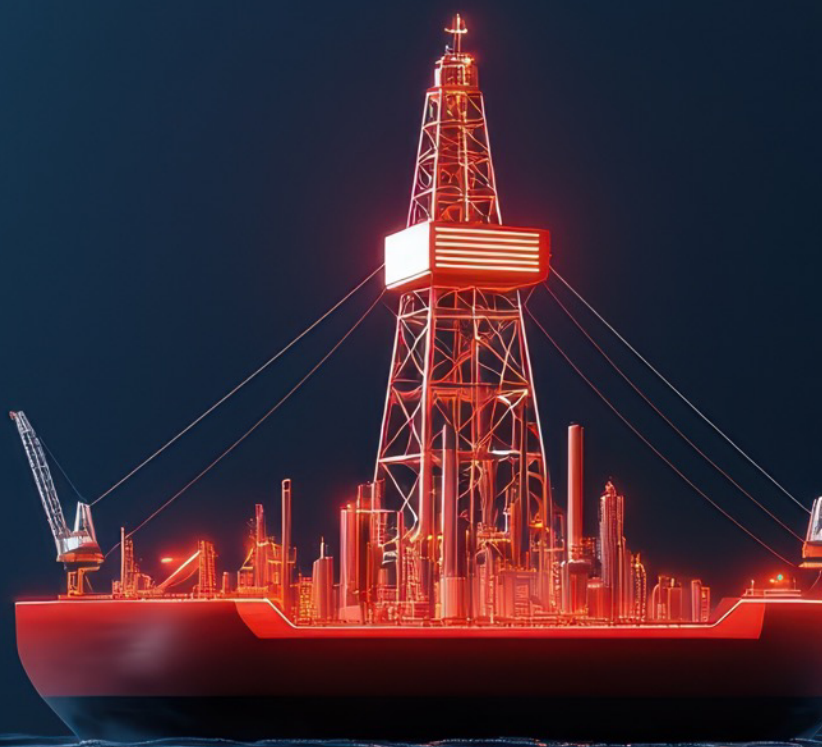


The MSP Facility Board (MSP-FB) is the entity responsible primarily for selecting: (i) MSP proposals for implementation and scheduling by the ECORD Science Operator (ESO), JAMSTEC/MarE3, or as expeditions implemented jointly by ESO and JAMSTEC; and (ii) SPARC proposals for funding in each annual round.



MSP Facility Board Terms of Reference



INTERNATIONAL OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAMME

Change Log

Date of approval of Version 1.1: 5 June 2026

Approved by: IODP³ Executive Board (Consensus Item 2026-06-11)

List of changes:

- **Sections 3:** Change from J-DESC to J-SSO (Japan Scientific Ocean Drilling Support Office) when referring to the Japanese PMO.
- **Section 3.1:** Replacement of the graphic illustrating the MSP-FB Co-Chair rotation scheme with a new version that reflects the revised working practice of outgoing Co-Chairs remaining as MSP-FB Science Board members for one year after standing down as Co-Chairs.
- **Section 3.2:** Addition of the following sentence to clarify the requirements for Programme Member Office nominations of new MSP-FB Science Board members: “Each PMO should provide a list of candidates they support in rank order, together with any underlying justification for preferred candidates (if any). Following discussion of the PMO responses at the MSP-FB, nomination proposals for new Science Board members will then be recommended by the MSP-FB Co-Chairs for approval by the ExB”.
- **Section 5:** Change of three instances of “ECORD Council and the President of JAMSTEC” to “Executive Board”, to reflect actual practice.
- **Section 7:** Removal of the phrase “if requested by the MSP-FB Co-Chairs” from the 3rd bullet point to normalise attendance of the SEA Group Chair at MSP-FB meetings.

MSP Facility Board (MSP-FB) Terms of Reference

1. General Purpose

The MSP Facility Board (MSP-FB) will be the entity responsible primarily for selecting: (i) scientific ocean drilling proposals for implementation and scheduling by the ECORD Science Operator (ESO), JAMSTEC/MarE3, or as expeditions implemented jointly by ESO and JAMSTEC; and (ii) SPARC proposals for funding in each annual round.

