

LTER-EUROPE

LTER-Europe is the umbrella network for Long-Term Ecosystem Research (LTER) in Europe. Its members are national networks of LTER sites. LTER-Europe provides forum for scientists working at the local, regional and national levels to share data, collaborate on global projects, integrate findings and deliver sound, peer-reviewed research to decision-makers and the public.

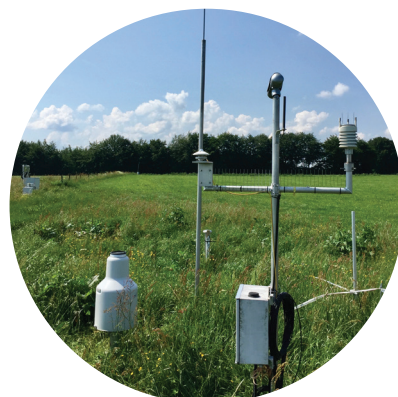
CONTACT



eLTER Office
office@lter-europe.net

LTER-Europe (www.lter-europe.net) is the regional (continental) network of ILTER (International Long Term Ecological Research network, www.ilter.network) representing the European LTER (eLTER) sites from 26 countries, each with a well-established governance structure. Since its launch in 2003, LTER-Europe has sought to better integrate traditional natural science with holistic ecosystem research approaches, including the impact of humans on environmental systems. LTER-Europe was heavily involved in developing the concept of Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research. As a result, LTER-Europe now comprises not only LTER Sites but also larger LTSER Platforms, where long-term interdisciplinary research is encouraged.

Currently, LTER-Europe includes around 450 ecosystem research sites, belonging to terrestrial (65 %), inland waters (26 %) and transitional waters (9 %), and 35 LTSER platforms. Each network is separately governed, but, through LTER-Europe, they strive to work together. Given the long history of ecological research in Europe and related physical infrastructures, the major challenge is to find common approaches to activities such as ecosystem monitoring and data management. Important elements of this process are: (i) an integrative approach based on jointly developed and commonly accepted standards (e.g. site categories) and jointly used tools (e.g. DEIMS-SDR Site and Data Registry, <https://deims.org/>), (ii) the involvement of a wide range of disciplines and research groups, (iii) joint service-oriented projects enabling concerted actions across various scientific and technical approaches at the European scale, and (iv) embedding eLTER in the European Research Infrastructures and environmental monitoring landscape, enabling formalisation of eLTER operations²⁰.



Related components of the European LTER

LTER Europe closely interacts with two other major elements:

- ✿ R&D projects, such as the eLTER H2020 flagship project (2015-2019) that further developed the Long-Term Ecosystem Research (LTER) infrastructure and community in Europe⁵
- ✿ The eLTER ESFRI process²⁰, a formalisation process in the framework of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures leading to the launch of the eLTER Research Infrastructure¹⁶.

LTER-Europe sites as at December 2020. All sites are described on DEIMS-SDR (<https://deims.org/>). The sites marked in red were included in the eLTER Site Catalogue (2019), available from the eLTER website (www.lter-europe.net)



Members of the eLTER community at the formal launch of the pan-European LTER-Europe network in 2007. The meeting took place at Lake Balaton, Hungary

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

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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