Exploring and documenting the natural world

The CETAF Digitisation Working Group
Minutes

Present:

Michael Malicky (MM), Landesmuseum
Christoph Hörweg (CH), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien
Nesrine Akkari (NA), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien
Heimo Rainer (HR), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien
Steven Dessein (SD), Botanic Garden Meise
Jiri Frank (JF), Natural History Museum Prague
Jiri Kvacek (JK), Natural History Museum Prague
Ari Taponen (AT), Finnish Natural History Museum
Walter Berndsohn (WB), Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum. Berlin
Andreas Allspachn (AA), Seckenberg
Mario Garcia-Paris (MG-P), CSIC Madrid
Rogier de Kok (RdK), Royal Botanic Garden, Kew
Elspeth Haston (EH), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
David Harris (DH), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Apologies:

Nikolaj Scharff, Natural History Museum of Denmark
Alan Paton, Royal Botanic Garden of Kew
Sarah Philips, Royal Botanic Garden of Kew
Ana Casino, General Secretariat
Patricia Mergen, Royal Museum for Central Africa
Michelle Price, Jardin Botaniques de la ville de Genève
Jean Mariaux, Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Genève

Place: Naturhistorisches Museum Wien
Time and Date: 9.30-12.00, 14 September 2014

1. *Introductions.*
    a. *DH welcomed the participants to the first meeting of the CETAF Digitisation Working Group.*
    b. *Each participant introduced themselves to the group and described their role within their institute.*

2. *Terms of reference of the Digitisation Working Group (DWG).*
    a. *Aims of the DWG.*

      i. *The group talked through the existing aims and considered whether some of them were too broad.*

      ii. *It was agreed that the tools and methods would include all stages in the digitisation workflow.*

      iii. *It was considered whether to include discovery of content as an aim.*

      iv. *It was considered whether to include the writing of best practice guidance documents for digitisation as an aim.*

      v. *DH reminded the group that the Aims were ratified by CETAF and any changes would need to be sent to the Executive.*

      vi. *JF suggested some potential changes to the aims, including making them more concrete. DH asked him to draft some options for the group to consider.*

b. *Membership of the DWG.*

      i. *It was agreed to make membership as inclusive as possible within CETAF membership.*

      ii. *A mix of staff from member institutes was considered appropriate to cover both the technical and strategic/funding aspects of the group's aims. This means we welcome more than one person from a member institute.*

c. *How the DWG will function*

      i. *It was agreed to look at other groups on how they function and to follow the CETAF instruction documents for groups, as well as the existing Terms of Reference for this group.*

d. *Communication mechanisms.*

      i. *CETAF Digitisation Working Group list serve – maintained by Ana Casino. People who want to join the list serve should send an e-mail to Ana, DH and EH in the first instance. They will then be added to the mailing list.*

      ii. *Wiki at http://cetafdigitization.biowikifarm.net/ which will be maintained by EH with contributions from all members.*

      iii. *A list of all members (without e-mail information) will be maintained on the wiki with links to their homepages and possibly with pictures.*

      iv. *EH to find out about setting up a mechanism for people to receive notification of updates on the wiki if they wish to sign up for it.*

      v. *Google Hangouts to be used for interim meetings – particularly for presentations of work in progress by members.*

      vi. *EH to find out about adding other spellings of digitisation in order for the wiki to come up when people search for it.*

      vii. *It was agreed that any member could call an interim meeting and use the CETAF mailing list to determine level of interest in attending.*

3. *Work plan for October 2014 – September 2015.*

a. *A draft workplan for the first year was agreed by the Working Group.*

b. *EH to send workplan round members and check that everyone is happy for it to be posted on the wiki.*

c. *Several meetings were proposed for the forthcoming year. These include:*

i. *TDWG – Jonkoping, Oct 2014. A meeting with a specific aim of talking through the minutes and discussion from this meeting for people who were unable to attend and who will be attending TDWG anyway.*

ii. *Google Hangout – Feb 2015. To discuss long term digital storage (see more information below).*

iii. *ISTC Meeting – Finland, 17 Mar 2015. It was suggested the visit by ISTC to Digitarium was directly relevant to the Digitisation Working Group and that it might be desirable to include a Digitisation Working Group meeting during this visit.*

