



## Process to establish the permanent Secretariat of Future Earth

### Call for full bids

**Deadline for full bids: 31 March 2014**

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## Introduction

### Background information

Future Earth is a 10-year international research programme that will provide critical knowledge required for societies to face the challenges posed by Global Environmental Change (GEC) and to identify opportunities for transformations to global sustainability.

Future Earth is sponsored by the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability comprising of the International Council for Science (ICSU), the International Social Science Council (ISSC), the Belmont Forum - council of principals of the International Group of Funding Agencies for global environmental change research (IGFA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University (UNU), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as an observer.

Future Earth will answer fundamental questions about how and why the global environment is changing, what are likely future changes, what are risks and implications for human development and the diversity of life on Earth, and what the opportunities are to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, enhance resilience and innovation, and implement transformations to prosperous and equitable futures.

Key characteristics of Future Earth include:

- delivers science of the highest quality, encompassing bottom-up ideas from the wide scientific community, and being inclusive of existing international Global Environmental Change projects and related research activities, notably those coordinated by four major international research programmes (International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, International Human Dimensions Programme, DIVERSITAS programme on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and World Climate Research Programme);
- solutions-oriented research to address policy needs at different scales and fundamental societal questions regarding global environmental change and pathways toward sustainable futures;
- interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, bringing together disciplinary strengths from across the natural and social sciences, engineering and humanities, and engaging stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors in defining and delivering the research (co-design and co-production);

- capacity building among the scientific and other stakeholder communities to strengthen integrated research for sustainability and the uptake of this research in decision-making processes.

A more comprehensive list of key design principles is available at annex 1.

Future Earth is led by a multi-stakeholder Governing Council, advised by a Science Committee and an Engagement Committee, and supported by a dedicated Secretariat, comprising of a headquarters and a set of regional nodes.

These core elements of Future Earth are described in more detail in the Future Earth initial design report. The report can be downloaded using the following link: [http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/media-centre/relevant\\_publications/future-earth-initial-design-report](http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/media-centre/relevant_publications/future-earth-initial-design-report)

As Future Earth is moving towards implementation, steps have been taken to establish the governance structure of the programme. During the interim operating phase (June 2013 – end of 2014) the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability (the Alliance) acts as the interim multi-stakeholder Governing Council. The Science Committee [<http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/who/future-earth-science-committee>] was appointed in June 2013 with membership renewals and turnover starting from June 2015 and an interim Engagement Committee is now in place [<http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/who/engagement-committee>]. Finally, Professor Frans Berkhout has been appointed as Director to lead the interim Secretariat, hosted by ICSU for 18 months (ending in December 2014) to move forward the implementation of Future Earth while the permanent Secretariat of Future Earth is being selected.

The initial duration of Future Earth is 10 years, starting from the appointment of the permanent Secretariat.

### **A globally distributed Secretariat**

The initial design report explains that an international call will be made for bids to support a globally distributed Future Earth Secretariat, which is expected to have a headquarters and regional nodes.

The report explains the requirement for a Secretariat which: organises the implementation of the approved research strategies and activities; performs the day-to-day management of Future Earth, ensuring the coordination across themes, projects, regions and committees; and liaises with key stakeholders. The initial design report lays out the administrative, communication, engagement and science-policy roles of the Secretariat (see Annex 2).

The Secretariat headquarters will provide overall leadership for the implementation of Future Earth i.e. it will have the overall responsibility for ensuring that the Secretariat tasks are delivered. The Secretariat headquarters will host the Executive Director of Future Earth. Regional nodes will perform some of the roles of the Secretariat at regional level<sup>1</sup> and are expected to be interested in the broad Future Earth agenda. These nodes will have an emphasis on providing the link to regional, sub-regional and national science communities, stakeholders and funders; regional nodes may also undertake secretariat tasks for the overall global programme, and provide secretariat support for regional science initiatives contributing to the global Future Earth programme.

The Secretariat will need an innovative approach and management model to ensure it can operate efficiently and effectively and fully support the communities of researchers and stakeholders in the delivery of Future Earth. It must ensure engagement of developed, developing and least developed countries. Consideration should be given to how best to interact at sub-regional level and also to opportunities to engage with existing regional structures of the GEC projects.

