



**Memorandum of Understanding**  
between  
**Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF)**  
and  
**Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)**

**Preamble**

The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF AISBL), created in 1996, with 33 members representing 57 natural history institutions from 20 European countries, is the unique platform for collections and taxonomy within Europe (<http://www.cetaf.org/>). In addition to its formal members, CETAF connects with other leading institutions, organizations and projects in the field of biodiversity research in Europe, and further afield.

CETAF members support the objectives of the Consortium:

- 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.

CETAF member institutions manage over 1.5 billion specimens that cover about 80% of the known biological and geological diversity on Earth. The distributed collections-based infrastructure that is formed by CETAF represents an unprecedented resource that is fundamental for the scientific analysis and understanding of biological and geological diversity on Earth.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) was established in 1987 to link the botanic gardens of the world in a global network for plant conservation. BGCI is an independent UK charity with its head office located at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. BGCI's membership consists of more than 500 botanic gardens in over 100 countries worldwide. In addition to its membership, BGCI has links with most of the world's leading plant conservation organisations through a range of networks and partnerships.

BGCI objectives, as outlined in its 2016-2020 Business Plan, are focused on:

- Leading and advocacy - promoting the role of botanic gardens to policymakers and funders in delivering plant conservation outcomes.
- Leading innovative and strategic projects achieving outcomes in plant conservation policy, practice and education.
- Co-ordinating efforts and building plant conservation capacity in botanic gardens and broader society.
- Mobilising funding to deliver plant conservation projects and outcomes in the botanic garden community and wider society.

BGCI's network of botanic gardens includes: globally significant *ex situ* collections, covering approximately a third of known plant diversity; world class seed banks, glass houses and tissue culture infrastructures and, technical knowledge networks covering all aspects of plant conservation policy, practice and education.

The purpose of the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to describe the relationship between the signatories and their intention to communicate and work together to advance their common interests.

## 1. Definitions

For the purpose of this MoU, the following terms are used as here defined:

**CETAF:** The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) is an international non-profit making association (Association internationale sans but lucratif - AISBL) that is formed by member institutions who hold important collections and undertake taxonomic research, according to the CETAF statutes.

- CETAF is an AISBL under Belgian Law is subject to its statutes with its legal seat in the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), Brussels, Belgium.
- CETAF is governed by the General Meeting composed of all CETAF official members.
- The CETAF Executive Committee is responsible for CETAF administrative issues.
- The CETAF Secretariat is responsible for the daily running of the Consortium and the executing of tasks as outlined in the CETAF Secretariat Work Plan.
- The CETAF holds its General Meeting twice a year in order to transact business matters and discuss issues proposed by the CETAF Executive Committee.
- The CETAF promotes working groups that form to address specific questions or topics that are of interest to CETAF member institutions (for example, CETAF Legislation and Regulations Group, CETAF Research Assessment Group, CETAF Information Science and Technology Commission, CETAF training and e-learning group).

Detailed information on CETAF, its activities and organization, its members and its strategy can be found on the CETAF website (<http://www.cetaf.org/>).

**BGCI:** Botanic Gardens Conservation International is an independent UK charity (Charity No. 1098834). BGCI is governed by the Board of Trustees that meets quarterly to guide the organisation's work programme and to review management accounts, future development and other organisational matters.

- Day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Secretary General, who acts as BGCI's chief executive officer reporting to the Board.
- The charity is guided by the International Advisory Council. The Council consists of highly respected leaders of the botanic garden and plant conservation community. They provide technical and scientific guidance and advice on the strategic direction of BGCI.
- The charity has a Finance and Audit Committee which meets on a regular basis to review and monitor financial and risk management issues.

## 2. Role and Goals of the signatories

### CETAF roles

- CETAF is the largest distributed taxonomy-based network in Europe, has an advisory role for taxonomy, biodiversity and collections related issues.
- CETAF is the largest natural history science communication network in Europe, acts as a hub for information exchange between its members as well as for public outreach on the importance of biological collections and taxonomy based research.

- CETAF is the largest biodiversity science network in Europe and, via its member institutions, supports Europe's taxonomic experts who provide authoritative information on biological and geological entities.
- CETAF collaborates on collections management and access policies, specimen digitisation, data-sharing and database interoperability, international legislation, science policy, public outreach and taxonomy training: equitably sharing skills, resources, knowledge and information between member institutions that have positive impacts on society within and across Europe, and beyond.

