



D5.2 Site Catalogue, 1st instalment: Transnational Access Sites Brochure

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PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
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Publishable Executive Summary

Production of the eLTER Site Catalogue, D5.2, was always foreseen as a step-wise process, releasing instalments of the deliverable at intervals, each one a refinement of the previous one. This report is instalment 1. It is a brochure of the 18 eLTER Transnational Access sites. It marks a key step towards preparing a full site catalogue by the end of the project, and is also a useful product for the project.

This delivered version is useful to promote the TA scheme and the research facilities provided at these 18 sites.

With this deliverable we have:

- (1) Developed a template for the full site catalogue
- (2) Established an initial production process, which we will now refine
- (3) Established the necessary links with DEIMS and the technical staff
- (4) Created a usable document with which we can both promote the TA scheme and collect feedback on the design of the final site catalogue from a range of end users.

In parallel with this, eLTER site records in DEIMS are being updated by site managers and the next step will be to produce draft output in 'catalogue format' for each of the 160 eLTER VA sites, from which we can further refine the content (i.e. DEIMS data) and the production process.

Preparation of this instalment is a little delayed according to our planned schedule, but we are confident that the final site catalogue will be delivered on time by month 48 of the project.

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1. Deliverable content and structure

The deliverable 5.2 “eLTER site catalogue instalment 1” marks a key step towards preparing a full site catalogue by the end of the project. Actually, the production of the eLTER site catalogue was always foreseen as a step-wise process, releasing instalments of the deliverable at intervals, each one a refinement of the previous one.

The present version covers a subset of sites, specifically the 18 eLTER Transnational Access (TA) sites. It contains a description of the TA scheme and of the 18 TA sites. It reports, for each of the 18 TA sites: (i) a short and clear description of the site typology and of the main LTER activities, (ii) the main purposes of the site, (iii) the core research topics, (iv) the location of the site, (v) the site manager name and email and vi) the web link to the site. Through appropriate icons it also shows: (i) site access, (ii) available modes of transport, (iii) environmental observation facilities, (iv) accommodation facilities, (v) available power supply and the data transmission infrastructure. Finally, a specific section lists selected publications for each site.

This deliverable was created in close connection with the 18 TA site managers, who provided and revised descriptions of their site along with pictures illustrating the habitats and field activities of each site. At the same time, the site managers were asked to complete the information available on DEIMS (<http://data.lter-europe.net/deims>) and to take care of the matching between the brochure and DEIMS. Wherever possible, information for the brochure was source from DEIMS. The process for doing this effectively will be further streamlined, having learned valuable lessons from producing the TA site brochure. Production of the full site catalogue will, therefore, be tightly linked to the storage of site information in DEIMS.

With this deliverable we have:

- (1) Developed a template for the document, consistent with the general graphic design of the project
- (2) Established a production process, which we can now refine for the next instalment
- (3) Established the necessary links with DEIMS and the technical staff, necessary for the further development of the catalogue that will include also the VA sites, as the final product to be delivered by month 48
- (4) Created a usable document with which we can both promote the TA scheme and collect feedback on the design of the final site catalogue from a range of end users.

2. Production process and connections with DEIMS

In parallel with the creation of the TA site brochure, we established a robust link with DEIMS and with the technical staff working on DEIMS for eLTER. In particular Christoph Wohner, from EAA was involved since the beginning of this task.

We carried out, first of all, a mapping of the brochure requirements and available DEIMS fields in order to improve the matching between the two. We then agreed the format needed to export the data from DEIMS to the brochure. These two steps were crucial for the further

development of the much more extensive site catalogue, which will also cover the eLTER Virtual Access (i.e. data providing) sites, a total of more than 160 LTER sites.

