



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"

D8 Summary analysis on user groups and their needs (Short version)

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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)	

Executive summary

This deliverable contributes to EDIT's objective 5 "stakeholder forum" and indirectly also to objectives 1 and 2 "reduction of fragmentation" and "strengthening the scientific, technological and information capacities". During the Third JPA EDIT used a two-way approach to engage with stakeholders of taxonomy: 1) compile, make visible and analyse what kind of collaborations already exist between different actors in taxonomy and 2) take a proactive role in creating a collaborative environment by inviting stakeholders to EDIT meetings and activities and by participation in stakeholder meetings.

Under the umbrella of the first approach the stakeholder subject was given a more prominent visibility through the EDIT website, information disseminated on users and other stakeholders and we started a social network analysis of the taxonomic field. The social network analysis of the EDIT co-author network was used as an explorative exercise to investigate the possibilities of the methodologies for strategic planning purposes in EDIT. The analysis provided interesting information about number of co-authored papers published among EDIT partners and the number of co-author pairs. Furthermore, we concluded that the social analysis indicators produced very rich information about the various roles and groupings of the actors (EDIT institutions) in the EDIT co-author network. The social network analysis tools and methods provided insights in the connectedness of the EDIT institutions, if they kept a strategic "gate keeper" positions in the network, the level of activity of their network participation and on the clustering of sub-networks between some of the institutions in the network.

Under the second approach three workshops have been held with representatives of different user communities: amateur/non-professional/volunteer taxonomists; users of collections; and users of scientific names. Based on the outcomes of different workshops with uses of taxonomy (approach 2) EDIT recommends its member institutions to cherish the collaborations of its staff with the stakeholder community, to compile collaborations carried out in their institutions, to give their staff a stage at the institutional level, to use these collaborations in communication with the general public, their governments and other funding bodies and to reward their staff for developing these collaborations. From the outcomes of the three workshops several recommendations for EDIT and EDIT institutions were filtered out and are brought (and will be brought) to the attention of the different EDIT hierarchies, NSC, BOD, SAC. A further effort towards the implementation of the recommendations will be made during year four.

Conclusions and next steps

In this report we discussed the vision of EDIT on why it is important in the context of the networks' framework to engage with users of taxonomic information, the efforts which are carried out to contribute to this vision and activities that have taken place during the Third JPA.

We stressed that more interaction exists between taxonomic institutions and the broader user community than is often assumed. EDIT acknowledges that these examples are hidden and dispatched. Therefore EDIT aims to make these activities of individual members visible and accessible. The Stakeholder Library and the Case Studies on stakeholder collaborations are just one example of how EDIT facilitates this. The newsletter and EDIT meetings are other platforms where EDIT - stakeholder collaborations can be presented and can serve as inspiration for member institutions. The visibility of existing collaborations and future user activities will be further developed in the Fourth JPA under activity 1.4. In this context EDIT recommends to the

member institutions to nurture intrapersonal interactions of its staff with the stakeholder community and to make these collaborations part of their institutional presentation

The second approach applied in the Third JPA involved direct engagement of users and other stakeholders of taxonomy by organising meetings to investigate who they are and what their needs are regarding interaction with the taxonomic research community and the use of taxonomic information (services). General needs expressed in the three users groups are:

- Have a systematic interaction with the broader stakeholder communities as institutions (currently too dependent on individual staff-stakeholder relations) and listen carefully
- Facilitate this engagement by communication mechanisms (one entrance point) contact details, experts lists etc
- Make visible what is available in institutions in terms of expertise, information, collections.
- Facilitate access to taxonomic information and services (e.g. online databases). Adjust these to different uses
- Create incentives and optimal work conditions for staff to interact with broad user demand (e.g. training)
- Further digitise information, develop sophisticated data storage and search options

In the Fourth JPA EDIT will continue to work on analysing stakeholder needs and will look into mechanisms for the implementation of the recommendations drafted during the Third JPA on direct engagement with stakeholders. The heart of the activities in year four will be the finalisation of the “Dynamics of taxonomy” study with the Rathenau Institute, the Conservation and Taxonomy meeting (M7.1.7), the collection of examples of stakeholder collaborations from EDIT members and making them visible. Finally, recommendations will be developed on stakeholder interaction with the Consortium after the EDIT funding period.

References

C4.1.2BIS Stakeholder report 1 Stakeholder engagement in biodiversity and environmental projects

C4.2.2 Report on case-studies of users-scientists collaborations in EDIT institutions
<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/node/471>

C4.2.6 Report on social network analysis and bibliometric methodologies as tool to map actors in taxonomy

C2.3.3/C4.2.8 Report on guidelines on how to meet mutual needs of non professional and professional taxonomists

M4.2.8a Report: Broadening the user base of natural history collections (draft). <http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/collectionusers>

M4.2.8b Meeting the needs of those that use scientific names.
<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/node/443>

ANNEX Photo gallery



Workshop
Professionals and non-professionals as
producers and users of taxonomic
knowledge – synergies, conflicts and the
role of taxonomic societies

An EDIT activity of WP2 and WP4
Hosted by Cabo de Gata – Níjar Natural Park
Rodalquilar, Almería, Spain
April 23 – 24, 2008

**Workshop
“Broadening the user base of
natural history collections”**

An EDIT WP4 and
SYNTHESYS initiative
4 and 5 November, 2008

Hosted by the Royal Belgian
Institute of Natural Sciences,
Brussels



**Workshop
Meeting the needs of those
that use scientific names.**

A workshop organised for
professionals from outside the
scientific taxonomic
community.

Organised by EDIT WP4,
Royal Botanic Gardens - Kew
& Natural History Museum,
London.
February 18-19, 2009

*Hosted by Museo Nacional de
Ciencias Naturales, Madrid.*

