



CETAF aisbl



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

GETTY IMAGES, 2024

ONE COMMUNITY 25+ COUNTRIES 75+ INSTITUTIONS 5000+ SCIENTISTS 1.5 BILLION SPECIMENS



FOREWORD

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, it is with great pride that I present the CETAF Annual Report for 2025. This document encapsulates our collective efforts, unwavering commitment, and the significant strides we have made in advancing taxonomy and biodiversity science across Europe.

The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) stands as a unique network of natural history museums, botanical gardens, and biodiversity research centers, **uniting over 80 institutions across 27 countries**. Together, we serve as custodians of an invaluable natural heritage, managing more than **1.5 billion specimens** that represent nearly **80% of all described species**. Our work not only preserves this heritage but also drives innovative research that informs critical decisions in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

In 2025, we witnessed remarkable progress in implementing our **Strategy 2025-2030**. Through collaborative efforts and strategic initiatives, we have strengthened our governance structures, expanded our membership, and enhanced our **advocacy for taxonomy** at both national and international levels. Our General Assemblies fostered vibrant discussions, allowing us to align our objectives and address pressing challenges in biodiversity research.

Moreover, our participation in various European projects has underscored the importance of collaboration within the **scientific community**. We have made significant contributions to initiatives aimed at enhancing biodiversity monitoring, advancing genomic research, and promoting **ethical practices in taxonomy**. These efforts reflect our commitment to ensuring that scientific knowledge informs policy and public discourse.

As we look ahead, the path remains filled with opportunities and responsibilities. The urgency of **addressing biodiversity loss and climate change** demands our continued dedication and innovation. Together, we will forge new partnerships, enhance our outreach, and ensure that taxonomy remains at the forefront of **environmental science**.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all **CETAF members**, partners, and stakeholders for your tireless efforts and contributions. Your **passion and commitment** are vital to our mission, and I am excited to see what we will accomplish together in the coming years.

Edwin Vans Huys
President of CETAF



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Who we are?

The **Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF)** is a European network of Natural Science and History Museums, Botanical Gardens and Biodiversity Research Centres. It is a unique network—unparalleled in Europe and beyond, that brings together **80 institutions across 27 European countries**, represented by **45 CETAF members**, including the continent’s foremost natural history museums, botanic gardens, and biodiversity research centres. Collectively, they curate and manage an extraordinary 1.5 billion biological and geological specimens, representing nearly **80% of all species** described to date.


These institutions, and the researchers within them, serve as custodians of an irreplaceable natural heritage. Their collections underpin essential research in geodiversity and biodiversity, especially in taxonomy and systematics, and drive groundbreaking discoveries across numerous scientific disciplines.

Our objectives are to promote scientific research and access to European collections, to foster European cooperation and partnerships, and to be the voice for taxonomy and systematic biology in Europe.



> **80**
Institutions

> **27**
Countries



07	The General Assembly
09	The Executive Committee
10	The General Secretariat
11	Expanding the CETAF membership

Unique organisation of taxonomic institutions

Ensuring the sustainable performance of CETAF, through its efficient governance structures.

The CETAF organisation is governed by three bodies, the General Assembly, the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat, each with their own responsibilities and mandates to jointly manage and move the organisation forward.

1.1 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the primary governing body of CETAF, comprising representatives from its member institutions, that meets twice a year to set **strategic direction**, discuss relevant aspects affecting the scientific community and ensure alignment with its mission and long-term vision, **approve budgets** and accounts, and make **major decisions for the future of CETAF**. Due to its dual objective, the General Assemblies are split into two different events each with a different target audience, focus and objectives. While the Spring meeting aims to gather representatives of the scientific community to discuss relevant topics in the field and jointly address common issues, the Autumn event unites the main representatives of the CETAF members under the so called Directors' Summit, to **address critical, high-level strategic approaches to escalate impact**, and make more robust and meaningful the contributions of the museums and their collections to tackle biodiversity-related challenges.

In 2025, two General Assemblies were organised. The **57th General Assembly (CETAF57)** took place in Luxembourg, Luxembourg (15-16 May), hosted by the Musée national d'histoire naturelle (MNHNL) and its Director Patrick Michaely. Later in the year, the **CETAF 58th General Assembly (CETAF58)** was organised under the umbrella of the **2nd Directors' Summit**, held in Berlin, Germany, on the 11th and 12th of November, hosted by the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin / Freie Universität Berlin, and its Director Thomas Borsch.



CETAF57 General Assembly, Luxembourg, May 2025

The **57th General Assembly** made history with **record-breaking attendance**. Thus, it reflected a growing enthusiasm and commitment across the CETAF community. From energising networking sessions to focused working group meetings, CETAF57 was a space for collaboration, discussion, and strategic planning. One of the main themes of the CETAF57 was the rollout of the **CETAF Strategy 2025–2030**, and for that participants engaged in in-depth conversations about aligning institutional efforts with this shared strategic roadmap, ensuring unified progress toward common goals in taxonomy and biodiversity research.

Furthermore, another outstanding topic in CETAF57 was the Working Groups and their critical role in driving the strategy forward. Their contributions are instrumental in turning CETAF’s vision into measurable outcomes across the scientific and policy landscapes.

In November, the **CETAF Directors met under the theme “Trusted Partners, Critical Times.”** which guided discussions on how CETAF and its institutions can forge new alliances, respond to societal needs, and demonstrate leadership in areas such as the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, where biodiversity expertise is essential. By uniting scientific, policy, and economic perspectives, **CETAF58 aimed to strengthen the CETAF collective voice** and shape the future of biodiversity and geodiversity knowledge across Europe. In that context, the CETAF directors discussed three critical statements regarding **Cybersecurity, Repatriation** and **Integrity**, as a reflection from a collaborative perspective on how to address the pressing scientific, societal, and ethical challenges that natural history institutions are facing today.



CETAF 2nd Directors' Summit, Berlin, Germany, November 2025

1.2 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is the decision-making body of CETAF that **provides the strategic leadership** and oversight for the organisation. This includes key decisions regarding the direction and priorities of CETAF, to warrant that the organisation's goals and objectives are met. Furthermore, it is responsible for safeguarding effective governance, resource management, and providing support and guidance to the Secretariat to ensure timely and successful implementation of the agreements reached by the General Assembly. The Executive Committee works closely with the **Executive Director and the Secretariat team** to align strategic vision and performance, identify major challenges and propose actions, collaborations, initiatives and pathways to support and promote taxonomy and the taxonomic community.

The Executive Committee (elected in November 2023), will drive CETAF action during the years 2024-2027. Following the revised Strategy for the period 2025-2030, the Executive Committee aims to implement the organization's strategic vision through annual work plans that **establish priorities and drive action**, at different levels, from local, national and European to global activities. In that context, the Executive Committee works closely with the Working Groups, an essential tool to advance taxonomic research, the cohesion of the organisation as a whole and improve the performance of the taxonomic community.

During 2025, the Executive Committee meets online every 6 weeks and physically twice a year, in **Brussels (27-28 March)**, and in **Berlin (6-7 October)**. Additionally a core team formed by the President, the Vice-President and the Executive Director met fortnightly to articulate the execution of planned activities.

CETAF Executive Committee 2024-2027



Edwin Van Huis
President
Naturalis, Leiden, NL



François Dusoulier
Treasurer
MNHN, Paris, FR



Stefan Örgård
NHM, Gothenburg, SE



Gila Kahila Bar-Gal
NNHC HUJ, Jerusalem, IL



Jana Hoffmann
Vice-President
SGN, Müncheberg, DE



Eva Häffner
Secretary
BGBM, Berlin, DE



Carole Paleco
RBINS, Brussels, BE

Ordinary Members

Note: Gergely Babocsay, HNHM, HU, stepped down during 2025 as an ordinary member of the Executive Committee

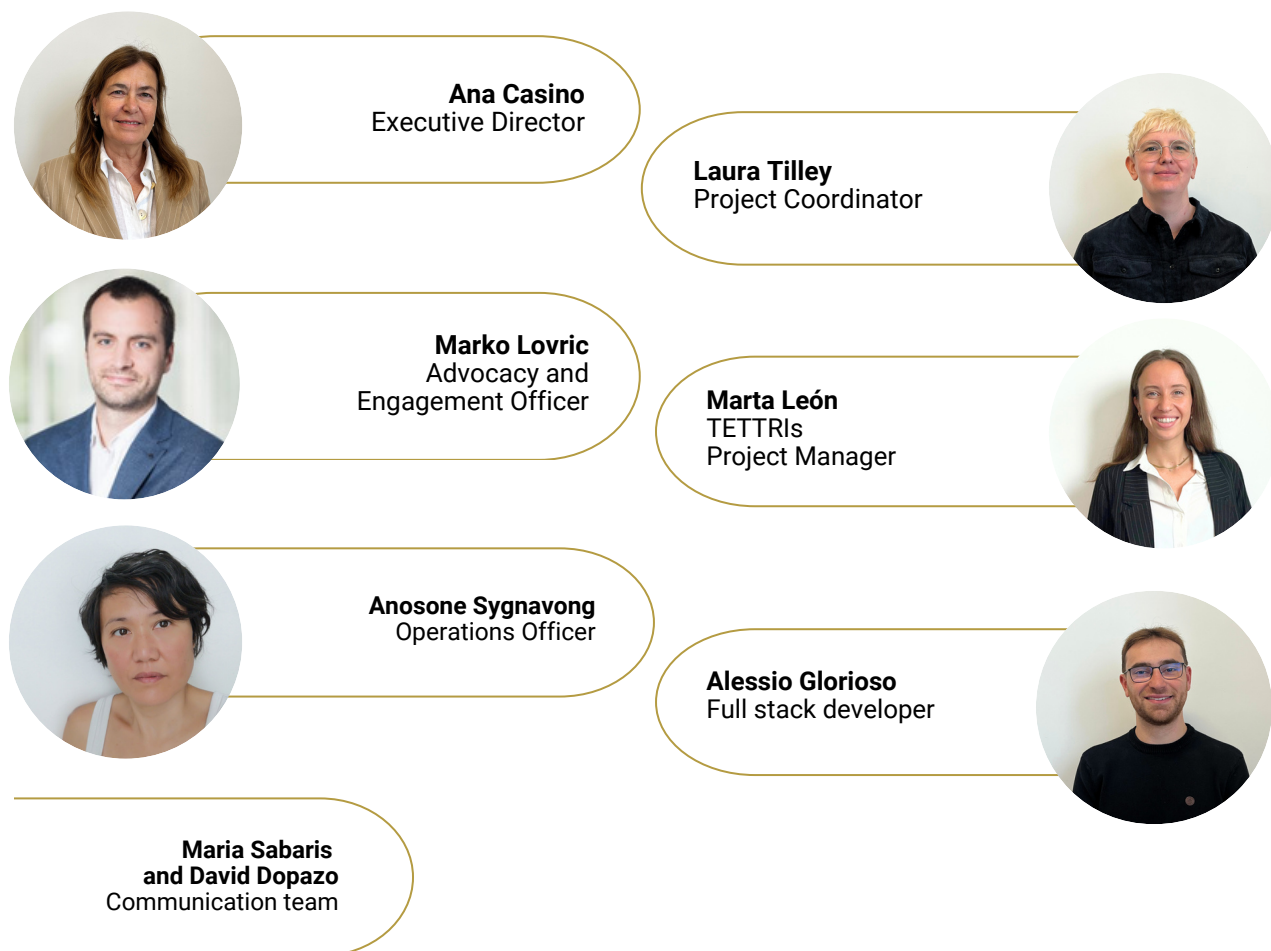
1.3 THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Finally, the General Secretariat acts as the **engine of the organisation**, responsible for implementing the daily work while consolidating the strategic positioning of the CETAF community, under the umbrella of the General Assembly and the guidance and support received from the Executive Committee.

