

BIODIVERSITY NEWSFLASH

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- ▶ Conference “Empowering Biodiversity Research” on 21th May : **Registration deadline 7th May**

This event is recognized as a **Green Week 2015** satellite event.

Deadline for registrations : 7th of May.

The **Belgian Biodiversity Platform** and several key Biodiversity Informatics related **partner institutes** are pleased to invite you to the Conference **Empowering Biodiversity Research**, which will take place on May 21st 2015 in Brussels at the **Palace of Academies**.

The conference will bring together representatives of national and international scientific institutes to explore and discuss the opportunities and strengths related to **Biodiversity Informatics and Open Data**. Three keynote speakers will start the day. A series of lightning talks will also take place, explaining the state of research making use of



biodiversity informatics tools in Belgium. In the afternoon we will showcase some state of the art projects.

Biodiversity Informatics deal with the application of informatics techniques to biodiversity information for improved management, presentation, discovery, exploration and analysis of scientific data. Combined with open data sources on the Internet, this is a powerful new approach in doing research.

- ➔ *When ? 21 May 2015*
- ➔ *Where ? Palace of Academies, Brussels*
- ➔ *More information [here](#) or contact Dimitri Brosens : d.brosens@biodiversity.be*
- ➔ *Small registration fee of 10 euro*



► “Biodiversity and Development, a global heritage”, on 26th of November

What is biodiversity and what services does it provide? How does it contribute to sustainable development, and more specifically in developing countries? Why should we care? What is the role of biodiversity in the fight against poverty? Why supporting the southern countries to safeguard their biodiversity? How are Belgium and the EU managing this? To answer these questions, and to better understand these issues, we invite you to participate in an information day, lead by **CeBioS** in the framework of the European Year of Development.

This day will address biodiversity through topics related to development:

- Protected Areas
- Green Economy
- Policy and Education
- Health
- Food security
- Land Use

Program:

- Presentations
- Poster session
- Debate
- Networking Lunch

A poster session will also take place, highlighting related activities and projects

Already block this date in your calendar and come join us on November 26 !

► More information on program and registration [here](#)

► Contact : Anne-Julie Rochette
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► When ? on 26th of November 2015

CEBioS 

► Software release supports consistent DOI-based citation

The GBIF Secretariat has published version 2.2 of its **Integrated Publishing Toolkit** (IPT), a free open-source software tool for publishing and sharing biodiversity data. The new version supports consistent, traceable attribution of GBIF-mediated data and downloads, streamlines how publishers define appropriate uses of their data, and improves data quality control.

IPT v2.2 introduces the use of **digital object identifiers** (DOIs) for datasets, which gives users a stable, easy-to-use model for citing data sources. This approach also improves publishers' ability to track how and where users apply their data, in both research and web applications. Updates to GBIF.org also support this new citation model, by displaying DOIs both for datasets and for user downloads. Since early February, GBIF has issued DOIs for all newly published datasets ([example 1](#)),

and GBIF.org now recognizes and displays publisher-assigned DOIs for existing datasets ([example 2](#)).



User downloads also now receive GBIF-issued DOIs. This approach significantly simplifies references to any and all datasets represented in user-defined search results, even complex ones comprising occurrences from many different datasets.

The new IPT release also introduces standardized machine-readable data licenses, emphasizing GBIF's commitment to open access.

► More information [here](#)

► Contact : André Heughebaert
(a.heughebaert@biodiversity.be)

► New opportunity for publication of species sampling and monitoring data

The international body responsible for maintaining standards for the exchange of biological data has ratified changes that improve support for mobilization and access of sample-based species data through the GBIF network.

By adding to the rich set of terms already available in the [Darwin Core](#) (DwC) standard, this action by [Biodiversity Information Standards](#)—also known as TDWG—will help GBIF-mediated data move beyond “presence only” data and support the discovery and application of richer, more quantitative information used in other areas of scientific discovery and research, particularly ecological monitoring and assessment.

Sample-based data come from thousands of different kinds of environmental, ecological, and natural resource investigations. These events range from one-off surveys to ongoing monitoring and include activities like freshwater and marine sampling, plant cover and vegetation plots, and citizen science bird counts, among others.

In addition to bringing in new datasets, these changes could also improve the quality and utility of many datasets already published through GBIF, which derive from the more complex sources required to understand how species populations change across space and time.



“The Darwin Core extension for sample data is a major advancement for the global biodiversity community,” said Henrique Pereira, chair of [GEO BON](#). *“Monitoring biodiversity change often requires repeated measures at the same place. This extension will enable data holders publishing through the GBIF network to share population abundance data (including time series population data) or presence/absence data, and also to document the sampling protocol.”*

➔ [More information here](#)

► Risk screening tools for potentially invasive organisms available



Harmonia+ and Pandora were created as parts of the Alien Alert project on horizon scanning for new pests and invasive species in Belgium and neighbouring areas.

