

Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee, editors and data management team of the World Register of Marine Species and associated databases.

This document establishes the basis on which data and/or intellectual property (IPR) is provided to the World Register of Marine Species database and associated databases (WoRMS) and how these data and IPR are managed. The associated databases may be defined geographically, taxonomically, or by other themes.

By voluntarily providing data or other documented expertise or assistance to WoRMS you as WoRMS editor accept the terms laid out below.

The governance structure of WoRMS comprises three components:

- The **WoRMS editorial board (WoRMS editors)** includes all active editors and data providers.
- The **WoRMS steering committee (WoRMS SC)** leads the editorial board. The WoRMS SC members appoint a chair and vice-chair by majority vote. The SC will have 12 elected members and 1 ex officio DMT member. Elections will be organized yearly, with a rotation time of 3 years for each member to ensure continuity and renewal. All taxonomic and theme editors and data provider head managers are eligible for candidacy and can nominate candidates.
- The **WoRMS data management team (WoRMS DMT)** is appointed by VLIZ to run the database.
- Together WoRMS DMT and WoRMS SC further consult to decide WoRMS policy, plan future developments, raise funding, and promote public use of the database.

Your rights as editor or data provider:

1. You keep the right to use and publish any data which you have provided without needing to inform the WoRMS SC.
2. You can provide your data to WoRMS either via the online interface or by direct communication with WoRMS DMT.
3. Your contributions will be acknowledged in all publications of the database and derivatives of it, either personally or by your membership to the editorial board.
4. You will receive reports on the actions taken by the WoRMS SC and DMT.
5. You will be invited to vote and nominate candidates (including self-nominations) for the WoRMS SC, at least one month prior to the elections.

You further agree that:

6. The data provided to the database can only be removed for scientific reasons, with larger datasets only to be removed after approval by the WoRMS SC.
7. You have taken reasonable measures to ensure that the data provided is scientifically correct, and free of copyright infringements, and to inform the DMT in case of doubts.
8. You will inform the DMT of errors in the database, copyright infringements or plagiarism by third parties.
9. When you use the online editing interface, you will follow the suggested procedures in the online manual, and if needed request support and clarification from the DMT at info@marinespecies.org and the chief editor for your taxon group.
10. You agree to respond to requests from DMT or users to add or correct data as soon as feasible.
11. You delegate to the WoRMS SC and the DMT the authority to take the necessary actions to **store, copy** and **disseminate** the database, to **modify** the provided data to protect the integrity and scientific correctness of the database, to further develop the database and promote its use.

A non-exhaustive list of WoRMS SC and DMT activities is laid out below.

Responsibilities and roles of the WoRMS SC:

1. Responsibility to **represent the editors** in all matters relating to the databases, including liaison with other international programs, projects and initiatives concerning the databases, in close collaboration with the Data Management Team (DMT).
2. Responsibility for the **scientific correctness** of the database, and for identifying data gaps.

3. Act to appoint or replace editors who contribute to or validate content of the database,
4. Responsibility to evaluate database download requests, to **license the use** of downloads through a standard agreement application form, and to negotiate exceptional uses of the databases outside the standard license.
5. Act to inform the editors and DMT of infringements in use of the databases and undertake necessary corrective actions.

Responsibilities and roles of the WoRMS DMT:

1. Responsibility for **online publishing** of the database including: taking all necessary actions to insure the database is online at all times; protecting the integrity of the database and the persistence of the unique identifiers; archiving the databases at regular intervals in a secure facility; acting as a first line of support to users; informing editors of remaining unresolved questions.
2. Act to **provide copies** of the databases to third parties upon prior approval by WoRMS SC.
3. Responsibility for informing the WoRMS SC Chair of infringements in use of the databases, and for undertaking necessary corrective actions.
4. Act to **supervise editing activities**, control access and editing rights of editors, support the editors in the use of the online editing environment, upload species registers or other information, maintain the taxonomy in close consultation with, or upon request of, the editors.
5. Act to organize workshops for WoRMS editors and to organize the yearly elections for the WoRMS SC.