

Notice to contributors



The series is open to contributions of experts worldwide, with preference for works that are the direct result of Belgian capacity building initiatives that adhere closely to the philosophy of the CBD especially the GTI.

Detailed author guidelines are available on the website of *Abc Taxa* which is available on: <http://www.biodiv.be/abctaxa>. More information is also available directly with the series editors.

Experts interested to contribute to the series are invited to submit a project proposal to one of the series editors. This proposal of no more than four pages must be in French or English. The elements it must include are given on the website.

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Abc Taxa Abc Taxa

is the joint product of



Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
<http://www.naturalsciences.be>



Royal Museum for Central Africa
<http://www.africamuseum.be>



National Botanic Garden
<http://www.botanicgarden.be>

under the auspices of



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Belgian Focal Point to the Global Taxonomy Initiative

A series of manuals dedicated to capacity building in taxonomy and collection management



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Rationale

Today, man's impact on nature is bigger than ever. This undermines ecosystem functioning and hikes the risk for sudden, drastic diminishing of free ecosystem services. Even though all humanity is affected, there is little doubt that it will harm mostly people that rely directly on nature. Combatting socio-economical imbalance will thus, entail re-



storing and protecting healthy ecosystems. To achieve this, conservationists rely primordially on basic information such as local, regional and global inventories of biota. These data are provided by taxonomists, the scientists that detect, describe, name and classify biodiversity. Yet, in the 21st century, accessing and generating this baseline information remains extremely

difficult. To alter this, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) installed the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) and endorsed it with a programme of work that aims to remedy the knowledge gaps in taxonomy, increase the number of well-trained taxonomists and curators, optimise the needed infrastructure for taxonomic research, improve access to existing taxonomic collections and data and thereby improve decision-making in conservation of biodiversity.

Programme of work of the GTI:

Operational objective 1 - Assess taxonomic needs and capacities.

Operational objective 2 - Help build and maintain human and infrastructural resources for taxonomic research.

Operational objective 3 - Facilitate access to taxonomic information; with priority on ensuring that countries of origin gain information on their biodiversity.

Operational objective 4 - Generate taxonomic information to implement the thematic programmes of the CBD.

Operational objective 5 - Generate taxonomic information to implement the cross-cutting programmes of the CBD.



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Philosophy

Since its official launch in 1998, the GTI has significantly increased political and scientific preparedness to augment taxonomic capacity. However, the velocity of capacity building has unfortunately remained low.



This observation inspired the Belgian National Focal Point to the GTI to set up *Abc Taxa*, a series of manuals dedicated to capacity building in taxonomy and collection management. Through explicit clearing of taxonomic and curatorial skills and know-how, this series will aid the novice to start with the taxonomy of a particular living taxon without needing initial guidance of the often overbooked expert. *Abc Taxa* thus bridges the large gaps that divide experts from novices.

Moreover, as advancement in taxonomy and collection management does not only entail scientific aspects, but also dwells on good practices in taxonomy, the series also strives to attract writings that deal with more applied topics (e.g. bioinformatics) provided they have a clear-cut taxonomic angle.

Although *Abc Taxa* has been initiated by the Belgian Focal Point to the GTI, its success will be the product of the three main Belgian Natural History Institutions (Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Royal Museum for Central Africa, National Botanic Garden), joined by their national and international partners.

The series is provided free of charge for interested individuals and organisations in developing countries and will be distributed at publication cost to the interested public of other countries.



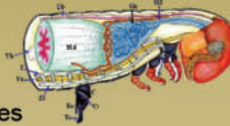
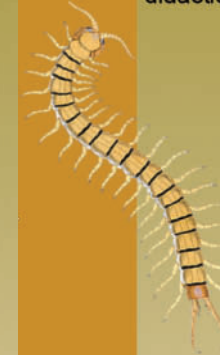
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Aims & scope

As *Abc Taxa* aims to accelerate taxonomic capacity building by liberating existing, but often scattered or hard to obtain (especially for commencing taxonomists in developing countries) taxonomic information, each volume strives to provide a detailed state of the art needed to embark on the taxonomy of a particular living taxon.

As such, each issue of *Abc Taxa* will hold a didactically illustrated:

- . introduction to the general biology of the taxon under study
- . description of collection methodologies
- . description of collection management methodologies
- . definition and illustration of taxonomic characters
- . guide to identification
- . current classification
- . selected key-references



These key sections can be complemented with all information the author(s) of each volume find relevant to speed the construction of taxonomic capacity (e.g. listings of available voucher material, databases, contact information of specialists, etc.).

Taxa can be considered at any hierarchical level from the genus onwards. Both regional and global treatises are deemed suitable for publication.

Quality of *Abc Taxa* is ensured through peer-review, whereby referees will be appointed by the series editors.

