



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 20-038

Dear Colleague Letter: Developing New Research Collaborations Between Evolutionary Biologists and LTER Scientists

January 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

There is a growing recognition in the ecological community of the importance and dynamic nature of interactions between ecology and evolution (eco-evo) and the need to better integrate the two fields to understand processes underlying ecological and evolutionary phenomena. Accordingly, the Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) aims to catalyze new collaborations that foster eco-evo research involving [Long-Term Ecological Research](#) (LTER) sites.

The LTER Program supports 28 active sites, distributed across a wide array of biomes (<https://lternet.edu/>). Although LTER activities focus on ecological research, the sites provide unparalleled opportunities for exploring the role of evolutionary phenomena in long-term ecological dynamics.

As detailed below, DEB will support new collaborations between members of the LTER community and evolutionary biologists, with the intention of developing evolutionary research approaches, expanding the LTER eco-evo community, and evaluating the efficacy of building evolutionary studies on the experimental work and long-term data collected at LTER sites.

CALL FOR CONFERENCE PROPOSALS

The LTER program, in collaboration with the evolutionary clusters within DEB, [Evolutionary Processes](#) (EP) and [Systematics and Biodiversity Science](#) (SBS), will support conferences and workshops that lead to new research and collaborations between evolutionary biologists and current LTER scientists. The goal is to leverage existing long-term data, experiments and samples to catalyze new evolutionary studies. Proposed activities should involve one or more working groups that will meet multiple times to plan and accomplish goals. Meetings may be in-person or virtual.

This initiative is intended to leverage opportunities at the intersection of evolution and ecology, not to expand the existing scope of the LTER program. Collaborations initiated through this mechanism may lead to proposals for submission to the Core programs in DEB (including EP, SBS, and the Bridging Ecology and Evolution [BEE] track [in DEB's core solicitation](#)) and elsewhere.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Proposals for conferences must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidance for Conference Proposals contained in Chapter II.E.7 of the [NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG). Budgets may include the costs of meeting activities as well as the costs of synthesis and analysis of existing data and samples that develop eco-evo approaches at LTER sites. Support for new analyses of existing samples or the collection of new data or samples that have clear potential to enhance the outcome of the conference may be available through supplements to existing LTER sites. The LTER Network Office offers the opportunity to host working group activities, if desired (<https://lternet.edu/contact-us/>).

Proposals should be directed to the Division of Environmental Biology and the Long-Term Ecological Research Program with titles that begin "EVO-LTER:" The Project Description should highlight opportunities to address evolutionary questions. Projects may focus on a single LTER site or may involve cross-site comparisons. Project personnel should include LTER scientists and evolutionary biologists from outside the LTER network. The proposal should make clear what data, samples or existing LTER experiments are being leveraged by the new interdisciplinary collaboration.

Conference proposals can be submitted any time before April 1, 2021.

Questions pertaining to this DCL may be submitted to:

Doug Levey: dlevey@nsf.gov

Francisco (Paco) Moore: fbmoore@nsf.gov

John Schade: jschade@nsf.gov

Sincerely,

Joanne Tornow
Assistant Director
Directorate for Biological Sciences