

# Long Term Ecological Research Network Bylaws

*Revision 5.3 | Adopted March 4, 2026*

## Article I Name

**Article I, Section 1. Name:** The name of the network is the Long Term Ecological Research Network (LTER Network).

**Article I, Section 2. Purpose:** The purpose of the LTER Network is to promote the advancement and applications of long-term ecological research in the United States and internationally. This is accomplished through communication and coordination of research, education, and information management activities, and through synthesis activities across sites and ecosystems and among other related national and international research programs.

## Article II Membership Affiliation

**Article II, Section 1. Membership:** The LTER Network consists of sites funded under the LTER program by directorates of the National Science Foundation (NSF), or by other agencies in conjunction with the NSF, an LTER Network Office (LNO), and the Environmental Data Initiative (EDI). The LNO and EDI are designated specifically by the NSF. Any person affiliated with an LTER site is a member of the LTER scientific community.

## Article III Meetings of Membership

**Article III, Section 1. Periodic All Scientists Meetings:** At approximately three (3) year intervals, subject to supplemental funding availability, the LNO will organize an All Scientists' Meeting (ASM) to facilitate synthesis activities and collaborative research in the LTER Network. The scientific theme(s) and overall agenda for the meeting will be determined by the Executive Board and the Science Council. The LNO will evaluate options for meeting locations and present recommendations to the Executive Board for discussion and approval.

## Article IV LTER Science Council

**Article IV, Section 1. Purpose:** The vision and scientific direction of the LTER Network is established by the Science Council. The Science Council reserves authority for decisions affecting the Network, and may address any issue that

arises from the Executive Board or the participating LTER sites. The Science Council works in close partnership with the LNO and EDI to promote collaboration, synthesis, and communication among LTER sites. The Science Council has the responsibility to provide leadership to the Network and facilitates: (1) planning for cross-site research and education, (2) development of proposals for the conduct of Network-level science and products that synthesize Network-level data and information, and (3) interactions with existing and emerging networks. The Science Council approves changes to the bylaws and may appoint subcommittees to help carry out its responsibilities. The Science Council receives no compensation for these duties, but may receive reimbursement for Network-related travel, when jointly approved by the Executive Board and the LNO

**Article IV, Section 2. Composition:** The Science Council shall be composed of a lead principal investigator from each LTER site or their designate, a representative from each Network-wide standing committee, and executive directors of the LNO and EDI.

**IV, 2.1 Chair.** The chair of the Executive Board (Article V) serves as the chair of the Science Council.

**IV, 2.2 Chair-Elect.** If, for any reason, the chair shall be unable to carry out the duties of that office, the chair-elect of the Executive Board will serve as chair of the Science Council.

**IV, 2.3 Principal Investigators.** A lead principal investigator of each LTER site will serve as the site's voting representative to the Science Council and shall represent that LTER site in all actions performed by the Science Council. It is expected that the lead principal investigator will attend Science Council meetings. In the instance that the principal investigator must be absent from a Science Council meeting, they shall appoint an acting voting representative from among site members.

**IV, 2.4 Representatives of the Standing Committees.** Representatives of each Network-wide standing committee shall serve as non-voting members of the Science Council.

**IV, 2.5 Executive Directors of the Offices.** The executive directors of the LNO and the EDI shall serve as non-voting members of the Science Council.

**Article IV, Section 3. Meetings:** The Science Council will meet at least annually on dates mutually agreed upon by the Executive Board, the principal investigator of the LTER site hosting the meeting, and the LNO. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the Science Council not less than six (6) months before the date fixed for the meeting. The Executive Board will determine the scientific theme(s) and program for the meeting with input from the Science Council. The chair, in

consultation with the LNO director, will prepare the agenda for the business portion of the meeting. Meeting minutes will be made available to the Science Council for review and comment via shared cloud storage within one (1) month after each meeting and will remain open for comments for one (1) additional month. At the end of that comment period, meeting minutes will be publicly archived and made available to all sites.

