

## MEMO

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**From:** Holly Kaufman, President, Environment & Enterprise Strategies  
**To:** Hen-biau King, ILTER Executive Committee Chair  
ILTER Coordinating Committee  
**Subject:** Report on Legal Entity and Location Options for ILTER  
**Date:** August 4, 2006

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### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) provided funding in July 2006 for Environment & Enterprise Strategies (EES)<sup>1</sup> to conduct research on organizational and location options for the International Long-Term Ecological Research (ILTER) Network. The goal was to present the results at ILTER's Annual General Meeting (AGM), occurring 14-18 August 2006 in Namibia. The research involved soliciting the perspectives of ILTER participants, and the insights of representatives of similar organizations and other experts, concerning the pros and cons of the organizational and geographic options.

Research for ILTER's future entity status focused primarily on four options: (1) ILTER as a stand-alone legal entity; (2) ILTER co-housed in another international science institution; (3) ILTER remaining at Brown University or another institution connected with US-LTER; or (4) ILTER co-housed in a member network's office (other than US-LTER / Brown University).

**Summary of Legal Status Options:** Autonomy is the main benefit of the stand-alone option, while costs, funding and isolation are the main drawbacks. The reverse is true for the option of co-housing ILTER within another international science institution, and both options have proponents suggesting each would improve ILTER's credibility. These two options are not mutually exclusive; there are organizations that are independent, free-standing institutions that reduce costs by being affiliated with and hosted by other organizations. The third option (staying at Brown) has the benefit of continuity, reduced costs and continued proximity to long-term ecological researchers, but it retains the risk of perceived U.S. domination of the network, and it lacks long-term viability. There appears to be little support within ILTER for the last option, ILTER co-housed in another member's office (other than US-LTER or Brown). An additional option is that of a rotating, decentralized secretariat, where the location shifts with the chair and the staffing needs are met by member volunteers.

**Summary of Location Options:** Although there are compelling reasons to keep ILTER in the United States, but Europe is preferable for giving ILTER a more international image and facilitating travel for its scientists. Europe would maintain ILTER's location in a region familiar

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<sup>1</sup> Environment & Enterprise Strategies (EES) designs and manages projects that integrate environmental and economic concerns. ILTER hired EES in 2005 to guide ILTER's strategic planning process and develop associated operations and funding plans. For information on EES, its associates and president, Holly Kaufman, see [www.EnvironmentStrategies.com](http://www.EnvironmentStrategies.com).

with long-term ecological research and with access to a major funding market. Having a head office in one place and affiliate offices elsewhere is also an option. Regardless of its location, ILTER should eventually establish partnerships with organizations and institutions in other locations so as to maximize fundraising possibilities.

**Recommendation:** Given the current organizational, geographic and fiscal realities, EES recommends that ILTER take the following three steps, with the ultimate goal of establishing an independent legal entity with a cost-saving hosting arrangement with another institution:

1. ILTER's Secretariat should remain at Brown for an interim period of one to three years, during which time ILTER can develop as an organization, solidify its reputation and fundraise.
2. During this interim period, ILTER should seek proposals from other organizations and/or governments for bids to host the long-term secretariat, preferably in a hub city in Europe.
3. Within the one- to three-year period, ILTER should establish itself as an independent organization with a cost-saving hosting arrangement.

## II. BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

### A. Background

ILTER is in a period of transition, evolving from an informal association of networks of scientists who do site-based long-term ecological research to a more formal umbrella organization with a headquarters office that will foster collaboration and cooperation among global LTER networks and researchers around the world.

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) has provided virtually all cash funding for ILTER up to the present time. NSF channeled the funds to ILTER first through the University of New Mexico and now through the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, which also serves as the *de facto* ILTER Secretariat by providing most of ILTER's administrative functions.<sup>2</sup> NSF provided funding in July 2006 for EES to conduct research on the best legal entity and geographic options for ILTER's headquarters, with the intent of having sufficient information for the ILTER Coordinating Committee to decide how to proceed at its annual meeting in Namibia on 14-18 August 2006. This report presents the results of the NSF-funded research.

### B. Methodology

EES researched a variety of options for ILTER's legal status and geographic location and prepared this memo laying out the pros and cons of each option.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The University of New Mexico and Brown University are both institutions at which US-LTER scientists are based.

<sup>3</sup> EES contracted with Dave Grossman of Green Light Group to implement this project. Green Light Group offers research, writing and strategic advice on projects involving energy and environmental policy, politics, law, organizing, and international development. For information on Green Light Group, see [www.GreenLightGroup.org](http://www.GreenLightGroup.org).

The research involved soliciting the perspectives of ILTER participants and the insights and experiences of other experts and representatives of similar organizations. EES:

- Prepared a survey and distributed it to the 32-member Coordinating Committee, of which nineteen members responded. (The survey and the list of respondents are in *Appendices A and B*). EES also conducted interviews with several ILTER participants.
- Conducted extensive interviews with leaders of similar organizations to learn from experiences with their organizational models. Groups consulted include the International Council for Science (ICSU); the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI); the System for Analysis, Research and Training (START); the Group on Earth Observations (GEO); and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN); among others. (The list of interviewees and the basic questions asked are in *Appendices C and D*).
- Conducted interviews with representatives of the funding community, including Frances Li of NSF and Lou Brown of both NSF and the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA).
- Conducted interviews with experts who have experience with international organizations and the establishment of secretariats, including Matthew Stilwell in the Geneva office of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development (IGSD) and Durwood Zaelke, Director of the Secretariat for the International Network for Environmental Compliance & Enforcement (INECE).

EES compiled and analyzed the survey and interviews to yield the information provided herein.

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. Entity Options

Research for ILTER's future entity status focused primarily on four options:

- (1) **Become a stand-alone legal entity**
- (2) **Co-house in another international science institution**
- (3) **Remain at Brown University or another institution connected with US-LTER, or**
- (4) **Co-house in a member network's office (other than US-LTER / Brown).**

In the survey of ILTER participants, seven of nineteen respondents chose staying at Brown or another institution connected with US-LTER as their first choice, while six chose co-housing in another institution and five chose a stand-alone entity. When considering both first and second choices, however, the stand-alone option received twelve votes, staying at Brown received ten, and co-housing in another scientific institution received eight. The only clear result from the survey in this regard is that most ILTER participants did not favor the option of ILTER co-housing in a member network's office other than Brown.