iv. *CETAF Spring Meeting – Brussels, 21-22 Apr 2015. It was agreed that during the first year the Digitisation Working Group try to meet at both the Spring and Autumn meetings of CETAF. The timing for this meeting was discussed. The options were Tuesday morning when the Executive Committee would be meeting therefore unable to attend or Wednesday afternoon when there were often invited speakers. It was agreed that Tuesday morning may be the best option, with apologies to the Executive Committee.*

d. *There were some key issues raised during the meeting and it was agreed that these should be followed up by additional discussion within the group as well as within the wider CETAF community. These included:*

i. *Digital curation. The curation of digital content was seen to be an area not included within any group's current remit and it was agreed that this was an important emerging issue which would need to be considered. There was some discussion about where this topic would naturally sit (Digitisation Working Group, ISTC or CPB) and it was suggested by WB that a Task Group formed from members of all three groups be formed. The Task Group would have a clearly defined objective, eg writing a paper on the current issues in digital curation. It was suggested by RdK that the Task Group look to Naturalis and Paris, both of which have large amounts of digital content already and may have already developed some policies and protocols. HR described the idea of transferring digitisation from project-based work to core work within institutes.*

ii. *IPR*

iii. *Long-term digital storage. It was agreed that this topic should be discussed at the first Google Hangout meeting which would be organised by JF. The date fixed for this meeting was the end of February 2015. The discussion from this meeting would then feed into the next ISTC meeting on 17 March 2015. EH and JF to explore the use of Google Hangouts for more than 10 participants.*

iv. *Sustainability of fixed-term digitisation projects which included CETAF members. There was some concern expressed at the potential breadth of this aim of the Digitisation Working Group. It was agreed that the Global Plants project could be an example of the kind of project that would be appropriate for CETAF Digitisation Working Group to look at in the context of CETAF member institutes.*

v. *Training. It was agreed that training needs and resources be identified with particular reference to data management and cleaning, image management and QC, equipment use, etc.*

4. *Relationships within CETAF.*
   a. *Relationship to the Information Science & Technology Commission (ISTC)*
      i. *Several members of the Digitisation Working Group are also on the ISTC and they would be responsible for feeding information between the groups. (JF, HR)*
      ii. *In addition, more formal communication mechanisms would include sharing of reports and presentations to the CETAF general meetings.*
   b. *Relationship to the Collections Policy Board (CPB).*
      i. *Currently one member of the Digitisation Working Group is also on the ISTC and he would be responsible for feeding information between the groups. (DH)*
      ii. *In addition, more formal communication mechanisms would include sharing of reports and presentations to the CETAF general meetings.*
      iii. *DH will speak to the CPB about any overlap between the two groups and about the issue of digital curation.*
   c. *Relationship to the rest of CETAF.*
      i. *Formal reporting at CETAF meetings.*
      ii. *Feeding in from the wiki into the CETAF web site.*
5. *Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) Europe.*
   a. *JF gave a summary of the new strategy for BHL Europe. This included the development of an open-source tool for curation of the metadata, a long-term digital depository at a European Data Centre. JF will write a report on this for the wiki.*
6. *Automated geo-referencing.*
   a. *Rene Dekker was not present to speak to this topic. His apologies had been received.*
7. *Any Other Business.*
   a. *RdK. Had been asked by AP to remind any institutes who were still due to submit the Synthesys 3, Work Package 3 questionnaire on digitisation capacity to aim to do so as soon as possible to allow this Work Package Deliverable to be achieved within the deadline.*
   b. *WB. Informed the group of a new funding proposal to the EU from Europeana within which BGBM was the only Natural History Collection partner. The proposal was aimed at the CEF mechanism which was normally related to traffic infrastructure. The BGBM element would be to work on the BioCase software and aggregation software and would include the IAT company with whom many institutes currently have service agreements for Europeana. The proposal would aim to streamline aggregation and data enhancement, extend common names provision, extend network to additional institutes. He emphasised the desire to have additional institutes involved through sub-contracts in the future.*
   c. *WB informed the group of a digitisation proposal currently being prepared for submission involving several large institutes including BGBM & Kew (Project is*

        called DEDDI). On WB's suggestion, DH to ask Hannu if the proposal can be made available to the Digitisation Working Group given its relevance to the group.

    d. *DH thanked the hosts for providing the facilities and refreshments for the meeting.*

8. *Date of next meeting.*
    a. *Morning of Tuesday 21st April 2015. Meise, Brussels.*