LTER Information Management Committee Terms of Reference

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1. Overview
The LTER Information Management Committee (IMC) is an LTER network-wide standing committee as described in the LTER Bylaws (article VII, section II).

2. Purpose
The LTER Information Management Committee is responsible for leadership and co-ordination of information management activities across sites that support LTER Network goals. The IMC works collectively to balance responses to immediate needs with long-term planning. The IMC works with various partners at multiple levels, e.g. site, network, organizational, community, and international.

3. Membership and Voting
Membership includes an information management contact at each site (SiteIM). Additional members may be identified by individual sites (including the LTER Network Office or LNO) from among site personnel who are involved with information management.

Elections and other committee-wide votes may occur in person at the annual meeting or electronically during the year. In all cases, each site is entitled to a single vote, to be cast by the SiteIM or by his/her designated representative. At least two-thirds of all sites must be present to constitute a quorum.

Elections are decided by majority vote (more than half), with run-off elections as necessary.

On any other votes not already recognized as having significant network consequences, co-chairs will initiate an IMC voting process by first asking for whether there is a motion on recognizing the issue as one of significant network consequence. With a motion and a second to this motion, an affirmative majority vote indicates that further discussion is required. On issues of significant consequence, a two-thirds vote is required.

4. Co-chairs
One or two people (hereafter called "IMC co-chairs") preside over meetings of the IMC and IMC Executive Committee (IM-Exec). They are ex-officio members of the LTER Science Council in accordance with the LTER Bylaws (article IV, section 2.5). The term of the IMC co-chairs is three years and can have more than one term if reelected.

Responsibilities: Co-chairs generally oversee, supervise and coordinate the governance and communication of the IMC. They ensure communication occurs among IMC members as well as between IMC members and other LTER boards, committees, and partners.

5. Executive Committee
Authority: The IMC reserves ultimate authority for decisions on matters that fall within its

purview and relate to responsibilities outlined below. To this end and without limitation of this authority, the IM-Exec has power to make day-to-day decisions and authorize actions on behalf of the IMC. All members of IM-Exec shall act on behalf of the LTER Network rather than their individual sites. They are accountable to the membership of the LTER IMC and are expected to recuse themselves on matters where they have a conflict of interest.

Decisions and projects with long-term or network-wide ramifications (such as participation in major projects or adoption of standards) are referred back to the IMC for debate and approval as outlined in the voting process. If five or more sites object to a decision of IM-Exec, they may request an appeal, in which case IM-Exec will bring the matter before the IMC for consideration by the full committee.

Membership: IM-Exec consists of seven members including the IMC co-chairs. The term is three years and is renewable. Members are elected on a rotating basis each year to replace those members rotating off (1 or 2 members). If a member does not complete their term, a replacement member will be elected at the next meeting to fill out the term. Terms begin at the end of the meeting after elections. The IM representative to the LTER Executive Board (EB), if not currently an elected member of IM-Exec, is a member ex-officio. Other ex-officio members include the LNO chief information officer and LNO information manager.

Responsibilities: Current responsibilities of IM-Exec include: planning (e.g. logistics and agenda for the annual IMC meeting) in consultation with IMC members; coordinating IMC and IM-Exec teleconferences (TC) together with preparing, overseeing, or requesting preparation of reports and minutes for meetings and TCs; staying informed of IMC working group activities; reviewing support proposals for IM-related activities; coordinating participation of IMC members in development of LTER Network-level information management plans; coordinating responses to requests for information; making recommendations to the EB; liaison to LTER Network committees and the LNO; and development and coordination of partnerships. IM-Exec maintains a Roster of Membership on IM-Exec updated annually after IM-Exec elections. IM-Exec maintains Rosters for IMC consisting of site primary contacts and attendance by verifying the SiteIM annually and recording the representatives in attendance at the annual IMC meeting. IM-Exec also maintains a Roster of Actions that includes important IMC and IM-Exec decisions, decision types, requestor, and approving body for requests (see appendix 12.2 for list of types of action including RFC, RFE, and RFA). Rosters of Membership and Rosters of Actions are posted online.