Each of the entity options has benefits and drawbacks for ILTER's future. These are explored below, as are some other models that arose during research.

### **1. Become a stand-alone legal entity**

Interviews and the ILTER participant survey revealed the following benefits to being a stand-alone organization:

- A strong image and identity, with the potential to have more weight and recognition;
- High levels of scientific and political autonomy;
- Less risk of undue influence from any one ILTER member network.

There are drawbacks to this option as well, including:

- The infrastructure, costs and staff needed for set up and operation (*e.g.*, to handle funds, payroll, benefits, audits, etc.);
- ILTER's lack of sufficient credibility to attract the funding needed to support itself as a stand-alone organization;
- The risk that the time, money and effort to build an isolated infrastructure with its own staff may detract from achieving ILTER's scientific goals;
- The risk of having staff in a stand-alone organization become too separated from the scientists who are the "clients" of the organization;
- The risk of being an isolated satellite without much legitimacy;
- The potential for ILTER to be competing with other organizations instead of collaborating with them.

The concern about infrastructure and costs is borne out by the example of the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science (CUAHSI). CUAHSI is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit, independent organization in the United States (commonly referred to as a "501(c)(3)" in reference to that section of the U.S. tax code) that NSF created to have a consortium of universities that could receive and administer NSF awards. The cost of incorporation was trivial, but the harder and more expensive part for CUAHSI has been getting its administrative business systems set up to handle the accounting requirements for an NSF award. Rick Hooper, Executive Director of CUAHSI, thinks this process cannot happen without a full-time business manager and an assistant, which creates immediate overhead costs. He estimates that an organization would quickly get to a base administrative cost of US\$250,000 to run the organization. CUAHSI has a staff of 5 (Executive Director, business manager, accounting assistant, program manager, and webmaster), and with an office and associated expenses, (*e.g.*, electricity), its base costs are about \$700,000 per year. If one assumes a 30% overhead rate is reasonable, then you have a program costing over \$2 million.<sup>4</sup> Setting up a stand-alone organization has been far more expensive and complicated than CUAHSI expected.

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<sup>4</sup> Rick Hooper based his estimates on setting up an organization in Washington, DC and having a senior scientist head the organization. Salaries drive much of the cost, so where salaries are lower, the costs will likely go down. Costs could therefore be lower if a younger scientists or other professional heads the organization or if the office is

**Overall, the ILTER survey showed that autonomy was the main perceived benefit of the stand-alone option (and perhaps credibility), with costs and funding being the main obstacles. The balance of pros and cons led some ILTER participants to conclude that being a stand-alone entity may be the best long-term solution for ILTER, but not necessarily the best immediate solution.**

**These pros and cons, it should be noted, primarily relate to a vision of an organization that operates apart from everything else, with its own staff and office. There are, however, examples of independent, free-standing organizations whose secretariats are hosted by countries or institutions.** The best example of this is the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). In order to allow the staff of a GBIF Secretariat to concentrate their efforts on scientific rather than administrative matters, GBIF decided to use a “Secretariat Host,” an existing organization with the capacity to provide personnel, finance, accommodation, and maintenance services and that could obtain or provide legal status for the Secretariat. GBIF therefore arranged an agreement with the government of Denmark that makes the GBIF Secretariat an independent legal entity (an international organization) in the country. GBIF also has an institutional hosting arrangement with the Zoological Museum of the University of Copenhagen that spells out the services that the University provides to GBIF. The arrangements emphasize the independence of the Secretariat. GBIF’s solution provides the convenience of working through an existing body while creating an independent secretariat responsible only to the Governing Board for the execution of the work program.

**The options of being an independent entity and being co-housed in another institution are therefore not necessarily mutually exclusive.**

## **2. Co-house in another international science institution**

ILTER could pursue an arrangement to be co-housed in another international science institution. Some interviewees and survey respondents noted that any organization that ILTER became part of should have a mission compatible with ILTER’s long-term focus. The organization most often mentioned in this respect is the International Council for Science (ICSU), although other possibilities raised for institutional partnership include various UN bodies (*e.g.*, UNEP, UNESCO), the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS), the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), and the Earth Institute at Columbia University (which is also home to the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN)).<sup>5</sup>

Interviews and the ILTER survey revealed several perceived benefits of being co-housed in another international science institution, including:

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located in a less expensive locale. Rick Hooper’s guess is that locating the office outside of Washington, DC would save some of the costs of administrative staff but not much on professional staff.

<sup>5</sup> Although the Earth Institute is based at a U.S. university, it is not connected with US-LTER and so belongs in this section with international science institutions instead of in the next section with Brown and other U.S. institutions.

- Reduced costs for infrastructure and personnel, as ILTER could use the host's existing infrastructure and share staff for tasks like accounting;
- The potential for a quicker and easier set-up than with an independent legal entity;
- The possibility of financial support from the host;
- Synergy and increased potential for collaboration;
- Improved connections and networking potential with scientific communities doing research on global change, biodiversity, human dimension issues, etc.;
- Enhanced image, credibility and marketing value;
- Recognition of ILTER as a truly international organization dealing with relevant scientific problems.

There are drawbacks to such an arrangement as well, including:

- The risk of being overshadowed by or disappearing into a larger, better-funded, better-known organization (or other projects of that organization);
- Less autonomy;
- The potential for being in a competitive position with the host regarding funding;
- The necessity of ensuring a good working relationship that can last;
- More difficult personnel decisions (when sharing staff) in terms of time, responsibilities and separation of functions;
- Reduced ability to re-locate or separate ILTER following consolidation;
- The fact that some projects within other organizations (such as ICSU) are self-funded, meaning a lack of autonomy without corresponding financial support.

Organizations have been co-housed within other international institutions in a range of forms, and these examples provide some insight into the pros and cons of this option:

- **CIESIN** is part of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. All CIESIN staff are Columbia employees, and the University takes care of most of CIESIN's administrative work (*e.g.*, human resources, accounting, contracts, grants). CIESIN was once an independent 501(c)(3) organization in Michigan, but it was difficult to compete and survive, in part because of having to provide its own infrastructure and accounting. To the outside world, CIESIN still has something of a presence as a separate NGO, but legally, CIESIN is no longer an independent organization. Despite that, CIESIN operates with a fair amount of autonomy, reporting now to the Earth Institute director instead of to a 501(c)(3) board. Bob Chen, Interim Director of CIESIN, has found that being associated with Columbia University has helped the credibility of CIESIN's overall research and has also pushed it to meet Columbia's standards for credibility. CIESIN may have lost some autonomy in becoming part of the Earth Institute, but the move has boosted its stature.
- **DIVERSITAS** is incorporated in France as a "1901 Law" (not-for-profit) organization under the ICSU umbrella. DIVERSITAS is located in the same building as ICSU (provided to ICSU by the French government). DIVERSITAS is organized on the general ICSU model, which means it is guided by a scientific committee.

