

DRAFT - ERF Strategic Planning - Overview - International Activities

Vision

The Estuarine Research Federation is committed to extending its responsibilities beyond the shores of the North America. All of the aspects of the Federation's mission transcend national boundaries. It considers itself an international, professional society but needs to institute measures to enhance its international presence. These efforts are particularly critical in the age of economic globalization and with the recognition that coastal ecosystems are especially vulnerable to global change. Thus, to be an effective instrument for the best science and wise management of coastal resources, ERF must extend its efforts into the global arena.

Motivation

ERF has historically been dominated by members within the United States of America. Recent efforts have expanded the Federation's commitment beyond the USA with its Canadian Affiliate Society (ACCESS) and inclusion of an international member to the Governing Board. But to implement its commitment it must continue to expand international membership. The challenge is to effectively embrace the diversity of cultural, political and economic conditions of this larger community of scientists, educators and environmental managers. Thus, the Federation needs to develop its plan within the context of this diversity and the limitations of the resources of a relatively small scientific society.

Objectives and Strategies

As a leader in the coastal and estuarine science community, the Estuarine Research Federation should promote communication among coastal scientists and environmental managers worldwide. The Federation should play a key role in promoting research, education, and management in coastal systems worldwide.

To meet the defined goals we have highlighted two major objectives. First, we wish to increase international participation in Federation, conferences and publication in the journal. Second, we plan to increase international membership with a target of 50% of ERF by 2014 and a governing board that reflects the international scope of membership and activities.

A number of strategies have been identified to meet these objectives. They are as follows:

- Improve visibility of ERF in countries other than U.S.A.
- Make meetings more accessible.
- Improve access to communication of ERF
- Improve involvement of international members and find incentives for them.
- Consider thematic affiliate societies.
- Consider ERF international meeting outside the USA in 2006 with an ongoing year of international meetings.
- Promote ERF conference sessions that highlight collaboration among sites and investigators from more than one country, with foreign author giving paper.
- Potentially change names of ERF and *Estuaries*.

- Provide incentives to researchers to bring a few members to ERF. Incentives might involve discount with next ERF meeting registration for X number new members.

Timelines for action

Some of these strategies have already been implemented. Others that are considered appropriate after due consideration will be phased in over the coming decade.

Resources needed

One serious consideration is the resources needed to accomplish the various strategies. Implementation of many of the strategies require additional staff time or financial resources. For example, there may be the need for an increased budget for international travel to promote ERF. This would involve travel for international members, staff and members of the Governing Board. Increasing the representation of international members on the Governing Board will increase the expenses of board meetings. If incentives for membership are given, these must be placed in the context of the cost/benefit to the Federation and its goals.

Measures of success

No plans should be made without thinking explicitly about the measures of success. One sure measure of success is if we meet our target membership goals. Second, success can be measured by the number and success of international meetings. Third, ERF is often called upon for help or advice by organizations within the USA. Another measure of success is the number of calls it receives from organizations that are international or from outside the USA.