Headquartered in **Brussels**, CETAF's General Secretariat **operationalises consortium at both European and international levels**. It advocates for the critical role of taxonomy in addressing urgent global challenges related to nature and sustainability, while promoting the unique value of collections and fostering innovative avenues for their use and expansion.

By building strategic partnerships and collaborations across sectors, and participating in EU-funded projects, the Secretariat empowers the CETAF community to **speak with one voice and amplify its impact globally**. It also provides essential logistical and operational support, enabling the development of key community-driven services and initiatives, from strengthening taxonomic expertise to accelerating the digital transformation of natural science collections and unlocking the full potential of their invaluable data.

The staff structure of the Secretariat reflects its main areas of activity including **advocacy and engagement**, support to research through the coordination of projects, expertise, communication and the general administration. Since August 2025 the Communications area is covered by two new staff members, working as external service providers on a part-time basis, who have developed a robust, comprehensive and engaging communication and dissemination strategy.



1.4 EXPANDING THE CETAF MEMBERSHIP

One of the key highlights of the 57th CETAF General Assembly was the expansion of its network with the addition of two new member institutions, bringing the total to **80 institutions across 27 countries**. Among the new members are the **Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe (SMNK)**, in Karlsruhe, DE, and the **Norwegian University of Science and Technology University Museum (NTNU)** Trondheim, NO.

By joining CETAF, these institutions not only strengthen international collaboration but also reaffirm their commitment to advancing biodiversity science and conservation in Europe and beyond. **New membership confirms the strength and consolidation of CETAF** and makes the consortium more integrative while contributing to expand the relevance, comprehensiveness and collective impact of the European taxonomic community.



Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe (SMNK)



Norwegian University of Science and Technology University Museum (NTNU)

A young fox with reddish-brown fur and a white muzzle is sitting in a field of green grass and small purple flowers. The fox is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The background is a soft-focus field of similar vegetation.

The Unified Vision: CETAF initiates the implementation of the Strategy 2025–2030

A collective framework to drive action

2.1 THE SECOND DIRECTORS' SUMMIT MAIN OUTCOME

On November 11-12 2025, over **50 directors from Europe's leading Natural History Museums** and Botanical Gardens gathered in Berlin for a new landmark moment in CETAF's journey. This in-person summit consolidated the strategic vision of the CETAF Directors in delivering critical knowledge, escalating impact and strengthening the role of the taxonomic institutions in Europe and beyond as critical players in **the science-policy interface** for a robust, evidence-based policy making.

Under the theme "**Trusted Partners, Critical Times**" CETAF Directors discussed different aspects of the organisation's core **vision**: *a world where natural science collections and biodiversity knowledge shape a sustainable future.*



The impulse talks, the first session of dialogue and reflection featured speakers from the private sector on the evolving role of natural history museums in Europe. **Dr Helge Maas** (Senior Director – Sustainability Lead Public Sector Germany, Capgemini Invent) and **Mr Robert-Alexandre Poujade** (SG Analyst, Biodiversity Lead – BNP Paribas AM) and the leaders of CETAF institutions discussed how natural history museums, botanical gardens and bio- and geodiversity research institutions serve as a vital link in a complex, science-based environment, highlighting opportunities for responsible collaboration that align innovation with integrity.



The second session, moderated by **Patrick Michaely** (MNHNL, Luxembourg), invited directors from leading European institutions to reflect and explore how to navigate partnerships while preserving scientific independence. **Klement Tockner** (Senckenberg Society for Nature Research), **Gilles Bloch** (MNHN, Paris), **Ursula Warnke** (State Museum of Nature and Human, Oldenburg), and **Esme Ward** (NHM, Manchester) discussed the potentials and risks of private sector collaboration.



In that context, three topics were collectively addressed and drove to the subsequent CETAF Statements:

CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity, commitment to collective digital security: This statement addresses the growing vulnerability of scientific institutions to cyberattacks and calls for a collective approach to digital security. It highlights the shared responsibility of institutions and governments to protect digital infrastructures, preserve scientific data, and maintain public trust.



REPATRIATION

Repatriation, commitment to ethical and responsible practices: This statement commits CETAF members to ethical and responsible dialogue regarding collections shaped by colonial histories and unequal power relations. It emphasizes transparency, provenance research, and respectful engagement with communities of origin, recognising historical injustice and supporting equitable and just scientific practices.



INTEGRITY

Integrity, trust and evidence-based science: This statement reaffirms CETAF's commitment to scientific integrity, institutional independence, and evidence-based communication in an increasingly polarised public environment. It highlights the importance of transparency, public engagement, and defending science against misinformation to maintain trust and support informed decision-making.



17

Collaborative work
of the community

22

Development of CETAF
initiatives and services

How CETAF operates

*Facilitating the creation and development of services for the
community, through multiple initiatives and actions*

3.1 COLLABORATIVE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY

Advisory Group

As one of the critical concerns of the entire community, the **European Projects Advisory Group** was revitalised during 2025 with new members bringing complementary expertise and building an enhanced knowledge base on European initiatives.

> European Projects Advisory Group (EPAG)

Coordinated by the CETAF General Secretariat (**Ana Casino** and **Marko Lovric**), the **European Projects Advisory Group (EPAG)** serves the CETAF community as a central information and advisory hub on European funding opportunities. It aims to simplify and streamline access to EU funding, especially in relation to biodiversity and taxonomic research. EPAG addresses the fragmented and complex funding landscape by helping institutions navigate opportunities, build partnerships and strengthen collaboration among CETAF members. 2025 was marked by a roll out of a brand new way of stimulating inter-member collaboration in EU funding programmes. This collaborative approach consisted of testing the value of the so-called **EPAG-CETAF Database** - used for sharing information and interests in relation to relevant funding opportunities - as well as establishing a loose network of EPAG Contact Points, consisting of member institutions' representatives interested in closer collaboration with EPAG.

During 2025, EPAG organised two webinars targeted at the Contact Points (CPs), the first serving as an introduction to EPAG and its objectives, while the second webinar provided valuable insights on the **latest Horizon Europe programme** from the EPAG experts. Furthermore, the webinar offered the CPs to give their feedback on the work of the Advisory Group and suggested ideas for improvement.



Working Groups

The community experts are gathered around **Working Groups (WG)** that tackle specific areas of interest, promote instrumental pathways and drive progress to address challenges encountered in the field of taxonomy. The working groups operate independently, though strongly linked in cross-cutting issues, and adapt their work programme to their concrete needs and goals. They present their work to the General Assembly on an annual basis, while the working group leaders meet several times a year to exchange experiences and discuss topics of common interest. The Executive Committee led the revision of the WGs at CETAF55, with the “World Café” to steer up the dialogue and interconnectivity for identifying what could be improved in the way the WGs operate. From that moment on, an intense work of internal discussion for improvement has been carried out to better define the scope and the objectives of each WGs and integrate them into the new CETAF Strategy. Some of the WGs that had been inactive for a while needed also to be revitalised with new inputs and leadership.

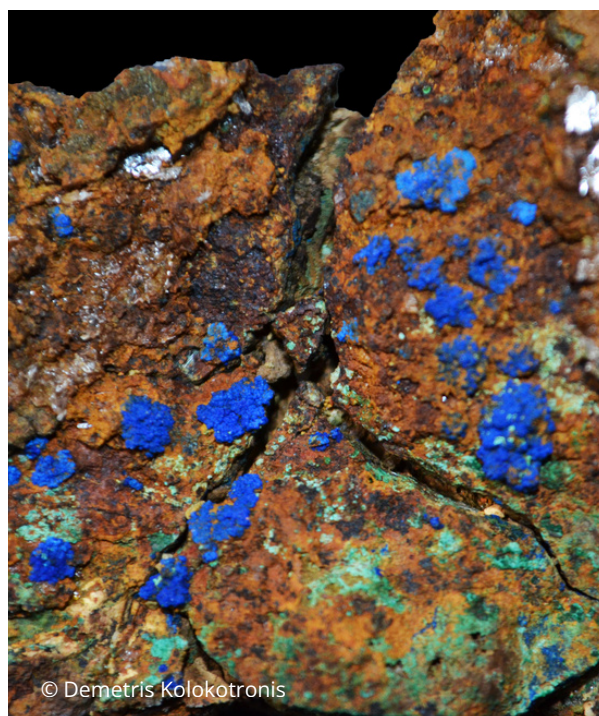
> Earth Sciences Working Group

The **Earth Science Group (ESG)** promotes the use of Earth Science Collections in research and society, and aims to support the improvement of their accessibility, interoperability, visibility, and data quality through the development and adoption of best practices and standards.

Under the coordination of **Laura Tilley** (CETAF), the ESG advanced its strategic priorities throughout 2025, with a major focus on developing the publication Enhancing Geological Specimen Data. Conceived as a structured desk-based study, the publication reviews current practices, standards, vocabularies, and data models relevant to geological collections, and analyses how their quality, discoverability, interoperability, and FAIR alignment can be improved. To support this work, in December (2025) a structured **survey** was launched to **collect institutional specimen case studies**, providing practical examples to underpin the analysis and recommendations. The findings are intended to strengthen data standards, inform the further development of **GeoCAsE 2.0** as a centralised hub for standardised geological data, and improve the provision of high-quality Earth Science data to DiSSCo.

