ARC-NZ RESEARCH NETWORK FOR VEGETATION FUNCTION

Open call for proposals for working groups

The Network for Vegetation Function operates through working groups. These gather 10 or so researchers together for sessions of a few days, to tackle research questions that need data synthesis or new concepts or theory.

This is an open call for proposals towards fresh working groups. The potential range of topics is wide, spanning for example molecular genetics and proteomics, evolutionary radiation, ecophysiology, development and architecture, root symbioses, ecosystem processes, functional and comparative ecology, global change, natural resource management, herbivory, pollination, vegetation dynamics, soil processes, nutrient cycles, plant diseases, global change, palaeoecology.

Proposals should be brief (1-2 pages). They should be sent to vegadmin@bio.mq.edu.au by Monday 1 October 2007. They need to articulate an idea and to indicate people who would be involved, but do not need to specify budgets or dates. More detailed advice is at http://www.vegfunction.net/research/how_to_apply.htm#WG

Lead applicants need not previously have participated in the Network, nor need they be Australia-based. However, proposals are expected to stimulate research in Australia as well as elsewhere.

Proposals will be assessed by the Network’s Science Advisory Board, within 4 weeks of the 1 October deadline. The Network’s convenor will then negotiate with the highest-ranked applicants, suggesting any recommended adjustments and making more detailed arrangements.

The Science Advisory Board will apply the following main criteria:
• Is the research question interesting? Does it bring together people in unfamiliar combinations? Can good progress be made through the working group mechanism?
• Is there a credible plan to generate high-impact research outputs? (Typically publications in strong journals or multi-institution research proposals, but the Board is open to suggestions about other outcomes.)
• Do the people involved have the talent, energy and time to ensure that outputs emerge from the working group?

Please see http://www.vegfunction.net/research/how_to_apply.htm#WG for further detail, and also for information about working groups already in progress. You are also welcome to discuss possibilities in advance with the Network’s convenors, Mark.Westoby@mq.edu.au and iwright@bio.mq.edu.au.

The Network is headquartered at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.