Bidders are encouraged to consider opportunities to engage regional offices of the Alliance members (e.g. ICSU, UNESCO, UNEP and UNU regional offices) in the delivery of Future Earth at the regional level. Alliance members and their regional offices are not, however, intended to be part of bidding consortia. Should any of these organisations wish to be part of a bidding consortium, then that Alliance member would not be eligible to participate in the selection process for the Secretariat; this should be discussed and agreed with their Alliance representative prior to submitting a bid.

The Secretariat of Future Earth is expected to start operating from mid-2014 – allowing for a hand-over period with the interim Secretariat - and be fully operational by December 2014. The initial commitment period from organisations hosting the Secretariat headquarters and regional nodes is 5 years, renewable for a further 5 years. An evaluation will be carried out during the first 5 years and performance will be monitored regularly to allow for learning and timely adjustments as the programme develops.

## **Selection process**

In order to solicit proposals from organisations to establish, resource and run the Secretariat, a three-step selection process has been developed, and the process is now entering the third step.

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<sup>1</sup>Regions should be geographically defined, and be founded on a level of common sustainability challenges, common integrated science needs and a common stakeholder base. The headquarters may provide the regional role within the region in which it is based, but other options could be considered, for example an additional regional node.

In step I, the Alliance invited any organisation or consortium of organisations to express interest in hosting the headquarters or individual regional nodes of the permanent Secretariat. In step II, credible bidders were invited to a conference to discuss further the requirements for the permanent Secretariat, and meet other potential bidders, to support community self-organisation. Further details of steps I and II are at Annex 3.

Now, in step III, full proposals for the permanent, globally distributed Secretariat are being sought. It should be noted that full proposals must include the headquarters and the regional nodes in single integrated proposals.

This document sets out the call for full proposals.

## Call for full proposals

The Alliance has released this call to host the Future Earth permanent Secretariat.

### Requirements

Bidders are asked to:

- a. Introduce the host organisations they represent and their vision for the Future Earth Secretariat, and demonstrate the commitment of these organisations to the success of the Secretariat. The overall proposal should identify the lead organisation, which will provide the primary interface with the Alliance, and take the overall lead for the Future Earth Secretariat.
- b. Explain how the organisations will meet the role specification, and justify why they have the capability to do so. We encourage bidders to bring their ideas, experience and creativity to address the role requirements. Bidders will need to demonstrate that they have an efficient and effective approach to running the distributed Secretariat.
- c. Present a credible organisational model and management plan with clear roles and responsibilities for the major Secretariat roles (headquarters and regional nodes) and clear lines of responsibility to the Executive Director, who will take the overall lead. It is recognised that regional structures may differ organisationally from each other, according to what best suits the regional context, though this should be justified. Bidders are reminded of the need for an efficient, effective organisation. Bidders' should explain the proposed legal status of the Secretariat, how this might evolve, and how the status (now and in the future) will support the work of the Secretariat.
- d. Provide a funding plan with clear funding commitments to meet the requirements of the Future Earth Secretariat.
- e. Set out how the Secretariat is expected to evolve over its lifetime, and in particular, how any gaps in regional coverage will be addressed.

All full bids must be backed by the necessary funding secured by the host organisations for 5 years, renewable for a further 5 years. The funding is expected to support:

- the staffing required for the Secretariat's role; office space;
- IT and furniture;
- operating and travelling expenses; and
- the cost of Governance Committees (Governing Council, Science Committee and Engagement Committee), project and community meetings.

For reference, it should be noted that the four existing GEC programmes - IGBP, DIVERSITAS, IHDP and WCRP - currently employ directly 28 FTE staff in total in their secretariats (and benefit from some additional services provided externally), and that the Future Earth Secretariat role is more ambitious than the current arrangements. Whilst Alliance members aim to mobilise existing national contributions to GEC programmes for Future Earth, bids for the Secretariat should not be predicated on this funding.