**Article IV, Section 4. Voting:** Voting requires a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) quorum of the voting members. Except as otherwise expressly required by these bylaws, all matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Science Council members present. Each voting representative of the Science Council attending the meeting shall be entitled to one vote.

## Article V LTER Executive Board

**Article V, Section 1. Purpose:** The Executive Board is the operational arm of the Science Council. The Executive Board shall have the responsibility, in consultation with the LNO and EDI, for developing and updating the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and for developing and recommending bylaws changes. The Executive Board may designate special committees, establish their charges, and assess continued need for committees. If a site objects to a decision of the Executive Board, it can seek redress of the issue with the Executive Board, and with the support of at least five (5) sites, with the Science Council. The Executive Board receives no compensation, but may receive reimbursement for Network-related travel, when jointly approved by the Executive Board and the LNO.

**Article V, Section 2. Composition:** The Executive Board shall be composed of lead or co-lead principal investigators representing one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the active LTER sites, serving on a rotating basis; the executive director of the LNO; the executive director of EDI; and a single representative from each standing committee. All members of the Executive Board shall act on behalf of, and are accountable to, the membership of the LTER Network. Members will serve as liaisons to LTER Network committees and perform other functions as delegated by the chair.

**V, 2.1 Committee Leadership.** The Executive Board shall elect a chair and a chair-elect from among the voting members of the Board. The chair-elect will be elected from among Executive Board members in the second year of their rotation and will progress automatically to chair in the third year of their rotation. If an Executive Board member feels they would be unable to carry out the duties of the role, they may choose not to stand for election.

If the chair is unable to complete their term, the current chair-elect will be

named as chair and a new chair-elect will be elected. If the chair-elect is unable to complete their term, a new chair-elect will be elected and will serve the remainder of the chair-elect term and progress automatically to chair. The chair of the Executive Board will also serve as the chair of the Science Council.

**V, 2.2 Site Representatives.** One-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the active sites will serve on the Executive Board in a rotation that includes all active sites. The LNO will administer the rotation, which will be staggered so that one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the representatives' terms expire each year. The rotation is designed to optimize representation by the sites in Network governance, and each site is expected to participate in the Executive Board at the time determined by the rotation scheme. Sites will be represented by a lead or co-lead principal investigator, serving a three (3) year term. In the event that a site representative is removed or is not able to fulfill their term, the site will choose a replacement to complete the term.

**V, 2.3 Standing Committee Representatives.** Each standing committee shall select one member from among them to serve as the committee representative to the Executive Board, who will serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Board for a single three (3) year term. Committee representatives serve as liaisons between the Executive Board and their committees. In the event that a committee representative is removed or not able to fulfill his or her term, the committee will choose a replacement to complete the term.

**V, 2.4 Executive Directors of the Offices.** The executive director of the LNO serves as a permanent voting member of the Executive Board. The director of the LNO is a non-voting member and staffs the Executive Board. The director of the EDI serves as a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

**Article V, Section 3. Meetings:** The Executive Board for the LTER Network meets monthly. The chair shall have the authority to call special meetings of the Executive Board to address urgent issues. Network members may bring forward business for the Executive Board to consider by notifying the chair, chair-elect, or director of the LNO at least 2 weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Meeting minutes are archived and available to members via shared cloud storage.

**Article V, Section 4. Voting:** Voting requires a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) quorum of the voting members. Except as otherwise expressly required by these bylaws, all matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of Executive Board members present. Each site represented on the Executive Board attending the meeting shall be entitled to one vote.

**Article V, Section 5. Resignation, termination, and absences:** Resignation from the board must be in writing and received by the chair and the director of the LNO. An Executive Board member may be removed by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the Executive Board.

## Article VI Officers and Duties

**Article VI, Section 1. Chair:** The chair shall preside at meetings of the Science Council and the Executive Board and, along with the Executive Board and the LNO, generally oversees the governance of the LTER Network. The chair leads the Science Council and the Executive Board in establishing and enacting the scientific direction of the Network, and represents the Network where a strong scientific presence is required, such as in establishing collaborations with other networks.

