E2M2 Communication to Students:

Dear E²M² participants:

You are receiving this message because you will be participating in our 2026 workshop, E²M²: Ecological and Epidemiological Modeling in Madagascar. This email contains many important pieces of information, please read the whole thing carefully!

**Important Updates**

First, the dates of the course are: we will leave Tana on Sunday March 10 and return on Sunday March 17.

Please note that because we are required to reserve your lodging at Centre ValBio in advance, we are unable to allow for cancellations. Any confirmed participant who does not show to attend the workshop in December will be charged a 100,000Ar fine to recoup the costs of this reservation. If you know at this time that you cannot attend, please let us know by February 10 before we finalize the reservation. There is still time for you to avoid the penalty and allow us to offer the workshop slot to another participant instead.

**Software installations**

We ask that you please begin to familiarize yourself with the computer programs that will be used at E²M². All preparatory materials can be accessed on our website here [*LINK*].

If you will be bringing a personal laptop to the workshop, please be sure that the following programs are installed and working:

* Excel, or a compatible spreadsheet software such as Google Spreadsheets
* R - a statistical programming language (download links for Windows, Linux, and MacOS)
* R Studio - a user interface for R that will be needed for computer exercises (download link)

A few of you indicated in the confirmation survey that you will need to borrow a laptop from us for the workshop duration. This is no problem. I will follow this email with an individual email to each of you who will borrow a machine. If you do not receive a follow-up email but need to borrow a device, this means you are not on my list. Please let me know immediately if this is the case!

Even if you are borrowing a computer, we still expect you to complete the preparatory tutorials in R prior to our course's start date (see below). Please take this time to locate a computer in your area on which you can install and begin these tutorials. If you are unable to access a computer, please let me know immediately.

**Preparatory tutorials and office hours**

After you have installed R and R studio on your computer, please begin to work through the four tutorials accessible here. All of them are extensively annotated with directions. If you have any problems loading and/or the software, please let us know immediately.

[*Insert Instructor*] will be hosting both office hours to answer your questions about setting up RStudio and working through the tutorials, and an R bootcamp where he will teach lead you through a lesson in R. Attendance at the R bootcamp is mandatory -- we will offer a hybrid option for students that cannot attend in person.

Office hours will be hosted at [*Insert Location*], on the following dates:

* Wednesday February 14, 8am - 12pm
* Wednesday February 21, 8am - 12pm

The R Bootcamp will be hosted at the Seminar Room at Madagascar Biodiversity Center at Parc Botanique et Zoologique de Tsimbazaza, and on Zoom, on the following date:

* Saturday March 2, 9am - 12pm

**Preparatory assignment**

In addition to the above tutorials, we ask that you prepare one powerpoint slide (saved in PDF format) summarizing your research prior to your arrival to E²M². Please be prepared to present your slide to the rest of the class in a short, 2-minute oral presentation at [*Insert Location*] on [*Insert Date*].

You may summarize recent, completed research that forms the basis for ongoing work, or you may give an overview of a new project that’s in development. You can present the subject of your application abstract if you desire, or you can choose a new topic you would like to develop during the workshop.

We recommend including 1-2 visual aids (e.g. figures or diagrams) that will help you explain key aspects of the research. Please keep the text on your slide to a minimum. Do not attempt to explain all of the details of your project – stick to the essentials and keep it simple. You will be kept to time.

We ask that you please submit the PDF version of your slide here [*Insert Link*] by midnight on [*Insert Date*] in advance of arrival to the workshop. Please use the following naming convention upon submission: "E2M2\_2026\_Prep\_Slide\_LastName\_FirstName.pdf".

**Food, Accommodation, and Weather**

All meals and lodging during the workshop will be provided, beginning with lunch on [*Insert Date*] (please eat breakfast prior to arrival) and ending with lunch on [*Insert Date*] (you will be responsible for your own dinner the evening after return to Tana). With the exception of lunch during both transit journeys, all meals will take place at [*Insert Location*].

Our workshop takes place during the [*Update*] season in Madagascar’s [*summer/winter*]. As such, it will be [*hot and humid / cold*] in [*Insert Location*], so please pack accordingly. While most of our workshop will take place in the [*Insert Location*] conference room, some of our sessions will involve hiking outside. Please bring bug-repellent clothing (long sleeves and pants), hiking shoes, and rain gear. Each participant should also bring a backpack, a water bottle, and a headlamp or flashlight to take on the trail.

All the best,

The E2M2 instructor team