#### **CETAF goals**

- CETAF takes positions on taxonomy, systematics and collections-based issues within and across Europe.
- CETAF supports European collections and collections based institutions (collections management policies, collections access, specimen digitisation).
- CETAF encourages biodiversity informatics initiatives (data management, data standards, data interoperability, data sharing).
- CETAF promotes taxonomy and taxonomy training in Europe (training and e-learning programmes).
- CETAF initiates, promotes or participates in EU or Global collections, taxonomy and biodiversity projects and initiatives.
- CETAF focuses on public outreach and strengthening the role of shares and initiates scientific and collections based exhibitions amongst its member institutions.

#### **BGCI roles**

- BGCI links botanic gardens and arboreta around the world forming the world's largest plant conservation network.
- BGCI provides leadership for the botanic garden sector, promoting the role of botanic gardens to policymakers and funders in delivering plant conservation outcomes.
- BGCI leads projects and networks contributing to global plant conservation targets in red listing, seed conservation, ecological restoration, plant health and biosecurity, ecosystem services and livelihoods and education.
- BGCI helps to build technical capacity in the botanic garden sector and beyond by acting as a knowledge hub and a clearing house for best practice, training, resources and expertise
- BGCI mobilises funding to deliver plant conservation projects and outcomes in the botanic garden community and wider society.
- In Europe, BGCI convenes the European Botanic Gardens Consortium, which links botanic gardens and arboreta across the region, addressing issues of specific European relevance.

#### **BGCI goals**

- BGCI supports the development of a professional botanic garden community, able to promote its unique skills to policy makers, funders and other stakeholders;
- BGCI aims to promote and prioritize plant conservation and sustainable use of plants in botanic gardens;
- BGCI works to focus botanic garden efforts on the conservation of the rarest, most threatened and challenging species;
- BGCI promotes contacts and partnerships with other sectors (e.g. forestry, horticulture, agriculture and *in situ* conservationists);
- BGCI aims to facilitate plant conservation action in broader society through stimulating public dialogue, creating opportunities for participation in local and global conservation efforts and through provision of education, tools and information.

### **3. Aim of the Memorandum of Understanding**

Create a framework for identifying areas of common interest between CETAF and BGCI as a basis for developing partnership activities and joint initiatives. Such areas of common interest include, but are not limited to:

- Access to genetic resources and benefit sharing in the framework of the Nagoya Protocol and the associated EU regulation;
- Raising awareness of the importance of collections and taxonomic research through public education and outreach activities;
- Promoting the use of collections in research and development activities;
- Sharing taxonomic expertise to support activities related to conservation and collection management;
- Developing and sharing common data standards with respect to collection management.

### **4. Commitments of the signatories**

The signatories agree to exchange information, to participate in and contribute to each other's networks, and as relevant issue invitations to participate in meetings. The signatories recognize each other as strategic partners for pursuing their common interests. Each party will commit to share information on their activities, give recognition of each other in their strategic actions and strive to work together in issues of common interest.

### **5. Benefits to the signatories**

#### **From CETAF**

- Recognition as a strategic partner
- Awareness of the activities of the CETAF community
- Increased possibilities for identifying collaborative partners
- Representation on the CETAF website
- Direct access to information on the outcomes and activities of the consortium
- Provision of a forum for the dissemination of information on activities or outcomes from the BGCI to CETAF
- Formation of direct links with the community of institutions that manage Natural History Collections and conduct research in the field of biodiversity sciences
- Opportunity share information with CETAF members via CETAF's communication channels
- Participation in relevant meetings

#### **From BGCI**

- Recognition as a strategic partner
- Awareness of the activities of the botanic garden community
- Increased possibilities for identifying collaborative partners
- Representation on the BGCI website
- Direct access to information on the outcomes and activities of BGCI, particularly in Europe
- Provision of a forum for the dissemination of information on activities or outcomes from CETAF to BGCI
- Formation of direct links with the community of institutions that manage botanic garden collections and conduct research in the field of biodiversity sciences
- Opportunity to share information with BGCI's members via BGCI's communication channels.
- Participation in relevant meetings – particularly those concerning European botanic gardens.

### **6. Financial matters**

This Memorandum of Understanding is not a legally binding agreement nor does it obligate any of the parties to any financial commitments or expenditures. Financial obligations for specific collaborative actions need to be agreed separately.

### 7. Modifications and Termination

Modifications to this Memorandum of Understanding shall be agreed by the signatories. The Memorandum of Understanding ends when one of the parties gives notice of termination in writing.

### 8. Signatures

This Memorandum of Understanding is understood and agreed:

On behalf of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF), by

Dr. Michelle Price (CETAF Chair)

Signature: Michelle Price

Date 18.10.2016

On behalf of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), by

Dr. Paul Smith (Secretary General)

Signature: Paul Smith

Date 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2016