



DEST Meeting

Infrastructure outline of the Distributed European School of Taxonomy (DEST)

Participants – Agenda - Conclusions & Recommendations
17 December, 2008
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels

Participants:

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Eileen J. Cox (EC), Natural History Museum, London
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Cornelia Löhne (CL), Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem
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Amoret Whitaker (AW), Natural History Museum, London

Secretary: Tine Mallaerts, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels

AGENDA

09:30 Welcome and round table presentation 'Who is who?'

09:45 Infrastructure outline of the Distributed European School of Taxonomy (DEST)
T. Backeljau

10:10 Summary of the feedback received on the DEST infrastructure proposal
I. Van de Velde

10:25 – 16:00

Round table discussion on the following issues:

1. General structure of DEST: model and components
2. Course programme
 - define course units & content
 - location: distributed in different institutions/universities
 - participation of the various partners providing courses - means of integrating courses and training providers - selection of training providers
 - level of training basic taxonomy module and others
 - integration of the modules in university curriculum
3. Recognized diploma
 - accreditation system
4. Audience
 - target audience
 - participation of students/trainees: registration – acceptance of students/trainees
5. Development of e-learning facilities
 - online study resources
6. Funding sources – financial aspects
7. Collaboration with international networks/organizations
 - proposal from ABRS & SANBI
8. Organizational structure of DEST
 - formation of a DEST core discussion group

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Not all courses have to be *a priori* for free. If they are of high quality, people will pay for it (*cf.* molecular course: <http://www.molecularevolution.org/>).
- There are various target groups. Training is needed at all levels (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate) but DEST should start to focus on postgraduate levels (master and PhD students) so that they can transmit the passion for taxonomy and stimulate the other levels. DEST should set-up e-learning for the broader public. DEST can have satellite things for extending the public.
- It is very important to teach the teachers -> train the trainers. Guidelines for teachers should not be in a paper version but as an e-learning component where all information can be found.
- Training should be different for young bachelors and more advanced people. It is important for undergraduates to teach them the basics of taxonomy: 'what is what', and do not go in too much detail. They need to be aware of the rules. Graduates need more professional and detailed courses.
- EDIT has to offer high profile taxonomy courses -> EDIT stamped courses. Basic taxonomy module should include: codes of nomenclature, identification and biological classification. In addition, develop an introductory course on the positioning of taxonomy in the science of biology (evolutionary thinking). Also to be included are: links to phylogenetic trees, legislation, applied taxonomy in biodiversity, forensics, biogeography, etc.
- Selection of courses has to be done on what is already available, and on what people want to share. If gaps exist in the present offer, fill in the gaps by contacting people.
- EDIT has to set up a platform with all available training resources offered by EDIT. Use attractive titles to announce the courses.
- DEST courses should at least require the acknowledgement from universities; universities accept the courses and students receive credits for following them.
- Formation of the DEST core discussion group: all participants of the meeting are willing to participate in the discussion group. An online discussion forum will be created.

Brussels, 14 January, 2009