CETAF
STATUTES

Chair and CETAF Executive Committee Proposal for the new CETAF Statutes
Approved by the CETAF Governing Board on the 25th April 2018

Registered legal seat at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
(RBINS), rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels (Belgium)
A. Aim and Objects of the Association

The international association shall have as its

a) Aim:
3.1. The aim of the International Non-profit making association shall be:
   • To promote scientific research in the field of biological systematics, palaeobiology and mineralogy,
   • To promote access to 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 all industrial or commercial operations.

3.2. In this context, the Association may use all appropriate resources and may act as a forum for the exchange of information, and for the launching and following-up of activities in support of its objectives when the latter require, or will benefit from, a coordinated approach.

3.3. In a general manner, and within the limits laid down by laws and regulations, the Association may also engage in the following activities:
   • acquiring and holding, through purchase, leasing, exchange as a gift or by other means, rights or interests relating to properties, and maintaining them in use, and equipping them,
   • selling, leasing out, mortgaging or transferring free of charge or subject to payment, in any other manner,
   • being involved in trading for the purpose of achieving its objectives,
   • hiring and paying employees, professional advisors or other persons,
   • investing and managing any funds of the Association which are not necessary for its immediate objectives in investments, credits, guarantees or assets,
   • opening and managing accounts and other banking services, drawing, accepting, endorsing, negotiating, settling, issuing, or signing promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments,
   • and, more generally, taking all measures which allow the Association to attain its objectives.

3.4. The Association shall not attempt to procure any material gains for its members.

B. Members
The Association shall be made up of full members and associate members.

C. Duration
The Association shall be formed for an unlimited duration.
D. Subscriptions
The scale of subscriptions and the payment procedures shall be laid down every four (4) years by the Governing Board, further to a proposal from the Executive Committee.

E. Administration
The international non-for profit making Association shall be administered by the Executive Committee, under the leadership of the Chair of the Governing Board.

F. Accounting period and annual Governing Board meeting
The accounting period shall begin on the first of January and shall end on the thirty-first of December each year.

Consequently:
- To draw up the rules relating to the articles and conditions of admission and leaving of members, to the supervision of the Association, to the Governing Board meetings, to the allocation of its assets in the case of liquidation and, in general, to all other clauses of the articles,
- To attend any meeting which shall take place after the formation of the non-profit-making Association, to take part in any deliberations, and to take part in any vote on any proposals which the Governing Board meeting shall decide to place on the agenda,
- To take part in the appointment of directors, to determine their number, the length of their mandate and, should the case arise, the remuneration, and to accept, should the case arise this function on behalf of the principal; to take part in the appointment of any auditor and to determine his/her fees,
- For the above purposes, to draw up and sign all deeds and minutes, to elect domicile, to act as substitute, and, in general, to do all that is necessary or useful for the execution of the present mandate, provided it is ratified.
SECTION 1 – NAME, DURATION, REGISTERED OFFICE, AIM AND ACTIVITIES

Article 1 – Name and duration

1.1. An international non-profit-making association (association internationale sans but lucrative, AISBL) is hereby formed, to be known as the “CONSORTIUM OF EUROPEAN TAXONOMIC FACILITIES” (abbreviated form: “CETAF”), sometimes referred to hereinafter as “the Association”.

1.2. This Association shall be governed by the provisions of Section III of the law dated 27 June, 1921 relating to non-profit-making associations and international non-profit-making foundations and associations, and by the law dated 2 May, 2002.

1.3. All deeds and invoices, announcements, publications and other documents issued by the Association to which the status of a legal entity has been granted shall mention its name, immediately preceded or followed by the words “international non-profit-making association” or the logo “AISBL”, followed by, if appropriate, “in liquidation”, together with the address of its registered office and its number in the Register of Legal Entities (RPM).

1.4. The Association will be set up for an unlimited period of time.

Article 2 – Registered Office

2.1. The registered office of the Association is currently at: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), Rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels (Belgium).

2.2. The registered office may only be transferred to another location in Belgium by a decision of the Governing Board, published during the month in which it takes place in the special appendix to the Moniteur belge.

Article 3 – Aim and activities

3.1. The aim of the Association shall be:

- to promote scientific research in the field of biological systematics, palaeobiology and mineralogy,
- to promote access to 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 all industrial or commercial operations.

3.2. In this context, the Association may use all appropriate resources and may act as a forum for the exchange of information, and for the launching and following-up of activities
in support of its objectives when the latter require, or will benefit from, a coordinated approach.

3.3. In a general manner, and within the limits laid down by laws and regulations, the Association may also engage in the following activities:

- acquiring and holding, through purchase, leasing, exchange as a gift or by other means, rights or interests relating to properties, and maintaining them in use, and equipping them,
- selling, leasing out, mortgaging or transferring free of charge or subject to payment, in any other manner,
- being involved in trading for the purpose of achieving its objectives,
- hiring and paying employees, professional advisors or other persons,
- investing and managing any funds of the Association which are not necessary for its immediate objectives in investments, credits, guarantees or assets,
- opening and managing accounts and other banking services, drawing, accepting, endorsing, negotiating, settling, issuing, or signing promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments,
- and, more generally, taking all measures which allow the Association to attain its objectives.

3.4. The Association shall not attempt to procure any material gains for its members.

**Article 4 – Financial resources**

4.1. The financial resources available to the Association shall be:

a) members subscriptions  
b) subsidies from public or private institutions  
c) income from general services and sale of publications  
d) gifts and legacies  
e) income from activities carried out within legal limits  
f) members’ contributions

4.2. The scale of subscriptions and payment procedures shall be laid down every four years by the Governing Board, further to a proposal from the Executive Committee.

**SECTION II - MEMBERS**

**Article 5 – Admission criteria**

5.1. Membership shall be open to any individual or consortia of taxonomic collection institution(s) from a European country which meets the following criteria:

- to be registered as a non-profit-making association and have the status of a legal entity in a European state, should the fundamental law (*lex fori*) allow it
• to adhere to the objectives of the Association, as formulated in Article 3
• to be provided with a clear and democratic structure of governance
• and to have transparent accounting procedures

5.2. The Association shall include full members and associate members. Full members shall be individual institutions or entities or consortia of institutions or entities which may meet the criteria of admission. Consortia shall be represented by one of their members, unanimously appointed internally.

5.3. Should the case arise, the Association may include among its members several institutions from the same European country.

5.4. Any individual institution, entity or consortium which wishes to be admitted as a member of the Association shall submit its application in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Association’s Bylaws.

5.5. Any individual institution or entity which is a member of the Association may submit its resignation at any time by recorded delivery letter, addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board. This resignation shall not become effective until three months after the date on which the recorded delivery letter is received. The resigning member shall pay any subscriptions due – including those for the current year – together with any financial contributions voted for that same year.

5.6. Any delay in paying the annual subscription of more than six months shall mean, fully as of right, that the Member which is in default shall lose all its privileges and its voting rights, including the right to take part in the Governing Board meeting and/or working group meetings, as laid down by these articles and by the Bylaws.

