

Newsletter #23

October 2010



<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu>



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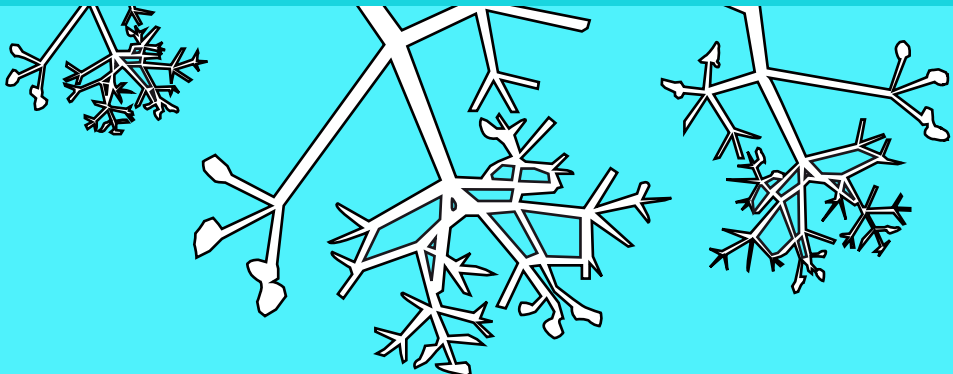
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EDIT Year 5 Event

17-19 Jan. 2011, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris



We are happy to announce EDIT's Final Year 5 Event. The highlight of the event will be the Scientific Conference «Information in the age biodiversity loss» held on Tuesday the 18th.

This conference will focus on the input and innovation from EDIT in the constitution and use of taxonomic information. It will show that the EDIT initiative has brought these five years to serve the community and science in general, and indicates paths to the future.

These issues will be presented under the head lines of the four sessions: 1) From Nature to notion (from the field to data); 2) Data driven processes; 3) Producing and sharing biodiversity data, information and knowledge and 4) Training and Public Outreach.

The Scientific Conference will be preceded by a press and policy day, and followed by a series of side events, work shops and meetings.

See the program at :

<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/>

- it is being continuously updated

Please notice: the Scratchpads basic training session is now open for registration.

Learn what you can do with Scratchpads and work with tools allowing you to manage classifications, phylogenies, images, specimen records, data matrices etc.

Register to the Scratchpads session at :

<http://scratchpads.eu/training>

Third ATBI+M Newsletter



EDIT's All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring programme has now published the third newsletter. It aims at reaching researchers and students that have been/will be visiting ATBI+M sites, other researchers, universities and natural parks.

This time with an announcement of THE NEW ATBI+M SITE SPREEWALD IN GERMANY in addition to news, upcoming events and articles

Please send contributions to the November 2010 edition by **October 15th, 2010**

Newsletter available online:

<http://www.atbi.eu/wp/?q=node/3185>

Call for applications for scholarships for scientific study visits on biodiversity in African Zoology

Application deadline : 15/10/2010

Royal Museum for Central Africa

African Biodiversity Information Centre (ABIC)

The Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) located in Belgium has launched a new call for scholarships for scientific study visits on biodiversity in African Zoology and Wood Biology. The programme targets African scientists and doctoral students.

Scholarships are awarded for research projects that involve RMCA collections and/or staff experience and contribute to identification, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

For more information visit:

http://www.africanmuseum.be/research/collaborations/training/abic?set_language=en&cl=en

Newsletter (European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy)
 Publisher: the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy
 Publication Director: Mr. Bertrand-Pierre Galey
 ISSN: 1958-5152

The IUCN's Countdown 2010 initiative is almost over. But the actions of its nearly 1100 partners worldwide are not!



The IUCN's Countdown 2010 is coming to a close. A plethora of initiatives conducted by the partners worldwide demonstrate the importance of Countdown 2010. 20 of these success stories have now been published, showing examples of actions taken to make adoption of protection measures, implementation of action plans, raising awareness and reduction of biodiversity impact.

