**ESG General (virtual) Meeting**

**Thursday 14th May 2020 at 15:00 – 17:00hrs (CEST)**

***Participants***

**Chair:** Johanna Eder (SNMS Stuttgart)

Björn Berning (Upper Austrian State Mus., Linz)

Ana Casino (CETAF)

Babis Fassoulas (NHM Crete)

Falko Glöckler (MfN Berlin)

Olle Hints (Tallinn University of Technology)

Joachim Holstein (SMNS Stuttgart)

Andreas Kroh (NHMW Vienna)

Giles Miller (NHM London)

Patricia Mergen (RMCA Tervuren, Meise Botanic Garden, Meise)

Michael Rasser (SMNS Stuttgart)

Celia Santos (CSIC Madrid)

Laura Tilley (CETAF)

Rachel Walcott (National Museums Scotland Edinburgh)

Wiebke Walbaum (SMNS Stuttgart)

Ralf - Thomas Schmitt (MfN Berlin)

Enar Mustonen (Tallinn University of Technology)

Jiri Frank (NHM Prague)

Jiri Kvacek (NHM Prague)

Rivka Rabinovich (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Franck Theeten (RMCA Tervuren)

Larissa Smirnova (RMCA Tervuren)

Yoni Israeli (?)

Bjorn Kroger (LUOMUS Finland)

zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85669527662>

***Agenda***

1. Governance of GeoCASe
2. Increasing the representation of Mineralogy/Petrology/Meteorites (R. Walcot)
3. Continued (from last meeting) discussion of GeoCASe technical road-map (F. Glöckler and O. Hints)
4. AOB

***Useful Links***

* *Technical Road Map:* <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QhIy0sGIdV1OAMma35AExroYFMNfElqLmHCulJ1OZFc/edit#gid=0>
* WORMs registry (World Registry of Marine Species): <http://www.marinespecies.org/>
* Mindat: <https://www.mindat.org/>
* International Mineralogy Commission: <https://www.ima-mineralogy.org/>.
* Bloodhound (<https://bloodhound-tracker.net/>)
* SYNTHESYS+ VA calls <https://www.synthesys.info/access/virtual-access.html>
* GRID: <https://www.grid.ac/>
* VIAF <http://viaf.org/>

***Minutes:***

*J.Eder:* Opened the meeting and welcomed participants, and asked: Does everyone agree with the agenda or anything to be added?

Everyone agrees with the agenda. *J. Eder* makes a suggestion to re-order the items by moving the ‘increasing representation of mineralogy….’ Item before the ‘GeoCASe roadmap item’, for timing reasons. This has been amended.

1. **Governance of GeoCASe**

* *J. Eder:* Explained the recent proposal of the ESG core team, which is to have a small core team formed of members that are committed to developing the GeoCASe portal into a fully functioning product for the CETAF community and beyond. The GeoCASe portal should be a product of the CETAF community.
* *J. Eder* asked *A. Kroh*  to elaborate on this:
* *A. Kroh:* commented that developing such initiatives as GeoCASe without governance often leads to repetitive discussion about a topic. An advisory board is important for better driving developments forward, and the advisory board should be a small core team. The implementation of an advisory board has worked well for other portals and registries such as the WORMs registry (World Registry of Marine Species) <http://www.marinespecies.org/> because it gives clarity to the responsibilities of individuals. A similar structure could work for GeoCASe.
* We need to discuss how we could implement an advisory board and the number of people involved.
* *J .Eder* asked members for their opinion, and specifically if *F. Glöckler* agrees?
* All meeting members agree, there were no objections. *F. Glöckler* agrees that this is a good idea.
* *J. Eder asked:* Who is ready to be a member of the consortium?
* *R. Walcott:*  commented that it is important to make sure mineralogists play a bigger role in GeoCASe. *J. Eder* replied yes we are happy for mineralogists to be involved and provide advice.
* *F. Glöckler* asked: How should this board be constituted to ensure that the different domains (e.g. Palaeontology, Mineralogy, Petrology, Meteorites, etc.) and technical views are well represented. We have already previously (2017) made a plan for different working groups which included technical and non technical roles - how is this current proposal different?
* *J. Eder/A. Kroh:* commented that the proposal of a consortium would work on a different level from the working groups (i.e. the consortium/core team would only involve a small number of members for decision making). The working groups are open for the ESG to be involved depending on their expertise.
* Participants of the meeting who volunteer themselves for the consortium:
  + J. Eder: Chair of Advisory Board
  + L. Tilley: Communication role - keeping an overview and connecting to other CETAF initiatives and projects
  + R. Walcott: Representative for Mineralogy, Petrology and Meteorites
  + M. Rasser: Palaeontology and Sedimentology.
  + P. Mergen: advisor for strategic positioning and providing knowledge of other initiatives
  + F. Glöckler: Technical advisor
  + O. Hints: Technical advisor
  + J. Kvacek: Palaeobotany and nomenclature/taxonomy
  + A. Kroh: Would like to contribute but not sure to what extent there are major changes taking place in NHMW.
  + J. Frank: advisor for quality control/software testing

