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Fri, 11/13/2009 - 10:54am — [mobrien](#) ^[1]

19 November 2009, 1000 -1200 MST

Participants

Members: Don Henshaw, Margaret O'Brien (co-chairs), Sven Bohm, Emery Boose, Hap Garritt, Corinna Gries, Suzanne Remillard

Ex officio: James Brunt (LNO)

Guests: Todd Cowl (NSF), Wade Sheldon (NISAC)

Topics

1. EB Report
2. CI Plan
3. 2010 Supplements
4. Business Items

1. EB Report

Four prospecti for future LTER research were written by working groups at the ASM. These have generated some excitement at NSF and will influence the next round of RFPs once the NSF budget is set. Four proposal writing workshops will be funded by the EB in February. Global climate change will be the theme throughout. Several different programs at NSF will contribute.

Post-ASM workshop proposals (about 40) will be reviewed by the EB in December. Should we coordinate submissions? John Porter is interested in submitting a proposal; other possibilities include EcoTrends, sensor networks, Drupal, and web services. There will likely be a strong preference for proposals that align with science themes. Funding for a single meeting for a dozen people.

LNO operational plan. Most groups are on schedule. The initial outline by LNO was well received by EB subcommittees. LNO is filling out details now. An outside committee has been assembled to review NIS and cyberinfrastructure plans.

LTER has been invited to create a BioScience issue to celebrate 30 years of LTER. The EB has suggested creating a publications committee to coordinate. Do we want to participate (30 years of IM in LTER)? This effort would be different from other ongoing histories of LTER.

The IMC production workshops might include web services. There is funding for two workshops in the first year (starting 1 Sep 2009).

2. CI Plan

NISAC has resumed activity after a break last summer. VTCs are scheduled for the next several months. Formal minutes will be posted on the Drupal website.

Review of the LNO operational plan is imminent. Wade, Will, and Corinna serve on the EB subcommittee on cyberinfrastructure.

Operational plan timeline. 1 Dec = LNO will complete CI / NIS portion of plan (30+ pages). NISAC will review entire plan. NISAC has been provided with related briefing materials including the initial outline. 4 Dec = NISAC members to provide personal reviews and comments. 9 Dec = NISAC VTC to assemble consensus report. 10 Dec = Wade & Will to finalize report. 11 Dec = report due back to LNO.

NISAC has assembled detailed material on each of the proposed tasks. Many tasks will require assembling groups to work out the required standards and best practices. These are essentially taskforce efforts and may require additional resources. A substantial coordination effort will be needed. Funding to sites will also be required to move forward.

Taskforces will mostly draw on LTER personnel. Need for scoping and strategic thinking. It might be possible to combine with science WG efforts (e.g. sensor networking) and/or IM production workshops.

The EB originally suggested that the IMC review the operational plan before NISAC. However the timeline is short. The IMC has been advised that it will receive the plan by 1 Dec and should return comments to Corinna by 8 Dec. Perhaps Wade and Will's revision could be circulated to IM-Exec before the 3 Dec IM-Exec VTC.

Invite Bob Waide to join the 3 Dec VTC to answer questions. This would be an opportunity to identify any important conflicts or problems (red flags). Remaining issues could be resolved with phone calls.

Wade and Will are meeting with Phil to discuss the role of NISAC in annual LNO evaluations. They will argue for a more hands-on assessment (not just a list of items started, in progress, or completed) and for raising expectations.

The IM review criteria have helped to standardize site reviews and to improve transparency and consistency. An EB subcommittee has formalized a list of review criteria for LNO. NISAC will evaluate some of these tasks. Two documents are in preparation: a top-level summary of tasks and a detailed list of activities. These will be vetted by the EB and IM-Exec when available.

3. 2010 Supplements

Large ARRA award to LNO for Pasta and related developments.

2010 LTER supplements. How to structure request to help site IM / IT? Last round of site reviews has been very encouraging in terms of data access, etc. What would provide the biggest bang for the buck? Different sites have different needs. RFP will contain a new section for IM, probably \$25k (no budget yet).

Suggestion from IM-Exec: improve quality of EML at all sites. EML metrics WG established at ASM with community-wide membership (LTER, NCEAS, EML-dev). Pasta and similar projects need high-quality EML. Create reporting tools. Metrics to be determined by IM-Exec at its winter

meeting. This suggestion arose from the need to move the NIS forward.