Source: www.countdown2010.net

Download Countdown 2010 success stories here:
<http://www.countdown2010.net/year-biodiversity/what-can-you-do/made-in-countdown-2010>



ATBI + M Manual on field recording techniques and protocols released

-Free online version now available

Manual on Field Recording Techniques and Protocols for All Taxa Biodiversity Inventories edited by EDIT WP7 team is now available through Abc Taxa.

21 chapters dealing with the various field collecting and sampling techniques for inventorying of a large spectrum of different taxa, e.g. *field tissue preservation techniques for subsequent molecular analyses, soil and litter sampling techniques and methods and techniques for monitoring mammals*

Each chapter is authored by scientists well experienced with the specific techniques. These authors represent many well renowned natural history museums and university departments from both Europe and USA.

Download online version at:
<http://www.abctaxa.be>



BioFresh -Integrating freshwater biodiversity data

- Launch of preview version of data portal

BioFresh, "Biodiversity of Freshwater Ecosystems: Status, Trends, Pressures, and Conservation Priorities", is a EU-funded international project which integrates the freshwater biodiversity competencies and expertise of 18 research institutions. This project is building a global portal for scientists and ecosystem managers with access to all available databases describing the distribution, status and trends of freshwater biodiversity. The aim of the data portal is to integrate and provide open and free access to this data and to serve as a data discovery tool, allowing scientists and managers to complement, integrate, and analyze distribution data to elucidate patterns in freshwater biodiversity.

The BioFresh team is pleased to inform you that they recently launched a preview version of the BioFresh on-line data portal. We welcome your comments and suggestions for the portal on aaike.dewever@naturalsciences.be.

In addition, BioFresh is constantly searching for freshwater biodiversity databases for both completing its metadatabase and for publishing the data on the BioFresh data portal. You can contact us on data@freshwaterbiodiversity.eu for more information.

Visit BioFresh on-line data portal at:
<http://www.freshwaterbiodiversity.eu/dataportal>

Visit BioFresh at:
<http://www.freshwaterbiodiversity.eu/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Reminder! Beyond 2010: strategies for understanding and responding to long-term trends in UK biodiversity

16-18 Nov. 2010, London

We would like to remind you of this upcoming conference organized by the Environmental Change Network, the Natural History Museum and the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

The focus of the conference will be on understanding and reacting to long-term changes in biodiversity. Emphasis will be on the UK but including an international dimension.

It is anticipated that the conference will yield a statement of recommendations for improving biodiversity monitoring and research in the UK and elsewhere.

Deadline for registration 31 October 2010

Conference website:

<http://www.ecn.ac.uk/Conf2010/Conf2010.htm>

BIOLIEF 2011 - 2nd World Conference on Biological Invasions and Ecosystem

21-24 Nov, 2011, Mar del Plata, Argentina

BIOLIEF 2011 will place a particular emphasis on studies concerning the impact of invasive species on ecosystem functioning and/or services. However, studies on any other ecological aspect of biological invasions will also be welcome.

Follow us on Facebook for news and updates: www.facebook.com/pages/BIOLIEF-2011/126444150720221?ref=sgm

For more information:

www.grieta.org.ar/biolief/

The Fourth International Zoological Congress (IZC) FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

2-7 Sep. 2012, Haifa, Israel,



The fourth IZC will be held at Mount Carmel Campus of the University of Haifa. The campus is situated at the edge of the Carmel National Park and has all facilities, including student dormitories for international congresses.

The congress will include plenary lectures, symposia (oral and poster presentations) and general presentations that will be fitted into selected topics, as will be detailed in the second announcement.

Ideas for symposia or workshops are welcome together with willingness to organize them. In addition we are planning social events and a half-day tour to historical sites close to Haifa. A special program will be offered to accompanying persons.