The ESG actively contributed to international collaboration, Laura Tilley and Olle Hints (TalTech) were invited to present GeoCAsE at the SwissCollnet Earth Science meeting in Bern

(October 2025), showcasing the GeoCAsE portal and discussing workflows for publishing Earth Science specimen data. These exchanges strengthened dialogue on standards (e.g. Darwin Core and ABCD-EFG). Building on this momentum, the ESG began planning a **dedicated GeoCAsE training workshop**, provisionally scheduled for late 2026, to support institutions, particularly smaller museums, in publishing standardised Earth Science data.



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➤ Training and e-Learning in Taxonomy Group

Supporting CETAF's strategic priorities, the **Training and e-Learning Working Group (Te-L WG)** aims to address several challenges, including the lack of a common system of training certificates and EU-level recognition for the educational and training activities of CETAF members and the scattered training opportunities on Taxonomy related topics, creating a major impact for the CETAF community by the CETAF community, through the knowledge transfer mechanism and the collaboration of the expert-trainers' network of the CETAF members.

During 2025, the Te-L WG had 3 **online meetings** where the **charta** was finalized, the main themes and objectives were formulated and working subgroups were formed accordingly. In the physical meeting prior to CETAF59, roles and responsibilities will be allocated.



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➤ Information Science & Technology Commission

The **Information Science & Technology Commission (ISTC)** facilitates dialogue and collaboration between the IT departments of CETAF member and non-member institutions to ensure implementation of technical services for interoperability through the development of common infrastructures and standards. Led by Anton Güntsch (Botanic Garden Botanic Museum, University of Berlin) the group works towards compatibility of components for digital information exchange and sharing, through procedural changes and adaptations to IT systems. In 2025, two working groups on **Collection Management Systems** and **AI and Robotics** were established under the umbrella of the ISTC. Both groups have already met in several online meetings and are currently developing a concrete agenda for the coming years. A key focus will be on supporting smaller collections in establishing standardized data workflows, for example in the context of digitisation and DiSSCo. In parallel, the ISTC wiki has been further developed as a central platform for knowledge exchange (<https://istc.cetaf.org>). In addition to documenting the outcomes of the various working groups, it now includes a dedicated section for research data management-related information from CETAF member organisations, which is planned to be expanded further in the future.



> e-Publishing Working Group

The **e-Publishing Working Group** addresses the need to support scientific online publishing and encourage FAIR access. The group is jointly run by **Isabelle Gérard** (Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren) and **Laurence Benichou** (National Museum of Natural History in Paris) and operates as a driving force in scientific publishing, particularly academic publishing on biodiversity and addresses all questions on Fair access to publication, AI access, Copyright, data mining, data reuse etc. The group's activity in general is closely linked to the **European Journal of Taxonomy (EJT)** which serves as a laboratory for the implementation of new technologies and best practices promoted by the e-Publishing group, and works to expand, support and promote this journal as a community endorsed initiative.

In 2025, the group worked on **[non]copyrightability** and published a paper on the subject (<https://doi.org/10.3897/rio.9.e115466>).

The group essentially focused its activities on disseminating its approach and organized a two-days DEST training courses on how to liberate data within publication and re-use them. It was the occasion to showcase the whole workflow on publication process from XML and annotations to how to find data in GBIF, Biodiversity PubMed Central and Plazi Treatment Bank. The e-publishing WG is currently working on writing a collaborative paper on the pros and cons of publishing reprints while actively participating to the development of the **Disentis roadmap**.

> Legislation and Regulations Group

The **Legislation and Regulations Working Group** is a relevant stakeholder at the science-policy interface and compiles information on regulations and legislation affecting CETAF members research activities or operations since 2012 as one of the earliest CETAF Working Groups. The WG liaises with the **Legislation and Regulations Committee of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC)**, and the **Alliance of University and Non-Biodiversity Research in Germany**.

In 2025, we engaged with our SPNHC partners after the **low-value tax-exemptions** in the EU and the United States affecting the shipping of preserved natural history specimens and informed our community via CETAF and SPNHC in advance of the changes. With regard to the **Nagoya Protocol (NP)** and the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, we submitted our views to various open calls and surveys of the CBD Secretariat, including views on Digital Sequence Information (submission 2024-114, submission 2024-115), and on a survey on COP-MOP decision 3/1, paragraph 18a on the effectiveness of the NP. For this open call, we shared a prefilled questionnaire to encourage individual submissions of CETAF Members. The Legislation and Regulations Group actively participates in regular meetings of the **CETAF General Assembly** and engages with other CETAF working groups. Currently, the working Group is organising an Workshop on Access and Benefits Sharing and the Nagoya Protocol on April 22nd at the Leibniz Institute for Biodiversity Change, Museum Koenig in Bonn.



Some of the CETAF Working Groups have been **dormant during 2025**, mainly due to changes in chairship (as it is the case of Collections and Monitoring), or because they tackled a very specific focus (as it happened with the Digitisation WG focused on the link to DiSSCo Research Infrastructure). Moreover, the **Communications WG was cancelled** since it was considered a critical component of the CETAF ecosystem and should involve all members. On the contrary, other topics were picked up by the community and the group was created, soon reaching its full speed (such as the **SciReg WG**).

➤ Scientific Research Group

In 2025, the **CETAF Scientific Research Group (SciReG)** entered a new phase of active coordination, following its formal re-establishment at the General Assembly in Luxembourg. Under the new leadership of co-coordinators **Eva van der Veer** (Naturalis, NL) and **Emily Hartop** (NTNU, NO), the group ratified a revised charter and expanded its organizing committee to ensure broad institutional representation.

Strategic Vision and Objectives The group's renewed mandate positions integrative taxonomy as a cornerstone of biodiversity science. By combining morphology, genetics, and ecological data, SciReG aims to create scalable, data-rich frameworks to accelerate the discovery and description of "dark taxa" (hyperdiverse, poorly known organisms). A primary goal is attention for community-driven Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that ensure taxonomic research remains interoperable and ethically grounded across European research infrastructures.

During 2025, the SciReg group focused on foundational growth and long-term planning, including:

- **Organizational Growth:** Attracting new members to the organizing committee and establishing a clear governance structure.
- **Operational Planning:** Developing a rolling calendar of thematic sessions and roundtable discussions designed to evolve with the needs of the CETAF community.
- **Upcoming Initiatives:** Preparations began for the first online general meeting—an open seminar featuring leading researchers—and a dedicated panel discussion for the 2026 General Assembly in Florence.

The first major thematic event, focusing on Species Delimitation in the Molecular Age, is scheduled for May 2026, marking SciReG's transition into a vibrant platform for cross-institutional scientific alignment.



3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF CETAF INITIATIVES AND SERVICES

> CETAF website

In 2025, the CETAF website entered a **structured process of review and modernization**, with the objective of making it fully operational and the most effective platform for allocating services, sharing knowledge, and supporting collaboration across the CETAF community.

By working on both the front end and the underlying structure of the website, CETAF is gradually transforming the platform from a historically built system into a **clearer, more coherent, and sustainable digital environment**. The modernization is not limited to improving the visual appearance or user experience; it also focuses on strengthening the foundations that support the website and its services.

The overall infrastructure is currently **being reorganized and improved**. Background servers are being reviewed, redistributed, and upgraded where necessary, and the system is being better documented. Services are being clarified, outdated components identified, and internal processes streamlined as part of this ongoing effort.

This work is still in progress and represents an important step toward a more **reliable, maintainable, and future-ready** digital platform for the CETAF community.

In addition to the CETAF website, as overarching infrastructure, during the year 2025, CETAF contributed to the enhancement and further development of certain critical tools and services for the community, namely the training platform, the **GeoCASE portal** and the **CETAF Registry of Collections**.

> CETAF-DEST, the training platform for taxonomy



The **CETAF-DEST** online platform aims to offer **training opportunities** to students and professionals from any nationality, functioning as a tool for training and capacity building in the fields of taxonomy, biodiversity and conservation.

To become the reference for training in taxonomy-related topics for the broadest community possible, CETAF-DEST is **expanding its range**, opening collaborations with new partners, and approaching the creation of a Business Plan, ensuring that it will thrive and provide quality Taxonomy training in the best conditions.

During 2025, CETAF-DEST **worked in cooperation with the CETAF Training and e-Learning (Te-L) Working Group** towards the development of training certificates and EU-level recognition for its educational and training activities, as well as the formulation of its business plan, which will be discussed and finalized during the physical meeting prior to the CETAF59.

Additionally, in 2025, **six (6) courses** by eight (8) CETAF members and ten (10) collaborating institutes were managed through DEST. Scientific Coordinator: Natural History Museum of Crete-University of Crete (Iasmi Stathi and Athanasia Margetousaki).

> European Journal of Taxonomy (EJT)



For the **European Journal of Taxonomy**, a CETAF endorsed initiative, 2025 has been a year of huge achievements.

Related to figures, this is a **record year**: 56 published volumes meaning 163 papers and 8,673 published pages, and 844 species, 46 genera and 4 families described. Among these papers the **1000th volume has been released**, and also the article coming from the CETAF e-Publishing Working Group: 'Open data in publications – non-copyrightability and attribution as drivers for equity, science and innovation'.

EJT became the **first scientific journal to launch a GBIF-hosted portal**, paving the way for other academic publishers to participate in the program. More than 86,000 occurrence data across more than 1,445 datasets have been mobilized to GBIF from EJT items via Plazi and are now accessible through the EJT hosted portal. It means more than 25,000 type specimens. Records mobilized by EJT have been widely cited, generating more than 624 citations, including 400 papers, 104 reports and 76 preprints and have been used to inform in a range of global research, including climate, health, ecological, and agricultural studies.

> The comprehensive CETAF Registry of collections

The CETAF **Registry of Collections** is a comprehensive database **cataloguing** the **biological and geological collections**, capacities, and institutional expertise held by CETAF member institutions. Under the DiSSCo Transition project, the roadmap for the further development of the

DiSSCo/CETAF Specialisation Plan was completed in early 2025, providing strategic direction for the Registry's technical evolution and its role within the infrastructure. A dedicated meeting in December reviewed the current technical status of the Specialisation Tool and Registry infrastructure. A web service for data retrieval is available via the **DiSSCo GitHub**, and preparations are underway to migrate the database from the Tervuren server to the CETAF server to ensure long-term sustainability and CETAF-hosted management. Work also progressed on clarifying the scope and definition of institutional "expertise" within the Registry, in alignment with the **DiSSCo Specialisation Plan** and its objective to identify centres of excellence across the network.

In parallel, discussions continued regarding alignment with **DiSSCo FEd** and **GRSciColl** developments, particularly in relation to permanent identifiers and data model mapping. The CETAF Secretariat presented the CETAF/DiSSCo Specialisation Tool at the Living Data Conference, highlighting its role in harmonising institutional collection-level documentation, supporting integration with DiSSCo services, and reinforcing the Registry's function as a reliable and interoperable source of information on European natural science collections.