As part of its provision of the headquarters Secretariat, the lead organisation is expected to employ, and provide the salary of the Secretariat Executive Director (other organisations in the consortium could contribute to the Executive Director's salary). The Executive Director will be recruited by the Alliance members in open, international competition; the Alliance will engage the host institution in this recruitment process.

Whilst the requirement for a globally distributed Future Earth Secretariat (with a headquarters and regional nodes) has been established, the more detailed organisational approach is open for bidders to define and propose. For example, the headquarters structure, balance in roles between headquarters and regional nodes, and models for regional nodes (a 'hub' with a network of national 'spokes', or a central node, or distributed regional node, etc.) were discussed at the bidders conference. The selection committee strongly encourages innovation and will carefully test the effectiveness and efficiency of proposed approach to delivering the secretariat roles described in Annex 2.

## **Overall selection criteria**

Full bids will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

- Vision for a successful Future Earth Secretariat.
- Proposed approach and capability to deliver the role specifications, taking into account innovation, efficiency and effectiveness, and the additional assessment factors.
- Clarity and credibility of the organisational model and management plan.



- Confidence that the funding plan will meet the needs of the programme.

### **Additional assessment factors**

In addition to the requirements and selection criteria specified above, the following factors will be taken into account in the decision-making:

1. **Experience and demonstrated capability of the lead organisation and consortium:** in global environmental change and sustainability issues at global and regional levels; leading large scientific programmes; networking, fostering and managing integrated research (natural science, social science, engineering, humanities etc) and co-design; creating opportunities for the engagement of scientists and other national, regional and international stakeholders beyond the host institution (including intergovernmental organisations, funders, businesses, and civil society), early career researchers and youth, and from developed, developing and less developed countries; and building partnerships with the development donor and research communities; establishing new projects, engaging new communities and learning from the experiences of the existing GEC programmes.
2. **Access** – are the locations of the proposed headquarters and regional nodes easy to get to? What are the visa formalities for international visitors to the Secretariat? There must be no barriers to involvement of scientists of whatever nationality/background. How well will the locations support virtual meetings across time zones? How effective are the local, regional and international transport facilities?
3. **Local context** – are there other relevant scientific, educational and environment organisations near consortium members which will provide a strengthened overall operating environment. Will the location of the lead organisation and consortium provide an attractive quality of life for staff and their families? Do the lead and consortium organisations share Future Earth’s principles regarding integrated science and co-design (see Annex 1)? Do the lead and consortium organisations share Future Earth’s principles regarding minimising the programmes environmental footprint (see Annex 1)? Is the political environment conducive to hosting a major international research programme?
4. **Relationship with the host organisations** – what will be the nature of the relationship between the host organisations and the Secretariat; what services will the host organisation(s) provide, on what basis and for how long? What will be the reporting lines and employment status of

Secretariat employees in relation to the host organisation? How will the relationship enable Future Earth to operate and be seen as an international programme? Do the host organisations commit to ensuring that Secretariat communication with all Future Earth stakeholders is independent and uncensored?

**5. Infrastructure and human resources** – the Secretariat will need:

- A suite of fully equipped offices, with access to appropriate meeting facilities;
- Unhindered access to high speed Internet connection; tele/video conference facilities; hosting of an independent website; IT and comms support;
- Access to legal, administrative and financial support as well as access to internationally accepted financial management and auditing systems
- Reliable utilities – electricity, water etc, and a ready supply of accommodation;
- Accessibility by public transport

**6. Ability to attract excellent candidates for the post of Executive Director** through open, international recruitment, in cooperation with the Alliance. Ease with which other qualified staff can be recruited locally or internationally, noting that English is expected to be the main language of communication in this international programme.

**7. Legal framework, administrative and financial management processes and regulations** that are conducive to the running of the Secretariat and an international research programme, whilst providing the necessary accountability required by funders and sponsors. Can the Secretariat receive and transfer funds from and to institutions and individuals outside of the host country? There should be little or no overhead charge made by host institution on funding received by the Secretariat (from whatever source).

## **Eligibility**

All those who were judged by the selection committee to have submitted credible expressions of interest and invited to participate in the bidders' conference are eligible to participate in the full proposal stage. Full proposals must be fully integrated, i.e. include headquarters and the regional nodes in a single proposal. Where there are gaps in regional coverage, bidders should identify them, and provide a plan as to how they will be addressed as the Secretariat evolves.