*A. Kroh & A. Casino:* recommend that the Advisory Board should be a small group to allow flexibility when organising meetings and for faster decision making. We can always invite people (ad hoc) to meetings if further expertise is needed.

The CETAF Secretariat and ESG members are in full support of the advisory board, no objections raised.

* *A. Casino:* Highlighted that the purpose of a core team is that it is small and should only contain members that are really committed either financially or by in-kind contributions (resources and time) in order to effectively push developments forward. *L. Tilley:* added that the core team can be determined by the extent to which members can contribute to the tasks of building GeoCASe.
* *A. Kroh:* Highlighted that there are other important roles within the Core team that are not mentioned in the Technical Roadmap such as communication roles, quality control etc. Communication roles are important in the advisory board with regards to having an overview and translating community needs to the technical team, thus relieving the technical team (I.T Personal) of this burden and allowing them to focus on the actual development.
* *P. Mergen:* People with a strategic overview are important.
* *G. Miller:* Mentioned the current portal being built in NHM and how they have organised an advisory board by having different-levels technical and non-technical working groups.
* *J. Frank:* Asked for clarification on the purpose of the Governance/advisory board and what will happen to it once GeoCASe is built? Who will take over?
* *A. Casino:* the product will remain in the community (ESG) and be offered to the rest outside the community to use.
* *A. Kroh:* Comments that it is a good idea to keep a GeoCASe advisory board after the portal is built, which should be voted in by the community and rotated every 2 or 3 years. This is to ensure maintenance in the long term for example with regards to checking market developments in I.T., software. This takes the burden off the I.T. personal so they can focus on technical aspects and don’t have to also deal with the communication aspect.
* A. Casino: Ensures that an advisory board can be continuous for as long as the community wants it.
* F. Glöckler: Highlight the importance of setting rules for governance in the form of a written document - it doesn’t have to be a legal document - just something in writing. Examples of rules could include: how often we have meetings, processes of discussion and decision making.
* Members support such a document of rules which should Not be an MOU.
* J. Eder: asks the group if we can agree on a core group made of the volunteers above:

All members agree with the volunteers and this way going forward.

1. **Increasing the representation of Mineralogy/Petrology/Meteorites (*R. Walcott*)**

* *R. Walcott*: Firstly introduces herself as a new member of the ESG and her background as a curator in Mineralogy, Petrology and Meteorites. Highlights her concern of making sure we don’t reinvent the wheel and that we are aware of other initiatives and communities that we can connect with and use.
* Within the Mineralogy and Petrology world, chemistry is the most important for classification. Rock and Mineralogy is slow to the game of global registries because they already have other well established services and communities such as **Mindat**: <https://www.mindat.org/> which contains all mineral species (1 million occurrences with the database). It is important to know what type of information these portals contain and the expertise involved, and we should consider the possibility of joining forces.
* *R. Walcott* presented a brief tour of the Mindat portal (via shared screen), showing the different features such as mineral properties, geographic occurrence, images; and also the pages that include palaeontology. Based on the feedback from the owner of Mindat (Jolyon Ralph), the post popular uses of the website people searching chemistry, chemical formulas, the structure of minerals; crystallography and mineral optical properties and searches for mineral groups.
* For the update of mineral names and properties there is a commission called the International Mineralogy Commission <https://www.ima-mineralogy.org/>.
* *J. Eder* asked whether Mindat has a curator perspective/collection manager view? Can you ask Where is a certain mineral collection?
* *R. Walcott:* Explained that her institute uses the DANA 8 approach to curate their minerals. But there is not much information on the curation of mineralogy and it does not contain individual collections of institutes.
* *R. T. Schmitt*: Added that this is a gap that needs to be filled and this is where GeoCASe can fill the gap - so that we have a combination of the occurrence data and collection management information.

