

INTERNATIONAL LONG-TERM ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH NETWORK - ILTER Network

October 1, 2004

POLICY DOCUMENT

1. NAME AND IDENTITY

The International Long Term Ecological Research Network (ILTER Network) consists of Research Networks of scientists, collectively engaged and dedicated to multi- and interdisciplinary long-term and large spatial scale research and monitoring in ecological science including human dimensions. Funding for the ILTER Network is by means most appropriate for the specific Member Network.

2. ILTER NETWORK VISION, MISSION, and GOALS

The **vision** of the ILTER Network is for a society in which exemplary science contributes to the advancement of the health, productivity, and sustainability of the global environment that, in turn, advances the health, prosperity, welfare, and security of humanity.

The **mission** of the ILTER Network is to develop and effectively deliver to the scientific community, policy makers, and society in general, sound scientific information and predictive understanding of ecological processes associated with large temporal and spatial scales needed to better conserve, protect, and manage ecosystems at local, regional and global scales, their biodiversity, and the services they provide.

The **goals** of the ILTER Network include:

- To better support the decisions of the scientific community and civil society by creating well-designed and well-documented databases suitable for exchange and sharing of data to better answer critical environmental questions;
- To create general knowledge through long-term and large-scale, interdisciplinary research, synthesis of information, and development of theory to meet societal needs;
- To create an accessible legacy of well-designed and documented long-term observations, experiments, and archives of samples and specimens against which to examine ecological change in the future;
- To promote training, teaching, and learning about long-term and large-scale change of the earth's major ecosystems, and to educate a new generation of scientists;
- To engage and inform the broader scientific community, natural resource managers, policymakers, and the general public by providing decision support, information, recommendations and the knowledge and capability to address complex environmental challenges;
- To develop and facilitate collaboration and coordination among long-term ecological research networks.

3. ILTER BODY STRUCTURES

To fulfill the above vision, mission and goals, ILTER will comprise a body consisting of:

3.1. *Permanent structures, which include:*

- Member LTER networks;
- The ILTER Coordinating Committee;
- The ILTER Executive Committee;
- Regional ILTER networks.

3.2. *Temporary structures, which include:*

- Standing Committees;
- Ad hoc Committees.

4. CHARACTERISTICS AND RULES FOR OPERATION OF ILTER BODY STRUCTURES

4.1 Member LTER networks

4.1.1 **Definition:** Network of scientist collectively engaged to conduct scientific research according to the ILTER mission, vision and goals.

4.1.2 **Nomination:** The petition for a Member Network to join the ILTER Network should come from a community of scientists endorsed by a government body, or private entity acting at the national level, and address the LTER program within that Member's boundaries. Mission statements of the LTER program should be consistent with the mission of the ILTER Network. Other criteria include:

- existence of a national committee or other management structure;
- a set of proposed sites or criteria for selection of sites;
- a statement of collective purpose which might include defined research or monitoring themes;
- a policy commitment to compatibility and accessibility in data management;
- prospects for long-term stability of the program.

4.1.3 **Incorporation in the ILTER Network:** To become an accredited ILTER member, a candidate LTER network should be approved by vote of the Coordinating Committee (see 4.2). Each accredited member of the ILTER Network shall nominate a correspondent who shall have primary responsibility for liaison with the ILTER Network.

4.1.4 **Termination of membership from ILTER Network:** An ILTER Member Network can be removed from the ILTER Network by vote of the ILTER Coordinating Committee.

4.1.5 **Voting rights:** Each accredited ILTER member network shall have only one designated voting representative at the Coordinating Committee. The voting representatives may be accompanied at meetings by non-voting representatives and advisers.

4.1.6 **Periodic ILTER Science Meetings:** ILTER Science meetings will be held to facilitate synthesis activities and collaborative research efforts in the ILTER Network. The ILTER Executive Committee (See 4.3) will evaluate options for meeting locations to present to the Coordinating Committee.

4.2 The ILTER Coordinating Committee

4.2.1 *Composition:* The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of one designated representative from each of the member ILTER Networks. The representative to the Coordinating Committee shall represent that ILTER Network in all actions performed by the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee may seek the advice of experts as may be required on an ad hoc basis. Such experts may submit documents and participate in discussions but will not vote.

4.2.2 *Powers and duties:* Management of the affairs of ILTER Network is vested in the Coordinating Committee. To this end, and without limitation of the foregoing or of its powers expressly conferred by these Bylaws, the Coordinating Committee shall have power to authorize such action on behalf of the ILTER Network, make such rules or regulations for its management, create such additional offices or special committees and select, employ or remove such of its officers or agents as it shall deem best. The Coordinating Committee shall have the power to fill vacancies in, and change the membership of, such duly constituted committees. The Coordinating Committee shall have the responsibility for :

- electing and appointing office holders;
- developing and updating an ILTER Strategic Plan;
- serving as a platform for the exchange of information and for discussion of topical issues in ILTER;
- receiving and commenting on report-backs by chairpersons of standing and ad hoc Committees (see 4.6);
- receiving and commenting on report-backs of the activities and initiatives of the Executive Committee;
- making inputs to future ILTER strategy;
- initiating and advising on new directions in ILTER.