> The GeoCASE Portal for geological collections

GeoCASE¹ stands for **Geoscience Collections Access Service**. It is a community collaborative initiative focused on creating a comprehensive and standardised **database of geological and paleontological specimens**. It aims to facilitate the sharing and accessibility of information about geological specimens held in Europe and worldwide.

In 2025, CETAF is continuing to investigate ways to improve data pipelines and looking for funding and collaborations for the portal's development. CETAF and **Taltech** are continuing to work in collaboration to transfer the hosting of GeoCASE to CETAF. As part of this process, CETAF is also working toward creating a fully operational copy of the portal infrastructure. This duplicate environment would function as a **failover system**, helping to ensure service continuity in the event of technical issues and strengthening the overall resilience of the platform.

¹<https://geocase.eu/>

25

Projects ended in 2025

26

Ongoing Projects

31

New proposals

Participation in European Projects

A mechanism to showcase collaborative developments

During 2025, the DiSSCo Transition project ended, while others continued with their expected development and achievement of planned objectives. CETAF was also part of the consortium in several proposals submitted in 2025 under the Horizon Europe programme, including HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-02 (Part A and Part B), and HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-03.

4.1 PROJECTS ENDED IN 2025

> DiSSCo Transition- DTP



The **DiSSCo Transition Project (DTP)** was an **18-month initiative** launched in December 2023, involving 16 partners from **11 countries** and funded with a total budget of **€1.5 million**. With CETAF contributing 15 person-months and a dedicated **budget of €152,812.50**, the project ensured a smooth transformation of the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo) for its transformation into a fully operational **European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)**. DTP was essential for establishing DiSSCo's governance, technical readiness, and strategic frameworks to initiate construction and operation phases under the ERIC model.

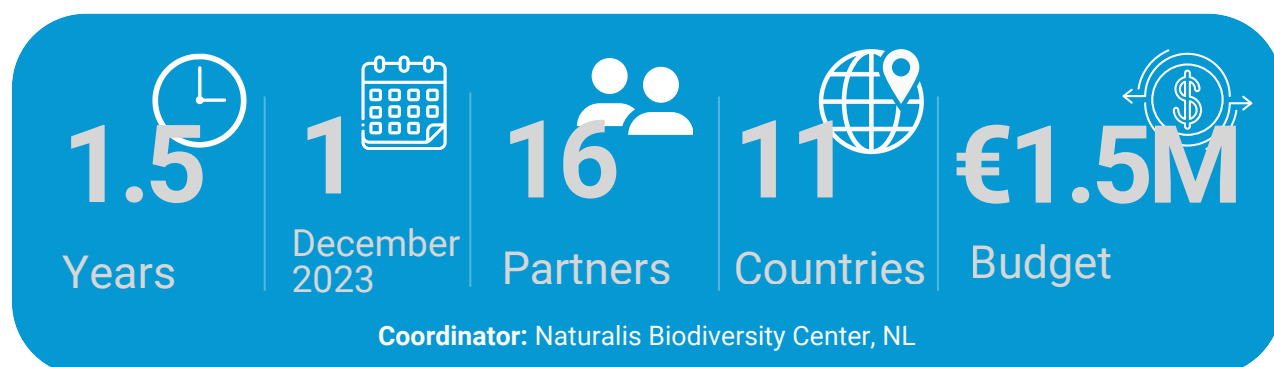
DTP was structured around **four key goals**: advancing the ERIC legal process and policy framework, supporting the engagement of National Nodes, developing core e-services, and fostering international collaboration on standards and best practices. These goals are achieved through closely coordinated work packages and tasks across the participating institutions.

CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF led the work on **engaging and integrating National Nodes** within the DiSSCo framework, consolidating participation channels and enabling effective coordination and feedback mechanisms. As the main driver of National Node engagement, CETAF ensured that the project's activities remained closely aligned with community needs through targeted coordination and communication efforts. It also contributed to the testing and rollout of strategic tools such as the Specialisation Tool for assessing institutional capabilities and thematic focuses.

Additionally, CETAF spearheaded the task to **develop foundational resources for the DiSSCo Helpdesk**, translating best practices from previous projects into practical support materials. It played a key cross-cutting role in several other tasks, including those related to the ERIC implementation, adoption of standards and governance support. Through these activities, CETAF strengthened both the operational and strategic capacities of the DiSSCo infrastructure.

In 2025, beyond the lifetime of the DTP (which ended in May 2025), CETAF committed and continued **hosting the monthly National Nodes meetings**, to keep the community updated, elaborate on new advances, collect feedback and ensure cohesiveness in the DiSSCo development process.



4.2 ONGOING PROJECTS

➤ Transforming European Taxonomy through Training, Research and Innovation - TETTRIs

The **TETTRIs** project is a **3.5-year** initiative launched in December 2022, bringing together **17 partners** from **11 countries** with a budget of **€5.99 million**. Co-coordinated by CETAF (Technical Coordinator) and RBINS (Financial Coordinator), it aims to strengthen the taxonomy's role in addressing biodiversity loss through innovative tools, collaborative frameworks, and stakeholder engagement. CETAF contributes 70.8 person-months and €2.62 million, including €1.8 million for Third-Party Projects.



In 2025, major milestones included the **second All Hands Meeting** and **third General Assembly** in Brussels, the third Stakeholder Lab in Brussels, which connected industry and taxonomy communities to explore joint solutions to biodiversity challenges. On the **23rd of May**, under the hashtag **#NameItToSaveIt**, a new Taxonomy Recognition Day took place across countries hosted by the different TETTRIs partners with an incredible impact across audiences and target groups, from early career researchers to scientists, general public and policy makers. Moreover, in 2025 the **12 Satellites projects granted under the Financial Support to Third parties (FSTP)** were concluded and their final reports elaborated pending for final review.

In 2025, the TETTRIs project achieved substantial progress across its technical, strategic, and capacity-building objectives. Key deliverables were successfully completed, including the establishment of functional and optimised **EU nomenclature processes** and services (D2.1) and a fully operational, documented workflow for **mapping local taxonomies** (D2.2). The project also launched a pilot implementation of a **taxonomic e-services** and resources marketplace (D3.1) and produced a comprehensive guide for **marketing indexed taxonomic expertise** (D3.2), strengthening the visibility and accessibility of taxonomic knowledge.

Strategic development was reinforced through a landscape and gap analysis of taxonomic expertise and academic training (D5.1), alongside the development of a business case for a **European Agency for Taxonomy** (D5.2). In addition, an online infrastructure enabling the creation and sharing of image and **sound recognition algorithms** was made available (D6.1). Major milestones were reached, including the definition of a **common strategy** for the future of taxonomy (MS10), the deployment of infrastructure for **sharing training data** (MS11), the establishment of **image recognition** for EU molluscs and sound recognition for EU grasshoppers (MS12), the completion of Knowledge Transfer Discussion 2 (MS16), the launch of the **Taxonomic Resolution Platform** (MS3), and the organisation of pilot training activities (MS8). Collectively, these achievements mark a significant **step forward in strengthening Europe's taxonomic capacity**, digital infrastructure, and long-term strategic coordination.

ICETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

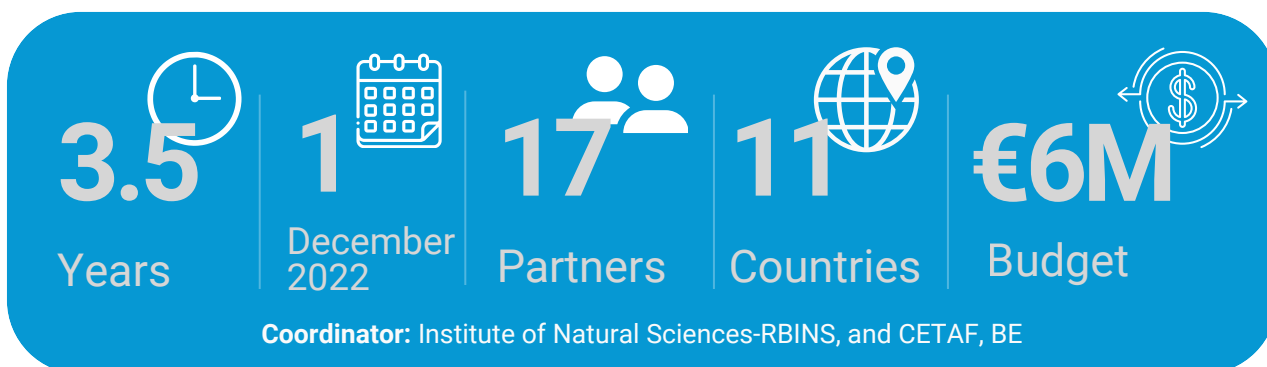
CETAF leads the **Taxonomic Expertise Marketplace**, develops the concept of the European Agency for Taxonomy, and manages the implementation of satellite projects. It also drives communication and outreach, including the official website, social media, promotional materials, and the organization of the Taxonomy Recognition Day.

As Technical Coordinator, CETAF **ensures governance and management** through regular boards and assemblies, supports internal communication and coordination, oversees planning and risk management, and leads reporting. It further contributes to expertise mapping, training alignment, and ethics and gender activities.

Through these roles, CETAF ensures TETTRIs delivers its **mission to reinforce taxonomy**, connect communities, and provide effective tools to address biodiversity loss.



Taxonomy Recognition Day at RBINS.



> Biodiversity Genomic Europe - BGE

The **BGE project** is a **3.5-year initiative** (September 2022–March 2026) involving **33 partners from 20 countries**, and funded with a budget of **€21.3 million**. CETAF dedicates 33 person-months and €332,625 to the project, which aims to accelerate the use of genomic science to understand biodiversity, monitor change, and guide interventions. BGE brings together two major networks: **iBOL Europe**, focused on DNA barcoding, and the **European Reference Genome Atlas (ERGA)**, focused on genome sequencing.



**Biodiversity
Genomics
Europe**

CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF participates in the **Executive Board and Coordination team**. It completed the periodic progress report, co-drafted the Engagement Plan, and supported the definition of Key Exploitable Results (KERs).

CETAF is also developing the **Policy Guidance Tool** (“Genomic Table of Policies”), finalizing content for Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) and mapping relevant policies to genomic research. It also maintains the ABS helpdesk and contributed to ERGA’s guidelines on Material Transfer Agreements. On the other hand, CETAF leads the design of the **Policy Guidance Tool’s Compliance Assessment feature**, coordinating technical development, producing the pilot web-based platform and refining the background metadata model.

