



Project no. 018340

Project acronym: EDIT

Project title: Toward the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

Instrument: Network of Excellence

Thematic Priority: Sub-Priority 1.1.6.3: “Global Change and Ecosystems”

C8.2.2 Progress report on the draft course prospectus

Due date of component: Month 28

Actual submission date: Month 30

Start date of project: 01/03/2006

Duration: 5 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this component: 13-RBINS

Revision [Final]

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)		
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

PROPOSAL ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE OUTLINE OF THE DISTRIBUTED EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF TAXONOMY (DEST)

This proposal has been widely distributed to EDIT and non-EDIT partners for comments. At the moment of this report, feedback results are processed and will be discussed in a forthcoming meeting.

A full version of this proposal is available at the EDIT website (C8.2.2 Progress report on the draft course prospectus – full version)

1. Objectives

EDIT partner institutions and non-EDIT partner institutions will establish a European state-of-the-art School of Taxonomy, the **Distributed European School of Taxonomy**, with the aim to develop an inter-institutional programme in Taxonomy. The participating institutions will be among the leading ones in the field of Taxonomy. High-level education and knowledge sharing are fundamental prerequisites in the development of future generations of taxonomists in Europe and beyond. The programme is intended to be offered to European and non-European trainees.

2. Integration and Cooperation

The main idea of a common course development is to share and to jointly further develop the knowledge in the field of taxonomy. The curriculum of the DEST will be developed in such a way that courses will be offered at several institutions. In this way the courses will give the best quality that partners can offer considering their staff, experiences and equipment. Each partner institution will contribute with a different number of subjects depending on the matching between the curriculum topics and the existing expertise of each institution. The trainee will attend the course subjects in different ways: face-to-face at the institutions and where appropriate by means of e-learning. Students will register in the DEST and study the course units offered at the different institutions through the modes of delivery prevailing at the institution. Visiting other institutions will provide them with a flexible and interesting learning experience.

3. Components of the DEST (Fig. 1)



Training via course units (=course programme) will be complemented by a system of expert-in-training (training on-the-job) within current research projects and by yearly held summer schools. The course programme will be developed with the purpose that the trainee will not only get the best course subject the partner institutions can offer in a specific taxonomic area but he/she will also get the important experience of other universities, countries and cultures. The DEST will federate training providers around a common vision for the future of taxonomic training in Europe. It will bring together existing training resources and new training opportunities into a coherent and widely publicised training programme for taxonomy.

3.1. Structure outline of the course programme 'Modern Taxonomy' (Fig. 2)

The '**Taxonomy core courses module**' will consist of different teaching units which will be developed and delivered jointly by the partners. For each teaching unit a responsible partner will be assigned to coordinate the development of the content and of the teaching material. Teaching material will be prepared in conventional form (lectures, practicals) and, where appropriate, in distance learning form.

This ‘**Taxonomy core courses module**’ will be offered as a new study programme with the ultimate purpose to be included in existing teaching programmes at universities as part of an undergraduate biology programme. Integration at this education level emphasises the fundamental importance of taxonomy in the formation of future biologists. Moreover, it paves the way for motivating or preparing students for a future taxonomic dissertation or career in taxonomy. A diversity of approaches exists to provide teaching and training in Taxonomy with universities/institutions offering courses in pure and applied taxonomy but there are few dedicated training courses that provide future experts with a profound knowledge on **basic taxonomy** (see report on gap analysis). The ‘**Supplementary taxonomy courses module**’ will treat taxonomy in a broader sense (Fig. 2).

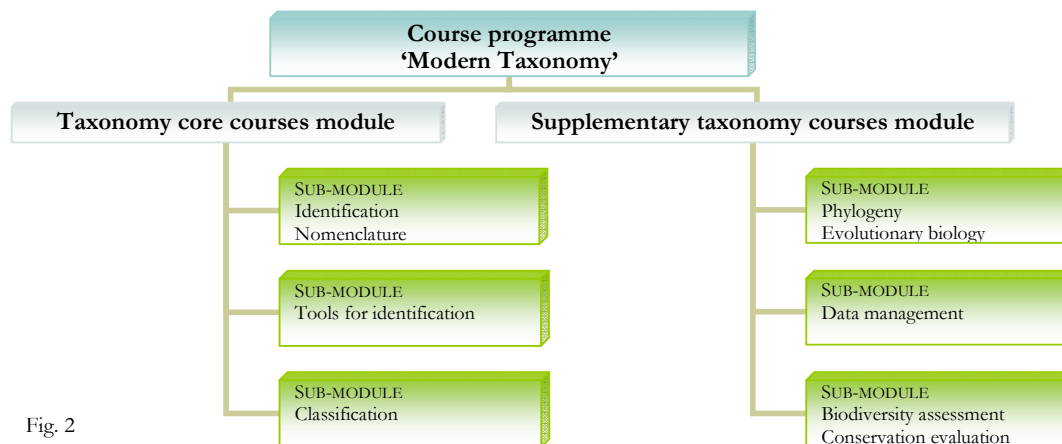


Fig. 2

3.2. Integration of the ‘Taxonomy core courses module’ in current university curricula

The overall objective of the ‘Taxonomy core courses module’ is to develop an international multi-institutional course programme which is the result of joined taxonomy knowledge and human forces present in museums and other research institutions. The ultimate goal is to integrate the module as an optional course programme in current university curricula. At a first stage, this Taxonomy core courses module will be offered to EDIT Member States for integration in university curricula. At a further stage, the programme would be presented to all 27 Member States. ‘Reforming’ university curricula and obtaining approval and recognition by universities to run the Taxonomy core courses module will not be easy. Therefore, the importance and relevance of a sound taxonomy training to underpin the skills and scientific formation of biology students should be more emphasised and unequivocally demonstrated.

3.3. E-learning component: the Virtual DEST Campus

The main goal of this virtual component of the DEST is to improve the teaching and learning methods and skills with a special focus on ODL-technologies. It is a location in cyberspace designed to support the Taxonomy training, to facilitate resource sharing, collaborative and integrated teaching and learning.

4. Organisational structure of DEST (Fig. 3)

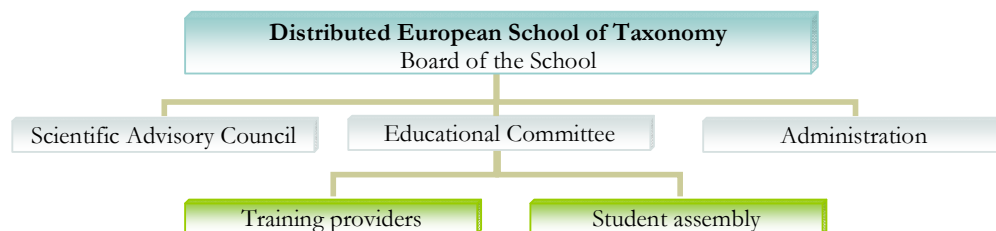


Fig. 3