2. Mandate

The main tasks of the MSP-FB will be:

- to consider the viability of scientific ocean drilling proposals that have already been scientifically validated by the Science Evaluation Panel (SEP) and forwarded to the MSP-FB for potential implementation.
- to assess the relative merits of the available suite of scientific ocean drilling proposals forwarded to the MSP-FB, and of their respective alternative Essential, Intermediate, and Advanced drilling/coring plans, in relation to available budgets to maximise the scientific returns of implemented expeditions.
- to select scientific ocean drilling proposals and/or combinations and/or parts of proposals for implementation as expeditions by ESO, JAMSTEC or jointly by these entities, and to determine the longer-term operations schedule for scientific ocean drilling expeditions to maximise the delivery of high-priority science using available budgets.
- to review reports from the IODP³ Operators regarding the identification of potential IKCs that could provide a firm basis for the development of new low-cost scientific ocean drilling expeditions.
- to select SPARCs proposals for funding and implementation in each annual round from the accepted proposals forwarded by SEP, and to select associated SPARCs Co-Chief Scientists based on nominations provided by SEP. Funding and implementation of SPARCs may be linked to IODP³ MSP expeditions, especially in the context of the Flagship Initiatives of the “2050 Science Framework”.
- to select and appoint SEP Co-Chairs and SEA Group members from nomination proposals provided by Programme Member Offices (PMOs) following open calls from the IODP³-SO for applicants from the IODP³ Core and Associated Members.

This mandate is subject to the following additional considerations:

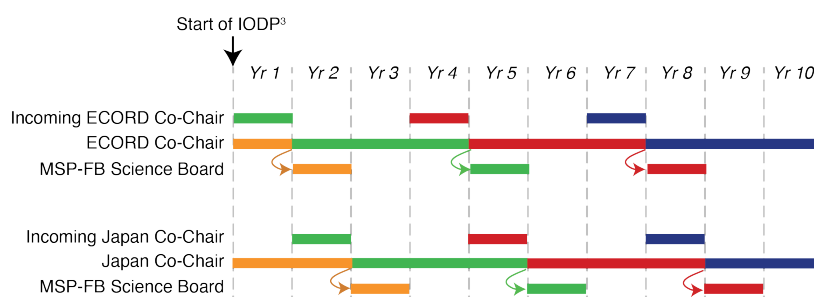
- Decisions will be made based on technical feasibility and availability of vessels/technology while optimising ship-time and use of funding.
- Proposals selected by the MSP-FB for implementation may lead to expeditions of variable duration that are not tied to the historical model of two-month operations adopted by previous scientific ocean drilling programmes.
- The MSP-FB may propose combining proposals of different durations and/or select combinations of alternative Essential, Intermediate, and Advanced drilling plans from different proposals to deliver more high-priority science from the same budgets.
- The MSP-FB can also propose geographical and/or technological clustering of expeditions to reduce operational costs via logistical efficiencies.

3. Membership

The MSP-FB will consist of two Co-Chairs, a Science Board and representatives of funding agencies, operators and other programmes, as follows:

3.1. Co-Chairs

The MSP-FB will have two Co-Chairs (one from an ECORD member and one from Japan), selected for their scientific and managerial leadership experience via a competitive process involving an open call for applications from the IODP³-SO by liaising with PMOs. Candidates will be evaluated by the appropriate PMO (ESSAC and J-SSO), who will forward nomination proposals to the ExB for final approval. They should be in place to shadow the existing Co-Chairs at the start of their final year in office and will succeed them at the end of their term. Each Co-Chair will serve for a maximum of three years and will be provided with logistical support through ECORD or JAMSTEC. Succession of the ECORD and Japan Co-Chairs will be managed on a staggered basis to ensure continuity of leadership, as shown below (note: orange bars indicate the continuation of Chairs from the EFB and CIB within the International Ocean Discovery Program to facilitate effectiveness at the start of IODP³):



The Co-Chairs will also be members of the MSP-FB Science Board, with voting rights. They are also expected to attend meetings of the SEP, the Scientific Drilling Forum and to represent IODP³ at selected international scientific conferences.

