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2nd Circular: Forthcoming projects planning meeting, Rome, 4-6 December

Dear LTER National Coordinators and eLTER colleagues,

This is the second circular about the planning meeting in Rome, December 4-6, 2018. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the overall design of upcoming European LTER activities and an overarching structure for the major projects ahead, namely the Preparatory Phase Project (PPP) and the Advanced Community project (currently called eLTER PLUS), which will both provide us with a unique opportunity to substantially improve the infrastructure for the European top level research on ecosystems, critical zone and socio-ecological systems.

Now, the national LTER coordinators and communities are challenged to:

- 1) commenting the overall design** of the projects presented in the attached document;
- 2) suggesting experts** to work for the projects and inviting them to the Rome meeting.

As announced, it is important to maximize synergies between the two projects. The currently emerging “overarching design” is described in the attached document. The foundation of this design includes the basic decisions taken by the consortium in Sofia. The developing concept will be used to guide more concrete discussions, including project planning, and defined tasks within focused work packages. The Rome meeting is a central part in the process.

We ask that you read the document carefully and send us (office@lter-europe.net) your suggestions, concerns, questions, etc. as soon as possible. We will keep on working on the document and including your suggestions and aim to send you a developed version in due time. Your suggestions are also vital for Rome meeting, because we are still formulating the structure of it. The meeting will consist of plenaries and smaller break-out group discussions, though the specific topics are still undefined.

Please note that there are two distinct parts to the Rome meeting, each dealing with unique aspects of the overall project; On 4th December we are focusing on the PPP, and on the 5-6th December, we will focus on eLTER PLUS. Please take the nature of each meeting into account when you consider who to invite to which part of the meeting.

Who should participate to the Preparatory Phase Project discussion (Dec 4)?

The PPP focuses on the legal, governance, and financial aspects of the RI. We will prepare the RI business plan, as well as tools for assuring its long-term sustainability. Participants needed for this part of the meeting include:

- **the national LTER coordinators**, who are the key contacts to stakeholders, and the best informed regarding national RIs and their integration into the ESFRI process
- **skilled experts in the field of legal, governance and financial issues**

from a variety of countries. These people will be needed throughout the PPP process, and it is important for them to join early on (i.e. already at the Rome meeting). Please note that these experts are not the “usual suspects” from the research departments and institutes, which have formed the backbone of LTER up to now. Rather, they should be individuals from your institutions who will contribute to the PPP technical work, preferably bringing their experience in Research Infrastructure planning, design, implementation and operation. Also note that, content-wise, the development of the PPP has little space for maneuver, because the process and outcome is largely determined by ESFRI criteria.

Who should participate to the eLTER PLUS discussion (Dec 5-6)?

The eLTER PLUS meeting will focus on the scientific aspects and benefits (current and future) of the eLTER Research Infrastructure. We are prioritizing the need for top scientists to link to our network, and for stronger linkages with other research communities. As such, we need experts for developing research tools and services and organizing transnational access and training. We need people firmly rooted in the LTER business and with a strong vision of how our science should be supported, developed and promoted in the future.

As noted, the meeting venue is in Rome, kindly hosted by Antonello Provenzale. The general agenda for the Rome meeting is as follows (we will begin promptly on the morning of 4th December, so please reserve the Monday, 3rd December for travelling).

Mon, 3 Dec: Traveling

Tue, 4 Dec, 9.00-17.00: Preparatory Phase Project

Wed, 5 Dec, 9.00-17.00: eLTER PLUS

Thu, 6 Dec, 9.00-17.00: eLTER PLUS (note the changed ending time!)

Fri, 7 Dec: Traveling

You will receive more detailed information about the meeting location and information how to register closer to the event. Remember that the specific agenda is still in development, so your feedback is crucial.

Please send all your thoughts and ideas to: office@lter-europe.net within one week of receiving this mail, i.e. before Nov 1.

Kind regards,
Michael and the proposal coordination team

Attachment:

Overall design PPP PLUS condensed (Annex: call texts)

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