



# LONG TERM ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE (NCO)

## **Synthesis Working Group Proposals** *Informational Seminar*

Proposal deadline: March 23, 2016  
<http://www.lternet.edu/CallForProposals>

# LTER-NCO BACKGROUND

- The LTER Network Communications Office (NCO) was established in 2015
- Goals are to foster enhanced **communication, collaboration, synthesis, training, and engagement** across the LTER network.
- Hosted at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis at University of CA Santa Barbara
- The Center provides:
  - excellent meeting facilities,
  - comprehensive in-house computing capabilities, and
  - consultation and training for visiting scientists on computation, informatics, and in-person and virtual collaboration skills.



# PROPOSAL TOPICS

- Most interested in proposals anticipated to return high impact results in the five core LTER thematic areas:
  - **Primary production**
  - **Population studies**
  - **Organic matter dynamics**
  - **Mineral cycling**
  - **Disturbance patterns and processes**
- Proposals in other areas will be considered

# DATA

- Emphasize use of existing LTER data from more than one site – **required.**
- In addition to multi-site LTER data, non-LTER data may also be included in the research.
- Groups must agree to:
  - comply with the LTER Network Data Access Policy, Data Access Requirements, and General Data Use Agreement and the NCEAS Data and Information Policy,
  - make derived data (data resulting from analyses from which the original data cannot be reconstituted) publicly available.

# SYNTHESIS PROPOSALS

## **What can be funded?**

- Meeting travel
- Lodging
- Per diem
- Part-time research assistant (must clearly articulate role)
- NCO reimburses actual expenses

## **What cannot be funded?**

- Activities that should be funded by another entity
- Collection of new data or field research
- Overhead or funds to be spent by the investigator at the investigator's home institution

## **How many groups can be funded?**

2-4 projects for 2-year duration

# WHO CAN APPLY?

- Individuals of any nationality who hold a position in an:
  - academic institution,
  - free-standing research institution,
  - scientific society,
  - governmental or policy agency,
  - non-governmental organization, or a
  - consortium of such institutions.
- Working group members should include **one or more LTER researchers** who are familiar with the LTER sites and data that will be used in the analysis.
- For synthesis research that will require a large effort to integrate multiple LTER datasets, inclusion of one or more **LTER site information managers** who are deeply familiar with those data is **strongly encouraged**.

# FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION

- LTER synthesis working group proposals are relatively short (fewer than 2000 words, excluding cover sheet, citations, references, figures, tables, and CVs) and yet need to include enough information in an effective form to allow for an accurate evaluation.
- Digital format only; PDF file preferred.
- Single, complete documents, formatted to standard letter size, graphics embedded. **Do not** send compressed collections of files, such as .ZIP files.
- Body of the proposal follows cover sheet
- Send the proposal document as an email attachment to [proposals@nceas.ucsb.edu](mailto:proposals@nceas.ucsb.edu). Expect an email confirming receipt within 24 hours of submission.
- Contact [proposals@nceas.ucsb.edu](mailto:proposals@nceas.ucsb.edu) if you have difficulty submitting your proposal, or if you have extenuating circumstances that would prevent you from submitting a digital version of your proposal by the deadline.

# REVIEW PROCESS

- Proposals are evaluated for:
  - Scientific merit
  - Contribution to LTER Network science
  - Novel approaches
  - Rationale for involving the NCO and NCEAS
- Review panel will include 4 LTER scientists and 4 non-LTER scientists (note change from RFP).
- Written reviews will be returned to the PI(s)
- The final decision on which proposals to fund will be made by the NCO Director in consultation with the Chair of the LTER Executive Board.



# Proposal Tips

- Proposals are evaluated primarily on the significance and novelty of the idea(s) under consideration and should be question-driven (i.e., not purely descriptive).
- Provide a clear rationale for why this should be done through the NCO.
- Be clear and concise. Give brief examples of major points you are making or approaches you are using.
- Include a **diverse** array of participants who are committed to the project. Pay attention to gender balance and include individuals from underrepresented institutions, groups, and career stage. For each participant, specify the expertise brought to the project and whether he/she has agreed to participate.
- Indicate where the source of the data used in your project and its availability.

# SYNTHESIS WORKING GROUPS

- Groups of 8 -16 scientists (20 maximum) work at the Center for 3-7 days. Each Working Group typically meets 2-3 times a year (working groups of 15 or fewer individuals meeting for at least 5 days are the most productive).
- Working Group proposals must designate at least one participant with considerable analytical expertise who will serve as the liaison with the NCO/NCEAS technical staff.
- Working Groups must involve a diverse group of participants, including gender diversity, diversity in career stages, and members of under-represented communities.
- The NCO is interested in increasing opportunities for early-career scientist and graduate student participation in LTER synthesis activities.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider additional funding sources to leverage NCO resources.

# KEY DATES

- Proposals are due by **March 23**
- Successful proposals will be announced in early May
- Groups are expected to begin work prior to October 2016