### *Participation in multiple bids*

Organisations bidding for a regional node component can be involved in several bids. Organisations bidding for hosting the headquarters can be involved in another bid as a regional node.

### Additional organisations

As part of proposals for full bids, new organisations can be engaged by existing eligible bidders as part of existing bidders' overall consortia, but it is not expected that new headquarters bidders will be proposed. Additional regional bidders who approach the selection committee speculatively will be put in contact with the existing relevant regional bidders and relevant consortia.

As part of the review of expressions of interest, the Selection Committee identified the need to engage additional regional bidders from Africa. Existing consortia are welcome to take steps independently to build partnerships with African organisations, however in addition, ICSU is working with regional players to address this selection committee recommendation. All existing bidders will be kept updated on progress.

The selection committee also encourages bidders in particular to improve coverage of sub-regions within Asia and the Pacific Islands.

## **Selection**

The Alliance members have established a selection committee (see Annex 4), with due consideration to regional balance and the need to avoid potential conflicts of interest. The selection committee will elect its own Chair and use the selection criteria set out above. Consideration will be given during the process to take advice from relevant organisations and programmes that have experience in setting up global and regional offices.

The selection committee will be responsible for assessing full bids and making a recommendation(s) on the preferred bidder(s). The selection committees' assessment and recommendations will be directed to each Alliance member organisation and approval by each organisation will be sought.

The process outlined above (and negotiation with the preferred bidder(s)) will be managed by ICSU, on behalf of the Alliance. The Future Earth interim Secretariat will provide support in this process, taking care to manage any conflicts of interest.

## Timetable

The selection of the Future Earth permanent Secretariat is being run according to the following timetable (*italicised* elements have already taken place):

- a. *Interim Director starts (1<sup>st</sup> July 2013)*
- b. *Call for Expressions of Interest (9<sup>th</sup> July 2013)*
- c. *Deadline for Expressions of Interest (23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013)*
- d. *Assessment of Expressions of Interest (mid October 2013)*
- e. *Invitations to participate in the Bidders conference issued (mid October 2013)*
- f. *Bidders conference (13-15 November 2013)*
- g. Call for full bids (mid December 2013)
- h. Deadline for full bids (31 March 2014)
- i. Assessment of full bids (by mid-April 2014)
- j. Co-decision by Alliance members to identify preferred bidder (complete by early May 2014)
- k. Negotiation with preferred bidder (May-June 2014)
- l. Award in place (end June 2014)
- m. Call for application for the position of Executive Director (July 2014 - tbc)
- n. Interim Director ends (Dec 2014)

### *How to participate*

Eligible consortia that wish to submit a full proposal to host the Future Earth Secretariat are required to **send their proposal in a single PDF document, using the template provided by email to [contact@futureearth.info](mailto:contact@futureearth.info) with subject 'secretariat' by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014, 23:59 CET.**

*Contacts*

For any question or points of clarification on the process outlined above, please contact the Future Earth interim Secretariat at ICSU.

Email: [contact@futureearth.info](mailto:contact@futureearth.info) with subject 'secretariat'

Phone: +33 1 45 25 03 29

## **Annex 1: Key design principles**

*From initial design report*

The implementation of Future Earth research and governance is guided by the following key principles:

- *Promote scientific excellence:* An overarching element to these key principles is Future Earth's commitment to support science of the highest quality.
- *Link Earth systems research to global sustainability:* Future Earth does not encompass all environment and development research but focuses on integrated earth systems research and global sustainability.
- *Be international in scope:* Future Earth focuses on areas where international research co-ordination is needed.
- *Promote integration:* Future Earth should draw on expertise in natural and social science, as well as engineering, the humanities and professions such as planning and law.
- *Encourage co-design and co-production:* The research agenda and programmes should be co-designed and, where possible, co-produced by researchers in collaboration with various stakeholders in governments, industry and business, international organisations, and civil society.
- *Be bottom-up driven:* The Future Earth approach will emphasize the importance of 'bottom-up' ideas from the research community and other stakeholders in designing the projects that respond to sustainability challenges.
- *Provide solution-oriented knowledge:* Future Earth will provide foresight of changes and risks, evaluating the effectiveness of responses and providing a knowledge base for new innovations and policies.
- *Be inclusive:* Future Earth will include existing international Global Environmental Change programmes and projects and related trans-national and national activities in a framework that

strengthens existing endeavours and provides new opportunities. Attention will be given to regional engagement, geographic and gender balance, capacity building and networking.

