

Annual Report 2020

International Initiative for Theoretical Ecology (IITE)

<http://iite.info>

Our planet's biosphere is under increasing pressure from pollution, climate change, overexploitation and land-use change. Biodiversity is rapidly declining. How will the biosphere respond, how societies be affected, how can this change be steered to the benefit of humanity? IITE aims to promote advancement, teaching and application of theoretical ecology in order to address these questions.

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Activities and Achievements

The International Initiative for Theoretical Ecology formed itself during 2018 and registered as a charity in England and Wales on 14 June 2019. This report covers the period until 30 April 2020.

IITE's constitution states our objective as follows:

For the benefit of the public the advancement of the science of Theoretical Ecology in particular but not exclusively by:

- a) the promotion, encouragement and advancement of theoretical ecology and its application;*
- b) the advancement of education and research in theoretical ecology and its application and the publication of the useful results of such research.*

During the reporting period, we focused our activities on progress towards these objectives that could be made without funding. This included on one hand work to develop IITE's public face and to improve the underlying infrastructure, and on the other hand strategically targeted actions.

By the end of the reporting period, over 50 colleagues from the scientific community, most of them theoretical ecologists, had registered as public supporters on the IITE website (<https://iite.info/our-supporters/>). These include both junior scientists and some of the most influential names, such as Prof. Alan Hastings (University of California, Davis; Editor in Chief of *Theoretical Ecology*), Prof. Simon A. Levin (Princeton University), and Prof. André M. de Roos (University of Amsterdam). Supporters included scientists from Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, the United States of America, Finland, France, Hong-Kong, India, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and South Africa. This strong support demonstrates that IITE meets a crucial need felt throughout the scientific community.

We collated on the IITE website (<https://iite.info/the-world-of-theoretical-ecology/>) the institutional cornerstones of the field, including specialised scientific journals, relevant textbooks and handbooks, blogs and organisations.

To continue developing a vision and identity for Theoretical Ecology, we published several blog posts addressing questions such as the role of Theoretical Ecology for sustainability science, what “understanding” in the context of ecological science means, and what persistent shortcomings of the field are that hold us back.

Together with other members of the community representing Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America, we published an article in the “Science & Society” section of the influential journal *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, explaining “Let's Train More Theoretical Ecologists – Here Is Why” (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2019.06.004>). The abstract of the article summarises

A tangled web of vicious circles, driven by cultural issues, has prevented ecology from growing strong theoretical roots. Now this hinders development of effective

conservation policies. To overcome these barriers in view of urgent societal needs, we propose a global network of postgraduate theoretical training programs.

Subsequently we started work to put this proposal into practice, which is ongoing.

We also developed a call to theoretical ecologists to make more use of Wikipedia to represent our field. We feel that the hypertext structure of Wikipedia is particularly well suited to expose linkages between different aspects of the theory, which, unfortunately, are not always visible to outsiders (including field ecologists), leaving the dangerous but false impressions that Theoretical Ecology would be an incongruent basket of ideas.

All activities of IITE were led by its trustees, served the public benefit, and were consistent with the charity's objective.

Outlook

An important goal for the next reporting period will be to open a charity bank account to allow us to apply for and administer grants, collect donations and so develop the aims of IITE even more powerfully.

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Governance

IITE has a simple governance structure: the board of trustees is identical with its membership, all work is volunteered, and all decisions are made in (virtual) meetings of the board of trustees in line with the published constitution (in the version of 14 June 2019).

Financial Review

IITE had neither income nor expenditures, and had no assets, funds, or liabilities during the reporting period.

London, 26 February 2021

Dr Axel G. Rossberg
(Chair of the Board of Trustees)



Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period
from

14 June 2019

To

30 April 2020

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
None	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	0	0	0	0	0
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
None	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	0	0	0	0	0
Total receipts	0	0	0	0	0
A3 Payments					
None	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	0	0	0	0	0
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
None	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	0	0	0	0	0
Total payments	0	0	0	0	0
Net of receipts/(payments)	0	0	0	0	0
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	0	0	0	0	0

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	0	0	0
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Axel Rossberg

23 Feb 2021