

# Ocean Observatories Initiative Facility Board

## Terms of Reference

NSF Updated: 12/11/2023

### **General Purpose**

The Ocean Observatories Initiative Facility Board (OOIFB) provides non-consensus, independent evaluation regarding the activities and performance of the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI).

### **I. Mandate**

1. The OOIFB is a conduit and provides leadership for community oversight of the OOI Science Plan.
  - OOIFB stimulates and engages the user community (through workshops, community meetings, and/or other community interactive mechanisms) to ensure the OOI supports cutting edge science and technological innovation.
  - OOIFB reviews OOI's activities and provides community feedback on best practices and satisfactory addressing the requirements laid out in the OOI Science Plan.
2. OOIFB represents the science community supporting the OOI.
  - OOIFB develops and implements strategies to expand scientific and public awareness of the unique scientific and technological opportunities of the OOI and ensures that the oceanographic community is kept informed of OOI developments.
3. OOIFB helps identify collaborative relationships with governmental, industrial, educational, and international partners where appropriate.
4. OOIFB assesses the appropriateness of existing and facilitates the evolution of performance standards for hardware and cyberinfrastructure. These duties include providing community established best practices that address issues such as short- and long-term instrument performance, calibration, sampling schemes, incorporation of novel technologies, expansion of technological upgrades, as well as other items as appropriate.

### **II. Processes and Procedures**

#### **Members**

Membership of the OOIFB includes:

1. Seven scientists from the oceanographic community who are not considered in conflict with the operations of the OOI, one of whom is Chair. Conflicts are identified according to standard NSF policies. An institution may have only one Member on the OOIFB at any given time. These individuals should represent different career stages and reflect the diverse community. Members should include representation from industry and education fields where appropriate and reflect the breadth of scientific inquiry and technological capability of the OOI.

2. Two non-voting members from the OOI Operator.
3. Sub-committee chairs, if not already members of the OOIFB, are considered as “non-voting” Members.

The seven non-conflicted scientists / OOIFB members are selected to serve on the OOIFB for 3-year staggered rotations. Members are selected by the OOIFB and approved by NSF. An open nomination process (including self-nominations) with outreach in the public domain is employed. A person may serve a maximum of two consecutive 3-year terms. A vacancy appointment shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy, and an individual so appointed may subsequently be appointed for two full 3-year terms if the remainder of the unexpired term is less than 1.5 years. After rotating off the OOIFB or a sub-committee, a person is not eligible for membership for a period of three years (one term).

Sub-committee members, as appropriate are appointed by the OOIFB. An institution may have only one Member on a given sub-committee at any given time. Perceived conflicts for sub-committee members may be considered subordinate to specifically valued technical and scientific expertise in the sub-committee appointment process.

Additional non-Member liaisons to the OOIFB, as approved by the OOIFB and NSF, could include the Chair(s) of any bodies providing internal advice to the OOI Operator (if not included in the formal representation described above) and appropriate UNOLS representative(s).

Non-Member observers to the OOIFB include representatives from NSF and may include representatives from other institutions not covered above, such as other federal funding agencies or international entities with significant investments in ocean observing.

### *Chair*

The Chair of the OOIFB is selected for their scientific, engineering and/or managerial leadership. The Chair serves for up to two consecutive two-year terms in this role. The selection is made by the OOIFB and approved by NSF. It is expected the OOIFB appoints succeeding chairs (Chair-elect) from one of the non-conflicted scientific Members on the OOIFB. The Chair-elect serves for one year to overlap with the outgoing Chair’s second (final) year. At the conclusion of the Chair’s term, if willing, the person may serve one more year as the immediate Past Chair (returning to a one-year member role).

The Chair should attend meetings of the OOIFB sub-committees. The OOIFB Chair may also represent the OOIFB at relevant and select national and international scientific conferences and based on availability of travel funding provided by the OOIFB Executive Office, have such travel supported.

### **Meetings, Decisions, and Reporting**

The OOIFB convenes at least once annually to execute its mandate. The OOIFB may convene a virtual meeting as appropriate.

The OOIFB operates via consensus of the Members present. Such consensus need not be unanimous, as defined. When consensus cannot be reached in a timely manner the Chair may call for a vote. When dissenting opinions are expressed, they must be clearly indicated in the appropriate record of the discussion.

Minutes of each meeting of the OOIFB and any sub-committees are taken by the OOIFB Administrative Support Office, and the draft (provisional) minutes are made publicly available within one month of a meeting's occurrence.

At the end of each calendar year, the OOIFB provides a public summary of that year's external OOI Advisory Structure activities to be distributed widely in the public domain.

### **Subcommittees**

The OOIFB is responsible for establishing and/or continuing sub-committees (either standing or ad hoc), and determining their mandates (technical, regional, etc.), representation, schedules, etc. Such sub-committees report directly to the OOIFB, which monitors their functionality and composition with regard to expertise, training, demographics, and other parameters.

### **Modification and Discontinuation**

NSF may redefine the Terms of Reference, or adjust or discontinue the OOIFB as needed, and to address changes in OOI operations, partnerships, or scientific and technical representation.

### **OOIFB Administrative Support Office**

The OOIFB Administrative Support Office provides travel and logistical support to the external (non-OOI) OOIFB members and any associated committees, assists the Chair of the OOIFB, and coordinate workshops and other community engagement as requested by the OOIFB. The OOIFB Administrative Support Office is located at an institution that is non-conflicted with the rest of the OOI.