6. Working Groups

The IMC carries out much of its work through ad hoc working groups (WG). IMC members may form a WG spontaneously or a WG may be organized by IM-Exec. Membership is voluntary and open to IMC members and associates. A WG may be formed to formulate recommendations on information management issues including but not limited to practices, standards, products, approaches, and assessment strategies. A WG determines its own leadership, agenda and types of communication (see appendix 12.3 for examples of types of communication). A WG achieves formal status by completing and posting a WG Terms of Reference.

Working groups may submit documents regarding their work in various forms, including a semi-formal Report of Progress (ROP) or Request for Comment (RFC) to IMC and/or IM-Exec. A WG may submit formal Requests for Endorsement (RFE) and Adoption (RFA) to IM-Exec. IM-Exec reviews a request, records it in their Roster of Actions, and takes appropriate action. When wider exposure is recognized as useful or when the request involves mandatory participation by sites and/or the commitment of site or network resources, the request is designated as having significant network consequences and brought before the IMC for discussion and voting. Requests not submitted two weeks prior to an IM-Exec meeting or TC may be considered at the following meeting.

Active working groups are tasked with maintaining a list of members (Roster of Membership), keeping a list of activities (Roster of Actions), and preparing a report for the annual IMC meeting website. Working groups that choose to disband are tasked with preparing a final report.

7. Network Roles

The IMC contributes to LTER Network activities through elected representatives and volunteers who serve on other LTER committees and working groups including the EB and Network Information System Advisory Committee (NISAC) as well as science working groups and Network Information System (NIS) related groups.

The IMC elects from its membership a representative to the EB in accordance with the LTER Bylaws (article V, section 2.4). The EB representative serves as liaison between the IMC and the EB, providing insight to the EB on matters related to information management and providing updates to IM-Exec and the IMC on current activities of the EB. The term of the EB representative is three years. Terms begin at the annual LTER Science Council meeting in the spring. An individual may serve as EB representative multiple times but not for consecutive terms.

The IMC elects from its membership representatives to serve on NISAC. The term is three years and is renewable. Terms are staggered and one or two members are elected each year at the annual IMC business meeting. Terms begin unofficially upon election and formally at the annual meeting of NISAC. The names of elected members are forwarded by IM-Exec to the EB for approval and then communicated to NISAC.

8. Meetings and Communication

8a. IMC Meetings
The IMC meets in person annually. Meetings take place according to a three-year rotation: (1) a meeting of the IMC alone, (2) an extended meeting as part of a larger conference, and (3) a meeting in conjunction with the LTER All-Scientists Meeting. Sites are required to send a representative to the annual meeting and are strongly encouraged to participate regularly in scheduled teleconferences.

The LNO provides travel expenses for the IMC co-chairs and one representative from each site. Committee and working group representatives as well as special participants from outside the LTER Network may be invited to attend the annual IMC meeting by IM-Exec; their costs may be supported by the LNO if the budget permits. A portion of the annual meeting is designated as the annual business meeting and is open only to IMC members.

Additional meetings by teleconference are organized by IM-Exec or WG leaders and are held throughout the year to keep IMC members up to date on current issues and projects.

8b. IM-Exec Meetings
IM-Exec meets in person at the IM annual meeting and the IM-Exec winter meeting. LNO provides travel expenses or technical support for IM-Exec members and designated individuals asked to report on particular activities. IM-Exec also meets regularly by TC. The NISAC IM co-chair and other working group representatives are included in meetings when deemed necessary by IM-Exec or NISAC representatives. Minutes of meetings are posted on the IM website. Assignment of tasks to individual members (including liaisons to active working groups) is normally made at the first TC after the annual election. Examples of individual roles are 'logistics' for the IMC meeting, 'scheduling' of TCs, maintaining lists of committee and working group members, and preparation of minutes for meetings and TCs.

