

New CETAF A.I.S.B.L. business and organizational model

As adopted at the CETAF29 General Meeting in Geneva on the 6th April 2011

This is the summary of the document (“New CETAF A.I.S.B.L. organizational model - 3rd draft”) proposing key elements for a new CETAF organizational and business model. It is the result of the work of a task group consisting of the Chair and members of the CETAF Executive Committee, the EDIT Network Office, and members of the EDIT Science Policy Group. It incorporates outcomes of the discussions held at CETAF28, feedback provided by members following that meeting, and from an informal round table discussion between directors and institutional representatives at MNHN, Paris, on 17th January 2011. It is meant to serve as the basis for reaching a formal agreement about the preferred structure and membership fee scenario for the future CETAF organisational model, for adoption by the 29th CETAF General Meeting (Geneva, 5-6 April 2011). The new CETAF organisational model, membership fee scenario and Secretariat functioning will be reviewed after a three-year period.

New CETAF secretariat

As agreed by the General Meeting, CETAF will move forward to establish and operate an effective organisational office/secretariat from its own resources in order to take full advantage of the achievements of EDIT as well as from other joint activities.

The CETAF Secretariat will manage its activities under the control of the CETAF Executive Committee, and ultimately the CETAF General Meeting, in order to serve the overall objectives of the CETAF A.I.S.B.L.:

- to promote scientific research in the field of biological systematics, paleobiology and mineralogy
- to promote access to the collections of its members to allow the formation of partnerships with a view to joint projects
- to be a European voice for taxonomy and systematics
- to the exclusion of any industrial or commercial operations.

The activities of the CETAF secretariat would include development of strategic themes, implementation of communication and coordination mechanisms, and of organisational representation and administration. These activities include, amongst other, the following:

Strategic themes

- Proactively initiate, develop and maintain relationships with other relevant international bodies and organisations;
- Foster the strategic development of CETAF;
- Establish and maintain relationships with relevant funding bodies and organizations;
- Stimulate, plan, and coordinate as needed joint project proposals, especially from/for the EC,

Communication and coordination mechanisms

- Efficient and effective communication services for members;
- Liaison and communication with sustained activities, initiatives and working groups, from relevant projects and partners;
- Communication and dissemination: operate regularly updated website (including archive function).

Representation

- Proactively represent CETAF interests in international and, in particular, European bodies.

Internal administration

- CETAF administration: day-to-day business, consortium services;
- Administration of additional external funds.

A detailed annual business plan and budget for the operations of the secretariat will be proposed for agreement by the General Meeting.

Organisational structure of the secretariat

The majority of CETAF members (22 of 28 responding members) indicated their preference for an **office with a senior-level director and minimal staff** (i.e., one FTE which could be split between a half-time office manager and a half-time communications person), that would run the business operations and take on representational functions for the organisation.

The estimated **minimum annual budget** (direct costs) would amount to approximately **160,000 Euros**. This is based on the following figures and would cover annual costs for:

- Staff (employment costs, i.e., salary + social benefits):

 - Secretary General: 80,000 Euro
 - Communications Officer / Office Secretary / Office manager (1 FTE): 50,000 Euro

- Travel & meetings: 25,000 Euro
- Running costs & consumables: 5,000 Euro

Additional infrastructure costs would have to be covered by the host. Furthermore, members would have to cover the cost for their own participation in activities, meetings etc.

Call for a secretariat host

The selection of the hosting member institution will be done by the General Assembly on the basis of a proposal prepared by the CETAF Executive Committee from bids received to a call. The process and conditions for the call to host the CETAF secretariat are specified in a separate document.

Financial model

A majority of CETAF members indicated their preference for **differential membership fees** (20 members of 27 responding, 1 abstention; 7 prefer model with equal membership fee for all members).

For the proposed set of criteria for establishing three **categories of institutional membership**¹ (referred to as: “very-large”, “large”, and “medium-sized”) the following values are being suggested:

Category (Institutional size)	Collections size (mio. objects)	Operational budget ² (mio. Euro)	Research & collection staff ³ (FTE)
I – Very large	> 30	> 5	> 100
II – Large	> 10 [& <30]	> 2 [& <5]	> 50 [& <100]
III - Medium-sized	< 10	< 2	< 50

¹ - For this classification, consortia will be considered as a single institution by adding up individual values.

² - Operational budget = research & collection budget, including staff costs (core institutional budget)

³ - FTE of research & collection staff, excluding administration, etc. but including temporary project staff.

For applying this **classification** scheme, CETAF members will be categorized principally according to their operating budgets because it reflects their abilities to contribute financially. In most cases, sizes collection size and staff numbers should place members in the same category as their operating budgets. In cases when either collection size or staff size disagree with the other two criteria, the member will be categorized according to the two criteria that agree. In cases where collection and staff size would place a member institution in a higher category than its operating budget, that member would be considered significantly underfunded and should be placed in the lower category, in agreement with its operating budget.

As a result of former discussions and calculations, the following levels of **membership fees** are here proposed for the three membership categories:

Category I (very large institutions):	10,000 Euro
Category II (large institutions):	6,000 Euro
Category III (medium-sized institutions):	2,000 Euro

Voting rights

Under the new financial model as here proposed, each member would have one vote in the General Assembly, and equal rights to participate in the CETAF decision making bodies and processes. In order to achieve a balance between the different levels of financial contributions and the prevailing rule of simple majority for decision taking by the General Meeting (statutes, art. 9.3), a qualification for a simple majority vote is here proposed to address concerns expressed by a number of members. The proposed condition for a *qualified majority* would require that any decision could be taken by a simple majority of votes, as long as the opposing votes represent no more than 33% of the annual financial contributions.

This qualification to a simple majority of votes would prevent a majority consisting of smaller institutions from passing measures that would significantly disadvantage the few larger members that provide most of the financial support. In daily practice and especially for important decisions, members are always expected to seek consensus and avoid taking decisions on highly contentious matters by (simple majority) voting. The 33% budget qualification would only apply to decisions taken by a simple majority vote, and would not affect decisions requiring a 2/3 majority of votes or other voting procedures. The condition will be introduced through a relevant provision in the bylaws.

Associate membership

For CETAF members that for economic or other reasons would not (yet) be in a position to contribute financially according to the new scheme, an associated membership category with a moderate contribution could be established to avoid *de facto* exclusion of members. The associate membership status should be considered transitional and limited to three years. An annual financial contribution for this status of 500 Euro is proposed. Associate members would be entitled to take part in all activities of CETAF including representation in the General Meeting, but will have no voting rights.