The chair shall facilitate communication to Network sites regarding decisions of the Executive Board; provide a receptive ear for any Network member who wishes to raise an issue of concern; and serve as, or work with the Executive Board to appoint liaisons to, NSF, other agencies, associations, and networks. The chair will work with the LNO director to prepare meeting agendas and produce minutes of the Science Council and Executive Board meetings. The chair will orient the chair-elect to the duties of the office.

**Article VI, Section 2. Chair-Elect:** The chair-elect shall, in the absence of the chair, preside over meetings of the Science Council and Executive Board and otherwise exercise all powers and duties of the chair. The Executive Board, in the absence of the chair and chair-elect, may appoint from among its members an acting chair.

## Article VII Other Committees

**Article VII, Section 1. General:** Other committees may be created by resolution adopted by the Executive Board. Each committee shall have only the powers specifically delegated to it through the charge to the committee approved by the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall evaluate all committees on an annual basis. Any committee may be dissolved by a vote of the Executive Board. Committee chairs shall report on their work at least annually to the Executive Board and at such other times as directed by the chair. Chairs and members of committees receive no compensation, but may receive reimbursement for Network-related travel, when jointly approved by the Executive Board and the LNO.

**Article VII, Section 2. Network-Wide Standing Committees:** One or more Network-wide standing committees may be formed by the Executive Board for each major scientific, educational, or research program identified by the LTER Network. Members shall include one representative from each site. Network-wide

standing committees, once formed, shall elect their own chairs. Representatives of each Network-wide standing committee are non-voting members of the Science Council.

**Article VII, Section 3. Ad hoc Committees:** The Executive Board may constitute ad hoc committees as necessary. Ad hoc committees report to the Executive Board at least annually, at which time the Executive Board may renew, update, revoke, or deem the committee charge to be fulfilled. Ad hoc committees may have representation at Executive Board and/or Science Council meetings at the discretion of the Executive Board.

## Article VIII LTER Network Office (LNO)

**Article VIII, Section 1. Tasks and Duties:** The LNO exists as the result of a grant or cooperative agreement awarded by the NSF to a contracting institution that hosts the office. Tasks that the LNO performs in support of the LTER Network are defined in the NSF proposal(s) or cooperative agreement(s) associated with the award, guided by input from the Science Council, Executive Board, and the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network.

**Article VIII, Section 2. Executive Director:** The executive director of the LNO is the lead principal investigator and scientific leader of the NSF award or cooperative agreement funding the LNO. The executive director is an employee of the contracting institution, and operational supervision resides with the contracting institution.

**Article VIII, Section 3. Director:** The director of the LNO is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the LNO. The director is an employee of the contracting institution, and operational supervision resides with the contracting institution.

## Article IX. Environmental Data Initiative (EDI)

**Article IX, Section 1. Tasks and Duties:** The EDI exists as the result of grants awarded by the NSF to the contracting institution(s) that host and maintain the LTER data products in the EDI data repository. The EDI is responsible for secure data archival of Network data products, and their public accessibility and re-usability. Specific tasks are defined in the NSF proposal(s) or the proposal(s) project execution plan(s) associated with the award, guided by the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and its information management requirements, and in consultation with the Executive Board.

**Article IX, Section 2. Director:** The director of the EDI is a principal investigator of the NSF award(s) funding the EDI. The director is an employee of the contracting

institution and operational supervision of the director resides with the contracting institution. The director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the EDI.

## Article X Amendments to the Bylaws

**Article X, Section 1. Amendments:** All bylaws of the LTER Network shall be subject to amendment or repeal and new amendments may be made by vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the voting representatives of the Science Council either in person or online. A notice that has specified or summarized the proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws must be circulated to the Science Council at least 30 days before the vote.