5.7. On a proposal from the Executive Committee, or from one-third of the Members, a Member may be excluded from the Governing Board meeting by a two-thirds majority of Members. Any Member threatened with exclusion shall have the right to a hearing. Any failure to fulfil any of the criteria for admission to the Association may constitute a legitimate reason for exclusion.

5.8. No Member may exercise any rights on the Association’s assets at any time, even if the Association is dissolved.

SECTION III – GOVERNING BODIES

Article 6 – Governing Board

6.1 The Governing Board shall act as the Association’s main governing body.
6.2. It shall be made up of Members and a Chair. Each of the members shall be represented at the meeting by a delegate.

6.3. The Chair shall be elected by the Governing Board. Candidates for the position of Chair shall be submitted by Members. To be eligible, any candidate for the Chair position shall submit a signed declaration to the Secretary of the Executive Committee confirming his/her availability to serve in the position.

**Article 7 – Duties**

7.1. The Governing Board shall have the full power to attain the objective and carry out the activities of the Association.

7.2. In particular, it shall have the sole authority:

- to amend the articles
- to approve the budget and the annual accounts and to grant discharge to the members of the Executive Committee
- to admit and/or exclude any member
- to appoint and/or recall the Chair and the member of the Executive Committee
- and to dissolve or liquidate the Association

7.3. The Governing Board shall also have the power:

- to define the overall multi-year strategic framework for the activities of the Association, on the basis of which the Executive Committee shall draw up the annual budget and the work plan
- to approve the Association’s annual report, together with the annual accounting report of the Association proposed by the Treasurer
- to verify that the budget and the annual work plan are in compliance with the overall strategic framework
- to approve the budget for the upcoming year and the annual accounts for the previous year, prepared by the Executive Committee *
- to establish a guiding principle for claiming expenses
- to give instructions for actions to be undertaken by the Executive Committee and the Members in the name of the Association
- to determine the subscriptions of the Members and lay down the rules for reimbursing the expenses of the volunteers within the limits laid down by law.

* In accordance with Article 53, § 1st of the Law, every year, the administrative body shall prepare the annual accounts for the previous accounting period in accordance with the present article, together with the budget for the coming period. The general governing body shall approve the annual accounts and the budget in its next meeting.
Article 8 – Meetings

8.1. A Governing Board meeting shall be held every year before the thirty-first of December (the time, date and location to be laid down by the Executive Committee) in order to:
   a) approve the accounts for the accounting period since the preceding ordinary general meeting, and grant discharge to the Executive Committee
   b) draw up the budget for income and expenditure for the period up to the following ordinary Governing Board meeting, and lay down the amount of the annual members’ subscriptions
   c) examine the Executive Committee’s annual report
   d) should the case arise, to appoint or recall the Chair, and to ratify admissions or exclusions of Members

8.2. The ordinary Governing Board meeting shall meet, fully as of right, at the registered office or at the location indicated in the invitation, in a country which is a member of the Association, under the leadership of the Chair, or failing this, of any other person explicitly appointed by the said Chair. Should the Chair position be vacant, the most senior Director of a Member shall perform this function until a new Chair has been appointed. The date and location of the meeting shall be determined on the basis of a call for candidatures addressed to the members by the Chair, either at a Governing Board meeting or by post or email.

8.3. The Executive Committee may convene extraordinary Governing Board meetings. It shall convene an extraordinary Governing Board meeting within a period of three months should a request be submitted by at least one-third of members in good standing. The request thus submitted shall indicate the specific questions to be included on the agenda.

8.4. Invitations to attend an ordinary or extraordinary Governing Board meeting, together with the agenda, shall be sent to Members at least two months in advance (by post or email) by the Chair or the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall draw up the agenda, taking into account questions to be submitted to the Governing Board. It shall include on the agenda any question raised by a Member in good standing, provided that this proposal reaches it no less than seventy-five days before the date of the ordinary or extraordinary Governing Board meeting.

Article 9 – Decision-making procedures

9.1. Every member in good standing shall have single vote. Should there be a tie, the Chair shall have a casting vote. Should there be a tie in an election, a second vote shall take place. Should this not produce a clear decision the result shall be decided by drawing lots.

9.2. The Governing Board shall be considered quorate if the majority of Members in good standing are present in person or are represented. Members may be represented by another Member possessing a written mandate. No member may serve as a proxy to more than one other Member.
9.3. Except where otherwise specified in the present articles, decisions shall be taken by a majority of those Members present or represented. Should there by a tie the Chair shall have the casting vote. Should the Governing Board be inquorate, the Chair shall organise a written consultation among members regarding the business on the agenda within thirty days following the meeting. Decisions shall be taken in a majority of Members submits their agreement within two months following the dispatch of these consultation documents by the Chair.

9.4. Members shall be informed of decisions taken by the Governing Board meeting at the end of the month following the meeting (by post or by email). These decisions shall be recorded in a register and signed by the Chair once the minutes have been approved at the following meeting. The register shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be available to the members.

9.5. Invited guests may attend Governing Board meetings at the Chair’s discretion.

SECTION IV – ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

Article 10 – Executive Committee

10.1. The Association shall be administered by the Executive Committee under the leadership of the Chair of the Governing Board.

10.2. It shall consist, as a minimum, of the Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Deputy chair, elected by a secret ballot of the Governing Board, with a mandate lasting no more than four years, which can be renewed once.

Article 11 – Duties

11.1. The Executive Committee shall have all the powers of administration and management, apart from those attributed to the Governing Board.

11.2. In particular, the Executive Committee shall have the responsibility for:
   a) the financial management of the Association, which shall include the preparation of the budget and the laying down of the annual scale of subscriptions and the drawing up of the annual accounts for adoption by the Governing Board
   b) the submission of the report on the activities of the Association to the Governing Board
   c) the adoption of resolutions and taking of positions by the Association
   d) the creation and the operating procedures of working commissions, concurrently with the Governing Board
   e) the dispatching of an annual report on its activities to the Members, at least thirty days before the annual Governing Board meeting takes place.
11.3. It shall delegate day-to-day management to the Chair, assisted by a General Secretariat lead by an Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be appointed and/or recalled by the Executive Committee on a proposal by the Chair. The Executive Director shall hire the personnel required for the proper management of the Association within the framework of the budget laid down by the Governing Board. It may co-opt voluntary collaborators. The duties and functioning of the General Secretariat shall be decided upon by the Executive Committee.

11.4. The Executive Committee may also, on its own responsibility, confer explicit special powers on one or more persons. It shall collaborate with host national associations in organising annual Governing Board meetings held abroad.

**Article 12 – Procedure for notice of meetings**

12.1. The Executive Committee shall meet, in principle, twice a year, or following special notice from the Chair.

12.2. The notice to attend shall be transmitted by post or email at least one month before the date of the Committee meeting.

**Article 13 – Decision-making procedures**

13.1. The Executive Committee shall be quorate if at least half of its members are present or represented. A member of the Executive Committee may be represented by any other member, but no member may act as proxy to more than one fellow member.

