

eLTER Expert Groups (EG) GUIDELINES

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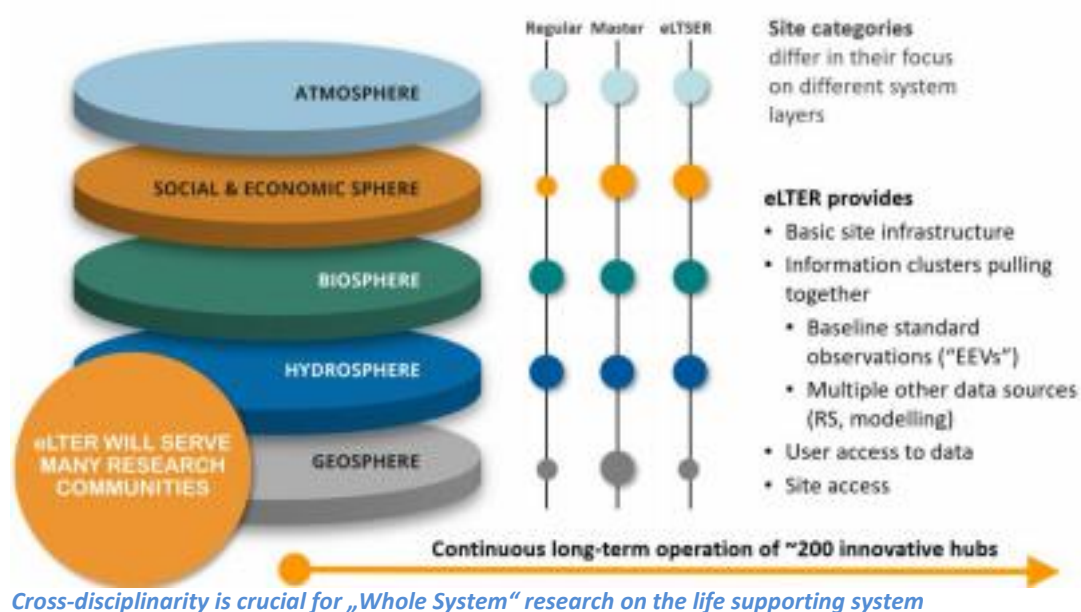
M. Mirtl, J. Bäck, S. Zacharias, N. Nikolaidis

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Preamble

In order to implement the whole system approach, a wide range of disciplines need to collaborate at eLTER Sites and eLTER Platforms in truly multidisciplinary integrated research (earth, soil and critical zone science, hydrological and hydrometeorological science, ecosystem and socio-ecological science). Each of the scientific communities need to be serviced according to their fundamental disciplinary requirements. This comprises standard observations carried out by the distributed sites in appropriate observational/experimental designs and the provisioning of relevant data from other sources as part of eLTER Research Infrastructure (RI) central services. Moreover, the prioritization of data needs should consider their relevance beyond individual disciplines, e.g., the usage of variables in modelling and their role as change indicators across ecosystem compartments.



The eLTER ESFRI process capitalizes on two major EC H2020 projects designed to interact closely. eLTER PLUS tests existing RI components and further conceptualizes eLTER RI alongside scientific case studies covering the eLTER

“Themes” (Research Challenges of eLTER: biodiversity, biogeochemical controls of ecosystem functions, climate water-food nexus, socio-ecological systems). eLTER PLUS also prioritizes future RI services and implements service pilots, e.g., supporting scientific data and analytical workflows. eLTER PPP feeds the identified priorities into the eLTER RI formalization process facilitating decision making of the funding shareholders across 20 countries and the establishment of the legal entity.

The task teams of the eLTER PPP and eLTER PLUS are in charge of (1) producing the documents and discussion papers needed for decision making about the design, costs and governance of the eLTER RI, and (2) managing multi-stage consultation processes towards these documents. These Guidelines outline the purpose and role of the **Expert Groups (EG) in the context of this consultation process**.

Purpose and role

In addition to the disciplinary breadth of eLTER PLUS and the sound anchoring of the Thematic teams (Research Challenges) in their respective peer communities, the eLTER ESFRI process strives for maximizing eLTER RI's relevance. This vision closely relates to the **purposes** for creating EGs:

- (1) through consulting with experts and communities beyond the actual project consortia limits
- (2) securing that eLTER RI seamlessly fits into the European and global landscape of environmental Research Infrastructures and observation networks, and
- (3) serve multiple communities, accommodating their networking efforts and identity.