- ICSU, as a sponsor, formally appoints the DIVERSITAS science committee members<sup>6</sup> but provides no administrative or financial support. ICSU does speak on behalf of all ICSU programs at international activities such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. DIVERSITAS has a lot of business in common with ICSU and coordinates often, but according to Executive Director Anne Larigauderie, the actual operations of DIVERSITAS are fairly independent.
- **START** is sponsored by ICSU's Earth System Science Partnership of global change research programs (the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the International Human Dimensions Programme on global environmental change (IHDP), and DIVERSITAS). START is organized under ICSU's umbrella and follows the usual ICSU structure (*i.e.*, guided by a scientific committee), but it is physically based with the American Geophysical Union (AGU) in Washington, DC. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the AGU, START can use AGU's 501(c)(3) status, and AGU does the financial oversight and management so that START does not have to hire a budgetary officer. START operates as an independent secretariat, with relatively strong autonomy and flexibility. ICSU, AGU, and the parent programs do not interfere with START on governance matters, according to Deputy Director Hassan Virji. The possibility of START becoming a department or center within AGU has been raised repeatedly, but START has decided that it wants to remain independent and flexible.
  - **GEO** is an inter-governmental *activity*, not an actual organization (it has no legal identity and is not incorporated under any country's law). Agreed to at a series of international summits, GEO is administratively housed in the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO). All GEO employees are UN employees or contractors. The governments in GEO created a trust fund for it that the WMO administers but over which the WMO has no control, ensuring GEO's financial independence. The GEO director nominally reports to the WMO, but GEO is very independent from the WMO. According to GEO Executive Officer Peter Colohan, the only thing tying them together is WMO's provision of administrative functions for GEO.

**The ILTER participant survey revealed that the co-housing option was seen as better in terms of fundraising and costs (and possibly increased credibility), but worse on autonomy. Co-housing in another international science organization (*i.e.*, being part of it) therefore has the exact opposite pros and cons of being a stand-alone entity. Again, it is possible that a hybrid model of being an independent organization that is hosted by another institution or government might yield the best of both worlds.**

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<sup>6</sup> ICSU appoints Scientific Steering Committee members for some, but not all, of its organizations.

### 3. Remain at Brown or another institution connected with US-LTER

ILTER could choose to remain at the Watson Institute at Brown University in the United States. Dr. Steve Hamburg of the US-LTER International Committee is based there, the NSF grant currently flows through there, and administrative support for ILTER is currently provided there. Little benefit was seen to re-locating to another institution connected with US-LTER.

The benefits of remaining at Brown include:

- Lower costs than creating and maintaining a stand-alone institution;<sup>7</sup>
- The ability to use existing staff and administrative resources;<sup>8</sup>
- Continuity;
- The potential ability to receive funds from various kinds of funders in different parts of the world owing to the fact that Brown provides multiple organizational structures – a university, a 501(c)(3) organization (the Watson Institute) and an NGO (a possible benefit for funding from international organizations or non-U.S. governments);
- Maintenance of a functional arrangement rather than establishment of a new one, especially at a time of organizational transition and critical shortage of funds.

The drawbacks of staying at Brown include:

- Potential overdependence on few and national (U.S.) sources of funds and negative effects on fundraising from other sources;
- The risk of U.S. and/or US-LTER dominance;
- The risk of staying at Brown being seen by NSF as a failure to broaden the base of support;
- Potentially reduced engagement of other ILTER members;
- The lack of long-term viability, given the dependence on Steve Hamburg remaining with Brown or the US-LTER International Committee.

Other possible benefits and drawbacks related to staying in the United States are described below in the “Location” section.

**The consensus from the ILTER survey and from interviews is that staying at Brown could be a good interim solution but is not viable in the long-term.**

### 4. Co-house in a member network’s office (other than US-LTER / Brown)

Possible member hosts include the Costa Rican and Taiwanese networks, but as mentioned above, **ILTER representatives expressed little support for this option. The benefits and**

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<sup>7</sup> The cost issue could still be significant, as Brown takes a big cut of grants. It is also unclear if ILTER would have to pay rent or other expenses if a formal arrangement were made with Brown.

<sup>8</sup> This “benefit” relies on the assumption that the free services from Brown will continue, which depends on whether Brown gets sufficient funding. Even if Brown can subsidize ILTER’s labor and office expenses, Brown should still keep track of the time and costs contributed for budgeting and fundraising purposes.

**drawbacks are similar to those for the “Staying at Brown” option** – the costs are lower, ILTER can use the existing staff and administrative resources and there will be proximity both spatially and psychologically to long-term ecological researchers. However, as with Brown, the risk also exists of being overdependent on national sources of funds, of being dominated by the host network and of potentially reducing the engagement of other ILTER members.

## 5. Rotating and decentralized models

Other options exist for how ILTER could structure a secretariat without having a long-term home or becoming a formal legal entity. For instance, the location of the secretariat could rotate, with the headquarters moving depending on where the current ILTER Chair works. ILTER could instead, or also, have a distributed or “virtual” secretariat, with decentralized use of the network’s resources and with the members agreeing to fill most of the “staffing” needs. This could involve arrangements such as people in various member networks spending an agreed upon amount of time on a regular basis working on a particular secretariat function, or creation of a “Staff Group” headed by the Chair or his/her staff and populated with people from other interested ILTER members.

This is the way that the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) operates. IGFA is an informal organization, not a legal entity, consisting mostly of national agencies that fund global change research. The members did not want to set up a standing secretariat, so the chairmanship of IGFA is supposed to rotate every couple of years. When the chair rotates, the leadership of the staff group also rotates.