13.2. The decisions of the Executive Committees shall be taken by majority vote of the members present or represented. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

13.3. The Chair may decide to proceed to the adoptions of resolutions and positions by post or by email.

**SECTION V – STATUTARY AMENDMENTS; DISSOLUTION, LIQUIDATION**

**Article 14 – Statutory amendments**

14.1. Irrespective of any article of the law relating to non-profit-making associations, international non-profit-making associations or foundations, any proposal intended to bring about a statutory amendment, or the dissolution or liquidation of the Association shall come from the Governing Board, or from at least half the members in good standing.
14.2. The Executive Director shall inform members of the date of the meeting in which the Governing Board is to rule on the said proposal, and the proposed amendments at least three months in advance.

14.3. The Governing Board shall not be quorate to deliberate on the proposal unless two-thirds of the members in good standing are present. No decision shall be valid unless it has obtained a two-thirds majority of the members present or represented. Nevertheless, should the Governing Board not be quorate, a new meeting shall be convened, which shall give a definite and valid ruling on the proposal, which shall also require a two-thirds majority of the votes, however many members are present or represented, and shall take place at least fifteen days after the last meeting.

14.4. Any amendment to the passages mentioning the aims for which the Association has been set up, or to the activities which it proposes to carry out in order to achieve those aims, shall be submitted for royal approval. Any other amendments to statutory references, referred to in Article 48, Clauses 5 and 7, of the law shall be confirmed by the authentic document.

14.5. In the event of the dissolution or liquidation of the Association, the Executive Committee shall that the full powers to liquidate the Association’s assets, unless otherwise decided by the Governing Board. Following the settlement of all debts and charges, the Governing Board shall determine what to do with the Association’s net assets, allocating them to the recipient which shall have the closest connection with the objective for which the Association was created.

SECTION VI – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 15 – Resource management

15.1. The Association’s funds, including all gifts, contributions and legacies, shall be deposited in one or more bank accounts managed in the name of the Association by the Executive Committee. The latter shall make its selection from among banks with an international reputation. All cheques drawn on the account(s) must be signed by the Treasurer and by another member of the Executive Committee.

15.2. The funds belonging to the Association shall be used solely in the service of its objectives.

Article 16 – Representation of the Association

16.1. Except in the case of a special power of attorney, all documents which are binding on the Association shall be validly signed by the Chair, who shall not be required to justify the powers conferred upon him / her for this purpose to a third party.
16.2. Any legal actions, whether as a plaintiff or a defendant, including actions heard before
any court (State, Council, etc.) or administrative authority, shall be pursued by the Executive
Committee, represented by the chair or by a member appointed for this purpose.

**Article 17 – Budget and accounts**

17.1. The accounting period shall begin on the first of January and shall end on the thirty-
first of December.

17.2. In accordance with Article 53 of the law, the annual accounts for the accounting period
which has just been ended, together with the budget for the period which is about to begin,
shall be prepared annually by the Executive Committee and referred for approval to the next
ordinary Governing Board meeting.

17.3. The Governing Board may decide to set up a reserve fund.

**Article 18 – Working commissions**

18.1. The Governing Board and Executive Committee may set up working commissions, sub-
committees and special interest groups relating to specific subjects. It shall appoint their
Chairs and lay down their remits. These bodies shall report to the Governing Board.

18.2. Working commissions shall not take part in the governing or administrative bodies of
the Association.

**Article 19 – Working languages**

19.1. The Association’s working languages shall be English, French and Dutch

19.2. Communications may be submitted in other languages

**Article 20 – Referral**

Any issue which is not covered by the present articles shall be settled in accordance with
Section III of the Belgian Law dated 27 June, 1921 governing non-profit-making associations,
international non-profit-making associations and foundations.
CETAF BYLAWS

Michelle Price (CETAF Chair), Jesús Muñoz (CETAF EC Secretary) and Ana Casino (Executive Director)

Approved by the CETAF Executive Committee (M.J. Price, T. Bourgoin, J. Muñoz, E. Smets, J. Kvacek, V. Smith, N, Scharff) on the 26 February 2018

Approved by the CETAF Governing Board at CETAF43, on the 25 April 2018
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SECTION I – Definitions and Understandings

1. DEFINITIONS
The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) AISBL (in French, Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif), is an international non-profit-making association and a legal entity constituted under Belgian law on 13th March 2009.

CETAF comprises, and will be open to, members (as defined in Section III below) from all European countries, and countries associated with the European Union.

CETAF, as an entity, may operate at a worldwide level and may develop its activities with an international scope.

These Bylaws (hereinafter, the Bylaws) constitute the "Association’s Standing Orders" ["Règlement d’Ordre Intérieur"] as stipulated in the CETAF AISBL statutes (hereinafter, the Statutes), and are meant to provide further guidelines and rules for the operation and management of CETAF AISBL in the application of the Statutes.

For the Bylaws, any mention of "CETAF" or the “Consortium” always refer to the CETAF AISBL.

For the Bylaws, any mention of “Governing Board”, “Chair”, “Executive Committee”, “General Secretariat”, “Working Group” or other representative, governing, administrative or functioning bodies, always refer to those of CETAF AISBL, as described in the Statutes.

For the purpose of the Bylaws, the period of month(s) and/or week(s) specified in any clause or provision always refers to the total number of calendar days, not working days, for the respective time period.

For the purpose of the Bylaws, unless otherwise specified, notifications among the members will be done electronically, by email.

2. UNDERSTANDINGS
The Bylaws arise and are intended to explain, develop, define and, if necessary, refine the content of the Statutes, the latter being considered as the general and legal framework of the CETAF AISBL.

In case of controversy in the interpretation of the contents between the Statutes and the Bylaws, the Statutes will prevail.

SECTION II – The Consortium

3. LOCATION
The CETAF has its registered office and legal seat at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.
Irrespective of the above, and until otherwise agreed by the Governing Board, the Secretariat office of CETAF is located at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences - RBINS (hereinafter, the Host institution), rue Vautier, 29, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, according to the agreement signed by the parties for hosting the General Secretariat, in Madrid, Spain on the 14th September 2011. This agreement (hereinafter, the Agreement) forms an integral part of the Bylaws.

If the current Host institution requests a rescission of the Agreement or this comes to an end without renewal, the Executive Committee will be committed to finding a new host for the CETAF secretariat office.

Changes to CETAF’s registered address shall, upon proposal of the Executive Committee, be adopted by a simple majority vote of the Governing Board. The General Secretariat will then be in charge of all the legal and administrative process to make effective (accepted by the Belgium Court) such change.

**SECTION III – The Members**

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes two categories: full and associate members.

Full Members refer to those members who fulfil each and all of the conditions required to become a member, as outlined in the statutes, and whose application has been approved by the Governing Board.

Full members have the rights listed below:

- To be informed about all CETAF activities,
- To have access to all documents and information produced and compiled by CETAF,
- To use the logo and the image of CETAF in their own brochures and all other materials, means and supports used for publicity,
- To participate in all meetings and events organized, promoted and/or to which CETAF is invited to or participates in, using their own resources,
- To vote in the Governing Board*.

* Voting is explained in parts 7 (quorum), 8 (voting decisions in Governing Board meetings, voting on budgetary issues) and 9 (elections).

