

# ALTER-Net

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### A Long-Term biodiversity, Ecosystem and awareness Research network

In 2002, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity called for a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 . Europe has gone one step further: In 2003, 51 countries in the wider Europe adopted a target (the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity) to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. They aim to achieve this through a set of policy actions identified in the [European Biodiversity Strategy](#). However, these responses are seriously hampered by a lack of effective science on both the assessment of biodiversity status and change and its implications for sustainable use. In response to this problem, the European Commission established the ALTER-Net project through its Framework VI research programme. It is one of several Networks of Excellence established to achieve lasting integration of research capacity. ALTER-Net is addressing biodiversity research in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.



ALTER-Net's main objective is to achieve lasting integration amongst its 24 partner institutes, and others, all of whom are involved in biodiversity research, monitoring and/or communication. By the end of the project, ALTER-Net should have brought about sufficient change to the way these organisations work, so that they operate in a far more integrated fashion than before the start of the project. It will do this by addressing integration at the top-level (e.g. setting common research agendas) and also by developing common tools and methodologies that enable a more integrated approach.

ALTER-Net will, in collaboration with a range of national and international organisations, develop integrated research agendas focussing on priority policy issues. This will be achieved through the following specific integration objectives :

- Integration of national centres of excellence in biodiversity research and social science;
- Integration of environmental and socio-economic approaches;
- Development of a network of multi-functional long-term ecosystem research platforms (LTER);
- Development of a partnership between research scientists, science communicators and science-based visitor centres;
- Development of a science-policy link to improve information exchange related to biodiversity assessment;
- Development of a framework for a distributed data, information and knowledge management system.

ALTER-Net will also encourage research, management and cultural changes within and between its component organisations through support for training and communication activities to promote the spread of excellence.

ALTER-Net also has a Joint programme of research . The core research programme will cover six research activities:

- Socio-economic drivers of biodiversity change . Purpose: To identify the relevant socio-economic drivers of biodiversity change, to analyse their social, political and economic dynamics, and to identify policy options to mitigate the negative impacts of these drivers.
- Biodiversity assessment and change . Purpose: To develop standard methodologies to monitor and analyse trends in biodiversity in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, taking into account the different levels (genetic, species etc.) and components of biodiversity (taxonomic and functional) and the services they provide.
- Impacts of the main natural and anthropogenic drivers and pressures on biodiversity . Purpose: To establish a scientific framework to understand and quantify the integrated impact of natural and anthropogenic drivers and pressures on biodiversity and its relationship to the structure and function of ecosystems
- Biodiversity conservation options . Purpose: To provide, through inter-disciplinary teams, science based assessments, decision support systems and management tools for the practical implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the European Biodiversity Strategy and associated policies and actions.
- Public attitudes to biodiversity and its conservation . Purpose: to establish understanding of public attitudes and beliefs concerning biodiversity and its conservation. Related to this is the role of communication mechanisms and processes to engage the public in dialogue with scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Forecasting change in biodiversity . Purpose: To develop tools to forecast change in biodiversity. Such tools will be designed to integrate impacts of the main natural and socio-economic drivers and policy objectives and further exploit the ability of models as a unifying tool in interdisciplinary research networks.

### Further Information

	<b>Project Duration</b> March 2009
	<b>Read More...</b>  <code>Unknown macro: 'link-window'</code>