4.2.3 *Quorum:* A simple majority (greater than 50%) of the Member Representatives of the Coordinating Committee shall constitute a quorum, except as may be otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws. In the absence of a quorum the ILTER Chair may poll the absent members for vote to achieve a quorum.

4.2.4 *Voting procedures:* Voting requires a quorum. All matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of the two-thirds (2/3) majority of those Coordinating Committee members participating, except as otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws. Each Member Representative of the Coordinating Committee attending the meeting shall be entitled to one vote. A member Network may transfer in writing, a vote by proxy to another Member Network representative with a condition of only one proxy per attending member. Non-member Network representatives have only observer status in the Coordinating Committee. The Chairperson (See 4.2.5) shall put to Members of the Coordinating Committee, with voting rights, questions and proposals requiring decisions. Decisions shall be taken according to the following provisions:

- Decisions on matters related to the appointment of office holders shall be taken by a simple majority of the Members of the Coordinating Committee present and voting;

- In the making of decisions pursuant to above statement, each Member representative shall have only one vote and votes shall be taken by a secret ballot;
- Tie votes in such elections will be resolved by a method agreed upon by the Coordinating Committee.

4.2.5 *Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee.*- Amongst other duties the Chairperson shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

- convene, open, preside at, and close each meeting of the Coordinating Committee and the Executive Committee;
- make rulings on point of order raised at meetings of the Coordinating Committee and Executive Committee;
- put questions and notify the Coordinating Committee and Executive Committee by record of decisions reached and the results of votes,
- approve a provisional agenda for the Coordinating Committee and Executive Committee meetings after consultation with voting Member's representatives, Executive Committee members;
- approve and archive, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee and the Executive Committee, the reports of each meeting as official documents of the proceedings;
- provide an annual summary of ILTER activities and finances;
- exercise other powers and responsibilities as provided in these Rules and make such decisions as will ensure that the business of ILTER is carried out effectively and in accordance with its committee's decisions.

4.2.6 *Chairperson election:* The Chair of the Coordinating Committee (ILTER Chair) shall be elected by the Coordinating Committee from within the scientific community of the ILTER Network. Nominations for the incoming Chair will be accepted from Member Networks by the ILTER Chair or ILTER representative agreed upon by the ILTER Executive Committee. The ILTER Chair will distribute resumes of each nominee to the Coordinating Committee and thereby to the scientific communities at all ILTER Networks at least seven (7) days prior to the election. Election of a Chair will be by simple majority (greater than 50%) vote of the Coordinating Committee. The election will be held at a Coordinating Committee meeting prior to the expiration of the current Chair's term. Term of office for the Chair will be 4 years. The Chairperson shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

4.2.7 *Chair Resignation or Removal:* The Chair of the Coordinating Committee may resign by giving written notice to the Coordinating Committee. Such resignation shall take effect at the time of receipt of the notice, or at any later time specified therein. The Chair can be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Coordinating Committee. In the event of a vacancy in the Chair, the Executive Committee shall elect an interim Chair. The interim Chair will serve until a replacement is elected by the Coordinating Committee.

4.2.8 *Coordinating Committee Meetings:* The Coordinating Committee of the ILTER Network will hold an annual business meeting. ILTER Chair shall prepare a provisional agenda for each meeting of the Coordinating Committee. The provisional agenda shall include:

- all items which the Coordinating Committee has previously decided to include in the provisional agenda;
- all items the inclusion of which has been requested by any Member of the Coordinating Committee.

The ILTER Chair shall transmit to all Members of the Coordinated Committee, at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the Coordinating Committee meeting, the provisional agenda and exploratory memoranda or reports related thereto. The dates of the annual business meeting shall be decided by the ILTER Chair in consultation with the ILTER Executive Committee. The location of Coordinating Committee meetings will be determined at least two years in advance by majority vote of the Coordinating Committee based on nominations from the floor at business meetings. Notice of such meetings of the ILTER Network shall be given to the Coordinating Committee by the ILTER Chair at the previous annual meeting or by electronic mail not less than two years before the date fixed for the meeting. An attempt will be made to rotate meetings among the ILTER Networks to allow ILTER Network scientists to become familiar with the different science programs of each Network.

4.2.9 *Special Governance Meetings:* The Chair of the Coordinating Committee shall have the authority to call special meetings of the Coordinating Committee to address urgent governance issues.

4.3 The ILTER Network Executive Committee

4.3.1 *Composition:* The Executive Committee represents the interests of the Coordinating Committee members at the management level. There shall be established an Executive Committee of the ILTER Network comprising the elected Chair of the Coordinating Committee serving as Chair of the Executive Committee, and eight additional members including a representative from each Regional Network and others elected by the Coordinating Committee from their membership. The Executive Committee may appoint any ILTER staff as non voting, ex-officio members.