- *Be responsive and innovative:* The governance and organisational structure for Future Earth must be fit-for-purpose, leave room for adaptation as the programme develops, and especially enable step-changes in the delivery of research for sustainability.
- *Be sensitive to Future Earth's own environmental footprint:* Special consideration will be given to the environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of Future Earth. For instance, greenhouse emissions related to operations (travel for meetings etc.) will be tracked and minimised wherever possible.

## **Annex 2: Role of the Future Earth Secretariat**

*Adapted from Initial Design Report (Annex 3.4.)*

The Future Earth Secretariat ensures that the strategies and activities approved by the Governing Council are realised. It has a headquarters and regional nodes, and carries out the day-to-day functions of Future Earth and acts as a hub to synthesise input from all components of Future Earth. The functions of the Secretariat are defined as follows (not in order of priority):

*Administrative:*

- Provide coherence and coordination in the scientific work of Future Earth by liaising with the leadership of all research themes and projects;
- Plan activities and oversee management of synthesis and integration across (multiple) Future Earth activities and themes;
- Design and manage innovative mechanisms for idea generation (e.g. fast-track research, a web-based platform etc.);
- Organise the submission of ideas for proposals for new projects for discussion by the Science and Engagement Committees and approval by the Governing Council (horizon scanning);
- Support the work of the Governing Council, the Science Committee and the Engagement Committee by carrying out the necessary administration tasks (planning and operations, including nomination and appointment processes, council and committee meetings etc.);
- Implement the fundraising strategy adopted by the Governing Council, with help from the Alliance and other relevant experts; including coordination of seed funding for development of new ideas;
- Prepare the Secretariat's budget for submission to the Governing Council, manage the funds and prepare financial reports;
- Support the monitoring and evaluation process of Future Earth;
- Provide coherence and coordination across the full Secretariat structure;
- Provide coherence and coordination by liaising with National Committees;



- Support the design of a Future Earth data policy and facilitate its implementation by research themes, projects and activities of Future Earth data producers, in particular by liaising with World Data System, CODATA, GEO/GEOSS and the observing systems, research funders, and others, as appropriate; and
- Develop and facilitate implementation of a sustainability strategy for all operations of Future Earth (including Secretariat, project offices, procurement, travel, operations of Science Committee, Governing Council and Alliance etc.).

*Communication, engagement and science-policy assessments:*

- Jointly with the Science and Engagement Committees, develop strategies for communication, capacity building, education and engagement with key stakeholder groups;
- Implement and coordinate with relevant partners on communication, capacity building, education and stakeholder engagement to implement strategies, as above;
- Ensure that Future Earth has a prominent role within the international science-policy processes such as UNFCCC, CBD; definition and effectiveness of SDGs, etc.
- Coordinate scientific input from Future Earth into assessment processes (such as IPBES, IPCC).
- Organise and manage outreach activities (e.g. conferences, workshops, stakeholder fora, panels in partnership with key stakeholders etc.);
- Develop and maintain networks and engage stakeholders from all regions, with a particular effort to engage young scientists and scientists from developing countries; and

*Role of the Executive Director*

The Future Earth Executive Director will work with the scientific community, stakeholders, and members of the Alliance to:

- Lead and manage the Secretariat.
- Provide visible executive leadership for Future Earth with the science community and stakeholders.

- Lead the continued development of Future Earth as a new programme engaging the global environmental change research, user and funding communities.
- Create funding opportunities to support Future Earth research and develop the mid- to long-term funding base, including engaging new potential funders, for example development donors, foundations and venture philanthropists.

