**Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities**

**(CETAF)**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**for the**

**Earth Science Group (ESG)**

**Version 1.0**

**February 16, 2016**

**Amended June 8, 2018**

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**PREAMBLE**

Earth sciences and related collections are essential components of many natural history museums. Geoscientific collections offer the only physical objects documenting Earth´s evolution including past biodiversity and are essential for calibrating the tree of life. They document Earth´s geodiversity offering evidence for climate change through time and are essential for mitigating risks based on natural processes. Moreover, collections of extraterrestrial rocks provide insight in the evolution of the solar system and the formation of solid bodies.

Geoscientific collections are distinct from biological ones by their deep-time aspects. Thus related are the specifically different collection materials, i.e. fossils, minerals, rocks, etc. that require different methods of preparation, restoration, curation and research.

The objective of the ESG is to efficiently integrate and strengthen these valuable resources in CETAF and to raise their visibility within CETAF and beyond. This will be achieved by intensive interaction with existing CETAF working groups.

# Paragraph 1 PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to encourage and improve collaboration and integration of the signatory institutions in the field of earth sciences. By signing this MoU, the signatory institutions provide evidence of concrete and specific commitment to the objectives of the ESG.

# Paragraph 2 GENERAL DEFINITIONS

**2.1. CETAF:** The international Belgian non-profit association (AISBL) “**C**onsortium of **E**uropean **Ta**xonomic **F**acilities” (CETAF).

**2.2. CETAF General Meeting:** The general governing body of CETAF as defined in the CETAF AISBL Statute.

**2.3. ESG:** The **E**arth **S**cience **G**roup within CETAF, a special interest group under CETAF with focus on earth sciences.

**2.4. ESG member:** An institution having signed the present MoU.

**2.5. GEOCASE: Geo**sciences **C**ollection **A**ccess **Se**rvice is an extended version of BIOCASE (Biological Collection Access Service), which is a transnational network of biological collections of all kinds.

# Paragraph 3 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The aim of the **ESG** is to embed the Earth Science strategy into the CETAF strategy focussing on the following most essential challenges for earth sciences within CETAF in the next decade:

* Make collection data (fossils, rocks, minerals, etc.) available via an online system
* Prioritise type specimens
* Convince CETAF members to contribute
* Search for an appropriate online system.
* Lobbying for increased incorporation of fossil names in global taxonomic databases like Catalogue of Life (extend the Catalogue of Life by the Catalogue of Past Life);
* Increase the visibility of geoscientific collections and research, e.g. contribute to the CETAF contact point for publication in social media;
* Develop projects and related initiatives that are relevant to society and challenging to science;
	+ Contribution to the new ESFRI road map
* Join forces with other European Geo-organisations;
* Elaborate solutions and raise awareness for field collecting policies in geosciences;
	+ Assemble information on national laws for sampling and export of earth science specimens in CETAF member countries
* Capacity building projects in geosciences;
* Raise awareness in politics for the relevance of geosciences.

**Paragraph 4 AGREEMENT**

**4.1.** The goal of this agreement is to implement the coordination of activities and to improve these coordination activities where necessary.

**4.2.** Each Partner signing this MoU agrees to work cooperatively according to the general ESG objectives outlined in paragraph 3.

**4.3.** The Partners recognise the importance of long-term institutional commitment in order to achieve effectiveness of the ESG by:

* Making available staff time of 6 days per year, excluding participation in annual meetings;
* Committing to cover travel and hotel costs of their institutional representative for the annual general meeting.

# Paragraph 5 GOVERNANCE

## 5.1. ESG membership representation

* Institutions are represented by the person in charge of the institutional collections, if available the director or head of earth science collections.
* The representative may designate a mandated substitute. In exceptional cases, an institution may be represented also by the official CETAF representative.

**5.2. Hosting institution**

The Stuttgart State Museum of Natural History acts as hosting institution for the ESG for the first period (see paragraph 9.1.).

## 5.3. Organisational structure and financial responsibility

* The nucleus of the ESG is formed by a chair person and a core group which will plan, coordinate and communicate activities.
* The core group will be constituted by members of institutions which will make staff time available (see paragraph 4.3.).
* The regular term for the chair and the core group is three years. It may be renewed by a vote.
* ESG members have equal voting rights. Decisions will be taken during ESG meetings by the majority of present members and have to be adopted by all members.
* ESG members meet at least once a year in person. Each ESG member will cover the costs of its participation from its own resources, unless these costs are covered by a specific grant.

**5.4. ESG Reporting**

The chair and core group will regularly report about the ESG activities to the CETAF General Meeting and to the signatories of the member institutions, and will cooperate with other integrative activities set up in the CETAF framework in accordance with the CETAF “Règlement d’Ordre Intérieur” when the latter will be adopted.

# Paragraph 6 ASSOCIATION AND DISASSOCIATION OF PARTICIPANTS

## 6.1. Association of Participants

**6.1.1.** Association with this MoU is open to all CETAF members holding geoscientific collections.

**6.1.2.** Such association becomes effective upon signature of this MoU.

## 6.2. Disassociation of Participants

**6.2.1.** Any Participant may disassociate itself from this MoU by advising the chair in writing of its intention to do so and of the effective date.

# Paragraph 7 AMENDMENTS AND CHANGES

**7.1.** This MoU may be amended to support textual improvements or any other minor change which does not alter the original intention of the text. Any more substantial changes should be effected by termination of this MoU and its substitution with another.

**7.2.** An amendment to the text of the MoU is proposed to the chair by a participant. The proposal is circulated among the ESG and the participants. Taking into account comments received, the chair issues a recommendation of the original proposal. The amendment is coming into effect by unanimous vote of the ESG members.

# Paragraph 8 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

This MoU adheres to the provisions with respect to Intellectual Property Rights and meets the definitions used by CETAF and as determined under relevant laws, regulations and international agreements of the Partner institutions. Additional provisions may be defined in paragraph 4 of this MoU.

# Paragraph 9 DURATION

## 9.1. Duration

This MoU covers a period of 3 years as from March 1st, 2018.

## 9.2. Termination

The CETAF General Meeting may terminate this MoU at any time.

## 9.3. Prolongation

The CETAF General Meeting will be prompted by the Chair of ESG about possible renewal of this MoU by mid of 2020.

For <Institution name>

<Institution Address>

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

<Authorised person name and title>