

# Information Management Committee Terms of Reference V1.0

Approved by IMC on \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Information Management Committee

Name Short: IM Standing Committee

Name Initials: IMC

Type of Group: standing committee

Scope: All-site

Date of Formation: ???

Planned Duration: ongoing

## 1. Description

The Information Management Committee (IMC) is a Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) network-wide standing committee described explicitly in the LTER By-Laws. Prioritization of IMC activities blends responses to immediate needs with long-term planning for growth of network infrastructure, support for scientific projects, and co-ordination of working group activities and responses to funding opportunities.

*Mission Statement [see associated working document]*

Our vision is

Our approach is

## 2. Organization

### Membership

Information Management Committee: Membership in the IMC is inclusive of site participants. The IMC members are included on the IMC members mailing list (im-at-lternet).

### Roles and Lengths of Terms

Information Management Committee Representatives: The LTER by-laws require that Each site will designate one information management representative (SiteIM) as required by the LTER by-laws. The SiteIM will be a voting member of the IMC. They will stay informed of IMC and IMExec activities by reading IMExec notes and attending periodic video teleconferences (VTC or virtual water coolers). The SiteIM representatives are listed in SiteDB and included on the IMC SiteIM mailing list (im-rep-at-lternet).

Information Management Committee (co)Chair(s): IMExec will assemble for IMC (co)chair(s) a list of candidates who are members of the IMC and will call for open nominations from the IMC. A secret vote by IMC representatives will be held when there are more nominations than positions available.

Information Management Executive Board: IMExec shall be composed of the elected (co-) chair(s) of the IMC and 5 members selected by the voting members of IMC on a rotating basis at

the annual meeting. IMExec will have a total of seven members, each serving three-year terms. Members are elected on a rotating basis with at minimum two members elected each year. IMExec Terms: IMExec will assemble for IMExec a list of candidates who are members of the IMC and will call for open nominations from the IMC. A secret vote by IMC representatives will be held when there are more nominations than positions available. All members of IMExec shall act on behalf of the Network rather than their individual sites; they are accountable to the membership of the LTER IMC. Members will serve as liaisons to LTER Network committees and perform other functions as delegated by the (co)chair(s).

IM participants on Network Information System Advisory Committee: NISAC will inform IMExec about the number of IMC-member replacements required each year before the annual IMC meeting. IMC representatives will vote for the number of candidates required.

An IM representative to the LTER Executive Board will be nominated for a three-year term at an annual IMC meeting. IMExec will assemble a list of candidates who are members of the IMC and will call for open nominations from the IMC. It is recommended that candidates have broad experience at multiple levels of the LTER. A secret vote will be made by IMC representatives to select a single candidate when there is more than one nomination. Elected NISAC representative names will be forwarded by IMExec to the EB and communicated to NISAC.

#### IMExec Responsibilities

In order to improve efficiency, the IMExec will oversee the broader landscape of IMC activities and be available to coordinate and prioritize LTER IMC arrangements. Full power in the management of the affairs of the LTER IMC is vested in the IMC. To this end and without limitation of the foregoing or of its powers expressly conferred by these Terms of Reference (ToR), the IMExec shall have power to authorize actions on behalf of the LTER IMC. The IMExec is given responsibility for coordinating the development and update of LTER network-level information management plans as well as development and recommendations for LTER IMC working groups in communication with the IMC. The IMExec is given power for making rapid responses to pressing needs and will provide timely communication to the IMC regarding these actions. Decisions with long-term, network-wide ramifications such as the adoption of standards or participation in funded projects will be contingent on a vote of endorsement by the IMC. New proposals and endorsements will be communicated to the IMC. If sites object to a decision of IMExec, it can be brought to the attention of the IMC, and with the support of at least 5 sites, will be redressed with the IMC before a final action is taken.

With the exception of the (co-)chair(s), the Executive Board receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses. [IMC Recommendation Pending]

#### Subgroups

Working groups are created to focus on a topic or carry out a particular activity. Membership to Working Groups is inclusive and open to all members of the IMC. Working Group (co)chair(s) may be suggested by IMExec, IMC, or the working group itself. Working groups (WG) may be created informally and may communicate their initiation by submitting a title and basic information to IMExec. They may be formalized by submitting to IMExec a Request for Support or Endorsement for the WG together with a WG Terms of Reference and a WG Roster using the IMC templates. Working groups carry out projects with network-wide ramification must submit such a Request for Endorsement to IMExec. A vote of the IMC will be coordinated by IMExec

on a Request for Endorsement of formal working group status. When recognized formally, the WG name will be recorded in the IMC Roster of Actions. The end of a working group will be defined in its ToR as either by consensus or by vote of its members.

Further working group arrangements include the following:

- Formal, active working groups are tasked to keep a record of members, activities, and actions.
- Formal, active working groups will self-review annually to consider continuation and will submit an annual report prior to the annual IMC meeting to IMExec at which time their status will be assessed. Lack of submission of a WG annual report will be taken as an indication that the WG is inactive.
- Working Group discontinuation will be accompanied by a final report and will be recorded in the IMC Roster of Actions.
- Working Group recommendations may be made to IMC for vote via submission to IMExec who will respond to the recommendation and record it in their Roster of Actions.
- Working Groups may designate subgroups to address defined tasks and activities. Working groups will record designation of subgroups in their IMC Roster of Actions.