It also **supports governance models for iBOL Europe**, and co-leading Engagement and Exploitation with Naturalis and RBGE. It updated the strategy in 2024, identified KERs such as policy briefs, and is preparing the final BGE conference in Brussels (October 2025).

Through these activities, CETAF ensures that BGE delivers **strong policy frameworks**, practical compliance tools, and effective engagement strategies to advance biodiversity genomics in Europe.

3.5

Years

1

September
2022

33

Partners

20

Countries

€22M

Budget

Coordinator: Naturalis Biodiversity Center, NL

➤ Past to Future - P2F

The P2F project is a **4 year initiative** officially signed in October 2024 and launching on 1 March 2025. It brings together **24 partners from 11 countries**, with a total budget of **€15 million** to advance climate science through the integration of paleoenvironmental data, **Earth system models (ESMs)**, and theoretical approaches. With CETAF contributing 24 person-months through Luomus, which will provide critical data, the project aims to strengthen the accuracy of climate change predictions by extending the temporal baseline of current models.



P2F addresses the need to move beyond the **170 years of observational data** on which present-day ESMs rely, incorporating insights from past climatic transitions to better understand long-term patterns and societal impacts. By doing so, it will **enhance the capabilities of ESMs**, contribute to the Climate Model Intercomparison Project development cycle, and generate paleo-informed models to support future climate scenarios.

CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF attended the P2F **kick-off meeting held in March 2025 in Utrecht**, where coordination structures, deliverables, and data workflows were established. In November 2025, Luomus (University of Helsinki), contributing under CETAF, participated in the P2F General Assembly, also in Utrecht. Luomus presented a poster outlining progress under their Work Package, which focuses on the synthesis of high-resolution Northern Fennoscandian tree-ring proxy datasets. This work involves compiling and structuring **extensive tree-ring measurements**, isotope records, and derived chronologies to support integration into Earth System Models and broader palaeoclimate comparisons.

In parallel, the CETAF Secretariat has begun planning **outreach and engagement activities to support the dissemination** of P2F results across the CETAF network and to relevant external stakeholders. Implementation of these activities will commence in 2026, **strengthening the visibility and impact** of P2F outcomes and reinforcing CETAF's role in linking natural science collections with climate research.



> EPIC-Bee

The EPIC-Bee project is a **24-month initiative** that will launch in January 2025, led by UMONS with **15 partners from 13 countries**, involved as sub-contractors or coordinators, and engaging a wider network of experts across the EU. With a focus on wild bee identification, the project aims to build **para-taxonomic capacity across the 27 EU Member States** and prepare the ground for implementing the EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (**EU-PoMS**). By training a critical mass of experts to identify wild bees to species level, EPIC-Bee directly contributes to tackling pollinator decline and supports the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.



CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF ensures that the project's **training activities are well designed** and aligned with community needs. In addition, CETAF contributes to other tasks covering areas from technical training and programme delivery to stakeholder engagement and dissemination.

Through this work, CETAF strengthens the **project's capacity-building dimension** and supports the integration of expert networks, ensuring that EPIC-Bee achieves lasting impact in pollinator monitoring and conservation efforts.



 2 Years	 1 January 2025	 15 Partners	 13 Countries	 €1.6M Budget
Coordinator: University of Mons, BE				

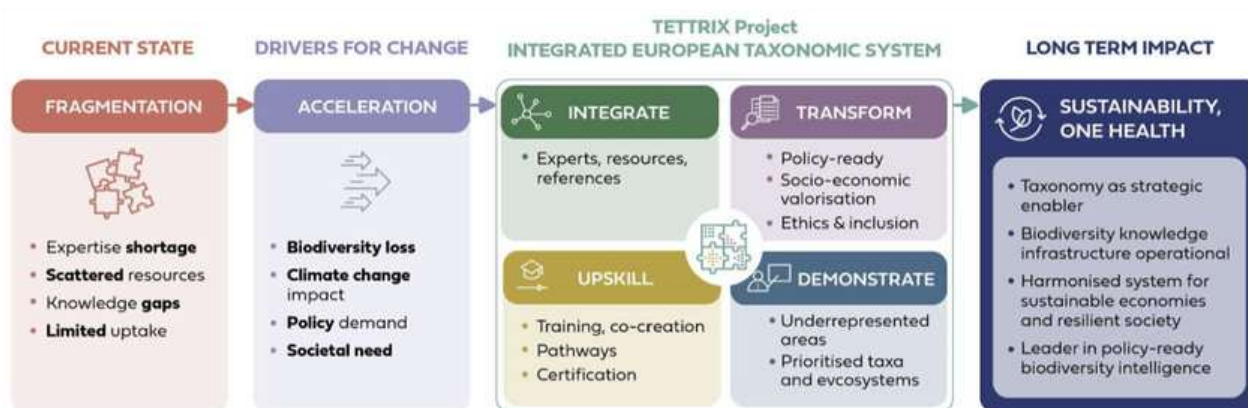
3.3 NEW PROPOSALS

> TETTRIX

In 2025, the consortium behind TETTRIX advanced its collaboration by preparing **TETTRIX**, conceived as the second phase of the project. The proposal was developed in response to the call **HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-03** under Horizon Europe, aiming to further strengthen biodiversity research infrastructures and cross-sectoral integration. Building on the achievements and partnerships established during the first phase, a strong consortium was assembled, bringing together **17 partners** and two affiliated entities from across Europe. The proposal was successfully submitted on **17 September 2025**, marking an important milestone in ensuring continuity and long-term impact of the initiative.

CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF played a central coordinating role in the preparation process. CETAF **launched and coordinated the call** for grant writing support and facilitated the selection process, which resulted in an agreement with the consultancy company **Catalyze**. Throughout the development phase, CETAF supported consortium building, structured internal coordination, and **ensured alignment with the strategic objectives** of the call. This contribution was instrumental in consolidating a competitive and coherent proposal within the given timeframe.



> BGE Plus

Biodiversity Genomics Europe plus (BGE+) builds on a **pan-European collaboration** to scale up the production and uptake of genomic evidence for taxonomy, monitoring and policy. It widens participation, standardizes methods, and prepares a **distributed European system for biodiversity genomics** that links molecules to ecosystems.

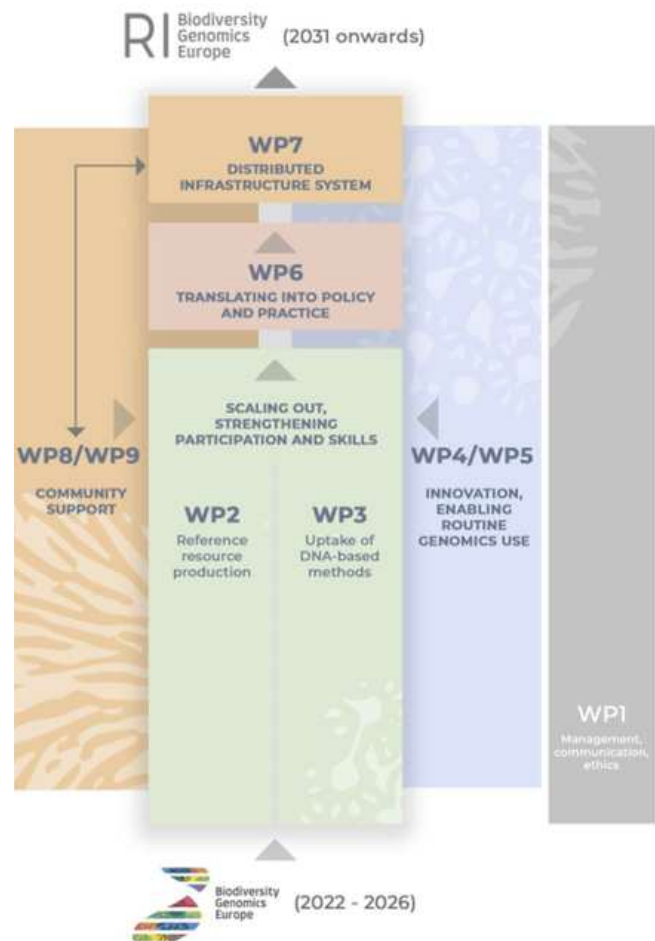
The consortium unites **iBOL Europe** (DNA barcoding), **ERGA** (reference genomes) and **CETAF** (taxonomic research and natural history collections) to align end-to-end workflows from field sampling to application to turn fragmented efforts into a coherent, scalable system that delivers reliable genomic evidence for taxonomy and policy.






CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

As Task leader for T1.4 (Ethics), and T2.1 (Cascade Grants mechanism), CETAF ensures the **participation of the taxonomic community** in the development of genomics in Europe, and beyond, as a critical component of the Integrative Taxonomy approach.

CETAF will significantly contribute to the **implementation of the roadmap** for embedding genomics into the landscape of Research Infrastructures, by integrating efforts and **foster cross-fertilisation** among the communities behind, CETAF, ERGA and iBOL Europe. It will also act as general contributor to capacity-building efforts, policy compliance, and dissemination.

Apart from the Coordinator, other **CETAF members** are equally Beneficiaries in this proposal, including NHM London, MHN UniFi Florence, RBGE Edinburgh, and NTNU Trondheim.