To receive the second announcement contact:

izc2012@sci.haifa.ac.il

4th International Symposium of Integrative Zoology

4-6 Dec, 2010, Kunming, China



The International Society of Zoological Sciences (ISZS) and the International Union of Biological Science (IUBS) will hold the 4th International Symposium of Integrative Zoology (4th ISIZ) at the Kunming Hotel in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province, China. The theme of the symposium is Biological Consequences of Global Change - Data Analysis and Sharing.

For more information:

http://www.biologie.upmc.fr/fr/agenda/4_6_decembre_congres_zoologie.html

K. Articus-Lepage (RBINS)

EDIT Taxonomy Success Story 6

This is the fourth instance of the EDIT Taxonomy Success Stories, in which we try to chronicle the use of taxonomy in inventive, unusual or unsuspected ways. Success stories will also be used to disseminate the use of taxonomy in EDIT's public awareness activities, notably within the International Year for Biodiversity 2010. If you would like to submit a success story, please contact Kristina.Articus@naturalsciences.be.

Entomology in the kinder garden – a successful way to overcome language barriers

In Brussels, right in the heart of Europe, a public preschool dedicated an entire school year to entomology – the goal was to enhance the French language skills.

Brussels is a meeting point of different cultures and languages. Here we find Belgians of the three national language regions, immigrants from outside Europe, and the numerous Europeans working around the European Commission. Children are often able to speak several languages; however the level of the national languages is often not sufficient enough. The kinder gardens or preschools in Brussels are thus busy to meet this challenge. Innovative ways have to be found to overcome language and cultural barriers.

A public school, the "Groupe scolaire des Etangs" decided to enhance the French skills while working on the same topic within all age groups (children aged 3 to 6). This permitted the teachers to deepen into the subject and to practice with the pupils repeatedly the belonging vocabulary. The classes were able to work closely together and to exchange on their findings. The topic chosen for the 160 children was insects- a choice that proved to be especially rich in vocabulary and very engaging for both pupils and teachers.

The classes called themselves after one insect, which they entirely adopted during the year. So did "the bees", "the walking sticks", "the beetles", "the butterflies" and "the ants" learn all about these little creatures: how to recognise them, how they live, reproduce, eat, where to find them in nature, and what their benefits are for us.



During the year the children repeatedly studied real insects and drew their observations. The drawings improved along the project and finally all children were able to draw the six legs at the right place. While comparing



“their” insects with the ones of the other classes, the children understood well the characteristics of insects in general and also the variation among different taxa. The children practised basic skills as needed in taxonomic research: observation,

comparison, classification.

The scientific curiosity was also stimulated by executing small experiments in the playground, where different food sources were placed to attract different kind of insects. One class kept living walking sticks in the classroom. This permitted the pupils to observe the walking sticks on a daily basis and to learn how to take care of them.



Within the project, the preschool visited the EDIT partner Royal Belgian

Institute of Natural Sciences. Here the pupils were able to investigate the entomology gallery with several living insects and an active beehive. Additionally, the school invited an apiculturist, who demonstrated the production of honey in the class.

Insects are a surprisingly good source for crafting. It was impressive to see the different objects created by the pupils in the exhibition at the end of the year. Here were also pictures of

the carnival party which the children attended as walking sticks, beetles or bees...

During this engaging school project the pupils were able to train various skills and also the original goal - training the language - was achieved. The pupils learned new expressions as thorax, antennae and mandibles. The vocabulary was also enriched with words as honeycomb, beehive, apiculturist, anthill, larvae and cocoon. These words might seem obvious to a native speaker, however they are exactly of the kind missing while learning a new language.

Entomology proved to be an engaging topic, which can, with small means and the right animation, stimulate perfectly the global development of young children!



Carole Paleco (RBINS)

GAP Mentoring programme



The call for applications to the GAP Mentoring programme was closed on Wednesday 15th September 2010.

The goal of the programme is to provide early career scientists with personalised guidance in the form of a privileged exchange with an established researcher from another EDIT institution.