To this end, the EG shall be established, which mirror major components of eLTER RIs environment and user groups collaborating at eLTER Sites and eLTSER Platforms or in using their comprehensive information clusters.

The major **roles** of the EGs are:

- critical review of discussion and concept papers on the eLTER design
- bringing viewpoints of the respective potential user group of future eLTER RI services (securing buy-in and service take-up)
- raise awareness amongst user groups and collaborators of
 - the starting specification process and the window of opportunity to co-design eLTER RI
 - the potential for coordinated joint activities, including co-location and co-design of services with other RIs and networks

In the current phase 2021/2022 of the eLTER ESFRI process, the eLTER RI design and service components of highest relevance are

- the eLTER Standard Observations framework
- the eLTER Site and eLTSER Platform design (site categories)
- the eLTER Service Portfolio

Members, nomination and establishment

The EGs are platforms for an in-depth dialogue between eLTER consortium experts in the topical area and the external experts. This composition shall guarantee the provisioning of contextual information about concepts elaborated by the eLTER consortium to the external experts. Open questions by the external experts should be clarified ad hoc to pave the way for targeted discussions of remaining critical points.

The process of nomination and establishment of an EG comprises the following steps:

1. Nomination of convener and co-convener
 - by eLTER Coordination
 - convener is an expert, but should not have a leading role in the eLTER projects WPs in the given field
 - convener and co-convener are nominated accounting for the gender balance aspects as much as

possible

2. Nomination of members

- Indicative maximum size of an EG is 15 members
- Conveners and eLTER Coordination elaborate a list of candidates
- Consultation with SCs, NCs and SAB
- The conveners will be involved in the final decision making by the Coordination
- The EG can start activities before the maximum number of participants is reached and new experts can be nominated according to the needs and possibilities to contribute (e.g. experts from the countries)

3. Modus Operandi

- PPP WP2 prepares the Rules of Procedure (**Annex 1**)
- An EG works within its mandate and reports to the respective PPP WP (--> SCs and Coordination)
- The conveners will act as rapporteurs of the EG's suggestions.

4. Processing of input

- The further processing of EG input is specified in the respective processes in the given matters (timing and decision making)
- All these processes will serve the ultimate goal of presenting the design and services for the eLTER RI to be decided in the Interim Council

ANNEX 1

eLTER Expert Group (EG)

Rules of Procedure

Purpose and composition

The purpose, tasks and the structure of the Expert Groups (EGs) are described in the EGs' Guidelines, as well as the process for initial establishment of the EG.

Membership

Membership in the EG is described in the EGs' Guidelines.

New experts can be nominated according to the needs based on the process described in the EGs' Guidelines.

Chair

Each EG elects a Chair from amongst the members. The Chair keeps the office until further decision by the EG.

Meetings and meeting preparation

The meetings are convened upon request of the Chair. The meetings and the material under discussion should be announced early enough to allow members of the EGs to prepare. Meetings can be organised virtually or face-to-face.

The coordinators of the PPP and PLUS projects, and the eLTER PPP WP 6 lead are allowed to participate in the EG meetings as observers. The Chair of an EG can invite other participants when necessary, such as the eLTER projects' WP, task or theme leads, or other contributors.

The EGs will receive material and background documents from eLTER PPP WPs (e.g., WP5 and WP6). Material and documents to be discussed in the EG meetings are prepared by the teams of the eLTER PPP and eLTER PLUS. eLTER PPP WP6 is in charge of submitting and coordinating the relevant material and requests to the Chair of the relevant EG.

The conveners and co-conveners shall have a joint plenary at least once a year.

Meeting agenda and minutes

The Chair makes sure that each meeting has an agenda, and prepares it together with the Convener (see Guidelines). The Chair makes sure that the minutes are written that indicate what was discussed, and what the end result was. Minutes shall be archived in the eLTER repository.

Working mode at the meetings

The EGs are platforms for an in-depth dialogue between eLTER consortium experts in the topical area and the external experts. Therefore the EGs shall always aim for consensus decisions and recommendations. There is no quorum requirement for the meetings to reach end results that are recorded in the minutes.

Reporting

The EGs work according to the task description given in EGs' Guidelines and reports through the mechanism provided for each of the matters like the Standard Observations consultation process. The reporting will be explained in dedicated teleconferences.