**Benefits of the rotating and decentralized options include: having a minimal headquarters and thus minimal administrative, staff and funding needs; sharing the responsibility for the Network among the membership, thereby also increasing the sense of ownership; and increased flexibility. The disadvantages include heavy reliance on volunteer efforts, potential inefficiency and difficulty in tracking effectiveness of the organization over time.**

### B. Location

Assuming that ILTER creates a formal entity, the question arises of where this entity should be based. The decision seems to be either Europe or the United States. Except for the UN (and perhaps Japan), these are the main places that provide large amounts of funding for international programs, and so this is where the funding market is (which is especially important now in ILTER’s development). These are also the places that have the most familiarity with the concept and practice of long-term ecological research. In the survey of and interviews with ILTER participants, there was generally a split between those who wanted ILTER to remain in the United States and those who wanted it to be based in Europe, with the edge (6-3) going to Europe. Interviews with other experts reinforced the arguments for not being based in the United States.

However, numerous reasons exist to keep ILTER in the United States, including:

- US-LTER scientists originally played a critical role in creating and developing ILTER and therefore have a lot of experience and connections;
- The largest network is US-LTER, and many long-term researchers are based in the United States;
- The United States has strong financial sources and strong support for the scientific community, particularly the LTER community;
- Brown has provided excellent support so far;
- The U.S. east coast is generally easy to travel to.

There are three principal drawbacks to ILTER staying in the United States:

- A sense exists that the United States dominates ILTER because of the proximity to US-LTER. This concern of ILTER participants most likely would not be alleviated if ILTER remains in the United States.
- Keeping ILTER in the United States perpetuates the impression of ILTER as an American organization and a tool of NSF rather than an international organization.
- It is difficult for many non-U.S. scientists to travel to the United States owing to current American immigration policy. For example, ICSU decided not to hold meetings in the United States until policy improves, due to the challenge of obtaining all needed visas for traveling scientists.

Being in Europe, in contrast, could improve ILTER's "international" image because of the multi-national nature of the EU. Europe would also provide "centrally"-located and relatively easy travel for many ILTER participants, while maintaining access to a funding market and locating in a place familiar with long-term ecological research. An additional benefit would be easier collaboration with ICSU and with the concentration of international environmental organizations based in Paris and Geneva.

In making the decision about the secretariat location, whether in the United States or Europe, there are some important factors that ILTER should consider:

- ***Proximity and access to funders*** – in the United States, for instance, many of the funding sources are in New York and Washington, DC. When **CIESIN** was located in a small-town in Michigan, its staff spent a lot of time and money traveling to where the funders were. Similarly, NSF requested that **CUAHSI** locate its headquarters in Washington, DC to enable frequent interaction.
- ***Labor pool & the costs of labor*** – outside of major areas, some skills may be difficult to find and may cost more to recruit. This was **CIESIN**'s experience in trying to get information technology (IT) help in Michigan. Also, it costs more to have employees in some locations. The Committee on Data for Science and Technology (**CODATA**) has considered leaving the ICSU building in Paris because of French regulations and taxes that make having employees in Paris very expensive; **CODATA** has considered moving to Ireland, where there are low taxes, good social services, a well-educated English-speaking workforce, and the currency is still the Euro. Labor may also cost

less in the developing world than in the developed world, although there may be trade-offs in terms of infrastructure, the need for capacity building and the other factors listed here.

- ***Ease of travel*** – being in a major hub city enhances an organization’s ability to network with scientists and officials coming through, travel to other meetings, recruit staff, raise funds, and interact with policymakers. This has been a drawback to **IAI**’s Directorate located in São José dos Campos, Brazil. The Directorate is not located in the capital or a big city, making communications with embassies and others more difficult. IAI has also found that it is harder to fly to other member countries because the Directorate is not in a hub, and some IAI directors have not been willing to travel much.
- ***Local rules & laws*** – many of the details of the way ILTER’s secretariat will operate will flow from the domestic law of the country in which it is located. One example is the French labor regulations described briefly above. Swiss law presents a number of administrative hurdles to establishing an independent organization in Geneva, but the city is very interested in maintaining its status as a center for international environmental organizations and claims to make it relatively easy for NGOs to establish themselves there.
- ***Influence of the host country*** – ILTER representatives raised concerns about U.S. domination of ILTER due to its proximity to US-LTER. In the experience of Paul Filmer of **IAI**, however, hosting is not nearly as significant as funding in terms of domination. Generally, whoever pays for most of a program will have most of the power in it, regardless of the geographic location of the secretariat. This factor may therefore be less instrumental than previously thought.

As described further in the “Funding Considerations” section below, ILTER could establish a headquarters in one location and then establish affiliate offices and/or partnerships elsewhere. Other organizations have experience with this model:

- **DIVERSITAS** has its main office in Paris and has project offices in the U.K., Switzerland and Venezuela that are funded by the host governments.
- **START** is based in the United States but has partnerships around the world with national-level structures that provide standing with funding organizations. For instance, its office in Bangkok is located in the biggest university in Thailand, which gives a high profile to **START**’s structure in Southeast Asia.
- **ICSU** is setting up regional offices around the world. Its South Africa office is hosted by the South African National Research Foundation, which does the bookkeeping for the office and pays for most of it, but **ICSU** runs the office. The South African office is not a legal entity there, but it is housed in one. This

arrangement prevents ICSU from having to contend with difficulties with regulations, taxes, auditing, etc. for regional offices.

**Like the legal entity options, therefore, the geographic options are not necessarily mutually exclusive.**

### **C. Funding Considerations**

ILTER participants and other experts agreed that the primary factor to consider in determining ILTER's future entity status and location is the ability to obtain sufficient funding, preferably from a diversity of sources. This funding could be small amounts of money devoted to specific tasks, countries or regions from foundations and other national science funding agencies; it could be financial support from a host country or organization; and it could be membership contributions. These different funding sources vary in terms of potential amount, likelihood and the amount of organizational effort required. These sources also have implications for organizational structure and location.

#### **1. Foundations**

EES, along with ILTER's Development Task Force, has done a lot of research into foundations, particularly in the United States, and has yet to find one that seems like a good prospect for general ILTER support. Though there is much more research to do on foundations in the United States and particularly other parts of the world, foundational support thus does not seem highly likely in the immediate future, although specific ILTER-wide project support may be more fundable.

#### **2. National science funding agencies**

The U.S. NSF has the ability to fund international organizations, as long as funding requests are submitted by a legal entity. NSF is providing funding to IGBP, for example, but it is not a regular practice for NSF to fund institutions outside of the United States.<sup>9</sup> Unless one of the NSF directorates (*e.g.*, Biosciences) champions international funding, it will not happen. NSF's tendency is to fund principal investigators, and it is not inclined to direct a portion of the funding to international networking. **START**'s experience is consistent with this. **START** has found that transaction costs are hard to justify to the research funding community because serving as the hub for a broader community tends not to be viewed as an appropriate use of money that could otherwise go to research. NSF is therefore a possible but uncertain source of funding for ILTER.

