

# SUPPORTING LONG-TERM RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE



ALTER-Net actively supports and promotes interdisciplinary ecosystem research. Research of this type and scale requires an effective supporting infrastructure. ALTER-Net has helped to establish the multifunctional, interdisciplinary, European Long-Term Ecosystem Research network, **LTER-Europe** ([www.lter-europe.net](http://www.lter-europe.net)) to effectively meet this challenge.

## WHAT IS LTER EUROPE?

- A network of instrumented research sites and other facilities, enabling studies at a range of spatial and temporal scales
- A community of highly knowledgeable scientists, technicians and data managers
- A body of 24 national networks (with more in development)
- A facilitator for the investigation of biodiversity-related questions

Many of ALTER-Net's partner institutes operate LTER site networks. Close collaboration between the two networks links the planning of biodiversity, ecosystem and socio-ecological research with actual monitoring and field-based experimentation.

Under the support of ALTER-Net, LTER-Europe has built research collaborations, promoted joint use of facilities by other networks, created a site metadata management system, encouraged the establishment of research platforms incorporating socio-ecological research, and promoted easier access to data.



## FURTHER DEVELOPING EUROPE'S INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH

LTER-Europe and the Critical Zone Observatories (CZOs) established the EU-funded eLTER project in 2015 to further develop European long-term ecosystem research infrastructure (RI). Half of the eLTER consortium are ALTER-Net partners.

The aim of eLTER is to expand network level services, usability, accessibility and interoperability of the "LTER Infrastructure" (long-term ecosystem research sites and socio-ecological research platforms) to support research targeted at producing management and policy relevant decision support.

Most recently, work is being done to establish LTER-Europe/CZO RI as a formal component of a European Research Infrastructure, through a proposal to the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, ESFRI). In 2018, eLTER was accepted as an emerging ESFRI infrastructure eLTER was recently recognized as an "emerging ESFRI infrastructure" and added to the 2018 ESFRI Roadmap, paving the way for further development.

**ALTER-Net: Europe's ecosystem research network**  
**[www.alter-net.info](http://www.alter-net.info)**