Cut & Paste of Zoom chat comments/questions (some not answered due to time limits).

* Patricia*:* I see more parallels with occurrences and bio monitoring answer: there is a type locality, but it is not necessarily linked to a voucher specimen (collection) ....
* From Franck Theeten to Everyone: Do they offer an XML of JSON webservice to link (or upload) data ?
* From Patricia Mergen to Everyone: The specimens in Geocase could link to the related "mineral species" to have additional info for example
* From Falko Glöckler to Everyone: 04:02 PM @Patricia: Good point!
* From Giles Miller NHM London to Everyone: We have investigated with Jolyon the possibility of using some of his georeferenced data. All the sites in this DB have georeferences.Could we link our occurrences to Mindat?
* *Someone:* I think there are multiple external databases to which GeoCASE could link out - Catalogue of Life for example, Geonames.org, etc.

Minutes from oral discussion continued:

* *G. Miller:* Asked why Mindat decided to have fossil specimens?  *R. Walcott* answered: The reason is because Jolyon has dealt with private dealers for mineral specimens, some of which also had palaeontology collections, and he became aware of the IDIGBIo and other initiatives that have tried to incorporate fossils into there databases but usability of these are difficult, thus he tried to make a database that is more accessible to the non-academic community.  *G. Miller* comments that we can link data for our needs.