3.2. Science Board

The Science Board will consist of leading scientists drawn from the international scientific ocean drilling communities. Open calls for applications that specify required scientific expertise(s) and national affiliation(s) will be issued by the IODP³-SO in liaison with PMOs. The ECORD and Japanese MSP-FB applicants will be assessed and ranked by ESSAC and J-SSO, respectively, whereas applicants from Associate Members will be assessed and ranked by their PMOs. Each PMO should provide a list of candidates they support in rank order, together with any underlying justification for preferred candidates (if any). Following discussion of the PMO responses at the MSP-FB, nomination proposals for new Science Board members will then be recommended by the MSP-FB Co-Chairs for approval by the ExB. Science Board members will serve on the MSP-FB for 3-years on staggered rotations.

The breakdown of MSP-FB Science Board membership shall be:

- the two MSP-FB Co-Chairs
- six members from ECORD and Japan
- up to four members from IODP³ Associate Members

3.3. Other MSP-FB members

The MSP-FB will also include the following advising (i.e., non-voting) members:

- nominated funding agency representatives (by ECORD Council, ECORD Managing Agency, MEXT, JAMSTEC, IODP³ Associate Members).

- Operator representatives from ESO and JAMSTEC/MarE3, plus additional *ad hoc* specialists as needed when additional technical and/or engineering expertise is required.
- Representatives from ESSAC, J-SSO and Associate Member PMOs.

4. Meetings

The MSP-FB will convene once annually in person to execute its mandate, but additional virtual meetings may be organised as appropriate. Meetings will be organised by IODP³-SO and will be scheduled in conjunction with the ExB meetings, with meetings alternating between venues in ECORD member countries and Japan. The location and venue for meetings selected by the IODP³-SO will be both efficient in terms of travel time, travel cost, and the overall carbon cost, and provide excellent support arrangements for hybrid participation by those who wish to join the meetings online.

5. Decisions

The MSP-FB will usually reach decisions by consensus, and reasonable efforts to achieve consensus via further discussion will be made where necessary. If a motion fails to be approved by consensus, the MSP-FB Co-Chairs may decide to defer further action, or to ask for a standard vote involving only the Science Board members.

The IODP³ Annual Programme Plan will be presented by the IODP³ operators for final approval by the ExB, following recommendations from the MSP-FB and the approval of ESO and JAMSTEC plans by the ExB, respectively. The responsibility for decisions over scientific priorities in relation to available budgets will rest with the MSP-FB, and so approval of schedules proposed by the MSP-FB will only be withheld by the ExB in response to significant overriding non-scientific circumstances, such as unresolvable conflicts with national funding regulations or adverse geopolitical circumstances (e.g. armed conflicts, territorial disputes etc.) that impact expedition viability and/or safety. Near-immediate final approval is needed to facilitate rapid, agile, and efficient implementation of expeditions by operators and other IODP³ entities. Hence, decisions by the ExB should normally be communicated back to the MSP-FB Co-Chairs within one month of the receipt of scheduling recommendations from the MSP-FB.

Responsibility for SPARC funding decisions rests solely with the MSP-FB.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest related to agenda items to be discussed at MSP-FB meetings should be declared by members at the earliest opportunity and formally recorded in the meeting summary. The Co-Chairs will then decide what actions, if any, are required to resolve conflicts of interests, e.g., asking members to absent themselves from parts of the meeting where the conflicting activity is being discussed, or to abstain from engaging in discussion in cases of low levels of conflict. However, members with conflicts of interest directly related to MSP proposals being considered by the MSP-FB must not be present when the relevant proposal is considered and assessed.

7. Liaisons

The MSP-FB will have liaisons from all major entities of IODP³ including:

- the Chair of the Scientific Drilling Forum or their nominated representative(s)
- the Co-Chairs of the SEP or their nominated representative(s)
- the Chair of the SEA Group
- the Director/Co-Directors of the IODP³ Science Office

Additional guests, such as representatives from ICDP and from other scientific ocean drilling programmes may be invited as appropriate.