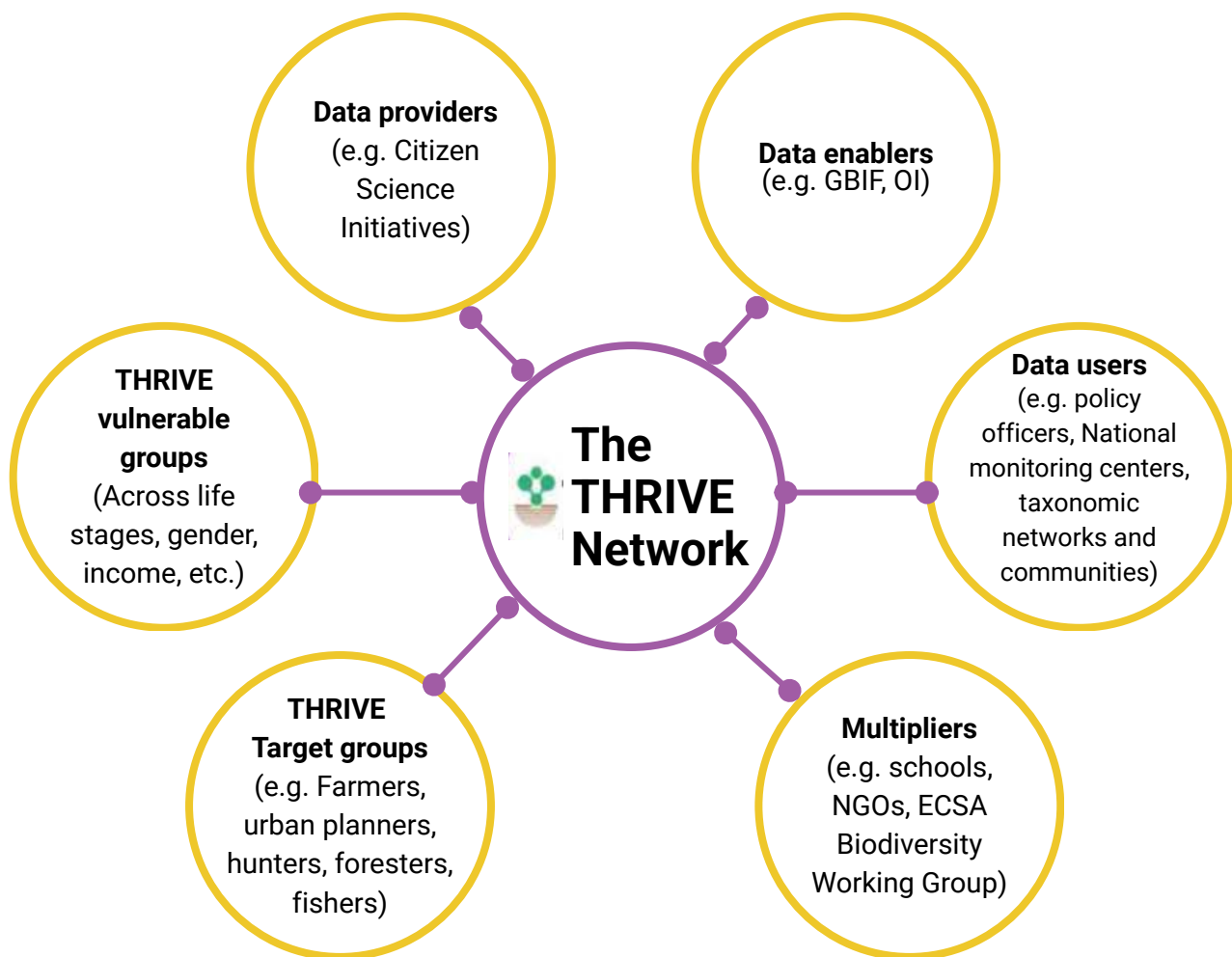
 3.5 Years	 20 Partners	 16 Countries	 €12M Budget	 €3.5M Cascade Grants
Coordinator: Naturalis Biodiversity Center, NL				



> Towards a Harmonised landscape that expands the Role of citizen science in biodIversity & Ecosystem services monitoring - THRIVE

THRIVE is a project proposal responding to the call topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-02 - Strengthening the capacity of citizen science in biodiversity observation. If approved, the project will run for **36 months** and will have the budget of approximately **4 million EUR**. Coordinated by **ECSA**, THRIVE aims to deliver a systemic step change in **citizen science** (CS) for biodiversity and ecosystem observation towards enhanced integration of CS data into official biodiversity and ecosystem monitoring schemes in Europe.

By harmonising tools and data flows, **building capacity**, engaging diverse communities, and embedding CS data into policy and governance, THRIVE will move beyond fragmented actions towards a **coordinated, scalable, and policy-relevant approach**.



CETAF CONTRIBUTIONS:

CETAF will contribute to the project with a total of 10.5 Person Months, distributed over 6 different Work Packages, including the leading role in task **"Stakeholder Mapping"**. As the name suggests, this task will deal with the mapping of the biodiversity monitoring actor ecosystem in Europe towards strengthening the contribution of CS to the wider biodiversity monitoring initiatives and taxonomic communities across Europe.

CETAF, with support from task contributors, will **classify actors across the biodiversity data value chain**, including data providers, data users, enablers, as well as community hubs and grassroots initiatives including representatives of THRIVE target groups.

CETAF will also have a minor role in several additional tasks, focusing on **collaboration with relevant biodiversity-related initiatives**, creating a sustainability roadmap for collaboration group legacy, mapping of teaching resources & trainings for creating capacity, co-developing workflow templates for policy-relevant European CS activities and co-designing a web-based match-making tool for **policy-aligned data**.



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Advocating for taxonomy

41

Collaborations with
sister organisations

The ecosystem of activities around CETAF

*Raising awareness of the importance of taxonomy, towards the
implementation of the CETAF Strategy*

5.1 ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT FOR A STRONGER TAXONOMY

Advocacy and engagement are core to CETAF's mission to promote evidence-based policymaking and sustainability. Our work ensures that scientific knowledge - especially from natural science **collections** - **guides public discourse and legislation**.

By advocating for a strong role of taxonomy in biodiversity monitoring and other relevant actions, CETAF **supports policies that protect ecosystems**, improve access to critical data and align with long-term sustainability goals.

Through active collaboration with **policymakers, scientists** and the **civil society**, CETAF helps bridge the gap between research and regulation. Our initiatives aim to embed science in transparent, forward-looking governance that responds to climate and biodiversity challenges.

By **advancing monitoring frameworks**, championing open data and contributing expert insight to policy dialogues, CETAF ensures decisions are rooted in science and aligned with global sustainability commitments.

> Advancing Open and Integrated Data for Biodiversity and One Health

In 2025, CETAF reinforced its commitment to **data-driven collaboration** by endorsing the **Disentis Roadmap**, which articulates the vision for the **Libroscope initiative** – a long-term effort to unlock biodiversity data embedded in centuries of scientific literature. Developed by an international group of experts, the Disentis Roadmap sets out a decade-long plan to transform legacy taxonomic knowledge into **machine-readable, FAIR-aligned data** integrated within digital research infrastructures. Through this engagement, CETAF supports the realisation of the **Libroscope vision**: converting vast volumes of published biodiversity information into accessible, interoperable, and reusable data that can power research, innovation, and policy.



Complementing this work, CETAF joined the **Crete Declaration**, coordinated by **LifeWatch ERIC**, to advance the One Health agenda in Europe. The Declaration underscores the importance of multidisciplinary cooperation, open data sharing, and advanced digital tools to address the **interconnected health of humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems**. CETAF's participation ensures that biodiversity data, collections-based expertise, and taxonomic knowledge are embedded within broader health and environmental strategies.

Together, these engagements highlight **CETAF's strategic role in strengthening open knowledge ecosystems** and cross-domain data integration. By supporting both the liberation of biodiversity data and its application within **holistic health frameworks**, CETAF continues to position natural history research as a cornerstone of evidence-based responses to global environmental challenges.



The Crete Declaration: Uniting Science for One Health



Abstract

The interdependence of human, animal, plant and ecosystem health necessitates systemic, cross-domain collaboration to address global challenges, such as emerging diseases, climate change and biodiversity severe change. Through the Crete Declaration, Europe's (e-)infrastructures, organisations and projects that focus on the functioning of our biosphere commit to jointly advancing the One Health approach. In doing so, the signatories aim to strengthen Europe's resilience and leadership through the sharing of data and expertise, the development of innovative solutions and the promotion of evidence-based policies.

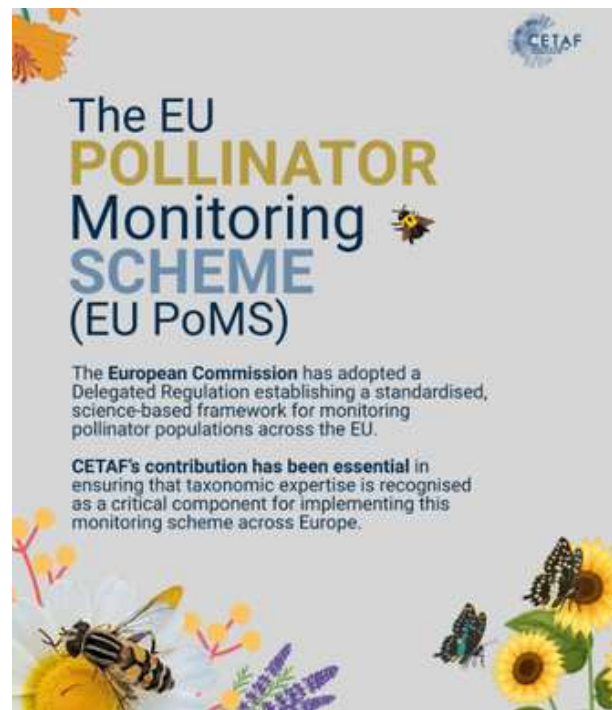
HOW TO CITE

Arvanitidis C, Ameixa O, Basset A, Chatziniolaou E, Coman C, Companys B, De Leo F, Deneudt K, Drago F, Eriksson J, Ferrari T, Georgiev T, Giuliano G, Gruber S, Habermann J, Heil K, Hubbard T, Huertas Olivares C, Kotoulas G, Koureas D, Manola N, Marrocco V, Pade N, Portugal Melo A, Provenzale A, Psomopoulos F, Raes N, Robinson S, Ruch P, Schaap D, Stanica A, Stavropoulos T, Teixeira H, van Tienderen P, Tsigenopoulos C, Waterhouse R, Aprea G, Boër M, Casino A, Delauney L, Ewbank J, Mirtl M, Pavlic-Zupanc J, Penev L, Piera J, Pitta P, Puillat I, Richter D, Stepanyan D, Ussi A, Westlawski J, Zuquim G (2025) The Crete Declaration: Uniting Science for One Health. *Research Ideas and Outcomes* 11: e176120. <https://doi.org/10.3897/rio.11.e168765>

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➤ Contributing to the European pollinator monitoring

As part of the STING initiative (**Science and Technology for Pollinating Insects**), CETAF helped to develop a methodology that was finally approved as the foundation for the '**EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme**' (EU PoMS), in line with the revised EU Pollinators Initiative, aimed at improving knowledge of pollinator decline. In October 2025, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) introduced a Refined Proposal for an EU-wide pollinator monitoring scheme based on the outcomes of STING-2 and its continuation initiative SIMPOLL (**Sampling strategy, Indicators, and Monitoring methodology for EU POLLinators**). Developed with input from nearly 30 leading experts, including CETAF's Executive Director, this proposal establishes **standardised methods for monitoring** key pollinator species—wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies, and moths to protect them and secure their future role in sustaining biodiversity and human well-being



The European Commission adopted this **EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme** to help Member States reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030. This objective is a key target under the **EU Nature Restoration Regulation** (NRR), a shared European commitment to safeguarding biodiversity, ensuring food security, and enhancing nature's resilience. The common framework guarantees that the annual data collected across all national territories is comparable and reliable, providing a clear picture of **progress toward the 2030 target**.