**3) Continued (from last meeting) discussion of GeoCASe technical road-map (F. Glöckler and Olle Hints)**.

* *J. Eder* First introduced this item and explained that there have been additional changes since the last meeting, and asked *F. Glöckler* if he could go through MVP1 again.
* *F. Glöckler* Firstly went through MVP2 briefly before explaining the updates of MVP1. So the MVP1 is the first phase of getting the portal functioning; and MVP 2 phase is focused on enriching and standardising the data. You need to make sure these differences are distinguished between the two phases when thinking of your contribution.
* Note: The Advisory Board should be in charge of MVP 1 task 1.01 ‘general & technical specification’. and MVP 2 task 2.01.
* **MVP 2:** 
  + **Task 2.02 ‘specification of minimum harmonized fields across data providers’** here we want to define a minimum set of field’s that the search index should include. What are the most important fields that people search for?
  + **Task 2.03 ‘identify / define controlled vocabularies’**: we need to have a level of harmonisation across institutes and search results. To do this we need to identify the crucial vocabulary and then we can work on harmonisation. A lot of the current issues with the portal relate to this.
  + *A. Kroh a*dded that GeoCASe could be used as a quality control reference for institutes. *F. Glöckler:* Yes we could attach research tools that automatise the differences between vocabs.
  + *P. Mergen* added: This work can be continued with TDWG. *F. Glöckler* added that this is highly related to TDWG, and that the data standard ABCD Extension for Geosciences (EFG) is lacking suggestions for controlled vocab. Domain specific knowledge is and other database expertise are needed here.
  + **Task 2.05 ‘data downloads & referencing’** This is a missing feature currently - ideally we could adopt the approach from the GBIF portal and assignpersistent unique identifiers for data downloads so we can use it as a reference in our work. Downloads would then be persistent snapshots for data citation.
  + **Task 2.06 ‘full REST API for machine readable data access’** Rest API’s should be available so that the data can be used by other software and research tools.
  + **Task 2.07 ‘identify (external) data sources for data enrichment’** There could be several links to different resources and portals.
  + *F. Glöckler*: links should be done on an institute level for quality control for example: I have to make sure that on an institutional level that values/text in our database are linked to an outside resource for reference.
  + *A. Kroh:* Isn’t this already done via ABCD-EFG (referring to the quality check)
  + *F. Glöckler:* gave the bloodhound platform (<https://bloodhound-tracker.net/>) as an example of mapping data with names of collectors - there may be reasons for typing names differently within different institutes, but by individually linking data to such resources (also Wikidata) we have a reference to the historical changes in names.
  + **Task 2.08 ‘mechanisms for linking collection object data to (external) resources’** - little was said about this?
* *Note:* These tasks may need to be adjusted to make sure they reflect the needs of the community
* *J. Kvacek:* Mentioned the authority of paleobotany names ‘ Registry of plant fossil names’ in which there is a clear standard that we could follow. Jiri Frank to add this to the remarks section of the Technical Road-Map google sheet.
* *J. Holstein:* Highlighted that SMNS can offer contributions to **Task 1.07** and **Task 1.08** in collaboration with MfN because they are involved in the IIIF (images) standard development in SYNTHESYS+ and Virtual Access (VA). They may be able to help in 1.10 depending on specifications, and they noted that this should move to MVP2. **SMNS can take over Task 1.12 and can support 1.13** (Added to the google sheet).
* There was a general conversation on SYNTHESYS+ VA calls (referring to **Task 1.08**)(*P. Mergen, A. Casino, J. Frank, R. Walcot* etc.). There is encouragement for members to apply for this because there is a lack of Earth Science collections. The current call maybe too soon for GeoCASe but the next call should be strongly considered. The extension of the current VA call see website for details; <https://www.synthesys.info/access/virtual-access.html>. Members noted that there is a lack of clarity on eligibility for VA calls. Members involved in SYNTHESYS+ say there needs to be some amendments made for the next call to ensure better clarity. It was noted that the VA calls are a competitive process and that it's more for a coalition of organisations/institutes to make a call rather than individual institutes. The funding goes to the institute that will be doing the actual digitising.
* **Task 1.05 ‘Metadata’** *R. Walcott* asked for clarification of metadata. *L. Tilley* and *F. Glöckler* answers this by explaining that this refers to the description of collections that allows for their discoverability and effective use. For example, (from the SYNTHESYS+ Dashboard) metadata at collection level includes Institute name, taxonomic classification, storage type, and geographic origin, stratigraphic level, etc...).
* *R. Walcott:* How would I help in this task? *L. Tilley* replies: For instance, we would appreciate your knowledge on mineralogy/petrology/meteorites in terms of how they are curated and classified. Also we could do with this knowledge for future recommendations for the SYNTHESYS+ dashboard.
* *G. Miller:* Asks how does the collection level metadata relate to specimen level metadata (which is granularity of GeoCASe): *L. Tilley:* explained that there are different levels of granularity. The collection level being the higher-level and specimen more detailed, but everything should hinge off each other (from higher-level more granular level). Thus it is important that we relate our metadata to the high-level classifications.
* *G. Miller:* Comments this may be very challenging to map existing records to this higher-level classification.

Zoom meeting chat cut/paste questions/comments

*This was a general discussion about the different databases GeoCASe can link to:*

* Bloodhound: difficult to find among all the dog pictures ...
* *From Andreas to Everyone:*
* What was the name of the person name database? "Via"?
* *From Patricia Mergen to Everyone:*
* http://viaf.org
* This issue is solved in IPNI and also PFNR
* <https://www.grid.ac/>
* *From Giles Miller NHM London to Everyone:* @Rachel Walcott I will post details of calls on the Geological Curators' Group listserver when details come up.
* *From Celia Santos to Everyone:* As I said during the last meeting, I can help with 1.05 and 1.06(Collection descriptions)
* *From Wiebke Walbaum (SMNS) to Everyone:* I suppose writing your Name/Institute into the sheet then

***Actions***

* *L. Tilley:* To set a Doodle Poll for First GeoCASe Advisory Board (AB) Meeting.
* **Participants are strongly encouraged to review MVP1** in the GeoCASe technical Roadmap and add comments and to seriously consider where they can effectively contribute their time and expertise - Deadline before the AB meeting (To be arranged).
* *A. Kroh:* After the meeting sent a presentation (which includes the screenshots from the old GeoCASe portal back in 2011) to the ESG mailing list that explains the mapping of ABCD-EFG, and gives an example of how it can link to collection metadata.