Rosters, notes, reports, and agendas of IMC and IM-Exec are posted publically by IM-Exec.

9. Elections

Candidates for IMC co-chairs, EB representative, IM-Exec and NISAC are drawn from the membership of IMC. IMC co-chair and EB candidates must have served one term as a member of IM-Exec.

IM-Exec issues a general call for candidate nominations prior to the annual IMC meeting for IMC co-chairs, EB representative, and NISAC representative(s). Once nominated, candidates willing to stand for election are asked to provide to IM-Exec a one-paragraph description of their experience, qualifications, and goals. IM-Exec keeps the community informed of nominations and issues a final call before assembling and publishing a list of candidates and candidate statements prior to the convening of the annual IMC meeting.

IM-Exec calls for IM-Exec candidate nominations at the annual IMC meeting. Nominations are closed the day prior to voting. Elections for all offices are conducted at the annual business meeting by secret ballot when there are more nominations than positions available; otherwise a verbal vote is adequate.

10. Budget and Expenses

A budget is maintained at LNO to support the IMC and IM-Exec meeting expenses. Occasionally funds are available for targeted activities such as workshops and ad-hoc tasks. A summary of IM-related budget items is requested prior to the IMC annual meeting where the

budget is presented and discussed. IM-Exec discusses with LNO potential changes to the IMC budget; IM-Exec may then send requests to the EB.

11. Amendments

These Terms of Reference may be amended by two-thirds vote of the IMC at its annual meeting. Revisions approved by the IMC are archived in the LTER Network document archive.

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Abbreviations

EB	LTER Executive Board
IM	Information Manager or information management
IMC	Information Management Committee
IM-Exec	LTER IMC Executive Committee
LNO	LTER Network Office
LTER	Long-Term Ecological Research
NIS	Network Information System
NISAC	Network Information System Advisory Committee
RFA	Requests for Adoption
RFC	Request for Comment
RFS	Request for Support
RFE	Request for Endorsement
SC	LTER Science Council
SiteIM	the individual designated as the site's information management contact
TC	Teleconference
ToR	Terms of Reference
WG	Working Group

12.2 Types of Action

The IMC, IM-Exec and WGs typically make decisions of the following types:
- Formal: votes are taken, e.g. on endorsement or adoption of a community standard
- Semi-formal: consensus, e.g. where a meeting is to be held
- Informal: iterative discussion and agreement or informational; e.g. meeting agenda
- Tacit: tradition, e.g. having an IMC meeting opening mixer
- Compliance: response to mandate, e.g. template developed by EB

12.3 Types of Communication

Examples of types of communication used within the LTER IMC:
- Roster of Membership: A list of participants, their roles, and terms (if applicable)
- Roster of Actions: A list of actions or decisions and the type of decision making involved
- Terms of Reference: description of a group's governance generated by the group

- Annual Report: A summary of the year's actions, plans, and products developed
- Meeting Notes: a record of participants and discussions at an event
- Agenda: A schedule of items to be covered at a given event
- Oral Reports: Informal verbal reports
- Survey: a collection of information made by asking a series of questions
- White Paper: a review that provides an overview of a particular topic or theme
- Best Practice: a document that provides guidelines for IMC-accepted practices for a particular task or activity
- Written or oral summaries: Lessons learned and cautionary tales
- DataBits articles: feature articles, news bit, and/or commentary
- Site-to-site visits: follow-ups on general themes or specific topics
- Informal multi-site communication via discussion at mixers, panels, teleconferences, break-out groups, and so forth
- Report of Progress (ROP): an informal demonstration, prototype, break-out group, posters and/or document summarizing progress of a working group
- Request for Comment (RFC): a semi-formal process of public discussions and revisions that documents response to a project or plan of action during its development
- Request for Endorsement (RFE): a formal request in writing for support of a project that eventually will involve mandatory site participation and/or the commitment of personnel time, funds, or other site or network resources.
- Requests for Adoption (RFA): a formal request in writing for adoption of a standard that will involve mandatory site participation.