The GAP supports this exchange by financing the travel of the early career scientist to meet his/her mentor, at the mentor's working place or at an EDIT conference.

The programme received fourteen applications among which were eight applications as mentees and six as mentors working in different research fields going from botany to entomology and zoology.

The eight candidates as mentees are all women and belong to the following institutions:

- Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales (1)
- Real Jardín Botánico (1)
- Natural History Museum, London (2)
- Natural History Museum of Denmark (1)
- University of Urbino, Italy (1)
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (2)

The six candidates as mentors count two women among them and belong to the following institutions:

- Natural History Museum, London (2)
- Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales (1)
- Royal Belgian Inst. of Natural Sciences (2)
- Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (1)

Each applicant has expressed his/her expectations to the programme and the GAP team will work on the coordination of the future pairs to help them get closer to their goals.

Here are a few excerpts of the mentees' expectations:

- "I think it is important to be able of establish collaborations with people within different

areas of expertise, as well as interact with other research groups all over the world. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task for a person in the early stages of a scientific career, especially if the young scientist is not part of a big and dynamic group. During my PhD and postdoc I often feel that my networking is really limited, and that is one of the main reasons why I am applying to the mentorship program."

- "The mentoring programme appeals to me, as I would like to gain further insight into different career options available. I also hope to benefit from the personal expertise and experience of researchers already established in the scientific community with regards to making career decisions."

- "I feel that the EDIT GAP Mentoring Programme will help me develop my potential as a female scientist in this field. I am particularly interested in the advice of another female scientist, at a more advanced stage in her career, about career development opportunities, relevant networks I could join, and advice on managing ones work-life balance."

Excerpts of the mentors' expectations and motivation:

- "I have trained many female scientists during my career and frequently seen them struggle to proceed with a career. I would very much like to assist in trying to overcome this problem."

- "To be of help"

- "It gives me pleasure to share information/experience with young colleagues"

In order to be able to match all the mentees with a mentor we are still eager to receive some more propositions, notably from experienced scientists.

To join the mentoring programme go to <http://e-taxonomy.eu/gap>.



EDIT, the South African National Biodiversity Institute and NCB Naturalis make progress with developing collaborative projects



Niels Raes¹, John Donaldson², Maureen Wolfson³, Wouter de Groot⁴, Shanelle Ribeiro⁵, Gideon Smith⁵, Marco Roos¹, Yolande Steenkamp⁵, Tebogo Rampho⁵ and Guy Midgley⁵.

In a previous issue of the EDIT Newsletter (18: 7–8), Gideon Smith (South Africa) and Cameron Slatyer (Australia) reflected on the possibility to use 2010, the International Biodiversity Year, as a springboard from which to launch thrusts aimed at empowering governments to rise to the challenge of discovering, describing and documenting their biodiversity, and to disseminate associated information to enable informed, wise conservation and environmental decision-making. As they phrased it: the dawn of a new EDIT, the acronym now derived from Enabling Disadvantaged International Taxonomists.

That note was published in November 2009, and a few months later representatives of both NCB Naturalis and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), together with colleagues from other institutes, spent many days over several weeks developing a preliminary proposal on the role of data extracted from preserved plant collections in ecosystem services (ES), that was jointly submitted to WOTRO (Stichting voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek van de Tropen en Ontwikkelingslanden / Foundation for scientific research of tropical and developing countries) in April 2010.

The preliminary proposal was favourably received and in June 2010 seed-funding was released by WOTRO, with co-financing by EDIT, NCB Naturalis and SANBI, to host a stakeholder workshop where the full proposal was developed, addressing how systematic and taxonomic data and insights might contribute to

enhanced understanding of the links between biodiversity, ecosystem services (as defined by the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment) and human well-being. The workshop was held in Cape Town in the Research Centre of SANBI, in the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, from 23 to 27 August, where the full proposal was significantly advanced and questions raised by the scientific and societal review panels addressed. The invited stakeholders included representatives from government, NGOs, academic institutions and organizations involved with ecosystem services, and comprised skills in plant sciences, economic and socio-ecological analysis, policy and regulation, ecosystem services, species distribution modelling, climate change impacts, entomology and databases.

