benefit OBIS (e.g. letters of support).
- Be aware of potential opportunities for OBIS through taking notes at meetings, advice from members of OBIS community, and initiatives outside of OBIS (e.g. new mapping tools available on the internet).
- Record and report on OBIS statistics, such as measures of data published (e.g. number location records, species and higher taxa coverage, gaps), website use, publications, and user feedback, with assistance of the Portal Manager.

Website

The iOBIS website is the face of OBIS to its user and data provider communities. The Executive Director must have excellent literacy and editorial skills to manage the website. It must be user friendly, follow policies and procedures approved by the Board, and have a professional appearance, with standard format and layout.

Role of OBIS Board and host organisation

The OBIS Board is responsible for providing policy, guidance, and general supervision of the Executive Director. Supervision will generally be communicated through the Chair of the Board but may be through other Board members for particular tasks. The Board (or its nominees) will pre-approve any hiring of staff or consultants, and any expenditures over \$4,000.

The Executive Director will be based at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, although the OBIS secretariat location is not fixed beyond 2010. He/she must be willing and able to travel widely around the world. The host organisation, represented by the Secretariat Director Dr J. F. Grassle, is responsible for hosting the OBIS Secretariat and Portal, employment of OBIS staff, and providing appropriate office facilities for the Executive Director and OBIS staff. The Executive Director salary will be US \$90,000 (plus benefits).

Applications

Applications should be submitted to OBIS Search Committee, Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers University via

<http://uhr.rutgers.edu/jobpostings/APS/Detail.asp?id=06-001472> and copies will be

sent to OBIS Chair Dr Mark J. Costello (m.costello@auckland.ac.nz). Applications will include:

(a) a covering letter highlighting the applicant's qualifications, interest in the position, and availability to start work,

(b) full curriculum vitae, and

(c) contact details (including email and telephone) of three persons who have first-hand experience of the applicant's abilities, including former work supervisors.

Review of applications will begin in December and continue until a suitable person is found. A start date in early 2007 is preferred.