It also **reduces administrative burden** at a national level, allowing national authorities to focus on implementation and restoration actions. It grounds collective efforts in robust, verifiable evidence.

➤ Participation in relevant policy dialogues

CETAF actively contributed to the **Biodiversity Genomics Europe (BGE) Connects** event held in Brussels on 30 September–1 October, bringing scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders together around the emerging role of genomic science in biodiversity research and its implications for policy and innovation. CETAF's Executive Director, **Ana Casino**, spoke on the panel "**Biodiversity Genomics Infrastructure in Europe**," where she highlighted the importance of connecting biological collections, advancing taxonomy, and ensuring open access to integrated biodiversity data as essential foundations for genomic research and evidence-informed decision-making.

Through this engagement, CETAF underscored the value of European research infrastructures such as DiSSCo (Distributed System of Scientific Collections) in streamlining access to biodiversity data and lowering barriers for both **scientists** and **policymakers seeking comprehensive insights** into biodiversity change. By situating collections-based knowledge within broader genomic and policy conversations, CETAF reinforced its role in bridging scientific expertise and policy dialogue to support data-driven approaches for biodiversity conservation, sustainable bioeconomy development, and the integration of genomic evidence into European environmental strategies.



Biodiversity Genomics Europe (BGE) Connects

➤ Raising awareness about the importance of taxonomy

In May 2025, CETAF co-organised the **second edition of Taxonomy Recognition Day in Brussels**, hosted at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences under the theme **“How to Become a Taxonomist”**. The event drew strong participation from students, early-career researchers, and biodiversity professionals, highlighting growing interest in taxonomic careers. A keynote address by **Martin Hojsík, Vice-President of the European Parliament**, underscored the strategic importance of taxonomy for European biodiversity policy, conservation action, and scientific excellence, reaffirming the need for sustained investment in taxonomic expertise.

The programme combined **policy perspectives with practical insight**, offering participants guided visits to entomological, fossil, and DNA collections and direct exchanges with practising taxonomists. By opening institutional collections and fostering dialogue between **scientists, policymakers, and aspiring researchers**, the event strengthened recognition of taxonomy as a cornerstone discipline for understanding and protecting biodiversity. Through initiatives such as this, CETAF continues to promote the visibility, relevance, and future development of taxonomic science in Europe.



Taxonomy Recognition Day at RBINS.

> In support of new generations of taxonomists, the CETAF E-SCoRe Award

The **CETAF E-SCoRe Award** is a prize to recognise and **incentivise younger scientists** to develop their scientific collection-based research. The 2025 edition was the sixth occurrence of the E-SCoRe Award. This time the prize was dedicated to PhD students. The receivable **applications were 19**, from 17 different countries, with a gender representation of man (12) and woman (7).

Among a total of **7 disciplines covered** by the applicants, all PhD students, Panagiotis Kampouridis won the 6th edition of the CETAF E-SCoRe Award and had the opportunity to present his research work to the scientific community in Luxembourg during CETAF57. His research looks at different groups of vertebrates (animals with backbones) that lived over the past 150 million years, especially on **large mammals** that lived in Eurasia between about 12 and 5 million years ago.

Kampouridis combines **traditional fossil descriptions** from museum collections with modern 3D scanning techniques and evolutionary analysis. As part of his work at **Senckenberg Research Institute and Natural History Museum Frankfurt (SGN)**, in Frankfurt, Germany.

At the same time, the **7th edition** of E-SCoRe, to support young scientists in the field of taxonomy and systematic biology, was launched. In 2026 the Award will go to an **Early career Investigator (ECI)**.

5. 2 COLLABORATING WITH SISTER ORGANISATIONS

In today's rapidly evolving landscape of biodiversity research and policy, collaboration is not just beneficial - it is essential. By actively engaging with like-minded organisations and initiatives, CETAF seeks to amplify the collective voice of the scientific community and contribute more effectively to shared environmental goals. These partnerships open the door to mutual learning, knowledge exchange and a broader reach for the solutions we jointly promote.

Through targeted dialogue and joint activities, CETAF works to align scientific expertise with practical applications in biodiversity monitoring, conservation and policy support. Whether contributing to capacity-building efforts, strengthening advocacy networks or connecting taxonomy with emerging technologies, these collaborations help bridge gaps across disciplines and sectors. By building strong, strategic relationships, CETAF advances its mission to ensure that science remains central to sustainable development and biodiversity governance.

> Joining the Biodiversa+ ESB



In 2025, CETAF strengthened its collaboration within the ~~European biodiversity research landscape~~ by joining the **Biodiversa+ Enlarged Stakeholder Board (ESB)**, a governance platform bringing together key actors in biodiversity research, policy, and innovation. Through this engagement, CETAF contributes its collections-based expertise and science-policy experience to the **strategic development of the partnership**, supporting alignment between research infrastructures, funding priorities, and policy needs at European level.

CETAF's onboarding to the ESB included an online meeting held from 27 to 29 October 2025, during which its Executive Director, **Ana Casino**, was elected as **representative of the "Boundary Organisations"** thematic college and appointed to the Biodiversa+ Advisory Board. This role reflects CETAF's recognised capacity to bridge scientific communities and policy processes. The first annual in-person meeting of the newly constituted Board is expected to take place in Spring 2026, providing further opportunities to reinforce cooperation and strategic dialogue across Europe's biodiversity community.

> CBD and COOP4CBD

As part of an attempt to deepen CETAF's participation in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (**IPBES**) processes, the Secretariat reached out to the **COOP4CBD** and Jorge Ventocilla (from RBINS, Brussels) presented during CETAF57 in Luxembourg, how the project works towards the achievement of **Kumming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** goals and how advancing the implementation of GBF requires mobilisation of experts, also from the CETAF community.



Furthermore, CETAF will link through COOP4CBD to the **European subregional Technical Support Centre (TSC)**, which will aid 44 countries in GBF implementation and is hosted by RBINS. This unit was launched in September 2025 and will become fully operational in 2026.

> iBOL Europe

The European node of **iBOL**, the renamed iBOL-E (former BIOSCAN initiative), aims to gather European efforts and experts from the iBOL global initiative, to focus on the monitoring of biodiversity using **DNA for rapid identification and monitoring of species**.



Under the auspices of the **EU-funded project BGE**, a work package is dedicated to setting up this European node made up of experts and institutions working in DNA techniques and applications. Among the over 100 members from 29 countries of this growing network, most of the CETAF members are already included. CETAF works towards the correct alignment of activities, supports **successful functioning** of the node and contributes to efficient merging of taxonomy and DNA objectives.

The **Belgian node of DiSSCo** continues the development of the project in which CETAF participates as an associated partner to ensure alignment, also from the perspective of DiSSCo-CSO (but is not a direct beneficiary).

The project of the Belgian scientific community aims to **strengthen and implement the connectivity** between the Belgian node and the Distributed System of Scientific Collections – Research Infrastructure (DiSSCo-RI). The **CETAF-DiSSCo Registry of Collections** as the major component of the so called Specialisation tool, plays a critical role in gathering, harmonising and delivering collections' data also at national level. The Belgian node aims to integrate all data from **Belgian institutes' collections** to be exemplar for the dashboarding element of the Registry. It will display comprehensive information filtered by categories, those including taxa, geographies, digitisation level and many others.

Ensuring alignment with DiSSCo RI, through CSO

CETAF Executive Director is the **Deputy Coordinator of the DiSSCo** Coordination and Support Office (CSO) and leads the stream of Communication and Engagement, while most of the CETAF GS staff are members of the distributed team of the CSO that combines the team from Naturalis (coordinated by Dimitris Koureas) and the CETAF GS.

CETAF **contributes with in-kind contribution** (20% equivalent to the cash contributions of the full members) to the interim development of DiSSCo Research Infrastructure, and actively participates in its strategic definition and development towards the constitution of the DiSSCo legal entity under the ERIC model. During 2024, specific tasks were dedicated to engagement with new members, supporting the decision-making bodies (the interim General Assembly and the Funders Forum) and contributing to the **communication activities** developed under DiSSCo umbrella. More specifically, CETAF contributed to several governing matters, also under DTP, to transition from the **Funders Forum** to the **interim Founders Council**, the embryo of the DiSSCo ERIC governing body.

During 2025, CETAF has largely contributed to the development of the **ESFRI assessment report** for DiSSCo as one of the ESFRI Projects approved back in the Roadmap 2018. This evaluation underlines the scientific case and the developments made since its approval towards the fully operational Research Infrastructure. Additionally, CETAF contributed to the development of the **scientific, technical and governance documentation** to fulfill the Step 1 for the constitution of the DiSSCo ERIC under the leadership of the Netherlands government.

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Creating an impactful
brand image

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Communicating to
raise awareness

The public presence of CETAF

Articulating the presence of the community.

6.1 CREATING AN IMPACTFUL BRAND IMAGE

CETAF's **communication and dissemination** activities aim to expand the reach of its outputs, amplify the results of the projects in which it participates, and **maximise the impact** of the services and initiatives developed by the taxonomic community. At the same time, CETAF works to **strengthen public awareness** of biodiversity-related challenges and contribute to a more scientifically informed and engaged society.

In this context, the continued consolidation of the CETAF brand has remained a strategic priority. A **coherent visual identity** and **consistent messaging** across all communication channels have been essential in reinforcing institutional recognition and strengthening CETAF's positioning at the European level.

A major milestone during the reporting period was the finalisation and release of CETAF's corporate video, centred on the message "**Why Taxonomy is Key for Biodiversity and Life on Earth**". The video was conceived as a strategic tool to bring taxonomy closer to society, highlight its relevance for planetary well-being, and position CETAF as a leading voice within European biodiversity research infrastructures. Its dissemination strategy will continue throughout 2026 in order to maximise outreach and visibility.



Faces of Taxonomy. Paula Kankaanpää, Director of the Finnish Museum of Natural History Luomus

CETAF also developed new **outreach materials** to strengthen its presence at strategic conferences and institutional events, including the General Assembly in Luxembourg (CETAF57, May) and the General Assembly in Berlin (CETAF58, November), held alongside the 2nd Directors' Summit. During this event, the newly developed **CETAF Communication Strategy** (2025) was presented in printed format, together with a new Membership flyer outlining the benefits of joining the CETAF taxonomic community.

Within the framework of the 2nd Directors' Summit, several **interviews** were conducted with directors of member institutions, which have led to the creation of the new editorial section "**Faces of Taxonomy**". This initiative gathers strategic reflections on the current situation of their institutions, the role of taxonomy in contemporary science, and the priorities that should shape the future of the field. The first interviews began to be published at the end of 2025 and will continue to be released progressively throughout the coming year, reinforcing CETAF's positioning as a platform for leadership and reflection within the **European taxonomic community**.

