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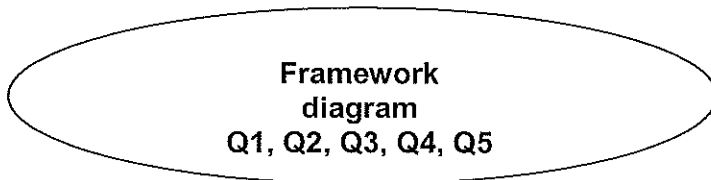
Alternative Visions for the Structure and Scope of the LTER Network Proposal

From: Barbara

To: STF

It is important that we align on a shared vision of the structure and scope of the proposal. I have put together this summary of some of our discussions to help clarify some of the alternative visions and some of the important issues to be resolved. Here are a few alternate visions and associated issues and challenges. Obviously, the Science Council needs to be in agreement with whatever vision we generate for the scope and structure.

Vision 1: "The Big Umbrella"



*None of these alternatives include mechanisms for the development of CI, training, education, or outreach. No synthesis mechanism is provided.*



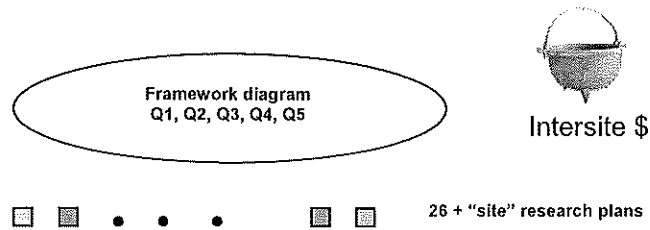
26 + "site" research plans

All the money goes to the sites equally. Sites develop their own research plans within the framework (loop-de-loop) addressing questions Q1 through Q5. The major innovation is the integration of the human system within the framework and resources for social scientists. Resources are also provided for CI and education/outreach at the sites. The "framework" is essentially an additional set of core areas. Intersite integration and synthesis plans are not specifically developed in the proposal but are expected to arise through engagement of sites in research under the framework, perhaps in five to ten years as each site understands its own particular system in more depth given the integration at the site level of social science. No resources are included in the budget at the multi-site/Network level for this multi-site synthesis.

Challenges: What accountability for multi-site activity will be built into this process? What is to keep the sites, under the situation of already being resource limited, from allocating new monies into "business as usual"? Would such a proposal be regarded as compelling scientifically at NSF or might it be viewed as mostly a way to augment sites?

*How can coordination + standardization be encouraged? How can the development of 26 research subs be avoided?*

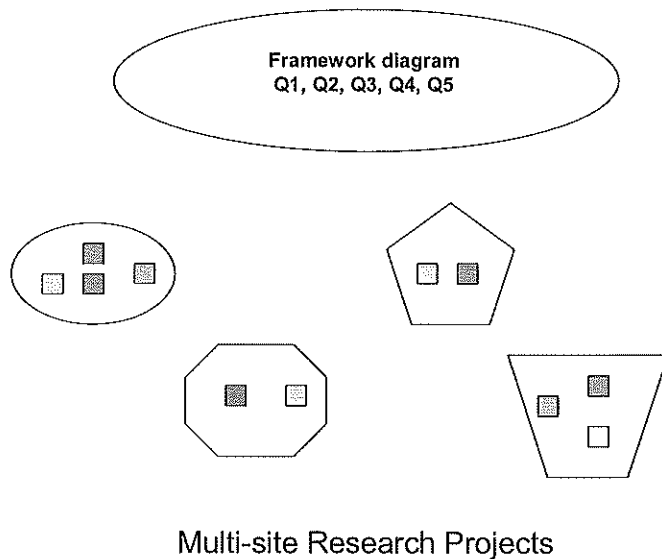
Vision 2: "The Big Umbrella" plus an Intersite Pot



Same as vision 1 with substantial funding going directly to the sites, except that part of the funding is set aside for intersite projects. These intersite projects are designed post-proposal funding and some sort of mechanisms is in place within the LTER Network for a competition for the intersite funds.

Challenges: Some of the challenges of vision 1. NSF may be reluctant to let LTER function as a funding organization.

Vision 3: Multiple Multi-site Projects



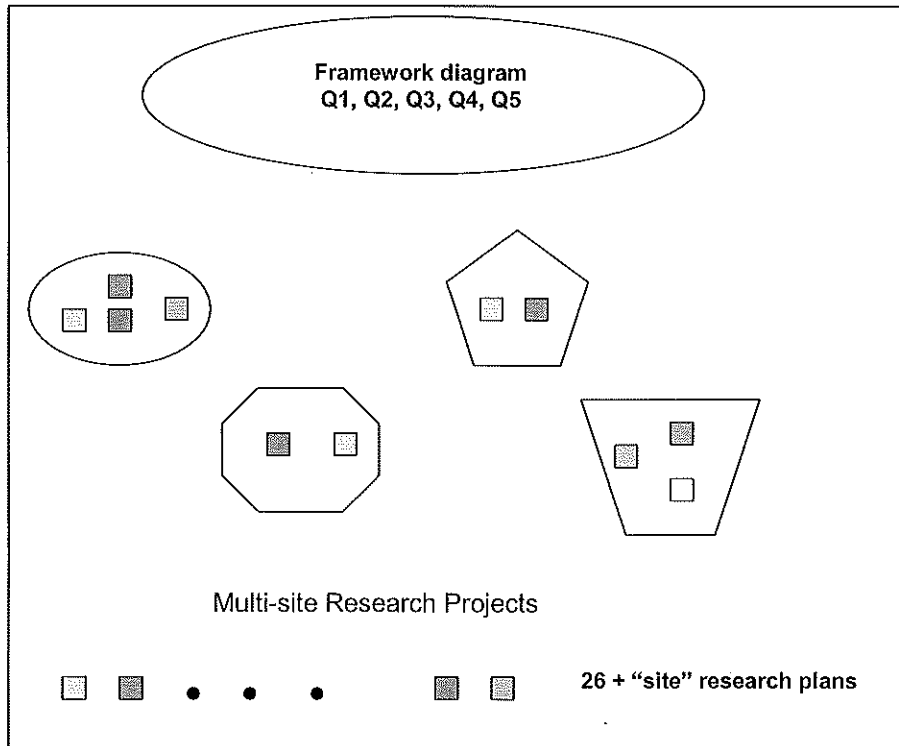
Multi-site projects are organized under the framework. Not all sites participate in all projects. These multi-site projects should be interdisciplinary and long-term. There are lead sites for each project. The funding is distributed through subcontracts. Perhaps an LTER Inc is the proposal submitting organization.

What is the process for generating the multi-site projects?

Vision 3a: The multi-site research plans are generated through a “bottom-up” process based on some kind of aggregation/distillation of the “site” research plans. Generating the “aggregated” plan is done through “site reps” (Science Council) meetings.

Vision 3b: The multi-site research plans are generated through an iterative process between “top-down” and “bottom-up” input. A working group (the writing committee?) takes the site plans, existing planning grant documents, and ideas from the ASM working groups and generates 7-10 potential multi-site research questions/areas under the framework. These are sent to sites for consideration and further developed at a Science Council meeting.

Vision 4: The Hybrid



This alternative is a combination of vision #1 and vision #3. I think maybe we are all seeing this vision as the structure for the proposal but are not yet aligned on the method of generating the multi-site research projects and how the funding should be apportioned to the site research plans vs the multi-site research plans.