



Joint press release of the Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon, the Institute of Oceanology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Sopot, Poland (IO PAN), and the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde (IOW)

International research network Baltic Earth: New shared hosting of the secretariat in Germany and Poland

[Hamburg, February 4, 2025] **After more than 30 years, the International Baltic Earth Secretariat (IBES), which supports research and other science activities of the Baltic Earth research network, is handed over from the Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon to two prominent oceanographic institutes at the Baltic Sea: The Leibniz Institute of Baltic Sea Research in Warnemünde, Germany (IOW), and the Institute of Oceanology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Sopot, Poland (IO PAN). A colloquium with a ceremony to mark the occasion is held today at the International Maritime Museum Hamburg.**

The secretariat's move from Hereon to the two new hosts is linked to the retirement of the current IBES chair Marcus Reckermann in April 2025. "I am very happy that there is so much interest in hosting the future IBES," Reckermann says. "It shows that the Baltic Earth network is well rooted in the scientific community of the Baltic Sea region, and that there is a high demand in maintaining such a network." "It also demonstrates the success of the secretariat's work over the decades," adds Hans-Jörg Isemer, who headed the IBES' predecessor, the International BALTEX Secretariat, for many years. "After 30 years of hosting the secretariat, it is time to pass on the torch to other institutions in the Baltic Sea region. We are proud to have supported the research community for so long and think that the network is in excellent hands for the future," comments Laura Schwabe, head of Hereon's international projects department.

The two new host institutions, IOW and IO PAN, will equally contribute to the running of the new IBES for at least the next five years. "I would like to thank the secretariat at Hereon for the great support over all these decades. This has been a really unique endeavour and leaves us with an excellent foundation to continue and further intensify the cooperation between the scientific communities in the countries of the Baltic Sea catchment." says Markus Meier of the IOW, chairman of the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group (BESSG). "Relocating the secretariat to two institutes in Poland and in Germany to share the tasks will further promote this cooperation. I am deeply convinced that this new structure will be effective in managing future activities in the Baltic Sea region," adds Karol Kuliński, BESSG vice chairman of the IO PAN.

The Baltic Earth network, to which researchers in the Baltic Sea catchment and beyond contribute with their expertise, organizes publication and research projects, conferences, workshops, as well as summer and winter schools for early career scientists. Internationally, it is best known for its comprehensive climate assessments for the Baltic region, which are designed to be a regional equivalent of the global climate report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). For more information see: <https://baltic.earth>

The network's secretariat IBES started to support the earth sciences as well as the scientific exchange and development in the Baltic Sea region in 1994 after the fall of the Iron Curtain that had divided Eastern and Western Europe for so many years. Over the past decades, the network has evolved into the comprehensive earth system research network for the Baltic Sea region it is today, encompassing meteorology, climatology, oceanography, hydrology, biogeochemistry, and related disciplines, including the human dimension as one of the key factors influencing the Baltic Sea and

its catchment area. In addition to establishing a stable and thriving international research network, further achievements have been the development of the first highly resolved coupled atmosphere-ocean model and an observational infrastructure in the Baltic region, as well as the preparation of the first extensive Baltic Earth assessments of climate change (BACC reports), which provided an excellent overview over the current state of research in the regional climate and earth system science. Updates of these assessments have been published regularly in various formats like the Baltic Earth Assessment Reports (BEAR) and the Factsheet “Climate Change in the Baltic Sea”, the latest of which appeared in October 2024.

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