



CONTACT



Herbert Haubold
herbert.haubold@
umweltbundesamt.at

eLTER ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

The eLTER H2020 project provided Transnational Access (TA) supporting in-person research visits to 18 well-equipped sites across Europe representing different socioeconomic and biogeographical settings and environmental conditions. Moreover, via its Information System, eLTER provided Virtual Access (VA) to various data sets from more than 150 sites openly available to anyone interested, to enable the cost-efficient implementation of large-scale cross-site studies.

Transnational Access (TA)

Making eLTER access opportunities widely known

The eLTER H2020 project website had a dedicated section regarding TA where the calls for proposals were issued (www.lter-europe.net/elter/ta/). This provides a general description of the eLTER TA scheme, lists the sites that could be visited and explains the application procedure. Moreover, a TA brochure and a flyer were printed and distributed at suitable events. Some of our users described their visits in log posts (www.lter-europe.net/elter/ta/ta-blogs), that also helped to publicise the scheme.

Selection procedure

Proposals were subjected to an eligibility check regarding the criteria set out in the TA scheme. Thereafter, a plausibility check was performed by the respective site staff regarding the appropriateness of the proposed research at the site. All proposals which passed these checks were subjected to a scientific evaluation considering scientific quality, degree of innovation, approach and methodology, and relevance for the eLTER science case. Reviews were conducted by a group of reviewers independent from both the site(s) where the user project should be conducted and from the user group as well.

Support offered to users

Successful applicants were offered complete travel and subsistence costs for the duration of their stay at one or several sites. They received an introduction to the site and its equipment and also access to existing site data. They were supported by local staff both in terms of scientific work and logistics. After finalising their projects, users were asked to submit a short report on the data gathered and the work done.

eLTER TA key facts

- 3 calls for proposals
- 75 proposals received
- 12 multi-site proposals
- 12 applications from outside EU
- 53 projects funded
- 1153030 € requested in total
- 499495 € granted in total
- ca. 85000 € granted for travel in total
- 1068 units (User/Day at the site) funded in total
- 116 users in funded in total

Topics addressed

User projects addressed a wide range of topics that were classified into the following categories:



Climate/anthropogenic impacts on ecology



Experiments and modelling



Forest ecology



General ecology



Hydrology interaction with land use



Influence of agriculture on ecology



Limnology and freshwater ecology



Measurements and devices



Nitrogen flux interaction with ecology



Socio-ecology



Soil science

Virtual Access (VA)

Data from a large number of sites are made available through the eLTER Information System whereby eLTER applies an open data policy and offers all of its data for free without the need for users to register or identify themselves.

Data collection from the eLTER sites was achieved via the **DEIMS-SDR** (Dynamic Environmental Information Management System – Site and Data Registry) as the metadata editor and **B2SHARE** as the data repository. Data providers received detailed documentation of the data specifications and publishing processes.

Currently, the data sets focus on these key elements of the eLTER science case:

- ☀ Temperature time series: Air and water temperature (daily means > 10yrs)
- ☀ Effects of climate change: Vegetation plot data (species lists or inventories, time series)
- ☀ Assessment of nitrogen-impacts on ecosystems: Data on climate, soil parameters, soil solution and runoff chemistry, nutrient cycling variables and information on ground vegetation.

During the project, 158 data sets were identified on temperature, 51 on climate change effects, and 42 on nitrogen impacts. These data sets originate from 158 eLTER sites which represent all major biogeographical gradients of Europe. The collection of data to be reported via the eLTER Information System⁰⁹ is an on-going process and will continue beyond the eLTER H2020 project.

The experiences gathered in organizing site access in the eLTER H2020 project 2015-2019 provided valuable input for improved procedures and workflows in the follow-up project eLTER PLUS for Advanced Communities.



eLTER encompasses LTER-Europe, a community of national long-term ecosystem research site networks, as well as major projects to develop eLTER RI, a whole ecosystem European Research Infrastructure under the ESFRI framework

Integrated European Long-Term Ecosystem, critical zone and socio-economical systems Research

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