Full members have the obligations listed below:

- To pay their membership contribution – the amount and category definition of which is found in document *CETAF AISBL organizational and business model 2016-2019* that was voted upon by the Governing Board at CETAF38 in Geneva, Switzerland in 2015,
- To adhere to the objectives of CETAF,
- To protect and defend CETAF interests,
- To have a transparent, honest and competitively fair attitude to the Consortium and its members.

For full and associate members the consequences of non-payment of the annual fees are detailed in the statutes (Article 5.6).

Associate members refer to those institutions who are either: a) potential members that do not fulfil all the conditions required for full membership and who are encouraged to form or join a consortium; and/or b) potential members who want to have an inside awareness of the functioning of CETAF before joining it as a full member; and/or c) members suffering short-term financial difficulties.

Associate membership is for a limited duration. After a maximum of two (2) years, the associate member shall decide whether to join CETAF as a Full member or to leave the Consortium.

Associate members in CETAF share the same rights and obligations as Full members, but cannot vote in the Governing Board (have no voting rights within the Consortium).

5. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership of the CETAF, Full or Associate, shall be open to any institution, entity or consortium of institutions or entities, which in addition to meeting the general requirements stated in the Statutes, also holds, hosts and/or manages important scientific collections and has a significant taxonomic research capacity that enables them to contribute to the activities of CETAF. These criteria will be assessed by the Executive Committee based on the details supplied in the CETAF membership application form.

Individual institutions or entities which do not meet the requirements for CETAF membership by themselves, in particular regarding the international significance of their scientific collections and research capacities, are encouraged to join CETAF by forming or joining a consortium with other entities which together will meet the Conditions.

A consortium member may comprise independent entities or institutions, that all comply with the membership requirements given in the statutes, which will jointly will be considered as a single CETAF member for all relevant provisions of the Statutes and the Bylaws, including the voting rights and membership contributions.

Unless otherwise specified by the Governing Board and until they are able to form or join a consortium, the individual institutions above may apply to join CETAF as an associate member.

Application for membership of CETAF must be addressed to the CETAF Chair and sent to the General Secretariat. An application must include, 1) a letter signed by the Director or official legal representative of the institution or entity (with evidence provided of the official legal representatives of all partner institutions or entities, in the case of consortia) stating the intent
to join and the compliance with each and all of the conditions, and 2) a completed CETAF membership application form (hereinafter, the Application Form). In the case of an application by a consortium, one Application Form is required per institution and these forms should be submitted together, with the accompanying cover letter(s) from the institution’s Directors, to the Chair and Executive Director.

Interested parties who have contacted the Chair and/or the Executive Director about membership will be provided with the CETAF membership package (consisting of the Application form itself, the CETAF Statutes and Bylaws, records of the previous CETAF meeting and the CETAF AISBL organizational and business model 2016-2019). The General Secretariat is responsible for processing requests for information on membership and any new applications as well as for completing any applications that, if necessary, by requesting the applicants for additional information or documents. Once completed, the Application file will be transferred to the Executive Committee for assessment.

All applications for membership will first be reviewed by the Executive Committee. In case of applications not fulfilling the Conditions, the Executive Committee can reject applications. Applications that have been accepted by the Executive Committee will be submitted to the subsequent Governing Board for voting.

All applications for membership will be approved, through voting, by the Governing Board. For the admission of new members, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by the Governing Board is required.

In order to be voted on at a particular Governing Board, applications must be received at least six (6) weeks before the scheduled date of that meeting. Following a positive decision by the Governing Board, membership of CETAF is effective immediately and this will be formally and duly communicated to the Director, or the official representative(s), or whoever was the signatory of the application. The new member will be added to the List of Members managed by the General Secretariat.

In order to obtain the information that is necessary for the CETAF website and member information, successful applicants will be asked to complete the CETAF passport (one per institution).

6. MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS
Each CETAF full member will pay an annual membership fee based on the three-tiered category system established by the Governing Board and outlined in the CETAF AISBL organizational and business model 2016-2019 voted upon by the Governing Board in Geneva, Switzerland in 2015 (CETAF38) as given below. Associate members will pay an annual fee of 500 Euros, as outlined in the same document, for a set period. New members will be classified according the three-category system, in agreement with the EC.
A change in the composition or status of a member or any consequential changes in category will be decided by the Executive Committee based on a formal request made by the effected member(s) and the re-evaluation of the relevant figures of collection size, staff number and budget.

Decisions regarding the contribution of members shall be adopted by the Governing Board through a qualified majority, with a minimum quorum floor of two-thirds (2/3) of members, present or represented.

The General Secretariat will be responsible for issuing the invoices for Membership fees within the first three (3) months of each calendar year.

Members are obliged to pay their fees within the six (6) months following recorded receipt of the invoice.

**SECTION IV – The Governing Body**

7. GOVERNING BOARD

As mandated by the Statutes the Governing Board is the governing body of CETAF, and operates according to the provisions provided therein.

The Governing Board is composed of members, full and associate, each represented by an individual (hereinafter, the Delegate), although only full members hold voting rights.

The Delegate to the Governing Board shall be the Director or official representative of the member, or an individual with formal authorisation to act on her/his behalf. Likewise, a consortium member is represented by a Director or official representative or an individual formally authorised by the institutions and/or entities forming the consortium, and who acts in the name of and on behalf of the consortium as a whole.

The identity of the Delegate should be communicated to the General Secretariat by the Director of each Institution. Any change of Delegate or official representative shall be
immediately communicated to the General Secretariat, and will have immediate effect upon its receipt.

For purposes of voting, a Delegate may bear the representation, at the Governing Board, of another member by means of an official Letter of Representation from the Director of the represented institution, which shall be sent to the CETAF Chair prior to the Governing Board. A Delegate can only have one proxy vote. The Chair will be entitled to verify the proven evidence of the said representation and, if it is not adequate, to refuse it.

The quorum for the Governing Board will be a simple majority of voting members present or represented, except in specific cases which are explicitly mentioned in the Bylaws or Statutes.

The ordinary Governing Board shall meet, preferably, within the first six (6) months of a calendar year.

A second ordinary meeting focusing on CETAF activities and the budget will take place in the second half of the calendar year.

Upon written request of at least one-third (1/3) of members, with subsequent approval of the Chair, or whenever the interests of the Consortium so demand, the Executive Committee may convene an Extraordinary Governing Board, at any time during a calendar year, in cases where urgent decisions need to be taken on specific questions (to be clearly identified in the corresponding agenda) that cannot wait for the next scheduled ordinary meeting. Due to the extraordinary nature of such meetings, written notification must be given no less than four (4) weeks in advance.

Proposals for items for the agenda of a Governing Board meeting are to be submitted to the Chair no later than seventy-five (75) days before the scheduled Governing Board. The agenda for the Governing Board (hereinafter, the Agenda) will be discussed and agreed by the Executive Committee.

The proposed Agenda, together with all supporting documents, must be sent out to the members no later than two (2) months before the scheduled meeting date. The Chair and Executive Committee will establish the agenda. The General Secretariat will be responsible for the collating and/or preparation of the necessary documentation in advance of each meeting, and for making it available to all members.

Additional issues, supported by at least one-fifth (1/5) of the members and communicated to the EC at least four (4) weeks before the Governing Board meeting, must be included in the final Agenda. In this case, an amended Agenda will be sent out two weeks before the meeting.