#### Types of Action: Letters-of-Request

IMExec will create responses to 'Letters of Request'. Inquiries take the following forms:

- Request for Comment (RFC) – an informal response to a design or plan, i.e. similar to a request for comments
- Request for Support (RFS) – semi-formal support for developing an idea, i.e. project abstract
- Request for Endorsement (RFE) – a formal support for development where time, money, or network-wide requirements will be involved; a letter of endorsement is beneficial for working groups interested in submitting proposals involving the IMC, an IMC product-oriented working group or an IMC training session.

#### Types of Action: Types of Decision-Making

The IMC, IMExec and Working Groups typically make decisions of the following types:

- Formal: votes will be taken; example: on a community standard
- Semi-formal: consensus; example: where meeting is to be held
- Informal: iterative discussion and agreement or informational; example: meeting agenda
- Tacit: tradition; example: having an IMC meeting mixer
- Compliance: response to mandate; example template developed by EB

### **3. Activities**

#### Meetings

A face-to-face meeting of the IMC will be held annually. Attendance by the IMC (co)chair(s) and one information management representative from each site is supported. Designated representatives from working groups may be requested to attend the annual IMC meeting by IMExec and their travel will be supported by the LTER Network Office Budget for IMC. A portion of the annual IMC meeting is designated the annual business meeting; it is open only to IMC members. During the business meeting, IMC members will conduct votes and will review

IMExec decisions from the previous year. Televideo meetings on selected topics will be held periodically to keep the IMC current on content, issues, and working groups' progress.

Two face-to-face meetings of the Executive Board of the IMC (IMExec) will be held bi-annually, one at the IMC annual meeting and another at the LTER Network Office unless otherwise decided. Attendance by IMExec members, IMC (co)chair(s), the IMC EB representative, a NISAC co-chair, and designated individuals asked to report on particular activities will be supported. Televideo meetings will be held monthly and may include invitations to working group chairs or other participants.

### Agenda

The IMExec is responsible for developing the annual IMC meeting agenda in consultation with IMC members.

### Communications and Reporting

Communication responsibilities are delegated as follows. Notes and reports will be posted publically.

- IMExec will create a report of the IMC annual meeting;
- IMExec will track IMC active working groups and projects;
- IMExec will coordinate IMC teleconference meetings and meeting notes;
- IMExec will coordinate IMExec teleconference meetings and meeting notes
- IMExec will prepare an annual report for the **EB/Science Council??**;
- The IMC EB representative will attend meetings of the EB, reporting verbally to IMExec at their meetings, in writing to the IMC via the IMExec notes, and quarterly by email or verbal report at the annual meeting;
- The NISAC IM co-chair will be included in IMExec meetings at minimum **bi-annually/quarterly???**;
- The IMC (co-)chair(s) and the IMC EB representative or representatives they designate will attend the annual LTER Science Council meeting;
- IMExec will coordinate responses to requests for information, comments, endorsement and/or support and will communicate them to the IMC, EB and/or NISAC depending on the issue at hand;
- IMExec will be cognizant of data management components of cross-site proposals and will communicate with the IMC about them.

### Rosters

The following information will be maintained in an IMC Roster that is publically available:

- The names of the IMC representatives, IMC members, and annual meeting attendees updated annually;
- The names IMExec members, IMC (co-)chair(s), and the IMC EB representative updated annually;
- The names of IMC working groups and their (co)chair(s) and any other projects accepted on behalf of the IMC updated as they develop;
- The formal and semi-formal decisions and responses made by the IMC, IMExec, and Working Group Requests, the date made, and the type of decision involved added as they are made.

## **4. Budget and Expenses**

A budget will be maintained at the LTER Network Office to support the IMC including annual meeting expenses and targeted activities. A copy of this budget will be requested prior to the annual meeting of IMC where funded activities will be presented and formally approved. Budget and activities will be semi-formally reviewed at the annual meetings of IMExec. Requests for changes in the IMC budget will be sent to the EB who will communicate with LNO.

- Budgeted activities for meetings will be decided by IMExec.
- Budgeted activities for funded projects will be voted on by the IMC.
- Projects with network-wide scope such as for network information system modules or named projects will be decided by vote of the IMC

## **5. Modifications**

These Terms of Reference may be amended by two-thirds vote of the SiteIM representatives at the IMC annual meeting.

## **Abbreviations**

EB	LTER Executive Board
IMC	Information Management Committee
IMExec	Information Management Executive Board
LNO	LTER Network Office
LTER	Long-Term Ecological Research
NISAC	Network Information Advisory Committee
RFC	Request for Comment
RFS	Request for Support
RFE	Request for Endorsement
SC	LTER Science Council
SiteIM	the information manager designated to represent a site
ToR	Terms of Reference
VTC	Video Teleconference (or virtual water cooler)
WG	Working Group