Supplement funds could be used to help sites meet these metrics. Assemble groups of sites to work on common problems. Build on earlier efforts: data access server, data loader (requires level 5 EML), software libraries that come with EML, Pasta, and Kepler.

Compare Henry's RFP for improving site contributions to ClimDB / HydroDB a few years ago. Other areas would also further network goals; e.g. sensor networking, keyword standardization.

NSF's goal is to show that the LTER network is a network. There is also an expectation that LTER will work well with NEON. NEON may tend to eclipse LTER as a repository for ecological data.

The goal of the supplements could be to enhance interoperability. But the RFP needs to be written succinctly enough to ensure that funds go where intended. Sites may have expectations based on past awards (e.g. for instruments). Need to set some tangible milestones so NSF can track.

How long will supplemental support for IM last? Todd is at NSF for one year. The Schoolyard program also began as a one-year effort for a few sites. The program has proven to be effective and visible with a high multiplier effect.

Compare to the substantial NSF investment in NEON cyberinfrastructure. What would be the comparable impact for site IM / IT? Every undergraduate ecology text book should have examples from LTER science. This would have a high multiplier effect.

How about EcoTrends as a visible, high-multiplier project? There is a large demand for clean, comparable data from observatory programs. LTER focus on documenting raw data. EcoTrends focus on reduced, large-time-step data. How to move forward? What are the best deliverables?

LTER needs more visible, clean, comparable data. Data products are needed. But the EcoTrends model with a human analyst is not sustainable in the long run.

There has never been a network-wide data comparability goal in LTER. If NSF wants to advance this goal it needs to communicate this to site PIs.

ClimDB / HydroDB demonstrated the need for scientist involvement in creating derived products.

NSF is due for a \$49-50M increase for climate research, including ecological feedbacks to climate, with a focus on regional to continental-scale science. LTER should be posed to write these proposals now. But this will depend on the ability to pull data together.

Legacy and historical data are often the problem. It is far easier to make new measurements comparable. There is some irony in the fact that LTER sites are chosen for their uniqueness. The scale of ecology is increasing and comparability will emerge as a key issue.

IM-Exec might craft some wording for the supplement RFP (by 11 Dec if possible). Todd has only 90% of the budget now but expects full funding or a slight bump.

Interoperability among LTER, NEON, and other observatories will be the trend in the future.

LTER sites are now renewed with an increase of \$120k per year. The LNO operational plan is everyone's priority (a lot of money). Milestones will help constrain spending as planned.

4. Business Items

IMC VTC 7-8 Dec. Discuss LNO operational plan. Opportunity to get ideas from outside of IM-Exec.

EML metrics. Need quick development of tools for feedback. Could we get some of Duane's time? Or use some supplement funds?

Development of the data management library to improve reporting is part of the LNO operational plan. There isn't much flexibility to develop additional tools in the first two years. But include suggestions as comments on the plan.

Other possible first steps include data models, attribute standardization, etc. What are the first steps in using Pasta? Loading data is a critical first hurdle. Then there will be a need for network products. The disparity across sites cannot be solved quickly.

Ontologies may be too difficult for a 5-year timeline. But some standardization may be required now. If we put off standardization then EML will need to be updated later. These can be parallel efforts.

We might provide Todd with some tiered milestones (comparable to EML levels). Identifying the benefits of achieving these milestones would provide some incentive to sites. But sites would need lead time to agree to milestones. Compare NISAC box diagram from 2003 Kellogg meeting. General metrics to encourage improvement. Craft something and circulate by email.

2010 IMC meeting. No reply to date from John P. and Jonathan. KBS may be best deal. Use site vans to provide transportation to airport (20-30 miles). A few cars would be helpful since there's not a lot to do at the station. Breakout rooms are available. Margaret has assembled a table of costs. Sven will check with Phil. Create Doodle for weeks in Aug, Sep, and Oct when station is available. Two full days and previous evening.

Mirada project. Microbial inventory research across diverse aquatic LTER sites (see: <http://amarallab.mbl.edu/mirada/mirada.html>). Genomic sequencing of aquatic bacteria. Looking for environmental data (temperature, nutrients, etc). Wade and Inigo have helped with data management. Another synthesis project we will wish to accommodate.

Attachment

Size

Report from 2009 ASM ad hoc working group on EML metrics (pdf) [2]	21.16 KB
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[Meeting Notes](#) [3]

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