The Governing Board may adopt a revised Agenda during the meeting, as decided by a simple majority. Changes to the Agenda are not possible for issues concerning Membership, Elections, and the Statutes.
8. ATTENDANCE AND DECISIONS
Each member may participate in the Governing Board with its Delegate, present or represented.

Each member may have, other than the Delegate, additional individuals whom attend a Governing Board, but such an additional attendance does not imply the acquisition of additional voting rights. Attendance at the CETAF Governing Board meetings by Delegates is under the financial responsibility of the member institutions.

Additional individuals may be invited to a Governing Board by the Executive Committee, on an *ad hoc* basis, to provide specialist input. The minimal necessary expenses for invited individuals will be covered by CETAF funds, if necessary.

Each full member, through its Delegate, has one vote, except in the case where the Delegate is officially representing one other member. Unless the Bylaws explicitly specify otherwise, decisions will be taken by a simple majority rule among the member institutions present or represented.

Full and Associate members in good standing are defined as those members that are not in arrears by more than six (6) months after the recorded receipt of the invoice for membership fee for that calendar year. Members who are not in good standing lose their voting rights and cannot attend the Governing Board meetings (see Statutes 5.6), except by agreement by the Chair.

For budgetary issues, 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 Governing Board (Statutes, Art. 9.3), a qualification for a simple majority vote would require that for any decision to be taken by a simple majority vote, the majority of votes in favour of any proposed decision would also need to represent more than 75% of the annual financial contributions to the budget for the respective year.

Voting decisions of the Governing Board will only be on items included in the Agenda.

The Governing Board shall meet, in ordinary session, within the first six (6) months of a calendar year, in order to, amongst others issues:
- approve the yearly accounts,
- examine the annual report presented by the Executive Committee,
- grant discharge to the members of the Executive Committee,
- ratify the admission or exclusion of members,
- elect and, if needs be, dismiss members of the Executive Committee,
- amend the Bylaws,
- dissolve the Consortium,
- pass any internal regulation which might be appropriate and/or necessary for the functioning of the Consortium,
- discuss and/or agree on other business that the Executive Committee considers relevant.

Each meeting of the Governing Board shall decide on the venue and the date of the following meeting(s). Both the date and the location may be modified only if the planned host member experiences difficulty in organizing the meeting, provided that such changes are duly communicated to the Chair and the General Secretariat, at least three (3) months before the scheduled meeting is to take place. In such an event, the meeting of the Governing Board will take place at the location of the General Secretariat on the date most convenient for the Host Institution but within the period of three (3) months from the date of the new announcement.

The Governing Board may take inter-sessional decisions through vote by electronic or other appropriate means upon the proposal of the Chair or Executive Committee. All issues for inter-sessional voting must be announced to members with a period of at least four (4) weeks prior to the respective decision deadline.

9. ELECTIONS
The Chair of the Executive Committee is responsible for the complete Election Process leading to the establishment of the following Executive Committee. The process will start with the opening of a period for the nomination (Nomination Period) of new members at least six (6) months prior to the termination of the current mandate and ending at a maximum of three (3) months before the meeting where the Elections will take place.

During the Nomination Period, Directors and official representatives of CETAF member institutions are invited to submit proposals for the nomination of one or more candidates for one or more of the positions on the Executive Committee. The nomination(s) shall be addressed to the Executive Director, identifying the name of the proposed person(s), the Institution/member(s) of CETAF that the candidate(s) work(s) for and for which position they are proposed. Prior consent of each nominated candidate should be sought.

The Secretariat will compile a list of nominations and circulate this, at the end of the official nomination period (3 months before the Elections are to be held) to the CETAF membership.

If nominations for any of the four legal positions are lacking then the Chair shall, in agreement with the Executive Committee, approach members for further nominations. The final list of candidates will be elaborated by the General Secretariat and will be sent out, together with the Agenda, two months before the Governing Board meeting in which the elections will occur.

Each nominee will supply a letter from their institution confirming that they are available to serve on the Executive Committee for the position that they have been nominated for,
accompanied a personal statement on their motivations for joining the Executive Committee that will be circulated to the members in advance of the elections. Nominees (as given in the distributed nomination list) may present themselves to the Governing Board prior to the voting procedures.

The election process at the Governing Board will be based on the list of nominees. It will cover the election for the five (5) different positions separately and subsequently, as follows: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary Members. Nominees for any of the four legal positions are automatically included in the list of candidates for the ordinary members.

All votes are done by secret ballot.

In case of only one nomination for one of the legal positions, the candidate has to be accepted by a simple majority.

In case of two candidates for one of the legal positions, the decision is by simple majority. In case of equal votes, the procedure has to be repeated. After second equal voting, the (outgoing) Chair makes the decision (unless a conflict of interest is identified) upon which case the voting will pass into a third round.

In case of more than two candidates for one of the legal positions, a candidate is elected if there is a simple majority in their favour. In case of no majority vote, the two candidates with the highest votes proceed to a second voting round as described above. In case of equal votes at this stage, an additional voting round will take place. Once the two final candidates have been selected, a subsequent vote will be held and the candidate with the majority is thus elected. In case of repeated equal number of votes, the (outgoing) Chair makes the decision (unless a conflict of interest is identified) upon which case the voting will pass into a further round.

After the election of the four legal positions, the four ordinary members of the EC are elected. All candidates are voted upon together. Each member has a maximum of four votes (votes to be equal to the number of vacant positions) to assign to the list of candidates, without the possibility of accumulation to one candidate. The four candidates with the highest number of votes are elected. In case of equal votes, the voting is repeated only for those candidates.

Two (2) persons attending the Governing Board will act as vote counters, provided that they have no conflict of interest with the candidates and/or the Institutions the candidates are affiliated with. They will be in charge of counting and checking the validity of all votes cast, and afterwards, of communicating the results to the Chair who will be the responsible of its final validation and of its announcement to the General Assembly.

The newly elected Executive Committee, including the Chair, has to be communicated to the Belgian Court to become legally effective. The outgoing Executive Committee will continue in
its duty until this has occurred, including the running of the Governing Board in which the elections occurred.

10. ACTIONS
To achieve its aims, specific activities and/or projects, an Action can be established within CETAF, via collaboration between members, the activities of the CETAF bodies (working commissions, special interest groups and sub-committees, as mentioned in the CETAF Statutes), or by the formation of specific CETAF bodies for that purpose. Such Actions may be established, implemented and supported by more than three individuals, but remain open to any member interested in joining.

For the establishment of a CETAF Action (via a CETAF body), a proposal from any member, subject to the support committed by at least three (3) members, needs to be submitted to the Executive Committee and Governing Board for approval. A proposal should specify the overall aims, products, term and timeline (if the Action was to be effective for a limited period of time), resources ascribed for its functioning and development, and the coordinator(s) of the group.

For the implementation and operation of a specific Action, the participating members should develop criteria, guidelines and operational rules, according to CETAF guidelines on working groups, CETAF Statutes, and as long as those are not in contradiction to CETAF's overall strategy, objectives, Statutes or Bylaws.