It was agreed at the workshop that species distribution modelling (often termed niche-based modelling) will improve South Africa's ability to identify and refine regions and centres of endemism through providing estimates of species occurrence likelihood in under-sampled regions, and to incorporate modelled extrapolations of putative species ranges into land use planning efforts. Although existing methods, such as satellite image analyses, are well suited to address regulatory ecosystem services (ES), it was agreed that the PRECIS database of over 1 million specimen records contains unique spatial information at a national level for many provisioning, cultural and supporting ES such as medicinal and food plants, fuel wood, biodiversity and ecotourism. This level of ES is called species-based ES.

Poor communities in rural settings are often most dependent on species-based ES, and as new techniques of species distribution modelling can refine information on these ES to a previously unattainable spatial resolution (~1 km²) and allow the projection of shifts in the distribution of plant species and associated species-based ES under different climate change scenarios, the proposed project can directly provide estimates of the vulnerability of species-based ES with clear implications for poor communities in the future. Such estimates will in turn play a role in influencing decision-making on spatial planning by national and provincial governments.

The workshop participants also discussed ways to enhance the socio-economic outputs of the project, issues of governance, equity, and access, payment for ecosystem services (PES), ways to improve pro-poor outcomes related to ES, as well as possible methodologies and tools to use for the research. The participants also agreed that the project may be able to demonstrate the indirect socio-economic value of natural history collections and counter the perception that specimen curation and databasing are ends in themselves.

The full proposal has been submitted to WOTRO, and we remain hopeful that it will attract funding support.

Further reading

Smith, G.F. & Slatyer, C. 2009. EDIT reaching out to southern counterparts: perspectives from the ABRIS and SANBI. *EDIT Newsletter* 18: 7–8.

Authors' Contact Information

1: Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis (section NHN), Leiden University
P.O. Box 9514, 2300RA Leiden, the Netherlands.
raes@nhn.leidenuniv.nl; roos@nhn.leidenuniv.nl

2: Applied Biodiversity Research, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Private Bag X7, Claremont 7735, South Africa. j.donaldson@sanbi.org.za

3: PO Box 39179, Faerie Glen 0043, South Africa. maureenw@beingunderstood.com

4: Centrum voor Milieuwetenschappen Leiden, CML/Conservation Biology, Leiden University, Van Steenis gebouw, Einsteinweg 2, 2333 CC Leiden, Room number A306. degroot@cml.leidenuniv.nl

5: Biosystematics Research and Biodiversity Collections, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Private Bag X101, Pretoria, 0001 South Africa. g.smith@sanbi.org.za; s.ribeiro@sanbi.org.za; y.steenkamp@sanbi.org.za

6: Climate Change and BioAdaptation, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Private Bag X7, Claremont 7735, South Africa. g.midgley@sanbi.org.za

EDIT and the Flora Malesiana Symposium: the beginning of a new era?



Sierra, S.E.C.(NNM), Roos, M.C.(NNM), Smets, E.(NNM), Berendsohn, W.(FUB-BGBM) and Baker, W.(FUB-BGBM)

The 8th Flora Malesiana Symposium, held at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, offered a week of fruitful exchange of knowledge and information on the flora of Malesia, the floristic region ranging from the southern tip of peninsular Thailand to Papua New Guinea and from the Philippines to East Timor, with Indonesia in the heart, encompassing seven nations.

The programme included a broad range of topics related to taxonomy & systematics, biogeography, target taxa, e-taxonomy, plant conservation, ecology, plant biodiversity & floristics, and ethnobotany & medicinal plants. For those interested in learning more about the plants of Singapore, it was possible to join a half a day excursion to visit the botanic garden, a mangrove reserve, or a forest reserve.

