

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The Steering Committee of the Soil Biodiversity Data Warehouse Edaphobase
represented by the Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG)

And

The Steering Committee of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS),
represented by the Flanders Marine Institute (Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee – VLIZ)

Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides the basis for cooperative work between the International Soil Biodiversity Data Warehouse Edaphobase and the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS).

The parties

Edaphobase - SMNG

The Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG) is one of seven institutes of the Senckenberg – Leibniz Institution for Biodiversity and Earth System Research (SGN). Senckenberg is examining the role of biodiversity, including humans, in the development of the Earth system from the past through the present to the future, making an important and internationally visible contribution to the understanding, conservation, and sustainable use of nature. The Soil Zoology Department at Senckenberg Görlitz is dedicated to the study of soil invertebrates, their taxonomy and systematics, their ecology, morphology and biogeography. The department is an expertise and collection hub for a number of taxa of soil micro-, meso- and macrofauna primarily in Germany and at the EU level.

The international Soil Biodiversity Data Warehouse Edaphobase is hosted and run by the Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz, and managed by the Edaphobase Steering Committee, comprising soil zoologists and software developers in charge of curation and further developing the data warehouse for the needs of the international research community. Edaphobase is a publicly open-access Data Warehouse, synthesizing and standardizing occurrence and taxonomic data on soil invertebrates, and linking it with environmental site parameters in space and time. Edaphobase is used as a data repository by European soil zoologists and as a database to explore e.g., population dynamics, species niche-space, distributions and trends of soil biodiversity, as well as to develop Red Lists for soil taxa and reference values for soil biodiversity monitoring. At the national level, Edaphobase is included in German National Research Data Infrastructures (“NFDIs”) such as FAIRagro and 4Biodiversity). Edaphobase features a strict data transparency policy, comprehensive quality control, and DOIs can be provided for individual data sets.

WoRMS – VLIZ

The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) is a not-for-profit, largely government funded organization based in Oostende (Flanders, Belgium). VLIZ acts as the coordination and information platform for marine and coastal-related scientific research in Flanders and serves as an international contact point. The Data Centre Division provides assistance, technologies and tools to scientists and policy makers to support marine data management. Within international networks, VLIZ participates in the development of data infrastructures and promotes the flow of marine data from Belgium. The Data Centre is a world leader in managing biodiversity data, and is part of the World Data System of the International Council for Science (ICSU). In particular, VLIZ has built-up expertise in taxonomic data management through the hosting of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) and related taxonomically-oriented databases.

The World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – including its subregisters – is managed by the WoRMS Steering Committee (WoRMS SC), who represents 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 WoRMS Data Management Team (WoRMS DMT). They are responsible for the scientific correctness of the database, and for identifying data and editor gaps. WoRMS itself is part of the Aphia platform, an infrastructure designed to capture taxonomic and related data which includes an online editing environment. Aphia is hosted at and managed by the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) and is an integral part of the LifeWatch Species Information Backbone (LW-SIBb), which is a central component of the European LifeWatch project.

Objectives

- To establish a framework of cooperation between Edaphobase and WoRMS, that uses the comparative advantage of each information system to:
 - o promote the use of biodiversity information systems for scientific research;
 - o minimize duplication of efforts by identifying the overlaps between both initiatives
 - o establish open exchange of taxonomic information between Edaphobase and WoRMS

Conditions of data exchange

The cooperative framework is governed by the following conditions:

- Each MoU party will cite the cooperative data exchange in the relevant parts of their public presentations (websites, publications, and similar).

- Where any information or data exchanged between the parties of this MoU derives from third parties, the third-party sources will be explicitly cited in any public presentations (websites, publications and similar). The MoU party providing this information will make the source information available to the other party.
- If any location-specific information on taxon occurrences (more specific than aggregations to a country or regional level) are shown or provided in public presentations (e.g., in websites or public databases), the specific reference or data provider (owner) of the occurrence data will be made available in the presentation. The MoU party providing the information will make the source information available to the other party.

Limited Warranty

The Electronic Intellectual Property (EIP; any data provided in an electronic format) is licensed to the receiving party on an "as is" basis, and the providing party makes no guarantees, representations or warranties with respect to the data, either express or implied, arising by law or otherwise, including but not limited to, effectiveness, completeness, accuracy, or fitness for purpose.

Exclusion and indemnity

- Neither party may incur any obligation or liability on behalf of the other.
- Each party shall indemnify and save harmless the other party, its servants, agents, and contractor from and against any claim, demand, or action, alleging loss, costs, expenses, damages, or injuries (including injuries resulting in death) arising out of the party's use of the EIP or in any way relating to this agreement.
- This MoU shall impose no financial obligation on either party.

Amendments and modifications

Either party may recommend amendments to this MoU by notifying the other party in writing. The amendment shall enter in force after the subsequent agreement of the other party in a written form.

Conflict resolution

If this agreement would be terminated, neither party can demand to withdraw the exchanged data and information from the other party's databases. In such a situation, all parties can continue the maintenance of the received data as they see best fit, respecting and acknowledging the original source of the data.

Not a legal partnership

The parties do not intend to create a legal partnership, principal, agent, or joint venture relationship and nothing in this MoU shall be construed as creating such a relationship between the parties.

Non-exclusive agreement

This MoU is non-exclusive, and in no way restricts either Edaphobase (and its partners) or WoRMS (and its host institute) from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other public or private initiatives, organizations or individuals.

Duration and termination

This agreement is valid indefinitely until it is terminated by either party by a written notice sent to the other party 3 months in advance.

Notices

All written consents required hereinabove shall be sent to the following addresses:

- To Edaphobase:
Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG)
Att. Soil Zoology Department/ Edaphobase Steering Committee
Am Museum 1
02826 Görlitz
Germany

- To WoRMS:
Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)
Att. WoRMS Data Management Team
Jacobsenstraat 1
8400 Oostende
Belgium

Authorized representatives

- *Edaphobase representative*: for the purposes of liaison, providing guidance and direction in daily operation matters, Edaphobase shall be represented by the Chair of its Steering Committee
- *SMNG representative*: for the purposes of liaison and providing guidance and direction in daily operation matters, the Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG) – an institute of the Senckenberg – Leibniz Institution for Biodiversity and Earth System Research – shall be represented by its Director.

- **WoRMS representative:** for the purposes of liaison and providing guidance and direction in daily operation matters, WoRMS shall be represented by the Chair or the Vice-Chair of its Steering Committee.
- **VLIZ representative:** for the purposes of liaison and providing guidance and direction in daily operation matters, The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) – permanent host institute of the Aphia database and its related registers, including WoRMS – shall be represented by its General Director.

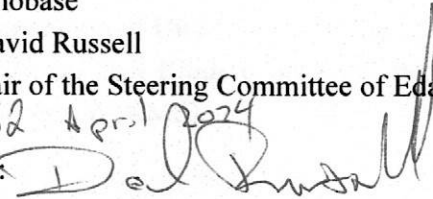
Signatures

For Edaphobase

Name: David Russell

Title: Chair of the Steering Committee of Edaphobase

Date: 12 April 2024

Signature: 


For the Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG)

Name: Karsten Wesche

Title: Director SMNG

Date:

Signature:



For the World Register of Marine Species

Name: Shane Ahyong

Title: Chair of the Steering Committee of the World Register of Marine Species

Date: 25 March 2024

Signature:



For the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)

Name: Jan Mees

Title: General Director

Date: Jan

Signature:  Mees

Digitally signed
by Jan Mees
Date: 2024.03.29
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