## **Annex 3: Previous steps in the selection process**

### **Step I: Expressions of interest**

In step I, the Alliance invited any organisation or consortium of organisations to express interest in hosting the headquarters or individual regional nodes of the permanent Secretariat.

Respondents to the call for expressions of interest were asked to:

- Introduce the organisation (or consortium of organisations) they represent and whether they would like to be considered as the headquarters or regional node. The organisation(s) might be an academy of sciences, research institute, university, government agency, private sector or civil society organisation, or other relevant body.
- Justify why the organisation has the capability to deliver against the role specification
- Provide evidence that they can fund the necessary activity (no funding commitments were required for step I, but they must have a credible funding plan).
- Share preliminary information of likely partnerships with organisations in other regions that may ultimately become part of a full bid.

Expressions of interest were assessed by the selection committee, and all credible bids were invited forward to take part in the bidders' conference.

### **Step II: Bidders' conference**

All credible bidders, judged against the criteria for expressions of interest were invited to a bidders' conference held in Gressy (France), 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The purpose of this conference was:

- To bring all bidders up to a common level of understanding of Future Earth and the needs of the permanent Secretariat
- For those bidders that wish, to present their proposals to all participants to facilitate networking
- To share common elements of feedback from the Expression of Interest stage and discuss common issues including clarifying expectations of regional nodes
- To discuss the requirements, process and any other key issues for the full bid stage
- To provide space for bidders to network and opportunities for the development of integrated full bids

- To provide space for bidders to discuss their bids with Alliance members

The presentations made at the bidders' conference, and other relevant documents, are available to the bidders in a password-protected area: <http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/events/bidders-conference-presentations>

## **Annex 4: Selection committee ToR and membership**

### *Role*

1. Assess the expressions of interests and full bids, including proposing feedback for the bidders
2. Decide which expressions of interest should be invited forward to full bid stage, and recommend a decision on the full bids to the Alliance members
3. Advise on the implementation of step II and step III (assessment criteria, information required from bidders, etc.)

### *Composition*

The Alliance established the selection committee with due consideration to avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure a reasonable regional balance. The selection committee elects its own Chair. Consideration will be given during the process to taking advice from organisational experts, and seeking comments from relevant organisations and programmes that have experience in setting up global and regional offices.

### *Management*

The process outlined above (and negotiation with the successful bidders) will be managed by ICSU, on behalf of the Alliance. The Future Earth interim Secretariat will provide support in this process, taking care to manage any conflicts of interest.

### List of members

Name	Organisation / Affiliation	Country residence / nationality	Email address
Jacqueline Alder	UNEP - Coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch	Kenya British / Australian	jacqueline.alder@unep.org
Brigitte Baptiste	Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Research on Biological Resources - Director	Colombia	brigittebaptiste@humboldt.org.co
Lidia Brito	UNESCO – Director of Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building	France Mozambique	<a href="mailto:l.brito@unesco.org">l.brito@unesco.org</a>
Heinz Gutscher	Future Earth Science Committee Professor of Social Psychology - University of Zurich	Switzerland	heinz.gutscher@uzh.ch
Hilary I. Inyang	Botswana International University of Science and Technology – President	Botswana	h.inyang26@gmail.com
Rik Leemans	Wageningen University - Professor	The Netherlands	rik.leemans@wur.nl
Antonia Yulo Loyzaga	Manila Observatory – Executive Director	Philippines	aloyzaga@observatory.ph
Alberto Martinelli	ISSC President	Italy	alberto.martinelli@unimi.it
Gordon Mc Bean	ICSU – President Elect Professor - Department of	Canada	gmcbean@uwo.ca

	Geography, University of Western Ontario		
Nebojsa Nakicenovic	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) - Deputy Director  Professor of Energy Economics at the Vienna University of Technology	Austria  Montenegro	naki@iiasa.ac.at
Leena Srivastava	The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) - Executive Director (Operations)	India	leena@teri.res.in
<i>Organisational experts</i>			
Walter Reid	Packard Foundation - Director of the Conservation and Science Program	US	WReid@packard.org
Anne Whyte	Mestor Associates - President	Canada	whyte@mestor.ca