It was remarkable to see the participation of young taxonomists, and in particular of women from the region, the gender balance rate was around one to one. There was a broad international participation with more than three hundred and fifty representatives from twenty-eight different countries.

EDIT was represented by WP3, WP5, and WP6 during the EDIT e-taxonomy session. In particular, life presentations on the EDIT botanical exemplar groups (Palms and Cichorieae) demonstrating the Data Portal of the "Internet Platform for Cybertaxonomy" attracted the attention of the audience. The Palmweb site (www.palmweb.org) is a cooperation of RBG Kew, the University of Aarhus and many others working towards a world monograph of the Arecaceae.

The international Cichorieae network is coordinated at Berlin (<http://wp6-cichorieae.e-taxonomy.eu/blog/home>). As a Platform-based data input tool the taxonomic editor software ("EDITor") was demonstrated (http://wp5.e-taxonomy.eu/cdm-setups/taxonomic_editor). A new website has been implemented as the on-line treatment of the published Flora Malesiana treatment of Sapindaceae (<http://160.45.63.201/dataportal/preview/flora-malesiana>).

One of the aims of EDIT is to make taxonomic and biodiversity information more accessible and usable online. During the symposium we noticed an increasing interest from taxonomists and ecologists to learn more about the tools being developed by EDIT.

Owners of Malesian biodiversity data (including observations, specimens, environmental or contextual maps, species information and images) would also like to use the tools developed by EDIT and discussed with EDIT WP5 the possibility of linking to their resources and sharing their data via the Platform. In fact, EDIT WP3 is working on a much broader cooperation, uniting all major Flora projects coordinated from EDIT institutes, initiated by NCB Naturalis and the National Botanic Garden of Belgium (Meise, Flore d'Afrique centrale).

Directors and representatives of the different leading institutes present recognised the importance of harnessing information technology to increase efficiency of the taxonomic work process with the aim of creating a modern taxonomy for FM. This, in turn, will facilitate the defragmentation

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of taxonomic data, the provision of unitary consensus taxonomies through the web and the use of common standards that will increase the sustainability of FM work.

In order to speed up FM activities, a series of steps will be needed by the FM institutions, among them institutional commitment, integration of web-taxonomy as part of core activities, the creation of positions to support web-taxonomy and the recognition of the time invested by staff members.

During the closing dinner the FM family had the opportunity to celebrate the results of this fantastic meeting and to thank the organisers for their great job. For those of you who could not join in, there is good news, the 9th FM Symposium will take place in Herbarium Bogoriense, Indonesia. We are all looking forward to see you all there in 2013.



Visit the Flora Malesiana website at: www.floramalesiana.org



Generating printed publications with the EDIT Common Data Model (CDM)

Niels Hoffmann (BGBM), Andreas Kohlbecker (BGBM), Andreas Müller (BGBM), Francisco Revilla (BGBM), Agnes Kirchoff (BGBM), Anton Güntsch (BGBM) and Walter Berendsohn (BGBM)

As part from the Dataportals to publish data from the CDM store (module of the Platform for Cybertaxonomy) over the web, there is the need to generate high quality printed publications to present taxonomic work to a wide audience and for being the final step in the taxonomic workflow.

It is crucial to the success of a tool providing this functionality that it will leave the user with as much control as possible when it comes to layout and final touches. The most user-friendly solution for this requirement is to prepare the data to be edited in word processor, thus giving the taxonomists the opportunity to layout their data with tools they are likely familiar with.



Fig. 1: Publishing with the Common Data Model (CDM)

The output being generated will be in OpenDocument format (ODF). ODF is an ISO-certified open standard that has been adopted worldwide by numerous organizations.

