# Scaling Without the Strain

## *How IMA cut setup time by 75% using OpenWater to centralize awards, grants, and nominations*

### OVERVIEW

IMA (Institute of Management Accountants) has a global network of about 120,000 members in 150 countries and 200+ professional and student chapters. Headquartered in the U.S., IMA advances the global management accounting profession through certification, education, and leadership development.

IMA supports professional, academic, and student members through programs such as scholarships, board nominations, volunteer calls, case competitions, and research grants.

### PROBLEM

IMA's previous application process was manual, inflexible, and heavily reliant on IT. Staff waited two to four weeks for basic updates, delaying time-sensitive programs. The system couldn't adapt quickly, making it difficult to build or revise applications. Submissions came through disconnected systems, forcing staff to manually compile, review, and organize materials.

Reviewers relied on spreadsheets and emails, leading to inconsistent evaluations. Staff had to upload supporting documents manually, increasing the workload. Without automation or self-service tools, the process created delays, limited scalability, and made it harder to serve IMA's growing global membership.

### AT A GLANCE

**ima**®
The Association of Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business

**INDUSTRY**
Professional Association

**SOLUTION**
OpenWater

**MEMBER SIZE**
120,000+

**WEBSITE**
imanet.org

> " *OpenWater has given us back valuable time and made our work so much more efficient. Automating tasks like application acknowledgments and approval letters with OpenWater has significantly reduced our workload.* "
>
> - Senior Manager, Governance and Community Relations

## THE IMPACT
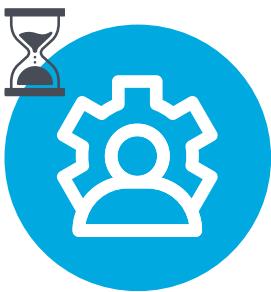
**Cut Program Setup Time by 3–4 Weeks**

**Streamlined 27 Programs into One Centralized Platform**

**840+**
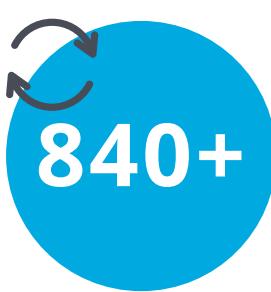
**Applications Processed in a Single Cycle**

## SOLUTION

OpenWater gave IMA control over 27 programs, including scholarships, grants, board nominations, and volunteer applications. Staff now set up programs in less than a week without IT, saving three to four weeks per cycle. In one cycle, they processed more than 840 submissions. Automation of tasks like acknowledgments and approval letters allowed the team to manage all global chapter programs. Reviewers access all materials in one system, eliminating spreadsheets and manual steps.

✓ **Eliminated** IT dependency by letting staff build and launch programs without support tickets.

✓ **Reduced** setup time by up to four weeks for applications and nominations.

✓ **Centralized** review workflows so evaluators could access applications, forms, and documents in one place.

✓ **Automated acknowledgments and improved** data accuracy by cutting manual tasks.

✓ **Empowered** three dedicated program staff to manage all global chapter and council programs.

> ❝ *We've seen an increase in our nomination, scholarship, and volunteer application submissions because of OpenWater; the process is now much easier for applicants.* ❞
>
> - Senior Manager, Governance and Community Relations

**OpenWater**