

# Persistent Questions About Virtual Engagement and Work Among NERRS Staff & Collaborators

*The following bits of advice were gleaned from 20 interviews with project and engagement leads of projects funded by the NERRS Science Collaborative during the COVID-19 pandemic. Compiled by Susanne Moser, Ph.D. (March 2022).*

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## Project Implementation

- What has surprised you in terms of who has stepped up into leadership roles?
- How do you balance openness/focus with varied end user input?
- What is the philosophy on collaboration, communication in your project?
- How do you align/integrate national projects with each other?
  - “Think tanks” to explore
  - Along themes, e.g., “human dimensions”

## Virtual Engagement

- How do we find and make space for new ideas
  - Techniques get old pretty quickly (“only so many slides”)
- How do you get everyone to talk in Break-out Groups?
- How can we get products and commitments out of meetings? Approach follow-up?
- How do you know who is being missed, and that all the right voices are at the table?
- How do you run effective/productive team meetings?
- How do we help people feel heard and like they used their time well?
- How do we build trust and go deep (especially across cultures)?
- What works best for different audiences?
- Is there an ideal group size for virtual engagement?

## People & Self-care

- How are project leads caring for themselves?
- How can we better support those with kids?
- How can we lift everyone up?
- How do you manage to safeguard quiet time for thinking and writing?

## NERR System/Network

- Will we lose our sense of community if we’re not meeting in person?
- How do we use tools better for system-wide engagement?
- How do we help people as they change jobs within the NERR system?
- What are the long-term budget implications for the NERRS Annual Meeting and Science Collaborative if the virtual world stays?



**National Estuarine  
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