If resources are committed by participating members to an Action, these resources remain under the authority of these members, or of the Action, if so agreed by the participating members, thus avoiding of the situation where CETAF must act as a contractor.

If additional economic support for the organization, dissemination and development of the Action is required from CETAF, the application for financial support should include a budget, a detail cost table, and the scheduled plan of the Action. Such applications will be addressed to the CETAF Executive Committee who will evaluate it and, subject to the availability of funds, will assess and approve / reject the application. Applications will be dealt with in the order in which they are received, a register of which will be maintained by the Executive Director.

Upon establishment of an Action by approval from the Executive Committee or Governing Board, any Action is required to report regularly to the Governing Board about its development and progress, in the form of a brief written report to be circulated prior to the Governing Board and/or a brief presentation of progress during a Governing Board. Upon termination of an Action, a final report is to be presented to the Governing Board, including any documents, developments or products that will become part of the records and resources of CETAF.
Any outputs and products produced through the work of an approved Action are to be shared with all members of CETAF, unless explicitly specified otherwise and approved by the Governing Board. If members participating in an Action need to restrict dissemination or use for protecting specific rights, obligations or investments within the Action, this needs to be clearly stated in the respective proposal and reporting.

The approved CETAF Action will a specifically dedicated space on the CETAF website, and will thus form part of the promotion and diffusion activities undertaken by CETAF.

**SECTION V – Executive Committee**

**11. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The maximum number of members of the Executive Committee is eight, distributed among five different positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Ordinary members. The Chair will chair the Executive Committee and Governing Board meetings.

The members of the Executive Committee are elected at the Governing Board for a period of four (4) years, according to the Election Process. Their mandates may be renewed for another consecutive period of four (4) years in the same position.

In the event of a vacancy during a mandate, for whatever reason, the Executive Committee may appoint a provisional member to complete the mandate vacant seat, except if the vacancy corresponds to the Chair, in which case his/her function will be borne by the Vice-Chair, or failing that, by the Secretary. Whatever is the case, the legal requirements concerning this new appointment must comply with the Statutes and Bylaws.

**12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee is the body engaged for the functioning and administration of CETAF as outlined in the Statutes. Hence, all powers of management and administration, under the responsibility of the Chair, are vested on the Executive Committee, as a collegiate body towards third parties, without prejudice of those reserved to the Governing Board.

The Executive Committee may delegate the daily running of CETAF, with the use of the signature pertaining to that management, to the Executive Director.

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be in person or by telephone conference call or by a comparable means of communication.

Additional individuals can be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee, on an *ad hoc* basis to provide specialist input, after proposal by any of the members of the Executive Committee and agreement amongst the Executive Committee.
The Chair is responsible for convening the meetings of the Executive Committee and for elaborating the corresponding agenda. With a minimum notice of three (3) weeks the Executive Director, in consultation with the Chair, will distribute the notification for a meeting, including place, date and time, and the selected meeting mode (in person or virtually), the agenda. The Chair and Executive Director will collate the documentation or information that is required in advance of a scheduled meeting.

Agreements on issues contained on the agenda will be reached by simple majority vote of the members present. In the case of a tie vote, the Chair holds a casting vote. No representation is allowed within the scope of voting within the Executive Committee.

Minutes of the meetings shall be distributed to all members of the Executive Committee within fifteen (15) days after each Executive Committee meeting, unless otherwise specified. Distribution of the minutes is under the responsibility of the Executive Director, subject to the Chair’s approval.

SECTION VI – General Secretariat

13. THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
The General Secretariat will be based in a Host Institution.

The General Secretariat will consist of an Executive Director and additional staff hired if/when it is deemed appropriate and if/when funds are available. Despite the number of people ascribed to the General Secretariat, for the purpose of the Bylaws, the Secretariat will be considered as a single unit, and unless otherwise specified, the Executive Director will be responsible for the tasks and activities developed by the unit.

The General Secretariat will act in close cooperation with and under the direction and guidance of the Chair and the Executive Committee. The General Secretariat will assist the Chair with the day-to-day business, as outlined in the CETAF Statutes and General Secretariat work plan.

Amongst the General Secretariat responsibilities towards the Governing and Executive bodies of CETAF, will be the timely circulation of the final Agenda for the meetings of both the Governing Board and the Executive Committee, upon request of the Chair. The same applies for the minutes of all Governing Board meetings. Once circulated amongst the members of the Executive Committee for review, they will be distributed to all members of CETAF.

The General Secretariat work plan will be developed by the CETAF Executive Committee and Governing Board, before first review period of the General Secretariat after four (4) years, the General Secretariat work plan will be elaborated every subsequent four (4) years. A CETAF review panel may be established to undertake the review of the General Secretariat, if and when necessary.
SECTION VII – The Budget

14. THE ANNUAL BUDGET
The funds belonging to CETAF shall be used solely in the service of its objectives.

Financial year is a calendar year, according to the Statutes.

Annual economic resources of CETAF may originate from sources other than that from the Membership Contribution fees, including, but not limited to, that from both, legal entities and/or individuals, of a public or private nature.

Whatever the origin of funds, each and all sources of funding will be duly recognized and formally considered in the CETAF accounting system, and be subject to strict legal compliance under Belgian Law.

The annual budget shall be approved by the Governing Board.

15. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
For handling financial resources on behalf of CETAF, the Executive Committee can open bank account and engage in necessary contracts with financial institutions.

The annual statements of CETAF will comprise a Balance Sheet and an Income Statement that will be submitted to the Governing Board for approval within the six (6) months following the end of the financial year.

The CETAF annual accounts will not be externally audited, unless otherwise decided by the Governing Board with a majority vote. However, an internal assessment and validation will be requested for the annual reports. The two Auditors for the annual accounts will be nominated by the Governing Board.

The balance for the previous calendar year will be presented, together with the auditing report, in the spring Governing Board, the budget for the following year will be presented and voted upon in the autumn Governing Board.

SECTION VII – Other items

16. VALIDITY
These Bylaws shall be considered valid from the date of their approval by the Governing Board and will remain so until further emended by the CETAF Governing Board or until CETAF is legally dissolved (i.e. when the dissolution process legally ends).
17. LANGUAGES
For the purpose of functioning and governing, CETAF working language will be English, though others may be used but only for personal communication.
CETAF A.I.S.B.L. Business and organisational model
2016-2019
(24 July 2015)

This is the summary of the document ("New CETAF A.I.S.B.L. organisational model - 3rd draft") proposing key elements for a new CETAF organisational 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 of 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, to be approved by the General Meeting at CETAF29 (Geneva, 5-6 April 2011).

New CETAF Secretariat
As agreed by the General Assembly, 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 activities of the CETAF Secretariat would include development of strategic themes, implementation of communication and coordination mechanisms, and of course organisational administration. A detailed annual business plan and budget for the operations of the secretariat will be proposed to 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 160,000 Euros.
This is based on the following figures and would cover annual costs for:

- Staff (salary costs):
  - Secretariat Director / Executive Secretary (CEO): 80,000 Euro
  - Communications Officer / 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. These costs may be adjusted within the total envelope by potential host(s) in their answer to the request for proposals for hosting the secretariat.