Other national science funding agencies also have limitations, from EES's research to date. **IAI** has found that 90% of its funding for programs and projects still comes from the U.S. NSF because most countries' science funding agencies are not authorized to spend anything outside their borders. (The rest of IAI's project funding generally comes from UNDP, GEF and foreign

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<sup>9</sup> There does not officially have to be a U.S. tie, but there is in almost every case, as a scientific steering committee coordinates virtually all programs, and these committees almost inevitably involve U.S. scientists.

aid organizations.) ICSU has found that funders are less interested in funding programs that have been around for a long time and that will be around for the long-term.

### 3. Geographic implications

If ILTER chooses to locate in the United States, it might have some difficulties raising funds from other countries. Governments, agencies and individuals are less likely to fund international program office activities in countries that their scientists have trouble accessing, such as the United States.

If ILTER locates outside the United States, it could keep open the possibility of raising funds in the United States by having a U.S. office or a “Friends of ILTER” group that is a 501(c)(3) to serve as a fundraising and acceptance vehicle. (A foreign organization can receive 501(c)(3)-equivalency status for purposes of U.S. fundraising, but many foundations and corporations will not make grants to such an organization.)

Locating ILTER in the EU could open up the potential of receiving EU Framework money, although ILTER may have to be sensitive to competition with **ALTER-Net**.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, ICSU has found over the past 5 years that it is easier to get money from a developing country than a developed country to fund an organization or project, perhaps because countries like South Africa, Malaysia, India, or China are more interested in having international science efforts based in their countries.

**Regardless of where ILTER is located, it can open up possible funding opportunities around the world by establishing partnerships and collaborations with organizations in other countries.** START, for instance, collaborates with European institutions in order to access EU money.

### 4. Organizational implications

As noted above in “Entity Options,” being co-housed or hosted by another country or institution can result in additional financial support. The support is often provision of services and personnel. Other times, the enhanced credibility and connections that come from being associated with an organization can improve fundraising potential. **CIESIN** gets its funding from grants and contracts from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the World Bank, various U.S. federal agencies, and some foundations, using Columbia University as the fiscal agent. Being embedded in a major interdisciplinary environmental research center, close to the UN and to foundations, and having Columbia’s reputation and

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<sup>10</sup> The Sixth Framework Program (FP6) is the European Community Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (2002-2006). It is a collection of the actions at EU level to fund and promote research. Projects have to be transnational; only consortia of partners from different member and associated countries can apply. FP6 also provides support for development of new infrastructures and communication networks, as well as for measures in support of international cooperation. More on the Sixth Framework can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index\\_en.cfm?p=0](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index_en.cfm?p=0). The European Commission will launch the Seventh Framework Programme in March 2007.

people from many disciplines who are interested and willing to work in interdisciplinary groups, CIESIN has found that fundraising is significantly easier now than when it was an independent 501(c)(3).

## 5. Membership fees

Many organizations utilize membership fees as a major source of revenue. Often the level of membership contribution is tied to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while voting and decision-making are equal for all paying members. Some organizations that use this funding method include:

- **DIVERSITAS** follows the general model of the ICSU family and receives national contributions on an established scale based on the GDP of the country. (It also receives some foundation money.) DIVERSITAS has found it very time consuming to attempt to collect numerous small contributions every year, with lots of emails, calls and visits to make sure that every country is visited regularly so that every country remembers to contribute. On the other hand, DIVERSITAS recognizes the strength in relying on several small chunks of money instead of being dependent on one source. In the experience of DIVERSITAS, an organization needs at least one staff member dedicated to national contributions.
- **GBIF** has a funding model in which countries' contributions are based roughly on GDP on a seven-step range, with the United States and Japan paying \$700,000 and Peru paying \$500. GBIF had considered expressing contributions as a percentage of the GBIF budget, rather than as dollar amounts, which would have been consistent with many international organizations and has the advantage of keeping income and expenditure always in balance. But with no clear indication of the number of countries that would join GBIF, it would have created considerable uncertainty as to the amount members would have to pay, and hence difficulty in seeking other funds from governments or other sources. GBIF has a nonbinding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with voting countries that states their intention to make a contribution of a certain amount every year. The downside of this arrangement is that GBIF is never sure that it is going to get the money promised, and sometimes big payers have been late, causing cash flow problems. (GBIF also has \$2 million of external funds from the Moore Foundation and Microsoft and is trying to tap into developmental aid money to help develop nodes in developing countries.)
- **IAI** receives country contributions to carry out its organizational functions. IAI uses the contribution scale laid out by the Organization of American States, which takes into account factors such as GDP.
- **ICSU** has a sliding scale membership fee based on GDP to pay for the basic running of ICSU itself. NSF pays about \$250,000 per year, while the annual developing country fees are a minimum of \$1000.

**As these examples make clear, membership contributions can be very time-consuming for a secretariat but can provide important funding. Sharing the buy-in for the program with a wide range of countries can also give them a broader sense of ownership of the program.**

#### **D. Interim Arrangement**

In the survey of ILTER participants, twelve of nineteen respondents expressed support for having an interim secretariat before implementing a long-term solution, compared to only four respondents who expressed support for ILTER immediately assuming its preferred organizational form. Of those supporting an interim arrangement, half supported an interim period of three years. (Three others supported a one-year period, and the remaining three did not specify a time period.) One comment from a supporter of an interim arrangement clearly expressed the risk of not pursuing such a course: “I can hardly imagine starting with something else [right away], as this would likely lead to collapsing the ILTER network.” Other supporters noted that Brown has been giving excellent support and that ILTER will need time to develop its credibility, contacts and profile, strengthen its science and influence with decision-makers, further explore funding, and make the preparations necessary for beginning its long-term organizational arrangement. Steve Hamburg has expressed willingness to keep the ILTER Secretariat at Brown for the next 2-3 years.

Other organizations, such as **GBIF** and **IAI**, have utilized interim secretariats to take care of essential organizational activities until the final arrangements have been set.