4.3.2 *Elections:* The elections for the Executive Committee shall be from nominations of members of the ILTER Coordinating Committee. Candidates can be nominated by any member of the ILTER Network, but only those candidates who agree to serve beforehand will be eligible for election.

4.3.3 *Terms of elected members:* Elected members of the Executive Committee shall have terms of three (3) years or until a successor is duly elected. Terms of the members of the Executive Committee will be staggered, so that the terms of one-third of the members expire each year. During the annual Coordinating Committee meeting, new members will be elected to replace those whose terms are expiring. Current and past Executive Committee members can serve additional terms if duly elected by the Coordinating Committee.

4.3.4 *Powers of the Executive Committee:* The Executive Committee serves at the pleasure of the Coordinating Committee, implements decisions made by the Coordinating Committee, and shall have the powers determined by the Coordinating Committee. These powers will be specified and determined by vote of the Coordinating Committee. The Executive Committee shall represent the Coordinating Committee in its actions and serve as the interface with funding

agencies. The Executive Committee will take the lead on issues of importance to the ILTER Network, develop preliminary recommendations for action to be taken to the Coordinating Committee, and develop agendas for actions by the Coordinating Committee. The role and functions of the Executive Committee are to:

- ensure that the goals of ILTER are met;
- exchange information on national, regional, and international developments in international long-term ecological research;
- confer with the Coordinating Committee as appropriate;
- provide continuity, direction and leadership;
- assess and review ILTER activities;
- assist in procuring resources necessary to carry out ILTER activities
- provide inputs to ILTER strategy;
- consult, inform, lobby and liaise with decision-makers, funding agencies and relevant international programs;
- act as a 'broker' between international funding agencies and ILTER Member networks.

4.3.5 *Quorum:* Two-thirds (2/3) of the Member Representatives of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum except as may be otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws.

4.3.6 *Voting procedures:* Voting requires a quorum. All matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of a simple majority (greater than 50%) of the Executive Committee members present; except as otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws. Each Member Representative of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to one vote.

4.3.7 *Executive Committee Meetings:* The Executive Committee for the ILTER Network will convene at least two times per year on dates designated by the ILTER Chair. Decisions of Executive Committee meetings must be recorded by the ILTER Chair and transmitted to the ILTER Coordinating Committee. Executive Committee members will be notified in advance of issues requiring executive decisions.

4.4 Regional ILTER Network

4.4.1 *Composition:* Regional Networks are voluntary groupings of at least three Member Networks within geographical context. Accreditation of Regional Networks shall be made by vote of the ILTER Coordinating Committee.

4.4.2 *Objectives:* Regional ILTER Network objectives include:

- Facilitate the establishment of Member Networks in the designated region;
- Improve connectivity between Member Networks;
- Secure long-term datasets;
- Share data, promote data accessibility and disseminate information;
- Develop common methods and data management protocols shared across the ILTER Network;
- Promote comparative and joint research;
- Strengthen opportunities for training and education;

- Share technical expertise and make optimal use of available resources.

4.5 ILTER Membership

The ILTER Network Members and Regional Networks shall form the ILTER Network and remain upon adoption of the ILTER bylaws

4.6 Temporary structures

4.6.1 **Standing Committees:** The Coordinating Committee may form one or more standing committees for scientific, educational or other purposes. Members of each such committee shall have only the lawful powers specifically delegated to it through the charge to the standing committee approved by the Coordinating Committee. An individual from any of the ILTER Networks may be a member of a standing committee. Standing committees may be dissolved by a vote of the Coordinating Committee. Standing committees may have representation at Coordinating Committee meetings at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Standing Committees shall elect their own Chairs, develop a specific charge, and determine their membership with approval by the Coordinating Committee.

4.6.2 **Ad hoc Committees:** The ILTER Chair may create such ad hoc committees as may be deemed desirable. Each such committee shall have only the lawful powers and term of operation/existence specifically delegated to it.

5. FINANCIAL ISSUES

5.1 Any central financial resources obtained by the ILTER Network shall be managed by the Chair in accordance with general accounting and audit practice (GAAP) adopted by the Coordinating Committee and shall be subject to an annual audit at the discretion of the Coordinating Committee.

5.2 Each Member of the Coordinating Committee shall normally meet its own expenses arising from attendance at meetings of the Coordinating Committee and/or subsidiary bodies, but financial assistance may be offered by the ILTER Chair to current or prospective members, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

6. AMENDMENTS

All policies and rules of operation of the ILTER Network shall be subject to amendment, addition, or repeal and may be adopted by two-thirds vote (2/3) of the entire membership of the ILTER Coordinating Committee. A notice that has specified or summarized the proposed amendment, addition or repeal must be circulated to the Coordinating Committee at least 30 days before the vote.

7. BYLAW ADOPTION *

These bylaws shall take force upon the affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership of the ILTER Coordinating Committee.

** This ILTER Policy Document and ILTER bylaws were adopted by unanimous vote of the ILTER Coordinating Committee on October 1, 2004*