**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 membership1 (called here: “very-large”, “large”, and “medium-sized”) the following values are being suggested:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (Institutional size)</th>
<th>Collections size (mio. objects)</th>
<th>Operational budget² (mio. Euro)</th>
<th>Research &amp; collection staff³ (FTE)</th>
<th>Possible further criteria…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I – Very large</td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>&gt; 5</td>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II – Large</td>
<td>&gt; 10 [&amp; &lt;30]</td>
<td>&gt; 2 [&amp; &lt;5]</td>
<td>&gt; 50 [&amp; &lt;100]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III - Medium-sized</td>
<td>&lt; 10</td>
<td>&lt; 2</td>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 for 2016 were 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

The CETAF General Meeting during its meeting in Geneva on 13 October 2015 has agreed on the following model for Membership fees for the 3 years period 2017-2019:

- Category I (very large institutions): 10,400 Euro
- Category II (large institutions): 6,200 Euro
- Category III (medium-sized institutions): 2,100 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 could be 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 25% 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 talking decisions on highly contentious matters by voting. Th 25% 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 could be introduced through a 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.
CETAF: POSITION PAPER

on

BIODIVERSITY AND EUROPE:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF TAXONOMY AND THE EUROPEAN TAXONOMIC FACILITIES.

We share our planet with millions of other species. Animals, plants, fungi and micro-organisms, they feed us, keep us healthy, providing goods and services from medicines to building materials. Other species damage us and our economies. Through the millennia we humans have developed ingenious ways to exploit the planet for our well-being, but even today only our knowledge of the total biodiversity of our planet is far from complete.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Summit 2002 in Johannesburg and the following European “Göteborg” target significantly changed the attitudes of people and their governments to their nation’s biodiversity, and that of the world. It was recognised that much more had to be done to halt the loss of biodiversity and, beyond this, to use and manage it in sustainable ways for all humankind. The implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which came out of the summit, requires not only the commitment of governments but the application of specific scientific expertise and resources.

Taxonomy is a key science in the sense that without it many aspects of modern biological science, as well as global and regional initiatives on biodiversity (including the CBD), cannot be tackled effectively and efficiently. The fundamental role of taxonomy has always been to discover, name, and investigate the relationships of all living things, past and present. But today taxonomy is about much more than that.

Taxonomic facilities, such as natural history museums, culture collections and botanic gardens, manage collections of the world’s biodiversity for research and to support the objectives of numerous user communities. Many areas of biological research are strongly dependent on these global facilities and Europe holds a significant proportion of the world’s most important collections.

This document explains the wider and important part played by taxonomy and taxonomic facilities in the contemporary context of biodiversity and of sustainable development, with a focus on the significance of European policies and actions. It urges support for action to protect Europe’s own biodiversity and to use its resources wisely to aid countries in many parts of the world.
TAXONOMY IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

What is taxonomic knowledge used for?
It provides scientifically based knowledge about species, the units of biodiversity, and establishes a basic biological language about them that enables meaningful communication between people.

- It aids species identification making it an essential tool in the control, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- It leads to the understanding of relationships of species and so helps to find new opportunities for product development in food or medicines.
- It shows which organisms can act as indicators of environmental quality or that are essential for the maintenance of healthy ecosystems, including crop-bearing soils and water resources.
- It is used in the fight against pests, parasites, vectors of disease, invasive species, and extinction.

Who uses this knowledge?
The list of users of taxonomic knowledge is extensive and, in addition to other researchers in many fields of biological sciences, it includes:

- The agricultural, fish-farming, forestry and horticultural industries.
- The tourist industry which increasingly focuses on eco-tourism.
- Water authorities.
- The oil and mining companies, including their work on environmental impact.
- Conservation agencies and voluntary bodies concerned with the protection of nature.
- National customs authorities who protect against pests and invasive species as well as trade in endangered species.
- Governments, local and regional authorities who are implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, through local biodiversity action plans.
- International agencies dealing with biodiversity.
- Pharmaceutical and drug companies searching for new products.
- The media: from scientific journalists, illustrators, to film-makers and others.

Increasingly, taxonomic institutions work not only to advance the science of taxonomy itself but also in collaboration with other scientists, industry and governments to help tackle current world problems and initiatives.

Do we have a sound knowledge of biodiversity?
The short and surprising answer is “only some of it”. It is estimated that we have named and described about 1.8 million species – representing perhaps only 15% of all those living today. There is a considerable amount of information on the relationships of species and their interactions but there is a huge amount of exciting research still to be done. Similarly, there is increasing information on important species involved in problem-solving areas such as the transmission of disease, or the control of pests of arable crops, but many challenges have yet to be faced.
Elucidating the genomes of organisms is only just beginning but the information it provides, together with other work in molecular biology, is already providing powerful insights into the course of biological evolution and giving new meaning to the world around us. Taxonomists are working to define the ‘tree of life’. As the results of the task unfold so the benefits multiply not only in the increasing usefulness of the information but also by providing a more predictive framework for comparative biology.
The taxonomic institutions will continue the development of well equipped facilities so that the accumulated knowledge associated with the collections can be used to best effect. These facilities will allow for the growing body of information as the urgent task of describing and documenting more of the world’s biodiversity progresses.

**How can the knowledge be made more readily available?**

European taxonomic facilities are committed to increasing access to the information they hold about species. The opportunities provided by information technology and the internet are being seized by these facilities to make information about specimens, including images, more readily available on-line. These tools provide a quick and preliminary screening of the contents of the collections prior to visit the institutions. Guides and keys to plants and animals, often with a regional focus, are being developed to meet user needs. Co-ordination and networking of the information held in different institutions is already being shown to improve access by a variety of users.

**THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION**

Europe is strong in resources for the management of biodiversity and for advancing our knowledge of the Earth’s species through taxonomy.

- Europe contains half of the World’s biological collections and holds specimens of more than 80% of the described species from all parts of the World, which provide a huge resource for comparative worldwide work.

- European collections are distinguished by their richness in type (or reference) specimens, especially those of the World’s most common and economically important organisms. They also represent the occurrence of organisms in time and space and of their genetic variation.

- Europe has occupied a strong position in the development of the science of taxonomy from its earliest origins to modern molecular and theoretical biology.

- Europe contains a significant resource of internationally-recognised taxonomists and a powerful network of taxonomic facilities.

- Europe has a significant diversity of languages and cultures so that its researchers are in a favourable position for collaboration across philosophical, linguistic and political boundaries, as well as across different perceptions of biodiversity.

- Europe has, through the European Union Framework Programmes, developed policies and actions to start improving the effectiveness of its taxonomic resources in scientific research and facilities, and in the implementation of European and global initiatives in biodiversity management. It is achieving this by an integrated approach to networking, collaboration, information provision and training.

- Some twenty leading European taxonomic institutions have formed an important Consortium (CETAF - see box) to help organise and optimise taxonomic research in Europe and to assure continued European focus and leadership in this field.