#### **E. Decision Process**

A few survey respondents noted the need for more detailed background information on potential hosts, and one ILTER participant suggested trying an open call to member countries and international science institutions inviting them to apply to host the ILTER Secretariat. Such a process would provide much more detailed information to ILTER participants and empower them to make the best decision about ILTER’s future. There are precedents for this approach:

- **CIESIN** set up an external committee of independent scientists and experts that could look impartially at proposals from various perspectives. CIESIN issued an open call for hosts to major research universities, receiving more than twenty responses. The committee invited all respondents to submit full proposals and received eleven, which the committee winnowed to four based on a specific set of criteria (*e.g.*, facilities, funding). Of the four, one was from an existing consortium member, one from a university that wanted to improve its sponsored research, one offering little hosting but access to a critical mass of like-minded scientists, and one from Columbia. Columbia was just starting the Earth Institute, had been thinking of starting a data activity, and preferred not to start from scratch. After choosing Columbia, there was a year-long process of sorting out the various legal issues.
- **GBIF** undertook a competition among its participants to host the Secretariat. It carefully drafted an MOU laying out the criteria and objectives that a host country

had to meet and had bidders explain in their bids how the secretariat would operate and have a legal identity in the bidding country. GBIF wanted to decide on the host jurisdiction as early as possible so that agreements and other documents could be drafted with the knowledge of applicable law, but GBIF ultimately found it more important to have an open bidding process once all other matters had been settled. GBIF received four proposals, and after evaluation teams visited all four, voters chose Denmark. The Danish bid included in-kind contributions in the form of serviced and maintained accommodation, thereby markedly reducing the secretariat's operating costs. Other countries were willing to offer substantial amounts (up to a million dollars a year) for the privilege of hosting the secretariat because of perceived benefits to domestic scientific activities.

- **IAI** asked member countries to submit proposals if they were interested in hosting the IAI Directorate. IAI evaluated and voted on the proposals, based partially on the quality of proposals and partially on politics. Brazil submitted an excellent proposal, did its diplomatic homework and got the votes. IAI is now a tax-exempt entity in Brazil, and the IAI Directorate is located on the grounds of Brazil's space research organization. Brazil provided a portion of an existing building and access to facilities like conference halls; provided and paid for all telecommunications connections; offered the initial sets of computers to get the organization started; provided secretarial staff, a driver and initial vehicles; and signed a formal treaty ceding authority over the grounds, which allows for operation without undue influence from the host country.
- **DIVERSITAS** regrets not asking countries to compete to host the Secretariat when it was re-launched. DIVERSITAS feels it would have generated more money, support and stability in terms of the building and funding from the host country.

The process of soliciting bids for hosting often targets governments, but this is not always the case. **CIESIN** targeted universities. When **ICSU** needed a host for the International Polar Year, it targeted national entities responsible for polar research, whereas for other projects, ICSU went to national science funding agencies. An ILTER bidding process, if members chose to pursue one, could target any entities ILTER members decided on, including countries, universities and/or other institutions. According to **GBIF**, "an international collaboration will almost always benefit the host country, and it is reasonable to expect that a premium be paid, above the level of contribution that would otherwise apply, in recognition of this."

#### **F. Staffing of an ILTER Entity**

During the interviews with representatives of other comparable organizations, interviewees repeatedly mentioned the importance of the type of staff needed for an international secretariat to succeed. These points will be important for ILTER to keep in mind as the process continues. Some involved the qualifications and nationality of the staff, such as:

- It is important to have people, especially at the top, who know not only science but also administration and program management. There are not many of these people.
- If ILTER wants to inform solutions to current and future environmental problems by delivering scientific information to policymakers, that involves law and institutional structures that will put science into the political arena, requiring someone who is trained in both science and law/policy to be the interface in the Secretariat.
- The staff should be international, with a maximum of 30-40% of the staff being domestic and the Director ideally being of a nationality different from the host.

Other suggestions related more to the personalities needed for secretariat staff, including:

- The Director cannot be a “loner” or an introvert and must be very people-oriented.
- When you are a stand-alone organization or are hosted by another institution, it is critical that the Director and whoever is in charge of public relations/communications or fundraising be extremely proactive and very good at engaging the host organization and other organizations. This requires a dynamic personality.

Again, these are not issues for ILTER to deal with now, but will be important as it hires its staff.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the current organizational, geographic and fiscal realities, EES recommends that:

- ILTER stay at Brown for an interim period of about three years, during which time ILTER can develop as an organization, solidify its reputation and increase and diversify its funding.
  - As noted earlier, staying at Brown enables ILTER’s interim headquarters to be at a university, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization (the Watson Institute) and an NGO, which can provide fundraising flexibility. The variety of available fiscal conduits at Brown are particularly useful given the current lack of obvious funding for moving the ILTER headquarters anywhere else.
  - An Executive Director, Development Director and/or Administrative Coordinator could be hired to start at Brown so as to reduce ILTER’s dependence on Steve Hamburg’s and Laura Sadovnikoff’s volunteer labor and time.
  - A “Staff Group” could be assembled for the interim period.
  - For fundraising, ILTER could partner with organizations in Europe to explore getting EU Framework Programme money. Additionally, ILTER should explore the feasibility of “sliding-scale” membership dues, including possibly a one-time fee to join, and implement these as soon as possible.
- The optimal model for ILTER’s legal entity structure appears to be one similar to GBIF – an independent organization with a hosting arrangement that covers many of

ILTER's expenses and needs. Beginning in mid to late 2007, ILTER should begin the process of seeking proposals from other organizations and/or countries for bids for hosting its long-term secretariat, preferably in a hub city in Europe.

## APPENDIX A: ILTER Legal Options Survey

### I. ILTER Survey Instructions

This is a short, 10-question survey that seeks your input on several options for ILTER's establishment as a legal organization, including an ILTER Secretariat office with small professional staff. In addition to ILTER member feedback, we will be gathering advice and input from other international organizations and experts.

In particular, we are seeking any specific expertise you have on the implications that the various options will have on ILTER's ability to be successful in its mission. How would each option affect fundraising? How would each option affect ILTER's scientific goals? How would each option affect members' abilities to work with the professional staff? What are other key issues you see? Should ILTER consider an interim strategy for the next 6 months, 1 year, 3 years before deciding on the permanent solution? Or should ILTER move ahead immediately with a permanent solution?

If you have been involved in the creation of other international organizations or networks, your experience would be greatly appreciated. If you do not have particular expertise in this issue, please provide your opinions and thoughts.