The so generated document may now be edited in modern word processors like OpenOffice.org thus providing the following advantages:

- full control over data and layout is in the hands of to the user
- using so-called styles, similar to CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) used in XHTML documents, a layout may be specified for a class of elements. The styles approach allows the user to change the layout of the data in a consistent manner
- by the use of macros, automation programs inside the word processor, it is possible to post process the data, e.g. deleting unwanted parts of the data

Technical Description

Using XML export functionality of the CDM, an XML document containing all the taxonomic data in a well structured form will be generated. Since ODF is also XML based, the exported XML can easily be transformed into ODF by using eXtensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT). XSLT is a language to translate an XML document into another XML document with a potentially different schema or arrangement of data. The purpose of these translations is to bring the original data into a format easily understood by the importing system.

A default transformation stylesheet will be provided to transform the exported XML data into an ODF document. Although it is possible

to create specialized transformation stylesheets for specific situations, the default stylesheet will contain all data and be suitable for the most common use cases. The concept has been proven and it will be integrated into the EDIT Taxonomic Editor once fully implemented.



Fig. 2: CDM print publishing, standard procedure.

Predefined Custom Layouts

Projects with multiple contributors most probably will need to work jointly with predefined layouts for the printed output. In this case it is possible to select from predefined layout templates. This will also facilitate the publication of names as predefined layouts of journals will be available. The first template that was implemented is compliant with the layout of the Flora Malesiana.



Fig. 3a: XML file from Flora Malesiana



Fig. 3b: Pdf output with Flora Malesiana layout.

The possibility to generate printed output using custom layouts is integrated into the EDIT Taxonomic Editor and will be available with the next major release.

Support: editsupport@bgbm.org

For more information:
<http://wp5.e-taxonomy.eu/>



Find your EDIT contact

Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures
GJM Verkley - verkley@cbs.knaw.nl

Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
Esteban Manrique - mcnd300@mncn.csic.es

Freie Universitaet Berlin - Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum
Walter Berendsohn - w.berendsohn@bgbm.org

Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique
Jean-Yves Rasplus - rasplus@ensam.inra.fr

Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences
Zbigniew Mirek - Zbigniew.Mirek@ib-pan.krakow.pl

Institute of Botany, Slovakian Academy of Sciences
Karol Marhold - karol.marhold@savba.sk

Komarov Botanical Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences
Dmitry Geltman - geltman@mail.ru

Magyar Természettudományi Múzeum
András Gúbanyi - gubanyi@zoo.zoo.nhmus.hu
Porter P. Lowry - pete.lowry@robot.org

Museum and Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences
Jacek Szwedo - szwedo@miiz.waw.pl

Museum für Naturkunde
Christoph Haeuser - christoph.haeuser@mfn-berlin.de

Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Thomas Haevermans - haever@mnhn.fr

Nationaal Herbarium Nederland
Marco Roos - roos@nhn.leidenuniv.nl

Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis
Leo Kriegsman - kriegsman@naturalis.nl

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Jérôme Degreef - degreef@br.fgov.be

National Museum of Natural History of Denmark - University of Copenhagen
Henrik Æ. Pedersen - henrikp@snm.ku.dk

Natural History Museum, London
Dave Roberts - workpackage6@googlemail.com

Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
Thierry Backeljau - tbackeljau@scarlet.be

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Mary Gibby - m.gibby@rbge.ac.uk

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Alan Paton - a.paton@kew.org

Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren
Michel Louette - michel.louette@africamuseum.be

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History
Leonard Hirsch - lhirsch@si.edu

Society for Management of Electronic Biodiversity Data
Mark Costello - m.costello@auckland.ac.nz

Species 2000
Frank Bisby - f.a.bisby@reading.ac.uk

Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart
Carlos Monje - monjesmnsnaturkundemuseum-bw.de

Universiteit Van Amsterdam
Yde de Jong - yjong@science.uva.nl

Univerzita Komenskeho V Bratislave
Eduard Stloukal - stloukal@fns.uniba.sk

Zoological Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences
Oleg Pugachev - pugachev_vermes@zin.ru

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Jesper Birkedal Schmidt
EDIT Communication Officer
University of Copenhagen
+45 3532 1125
E-mail jbschmidt@snm.ku.dk



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