There are, however, still significant groups of organisms for which Europe has no specialists and numerous groups where the European specialist coverage is very thin and therefore vulnerable. For Europe to maintain and strengthen its leading role in taxonomy, an increased investment in human resources is necessary, especially in the field of basic taxonomy, as a *sine qua non* for biodiversity research in general and sustainable development in particular.
THE WAY FORWARD FOR CETAF

CETAF strives to maximise the benefits that its member institutions can provide for the sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It works with other institutions, governments, private organisations and agencies to achieve a programme of co-ordinated work, significantly improving Europe’s capacity to fulfil its commitments and obligations under European and international initiatives as well as Conventions (especially the CBD).

Over the next six years CETAF will:

Promote increased access to collections and associated information.

The collections of the many European institutions are a valuable and irreproducible resource but their potential is far from fully realised. CETAF and its member institutions will:

- Work within the SYNTHESYS Integrated Infrastructures Initiative of the European Union to provide enhanced and co-ordinated access by a diverse range of users and researchers to collections, facilities and expertise in many of Europe’s taxonomic institutions.
- Use the Framework Programmes of the EU to boost taxonomic research in Europe.
- Co-ordinate contributions of information and aid policy development within The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) – an internationally funded initiative started in 2001 to establish a high-quality and user-focused network of databases on biodiversity. CETAF is fully committed to the GBIF objectives.
- Be key participants in the EU funded European Network for Biodiversity Information (ENBI) which constitutes the European Commission’s contribution to the GBIF and also to prepare the way to a European Research Area.
- Accelerate the provision and accessibility of information about biodiversity to users in line with priority needs and to set targets by 2010.
- Campaign to secure continued and increased funding for Europe’s unique collections, in particular for their digitisation and access for multidisciplinary use.

Provide international leadership in setting and implementing standards.

It is increasingly important to set and implement agreed standards and protocols for the development and maintenance of collections, for their use, and for the associated information and data sets. The importance of the European collections is too high to allow deterioration to occur simply as a result of lack of sound procedures and guidelines. Users are increasingly requiring information on the standards of treatment of specimens, especially for those used in molecular biology research; they also need clear details of the quality of associated so they can assess whether or not it is fit-for-purpose. Over the next six years CETAF will:

- Develop and establish agreed standards and protocols for collections care and data provision, through the SYNTHESYS Integrated Infrastructures Initiative. These standards will be set at a level appropriate for international application.
- Agree priorities for implementing standards, in the context of user needs and within a collaborative framework, across Europe.
Exploit new scientific opportunities

As a scientific activity, taxonomy is continually assimilating new methods and technologies in an innovative way. It is now actively exploiting the benefits of molecular biology, genomics and biodiversity informatics, so as to help accelerate the process of inventorying and databasing biodiversity. European objectives over the next six years include:

- Research into rapid means of species identification through DNA ‘bar-coding’ and by advanced methods of pattern recognition.
- Development of advanced models for the construction and handling of the relationships of a relatively large number of species within parts of the ‘Tree of Life’ in order to provide a better understanding of all aspects of biodiversity, including, e.g., ecological, behavioural, physiological and molecular diversity.
- Development of improve systems for the generation of multi-access keys for identification purposes by a wide range of users.

Secure Europe’s taxonomic capabilities

Matching the available scientific resources to meet the European and global needs of the many biodiversity programmes is a challenge in itself. The past investment in collections, museums and botanic gardens has, over the last 250 years, been colossal and now is the time to maximise the yield from this investment. This can be achieved only through the combined efforts of Europe’s taxonomic institutions. These institutions, working through CETAF, will:

- Analyse the different strengths of the many institutions, especially with respect to their abilities to deliver research outputs and services, so as to aid integrated resource planning and provision. The objective will be to define the existing ‘complementarity’ among organisations and to use it to advantage in institutional change and growth, so as to improve effectiveness in meeting user needs. This will be achieved through the SYNTHESYS Integrated Infrastructures Initiative and will lay down the framework for long-term planning in Europe.
- Develop and agree an integrated and collaborative approach to the development of major new collections of cultures, tissues and ‘DNA’, for molecular biological research.
- Promote, at the European level, a special funding programme to target revision and description of species through monographs, faunas and floras, delivering basic scientific data and creating new knowledge. The US "Partnerships for Enhancing Expertise in Taxonomy" (PEET) may in part serve as a model.
- Establish the first CETAF distributed training module for taxonomy and develop further training courses and opportunities. *It is anticipated that at least three times as many taxonomists as there are today will be needed in Europe’s collections-based institutions if the global inventory of biodiversity is to be completed and made accessible in a reasonable time.*

FUTURE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

CETAF is now an established part of the European taxonomic scene and has an important future role to play in co-ordinating the European contribution to the global taxonomic effort. It will continue to review, and adapt as necessary, its strategy for integrated and collaborative working across Europe. It will also, where it is able, help support individual institutions to gain support for their valuable taxonomic resources and work.

CETAF will continue to champion the importance of taxonomy in its crucial role in baseline biodiversity research and in the development of sustainable use and conservation in areas where the level of biodiversity is high but the scientific capacity is low.
CETAF provides an authoritative and integrated voice for the discipline in Europe.

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**Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF)**

CETAF was founded in 1996. Twenty five of Europe’s largest taxonomic facilities (natural history museums, botanic gardens and other biological collections) are members of CETAF. The objectives are:

- to promote scientific research and access to European collections
- to enable the formation of partnerships to exploit European funding opportunities
- to be a voice for taxonomy and systematic biology in Europe.

A number of CETAF members, or national consortia in which CETAF members play leading roles, have, since 1998, received support through the European Commission’s Framework Programmes to enhance transnational access to their collections, equipment and expertise. Most recently, under the 6th Framework Programme, twenty CETAF institutions in eleven countries are running an Integrated Infrastructure Initiative: "Synthesis of Systematic resources" (SYNTHESYS). It provides transnational access to member facilities. In addition SYNTHESYS seeks to increase the quality of European collections by focusing on such issues as: complementarity and gaps analyses, collection standards, enhanced data processing, new types of collections and new analytical methods for their study.

A consortium of CETAF members have formed the European Natural History Specimen Information Network (ENHSIN), a concerted action which has as its core objectives to develop and assess protocols, standards, methods and management frameworks, together with a consensus on user needs, which will enable the development of a shared, interoperable European Infrastructure of specimen databases.

A following Biological Collection Access Scheme for Europe (BioCASE) also has its roots in CETAF. BioCASE will through its core objectives network biological collections with the aim to fully realise the immense research and documentation value of European biological collections, implement a sustainable and expandable Biological Collection Information Access Service for Europe, a system, which will enable users for the first time to access European collection resources in an integrated and concerted way and create an innovative information system, which provides indirect access to the highly heterogeneous and widely distributed information base formed by the numerous European biological collections through a metadata framework backed by a network of National Nodes.

CETAF was also instrumental in creating the very large thematic network Fauna Europaea. With over 400 contributing specialists, Fauna Europaea is compiling taxonomic lists of more than 100,000 non-marine species of European animals, as well as information on their distribution, thereby complementing the earlier project: European Register of Marine Species (ERMS) and the sister project on the European Flora, Euro-Mediterranean Plant Diversity (Euro+Med PlantBase).
## CETAF Member Institutions to date

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