If you have an idea that is not shown here, please describe it in the areas asking for more input and information.

We apologize that this comes so close to the AGM, but NSF has only just provided us the resources to conduct this preliminary research.

Thank you for your time!

### II. Overall Thoughts

Please provide us with your overall views on the most appropriate legal structure for ILTER's professional office.

**1. Please tell us which is the best choice for ILTER's legal structure. Please indicate which would be your #1 choice, your #2 choice, your #3 choice, etc.**

- ILTER as a stand alone legal entity (please indicate the preferable host country in the space below)
- ILTER co-housed within a member network's office (other than US-LTER / Brown University)
- ILTER co-housed within another int'l science institution (such as ICSU)
- ILTER remaining at Brown or another U.S. institution
- Other

2. **Please provide details on your answer to question number one. Please provide examples or experience you have that supports your suggestions if possible. Should ILTER consider an interim strategy for the next 6 months, 1 year, 3 years before deciding on the permanent solution? Or should ILTER move ahead immediately with a permanent solution?**

### III. ILTER Stand Alone Entity Questions

If ILTER were to establish itself as a stand alone entity, please tell us the pros and cons (compared to the other options: co-house with ILTER member; co-house with another int'l science organization; stay at Brown)

3. **If ILTER were a stand alone entity, what would be the implications for the following (compared to the other options):**  
*(choice of Best Option, Somewhat Better than Other Options, Same as Other Options, Somewhat Worse than Other Options, Worst Option, and N/A)*
  - Fundraising (would raising money be easier or harder?)
  - Set Up Costs (would it be more or less costly to set up than the other options?)
  - Administrative Costs (would it be more or less costly to run than the other options?)
  - Scientific Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to follow its own scientific mandate?)
  - Political Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to work with policy makers on issues of importance to ILTER?)
  - Physical Convenience (would it be easier or harder for members to visit headquarters?)
  - Member Domination (would the secretariat be more or less likely to be dominated by one member's goals?)
  - Credibility (would this legal structure add to or detract from ILTER's credibility as an organization?)
4. **Please provide more detail about your suggestions for ILTER as a stand alone entity. If ILTER were a stand alone entity, please indicate the best geographical location and why. Would this be a good interim solution or long-term solution? Provide examples if you can.**

### IV. ILTER Co-Housed with a Member Network

If ILTER were to co-house with a member network office (other than the US-LTER / Brown University), please tell us the pros and cons (compared to the other options: stand alone entity; co-house with another int'l science organization; stay at Brown).

5. **If ILTER were co-housed with an ILTER member network, what would be the implications for the following (compared to the other options):**  
*(choice of Best Option, Somewhat Better than Other Options, Same as Other Options, Somewhat Worse than Other Options, Worst Option, and N/A)*
  - Fundraising (would raising money be easier or harder?)

- Set Up Costs (would it be more or less costly to set up than the other options?)
- Administrative Costs (would it be more or less costly to run than the other options?)
- Scientific Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to follow its own scientific mandate?)
- Political Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to work with policy makers on issues of importance to ILTER?)
- Physical Convenience (would it be easier or harder for members to visit headquarters?)
- Member Domination (would the secretariat be more or less likely to be dominated by one member's goals?)
- Credibility (would this legal structure add to or detract from ILTER's credibility as an organization?)

- 6. Please provide more detail on your suggestions for ILTER being co-housed with a member network. If ILTER were co-housed with a member network, please indicate which member(s) might be good options and why. Would this be a good interim solution or long-term solution? Provide examples if you can.**

#### **V. ILTER Co-Housed with Another Int'l Science Institution**

If ILTER were to co-house with another international science institution (such as ICSU), please tell us the pros and cons (compared to the other options: stand alone entity; co-house with an ILTER member network; stay at Brown).

- 7. If ILTER were co-housed with another organization, what would be the implications for the following (compared to the other options):**  
*(choice of Best Option, Somewhat Better than Other Options, Same as Other Options, Somewhat Worse than Other Options, Worst Option, and N/A)*
- Fundraising (would raising money be easier or harder?)
  - Set Up Costs (would it be more or less costly to set up than the other options?)
  - Administrative Costs (would it be more or less costly to run than the other options?)
  - Scientific Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to follow its own scientific mandate?)
  - Political Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to work with policy makers on issues of importance to ILTER?)
  - Physical Convenience (would it be easier or harder for members to visit headquarters?)
  - Member Domination (would the secretariat be more or less likely to be dominated by one member's goals?)
  - Credibility (would this legal structure add to or detract from ILTER's credibility as an organization?)
- 8. Please provide more details on your suggestions for ILTER being co-housed with another organization. Please indicate which organizations might be good options**

**and why. Would this be a good interim solution or long-term solution? Provide examples if you can.**

**VI. ILTER Remaining at Brown or another U.S. Institution**

If ILTER were to remain at Brown or another U.S. Institution, please tell us the pros and cons (compared to the other options: establish stand alone legal entity; co-house with ILTER member not Brown; co-house with another international science organization)

**9. If ILTER were to remain at Brown or another U.S. University, please indicate the implications for:**

*(choice of Best Option, Somewhat Better than Other Options, Same as Other Options, Somewhat Worse than Other Options, Worst Option, and N/A)*

- Fundraising (would raising money be easier or harder?)
- Set Up Costs (would it be more or less costly to set up than the other options?)
- Administrative Costs (would it be more or less costly to run than the other options?)
- Scientific Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to follow its own scientific mandate?)
- Political Autonomy (would ILTER be better or worse positioned to work with policy makers on issues of importance to ILTER?)
- Physical Convenience (would it be easier or harder for members to visit headquarters?)
- Member Domination (would the secretariat be more or less likely to be dominated by one member's goals?)
- Credibility (would this legal structure add to or detract from ILTER's credibility as an organization?)

