

# OBIS TECHNICAL COORDINATOR

Post Number : 1BEIOC0003RP

Grade : P-3

Parent Sector : Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Duty Station: Ostend

Job Family: Natural Sciences

Type of contract : Fixed Term

Duration of contract : 2 years, renewable

Recruitment open to : Internal and external candidates

Application Deadline (Midnight Paris Time) : 15-MAR-2024 (Extended)

UNESCO Core Values: Commitment to the Organization, Integrity, Respect for Diversity, Professionalism

## BACKGROUND

The Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) aims to be the most comprehensive gateway to the world's ocean biodiversity and biogeographic data and information required to address pressing coastal and world ocean concerns. Its mission is to build and maintain a global alliance that collaborates with scientific communities to facilitate free and open access to, and application of, biodiversity and biogeographic data and information on marine life. OBIS is a programme component of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) programme of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

More than 30 OBIS nodes around the world connect over 1,000 institutions from 100 countries. Collectively, they have provided over 120 million observations of 180,000 marine species, from Bacteria to Whales, from the surface to the deepest trenches, and from the Tropics to the Poles. The datasets are integrated so users can search and map them all seamlessly by species name, higher taxonomic level, geographic area, depth, time and environmental parameters. OBIS is underpinned by an advanced and sophisticated web-enabled database system that not only ensures the long-term secure archival of the OBIS data, but also provides constantly evolving products and services developed based on user requirements.

The OBIS Secretariat is based at the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende, Belgium. As Programme Specialist, you will join a small but dynamic team that is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the OBIS programme. The team consists of colleagues in Oostende as well as in other parts of the world.

Under the overall authority of the Executive Secretary of IOC, direct supervision from the Head, IOC Project Office for IODE, and in close collaboration with the OBIS programme component manager, the incumbent is responsible for the technical and scientific coordination, implementation and maintenance of the OBIS data system and planning of related programme activities.

This is a unique opportunity for a motivated and experienced individual who wishes to further develop their career in marine biodiversity information.

## OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE POST

More specifically, you will be expected to perform the following duties:

- In close collaboration with the Head of the IOC Project Office for IODE, OBIS programme component manager and OBIS team, establish technical programme goals, plan of activities,

budget proposals, and performance measures - in accordance with technical guidance from the IODE Committee and OBIS coordination and steering groups.

- Coordinate and provide technical maintenance and further development of the OBIS technology stack and infrastructure; Manage the technical implementation of the OBIS work plan; Manage and provide support to the OBIS technical and scientific working groups; Provide terms of reference for, and monitor/evaluate progress of, contractors hired to provide technical work; Collaborate closely with the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) team to ensure interoperability between ODIS and OBIS.
- Resource mobilization: Manage drafting technical and scientific aspects of extra-budgetary project proposals, as well as the technical and scientific implementation of approved extra-budgetary projects.
- Networking and Outreach: Participate in meetings of technical groups as well as the OBIS steering group and other relevant events; Assist with the promotion and communication of the OBIS programme component.
- Assist with technical support of IODE databases and other IT services of, or hosted by, the IOC Project Office for IODE, Oostende, Belgium.

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### **COMPETENCIES (Core / Managerial)**

Communication (C)

Accountability (C)

Innovation (C)

Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement (C)

Planning and organizing (C)

Results focus (C)

Teamwork (C)

Professionalism (C)

For detailed information, please consult the [UNESCO Competency Framework](#).

### **REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Education:**

- Advanced University degree (Master's or equivalent) in environmental, marine or biological sciences.

#### **Work Experience:**

- A minimum of 4 years of relevant professional experience in the area of marine biodiversity informatics, of which preferably two (2) years acquired at international level.
- Demonstrated experience in IT web-enabled scientific database development and management.
- Familiarity with ocean sampling techniques and scientific data analysis workflows.
- Familiarity with biodiversity concepts and statistical analysis of biodiversity data.
- Professional experience of project management, or other relevant management and coordination experience.

#### **Technical Knowledge:**

- Strong frontend and backend development skills, including Python, R, JavaScript (Node.js), Django, PHP.

- In depth knowledge of SQL and NoSQL databases, including PostgreSQL, PostGIS, Elasticsearch, MySQL.
- Good knowledge of frontend JavaScript frameworks, in particular React and Vue.
- In depth knowledge of biodiversity data standards (Darwin Core, EML) and biodiversity informatics (IPT, RDF).
- Experience with data analysis and visualization with R.
- Good knowledge of GIS and geospatial data platforms, including GeoNode and GeoServer.
- Experience with Linux system administration and managing web servers (Nginx, Apache).
- Experience with source control systems and CI/CD (Git, GitHub).

### **Skills & Competencies:**

- Experience with project management, and in evolving flexible planning for complex and changing environments.
- Demonstrable strategic and goal orientated approach, with knowledge of management by objectives
- Good conceptual, analytical, research and organizational skills and excellent drafting skills, with the ability to produce accessible reports and papers on scientific, technical, and strategic issues.
- Good negotiating, communication and advocacy skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, ability to work in a multicultural environment and foster team cooperation.

### **Languages:**

- Excellent knowledge of English (spoken and written).

## **DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Education:**

- A PhD in environmental, marine or biological sciences.

### **Technical Knowledge:**

- Experience with data formats such as Parquet and Arrow.
- Experience with sequence data and bioinformatics.
- Experience with Docker.
- Experience with cloud computing platforms (AWS).
- Knowledge of species distribution modelling.

### **Languages**

- Working knowledge of French.

## **BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS**

UNESCO's salaries consist of a basic salary and other benefits which may include if applicable: 30 days annual leave, family allowance, medical insurance, pension plan etc. The approximate annual starting salary for this post is 96,566 US \$. For full information on benefits and entitlements, please consult our [Guide to Staff Benefits](#).

### **SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Please note that all candidates must complete an on-line application and provide complete and accurate information. To apply, please visit the [UNESCO careers website](#). No modifications can be made to the application submitted.

The evaluation of candidates is based on the criteria in the vacancy notice, and may include tests and/or assessments, as well as a competency-based interview.

UNESCO uses communication technologies such as video or teleconference, e-mail correspondence, etc. for the assessment and evaluation of candidates.

Please note that only selected candidates will be further contacted and candidates in the final selection step will be subject to reference checks based on the information provided.

*UNESCO recalls that paramount consideration in the appointment of staff members shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity. UNESCO applies a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of harassment. UNESCO is committed to achieving and sustaining equitable and diverse geographical distribution, as well as gender parity among its staff members in all categories and at all grades. Furthermore, UNESCO is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Candidates from non- and under-represented Member States ([last update here](#)) are particularly welcome and strongly encouraged to apply. Individuals from minority groups and indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Worldwide mobility is required for staff members appointed to international posts. UNESCO does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process.*