i4Life

i4Life (Indexing for Life) is a new three year project (2010 to 2013) supported by the European Commission through the 7th Framework Programme. Its aim is to interlink and harmonise the global taxonomic catalogues between the Catalogue of Life and six of the major global biodiversity programmes to create a Virtual Research Community. These programmes include the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the European Nucleotide Archive (part of INSDC), the Barcode of Life initiatives, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List, the new LifeWatch programme, and the Encyclopedia of Life.

These key players, together with the Catalogue of Life, will engage in a common programme enumerating the extent of life on earth. Information will be shared between partners to improve both the Catalogue of Life and the partner's catalogues, and to explore the full extent of species surveyed in the different programmes.

4D4Life

4D4Life – Distributed Dynamic Diversity Databases for Life - is a three year project (2009 to 2012) supported by the European Commission through the 7th Framework Programme bringing together 38 partner organisations.

4D4Life is developing the Catalogue of Life as a state-of-the-art e-science facility, with an expanded array of user services with both improvements and a major new infrastructure to the software system. Over 30 of the taxonomic databases that contribute data to the Catalogue of Life will be facilitated through the project.

For news of i4Life and 4D4Life and to help shape the future of the Catalogue of Life please sign up to receive the Catalogue of Life e-bulletin by visiting our websites www.i4life.eu or www.4D4life.eu.

Looking ahead

Work to complete the Catalogue of Life helps to underpin knowledge of biodiversity worldwide.

Cataloguing and sharing information on the names, taxonomy and distribution of species is fundamental to achieving global biodiversity conservation.

The work becomes harder for the less well-known groups of micro-organisms, some of which challenge our concepts of species and of life itself.

For more information

The Catalogue: www.catalogueoflife.org
EC-funded projects: www.4D4life.eu
                     www.i4life.eu

Species 2000:   www.sp2000.org
ITIS: www.itis.gov

University of Reading

www.catalogueoflife.org

Catalogue of Life

indexing the world's known species

Catalogue of Life

The Catalogue of Life is the most comprehensive and authoritative global index of species currently available. It consists of a single integrated species checklist and taxonomic hierarchy.

The Catalogue of Life is published on-line and as an electronic web-service. Each year there is a fixed annual edition which is additionally published on free DVD. All editions are available for free usage by all individuals, and by arrangement for organisations.

The Catalogue is a unique online resource which holds information on the names, relationships, and distributions of species, now reaching 1.3 million species, about 70% of all known plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms.
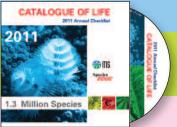
Using the Catalogue

The Catalogue of Life is widely used by organisations and individuals world-wide to:

- Check the scientifically accepted name, spelling, alternative names and distribution of a species;
- Find the place of an organism in a consistent and integrated taxonomic hierarchy;
- Compile checklists of species in a particular area or taxonomic group using downloads;
- Download an electronic list for use in systems and portals;
- Provide an electronic taxonomic backbone for indexing and compiling other information;
- Carry out biodiversity analyses.

The Catalogue of Life is used to support the major biodiversity and conservation information services such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Encyclopedia of Life and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. It is recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity as a significant component of the Global Taxonomy Initiative and a contributor to Target 1 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Source of information

The content of the Catalogue of Life is supplied by an array of about 100 expert taxonomic databases world-wide with contributions from over 3,000 taxonomic specialists.

Expert teams peer review the databases and integrate them into a single coherent catalogue with a single hierarchical classification.

Creation of the Catalogue of Life is co-ordinated by the Species 2000 Secretariat at University of Reading, UK, working closely with ITIS (Management Classification, global and N. American sectors); Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (Plants); WoRMs (Marine); FADA (Freshwater); the Species File Cluster, Species Dipterorum, NHM London, MNHN Paris, CSIC Madrid, (Insects); and the Fungi Cluster; as well as many individual global species databases.

Software development is led by University of Cardiff and ETI Bioinformatics.

www.catalogueoflife.org