**10. Please provide more detail about your suggestions or experiences about ILTER remaining at Brown or another U.S. Institution. Would this be a good interim solution or long-term solution? Provide specific examples if possible.**

**VII. Thank You**

Thank you very much for your time in filling out this survey. We look forward to presenting these findings at the AGM, and hopefully for ILTER's coordinating committee to be able to move forward on this important decision.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**ILTER Member Responders to the Legal Options & Location Survey**

Francisco Barbosa	<i>Brazil</i>
Jacques Baudry	<i>France</i>
John Henschel	<i>Namibia</i>
Jorge Jiménez	<i>Costa Rica</i>
Joseph Kanyanga	<i>Zambia</i>
Edit Kovacs-Lang	<i>Hungary</i>
Ling-ling Lee	<i>Taiwan</i>
Armando Torres Lezama	<i>Venezuela</i>
Viesturs Melecis	<i>Latvia</i>
Felix Mueller	<i>Germany</i>
Julius Oszlanyi	<i>Slovakia</i>
Terry Parr	<i>UK</i>
Avi Perevolotsky	<i>Israel</i>
Tanja Pipan	<i>Slovenia</i>
Hirma Ramírez-Angulo	<i>Venezuela</i>
Hendrik Schubert	<i>Germany</i>
Almeida Siteo	<i>Mozambique</i>
Saulius Svazas	<i>Lithuania</i>
Jaroslav Vrba	<i>Czech Republic</i>

## APPENDIX C: List of Interviewees

- **ILTER MEMBERS**

Patrick Bourgeron	<i>US LTER International Committee</i>
Steve Hamburg	<i>US LTER International Committee</i>
Jorge Jiménez	<i>ILTER Executive Committee; Development Task Force; Costa Rica LTER Network</i>
Julius Oszlanyi	<i>Development Task Force; Slovakia LTER Network</i>
Johan Pauw	<i>Planning Task Force; South Africa Environmental Observation Network</i>

- **COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

Bob Chen	<i>Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN); Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA)</i>
Peter Colohan	<i>Group on Earth Observations (GEO)</i>
Jim Edwards	<i>Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)</i>
Paul Filmer	<i>Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)</i>
Rick Hooper	<i>Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science (CUAHSI)</i>
Anne Larigauderie	<i>DIVERSITAS</i>
Jim MacMahon	<i>National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)</i>
Tom Owens & Cathy Campbell	<i>U.S. Civilian Research &amp; Development Foundation (CRDF)</i>
Thomas Rosswall	<i>International Council for Science (ICSU)</i>
Hassan Virji	<i>System for Analysis, Research and Training (START)</i>

- **FUNDERS**

Lou Brown	<i>Int'l Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) and National Science Foundation (NSF)</i>
Frances Li	<i>National Science Foundation (NSF)</i>

- **OTHER EXPERTS**

Harry Cerino	<i>JRS Biodiversity Foundation</i>
Matthew Stilwell	<i>Institute for Governance &amp; Sustainable Development</i>
Durwood Zaelke	<i>International Network for Environmental Compliance &amp; Enforcement (INECE)</i>

## APPENDIX D: Basic Interview Questions

- **ILTER MEMBERS**

- What kind of entity do you think the ILTER secretariat should be? Why?
  - Stand-alone? Co-housed with a member network? Co-housed with another institution? Stay at Brown? Something else?
  - Should there be an interim strategy and then a permanent solution?
- How do you think it would affect fundraising? Costs (to set up or operate)? Accomplishing ILTER's scientific goals? Working with policy makers? Visiting by members to the office (if that would occur)? Risk of domination by one member? ILTER's credibility?
- What do you think are the most important considerations to account for in deciding ILTER's organization and location?
- Geographically, where would you like to see an ILTER secretariat located? Why?

- **COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

*Questions for all*

- What is the structure for the organization? What type of entity (and where) is the Secretariat?
- Why did you choose that model? Why did you choose that location? What were the challenges involved in setting up the organization, in terms of legal/regulatory/tax issues?
- What are the pros/cons?
  - Fundraising? Costs? Autonomy? Credibility with policy makers? International credibility?

*Specifics*

- **IAI** – IAI was hosted by NSF until 1996, when it became fully operational at the IAI Directorate located in the campus of the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE) in São José dos Campos, Brazil. Why and how did that transition occur? What factors were considered?
- **START** – The International START Secretariat is located in DC, and five START Regional Centers are located in Asia and Africa. Why did START decide to have regional centers? How are the regional centers managed (top-down from the US headquarters, or bottom-up from the local staff)?
  - START has gotten financial support from networks, foundations, governments, and organizations. How has START garnered such broad support? Does the organizational structure / location play a role?
- **CRDF** – CRDF was established by the NSF. What is it now? What is the nature of the arrangement with NSF?
  - CRDF is based in Arlington, Virginia with offices in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia, and Kyiv, Ukraine. Why the multiple locations?

- CRDF has gotten financial support from foundations, government, and corporations. Does the organizational structure / location play a role in getting such support?
- **GBIF** – Why did the OECD ministers decide that GBIF should not be under OECD auspices but rather should be a free-standing organization?
  - How were bids solicited for hosting the Secretariat?
  - What were the criteria used to evaluate the bids by Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, and Spain? Why was Denmark chosen?
  - Do you feel the arrangement of having an interim Secretariat (in Germany) and then a permanent one (in Denmark) worked well?
- **GEO** – the website says that GEO is established on a voluntary and legally non-binding basis – what does that mean?
  - Why was the initial *ad hoc* Secretariat in Washington, DC? Why was a decision made to move it?
  - Why was the WMO offer accepted over others? What is the nature of the arrangement with the WMO?
- **CIESIN** – CIESIN was established as an independent NGO in 1989, and then in 1998 it became a center within Columbia’s Earth Institute. Why the change? How has the change affected things like fundraising? How has being located at a university affected the organization (in terms of funding and our other criteria)?
- **ICSU** – How does ICSU get money for its international offices, not for the projects? How is the relationship with ICSU and its projects?
- **FUNDERS**
  - In ILTER’s evolution, one of the things we’d like to optimize is fundraising potential. What kind of structure / organization do you think might serve ILTER well in terms of its fundraising ability and long-term financial stability? What is the best option and why – short-term and long-term? Any suggestions for another kind of entity (in any country) that is not on the list?
  - What are the factors ILTER should consider relevant to fundraising when making its upcoming organizational decisions?
  - Do you know if it is common for funders to support networks or associations, which is what ILTER is now? If so, what kind of fiscal agent do such collaboratives normally use, and what kinds of funders tend to give to collaboratives?
- **OTHER EXPERTS**
  - In your experience, what are the key factors to consider in establishing the Secretariat of an international network or organization?
  - How do you determine the geographic location(s) of the Secretariat?
  - How did you decide what kind of legal entity to make the Secretariat?
  - What are the legal steps that need to be taken in various countries? In other words, what are the challenges involved in setting up an organization, in terms of legal/regulatory/tax issues?