The Alien Alert project was performed by a consortium of eight Belgian scientific institutions. It was coordinated by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform and funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO).

The following risk screening tools for potentially invasive organisms are available and potentially useful in the framework of the [EU regulation on Invasive Alien Species](#):

Harmonia+

[Harmonia+](#) is a first-line risk assessment scheme for potentially invasive species. It presents a series

of questions concerning an organism, the answers of which need to be provided by one or more assessors. [Harmonia+](#) is described in full [here](#).

Pandora+

[Pandora+](#) is a first-line risk assessment scheme for pathogenic or parasitic (micro)organisms that may be of concern to environmental, plant, animal or human health. It refers directly to a particular host organism, and as such, is designed to support assessments within [Harmonia+](#).

Pandora

[Pandora](#) is a first-line risk assessment scheme for the risks posed by pathogenic and parasitic (micro)organisms. It is the counterpart of [Harmonia](#), for potentially invasive (macro)organisms.

➔ Contact : Sonia Vanderhoeven (s.vanderhoeven@biodiversity.be)

► Request for action to map Unesco's MAB Belgian activities



For UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) the year 2015 is a crucial year with the development of a new strategy and action plan.

The WNBR (the World Network of Biosphere Reserves) is now composed of 631 biosphere reserves in 119 countries, including 14 transboundary sites. Those sites are unique model/learning/international cooperation sites or tools for research, for sharing knowledge and good practices, for exchanging experiences and building capacities: 'The MAB Programme develops the basis within the natural and social sciences for the rational and sustainable use and conservation of the resources of the biosphere and for the improvement of the overall relationship between people and their environment. It predicts the consequences of today's actions on tomorrow's world and thereby increases people's ability to efficiently manage natural resources for the well-being of both human populations and the environment.'

- Within the UNESCO MAB programme, the new Strategy for next decade as well as the Action Plan are being developed

We observe that, in the draft 'Strategy' document, research will take an even more important role in the MAB programme than before.

- At EU level, we noticed recently interests (e.g. proposal from Spain) to incorporate a new topic 'Biosphere Reserves' in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017 for Challenge 5.

These developments bring us to request your assistance in documenting the Belgian interests in MAB as a platform for research.

In the light of the above and in order to prepare ourselves for the 27th session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of (MAB) Programme in June 2015, BELSPO invites -as focal point for the MAB Programme- all Belgian actors to give input to a mapping exercise.

The outcome of the query will be made available via BELSPO's website and the websites of the Regional UNESCO Commissions before 15 September 2015. This sharing of information may contribute to raise visibility of Belgian efforts and to join forces and enhance coherence, where relevant, as well as raising the impact of actions.

- Send your input to secr.coord@belspo.be

► Invitation to 1st Annual LTER-Belgium meeting at Belspo, 29th May 2015

The coordinators of **LTER-Belgium** would like to invite you to the 1st Annual LTER-Belgium meeting which will take place at BELSPO on the 29th of May 2015.

'LTER' stands for 'Long-term Ecosystem Research' and the LTER-Belgium initiative aims to build up a network in Belgium of research sites which are aiming at long-term ecological research one way or the other.

At the 22nd Annual Meeting of the International Long-Term Ecological Research Network (**ILTER**) in Chili in December 2014, Belgium became official member of both the international ILTER and the European LTER network, both organisations that umbrella national networks and aim at cooperation and joint initiatives and goals at the European and World level. INBO, as national coordinator, proposed a network of research sites, located in forests, heathlands, rivers and coastal

areas, currently all located in Flanders. Part of the common research focus of several of these sites is on pressures of human activities on the (semi-) natural ecosystems such as eutrophication, acidifications and climate change.

The aim of this first meeting is to give your institute the opportunity to join the LTER-Belgium network with sites on which long-term ecological research is being conducted. You will be informed on the background of LTER-Europe and ILTER and on the opportunities and responsibilities when joining the LTER-Belgium network. We would like to outline with you the common goals of the network. Furthermore, we invite you to present the long-term research sites you believe might be suitable for joining the network (10' presentation).

► More info and program, please contact Maurice Hoffmann (maurice.hoffmann@inbo.be) or Nathalie Cools (nathalie.cools@inbo.be)

'Biodiversity Newsflash' is published whenever the need arises to inform the Belgian biodiversity research community on new developments in biodiversity research policies.

The [Belgian Biodiversity Platform](#) is an initiative by the [Belgian Science Policy Office \(BELSPO\)](#)

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