



**International Long-Term Ecological Research Network**

**FIRST ILTER OPEN SCIENCE MEETING: Joining forces with other global environmental research organisations and networks... towards an ILTER network of networks**



Day 2 of the Open Science Meeting focused on exploring opportunities for collaboration and investigating global environmental data requirements with the following global research organisations:

- Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- Global Land Project (GLP)
- Global Collaboration Engine (GLOBE)
- International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)
- Future Earth (International & South Africa)
- National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)
- GEO ECO

- Group on Earth Observation (GEO)/ GEOBON/ Global Carbon Observation System (GCOS)
- World Network of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO WNBRS)
- Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (ICSU-PECS)

Key issues emerging from the discussions and a lively interactive Q&A session with OSM delegates included that all organisations should make a concerted effort to improve communication and collaboration between the different programmes; work towards encompassing network science; pay attention to the interoperability of their data; combine efforts in sourcing funding and focus on conducting their research *in situ* over larger scales in an effort to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of climate change on ecosystems.

These programmes share many objectives but each are focused on a specific key outcome. Delegates considered the diversity of organisations to be a strength and not a threat. Working towards an integrative approach would result in many benefits and would also serve to improve the science-policy interface.

A move towards “actionable science” was mooted, citing recent catastrophic events as an example. What do we learn from such events and how do we model them? Scientists could add valuable input to the global body of knowledge in forecasting and mitigating these events.

Professor Bob Scholes suggested that ways should be explored to “reduce the clutter” of the global network of organisations. One way would be to group them according to their main function into RESEARCH bodies (such as Future Earth), ASSESSMENT bodies (such as the IPCC) and ORGANISATIONAL bodies (such as ILTER).

In response to a question whether global research organisations should be focusing more on policy

and education, it was suggested that better use be made of new channels of communication that are opening up. People are increasingly using the Internet and social media to explore and learn and the recent resurgence of citizen science provides an excellent opportunity to inform and educate the general public.

In conclusion, ILTER Chair Professor Michael Mirtl described the session as the “first big step” towards cementing ILTER’s status as a network of networks.

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