In addition, a new flyer based on **CETAF's Advocacy Strategy** was produced in 2025 and will be actively deployed from 2026 onwards in institutional representation and policy dialogue contexts.

6.2 COMMUNICATING TO RAISE AWARENESS

The CETAF website (cetaf.org) continues to serve as the organisation’s main communication and dissemination vehicle. It is continuously updated, incorporating news items (**53 published in 2025**), which are subsequently shared via social media, as well as **tools** and **services** for the taxonomic community.

The sustained effort to attract visitors is reflected in the **positive evolution** of the key indicators:



Despite the restructuring carried out in 2021, the **website must continue evolving** in order to accommodate the new services foreseen within CETAF. For this reason, a structural and technical upgrade process is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2026.

> The Social Media presence

In 2025, CETAF developed its digital communication through **Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube** (mainly as an audiovisual repository), and **Bluesky**, following its gradual **withdrawal from the X platform**. In addition, an **Instagram profile** was launched in November 2025 with the aim of bringing taxonomy closer to new audiences and diversifying outreach.

After the summer period, CETAF implemented an updated visual and editorial approach across its social media channels, applying its corporate identity in a more **dynamic and contemporary way**. This renewed strategy, incorporating more visual and engaging formats, generated positive results in terms of reach and interaction with key audiences. Overall, all **social media platforms** experienced more pronounced **growth** following this implementation.

May, coinciding with the **Taxonomy Recognition Day**, together with the **post-summer months**, ranked among the periods of **highest reach** and impact across CETAF’s social media channels.

	2023	2024	2025	2025 Change
Users	6,843	10,551	12,122	14.88%
Sessions	10,592	15,588	16,941	8.67%
Views	20,304	26,027	31,196	19.86%



LINKEDIN



LinkedIn has consolidated its position as CETAF's flagship channel. The average annual engagement rate stands at approximately 18%, and the number of followers increased by 33%, reaching 1,272. The audience is primarily composed of professionals from research institutions, higher education, museums, and governmental organisations.

FACEBOOK



On Facebook, page views reached 85,436. The number of followers grew steadily, surpassing 1,400, representing a 13.1% increase compared to 2024.

INSTAGRAM



Launched in November 2025, CETAF's Instagram profile has already begun to show positive growth. Within just six weeks, it reached 111 followers, with strong growth expected throughout 2026.

BLUESKY



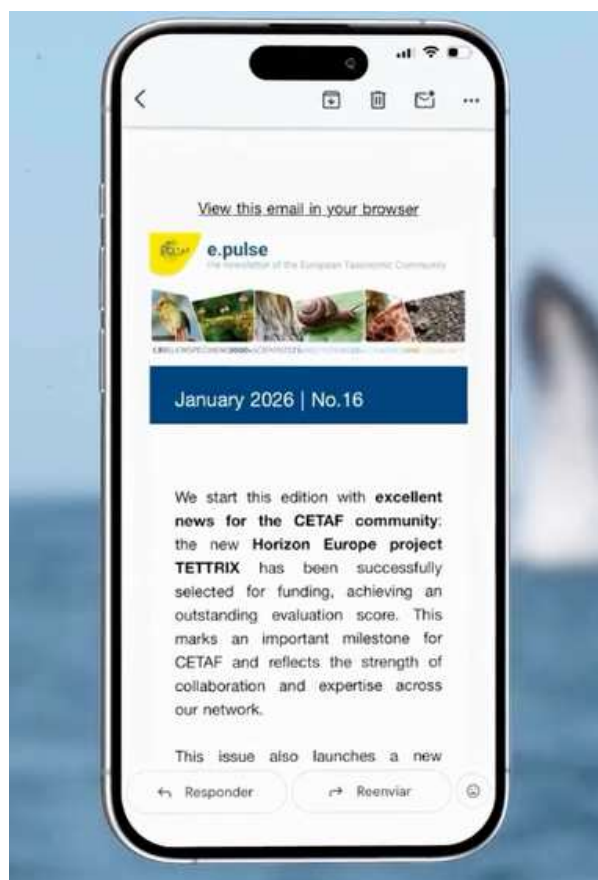
One year after its launch (December 2024), CETAF's official Bluesky profile has reached 570 followers. Although its overall reach remains lower than that of other platforms, its steady growth and the increasing presence of the scientific community make it a strategically relevant niche channel.

> Newsletter – e.Pulse

As part of CETAF's efforts to further disseminate information relevant to the taxonomic community, the **e.Pulse newsletter** introduced significant changes from October 2025 onwards.

In addition to maintaining its informative focus, e.Pulse **expanded its content** to include events of interest for the taxonomic community, updates on European policy developments, and job opportunities related to taxonomy and allied disciplines, with the aim of particularly supporting early-career researchers. Furthermore, the publication **frequency** was increased from biannual to **monthly**.

This strategic shift has had a very positive impact on performance. e.Pulse currently counts 683 active subscribers, representing an **increase of 261 subscribers** compared to the period prior to October 2025.



➤ Special reference to sister initiatives BGE

Biodiversity Genomics Europe (BGE) activities have been regularly **disseminated** through CETAF's communication tools and social media channels. In addition to including a direct link to BGE on CETAF's website and newsletter, relevant news and events related to the project were featured throughout the years in the CETAF newsletter, e.Pulse.

Among the most **relevant insertions**, [e.Pulse 2](#) included information on the kick-off of the BGE project, while [e.Pulse 8](#) disseminated CETAF's involvement in the Biodiversity Genomics Europe Task 12.1 training. In [e.Pulse 9](#), we covered the 2024 BGE Barcoding Hackathon. In [e.Pulse 11](#) (Spring 2025), we shared news related to the European Reference Genome Atlas (ERGA) and the European node of the International Barcode of Life (iBOL Europe), both brought together under the BGE project. In [e.Pulse 13](#), we informed readers about BGE Connects 2025, highlighting its contribution to CETAF. [e.Pulse 14](#) included access to the recordings of all sessions from Biodiversity Genomics Connects, while [e.Pulse 15](#) featured the Second BGE Workshop in Thessaloniki. In [e.Pulse 16](#), the first newsletter of 2026, we shared the final report of the BGE Connects policy roundtable and highlighted BGE sampling activities.

In parallel, CETAF actively disseminated BGE-related updates through its social media channels, primarily LinkedIn, by sharing and reposting **information on events and project developments**. Similar dissemination efforts were carried out on X until CETAF ceased its activities on this platform.

In addition, a dedicated [news](#) was published on the CETAF website for **BGE Connects 2025**, which was further promoted through CETAF's social media channels, highlighting CETAF's participation.



Second BGE Workshop in Thessalonik.



The resources to support CETAF activity

The means to secure CETAF operation.

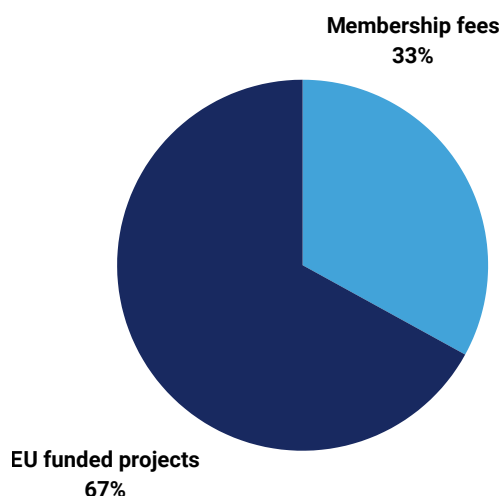
7. THE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CETAF ACTIVITY

The financial resources of CETAF are primarily coming from two different types of sources, the first being the **participation in external projects**, which allows contracting personnel to tackle specific tasks to develop new services and consolidate CETAF initiatives. Additionally, the core activity of the Secretariat is supported by the **membership fees** granted on an annual basis by the Member institutions of the organisation.

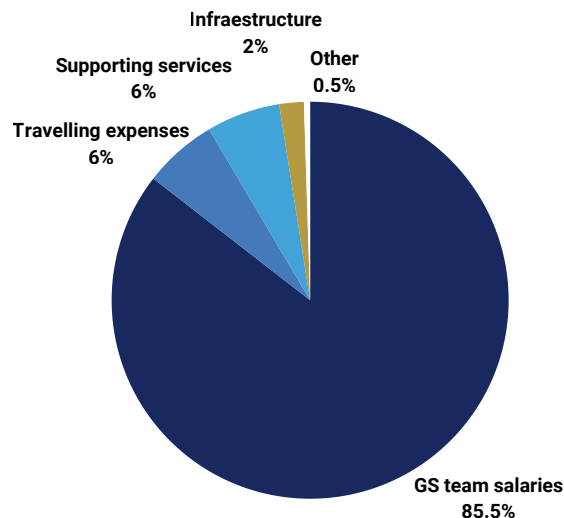
The Business Model for the period 2023-2027 provides a **well-ground, stable and long term schema** for supporting the core activities of the Secretariat. Still, the ambitious **Strategy 2025-2030** may lead to a revision of the model to ensure that the Secretariat has enough resources to accomplish the CETAF goals. The Annual Accounts for year 2024 were approved by the General Assembly during its meeting CETAF57 in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, along with the positive assessment of the **internal Audit Report** produced.

An important milestone achieved in 2025 was the **consolidation of the CETAF Accounts** following the double-entry accounting system which provides clarity, consistency and objectivity to the financial matters, in alignment with internationally recognised standards. The **financial year 2025** has been fully recorded under this new system. To support the Secretariat in this transformation process and towards the compliance with Belgian protocols, the Belgian company PROFISCAL was hired as an external supporting expert.

> Incomes



> Expenses



Incomes. In 2025, Membership fees, up to 207.100 euros, represent 33% of CETAF total income. The other 67% are from EU funded projects which either entered into force or received instalments during the year namely TETTRIs , BiCIKL, BGE, DiSSCo Prepare and DiSSCo Transition.

Expenses. The figure above represents the distribution of expenses across different main categories, including Salaries of the Secretariat's team (85.5% of the total budget); Travel (6%); Supporting services (6%); Infrastructure (2%), and Others (with the remaining 0.5%).

Similarly, the **Budget for year 2026** was also **approved** by the General Assembly during **CETAF58** in **Berlin**, Germany, as the main mechanism to guide the use of resources gathered by CETAF. The budget 2026 was approved counting on the approval of the proposals submitted (TETTRIX, BGEPlus and THRIVE).

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