Figure 1 summarises the process of preparing the TA site brochure, which was as follows:

1. For the 18 TA sites, we asked the site managers to provide the required site information by completing a Microsoft Word form. We also asked them to update their DEIMS eLTER site record. The Word form was needed because there were a few items of information required that could not be entered on DEIMS in its present form. Site managers also provided images and a list of selected publications relating to their site
2. The page layout was developed in Adobe InDesign (desktop publishing software)
3. Our aim was to use DEIMS site metadata in preference to that provided on the Word form. Data were exported as an XML file and imported into InDesign. Additional information was added from the Word forms, and site pictures were added
4. Site-related publications were added
5. Site managers checked the draft pages, changes were made and where necessary, site managers updated DEIMS as a result.

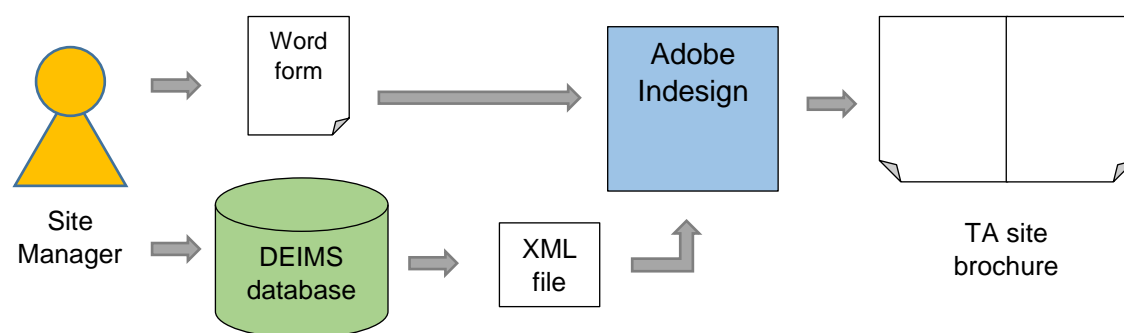


Figure 1: The key components of the TA site brochure production process. Draft versions of the brochure were checked by the Site Managers

DEIMS actually contains data describing LTER sites around the world, and separate from the eLTER project, international LTER site managers were asked to update their DEIMS site records by the end of June 2016. This will be beneficial to us when producing the full site catalogue. Using the recently updated data for the 160 eLTER sites, we will produce draft output in 'catalogue format', from which we can further refine the content (i.e. DEIMS data) and the production process.

The process used to produce the TA site brochure was time-consuming. However, it can be improved by ensuring that all the source information needed is stored in DEIMS (including the images). This will eliminate the need to collect information via a Word form. It should also be possible to automate the process of building the site pages from the XML data file. There will, however, still need to be a manual step of checking each page and making adjustments.

Nevertheless, we are confident that preparing the full site catalogue will be a more streamlined process.

During the preparation of this TA site brochure, we recognized the good and useful structure of the DEIMS fields, which contained most information we required, with the need for only minor changes. However, some issues came to light. For example the different fields were not always properly filled and, in some cases, site managers found it difficult to update the site information without technical help. This is an important point, because the further development of the catalogue is strictly dependent on the proper connection of the site catalogue with DEIMS, and we anticipate the limiting factor will be encouraging and helping site managers to input up-to-date and complete site metadata, rather than the process of importing data from DEIMS into the site catalogue.

3. Next steps

This site catalogue instalment will be made available for download and in printed form if necessary, for a wide range of users. We will use it to promote the TA scheme and sites and at the same time collect feedback from users that will be of great help for further development and improvement. The catalogue production process, started with this instalment, will be refined for the next instalments, which we envisage to be:

- Instalment 1: TA site brochure (as described in this report) – Month 12
- Instalment 2: Draft full catalogue (160 sites, internal use only) – Month 16
- Instalment 3: First beta version of full catalogue (digital only) – Month 24
- Instalment 4: Second beta version of full catalogue (digital only) – Month 36
- Instalment 5: Final eLTER site catalogue (digital and print versions) – Month 48

This schedule may change. Following the recent updating of the DEIMS eLTER site records by all the site managers, we will next produce draft output in 'catalogue format' for each of the 160 eLTER VA sites. This will be released internally. With it we can further refine the content (i.e. DEIMS data) and the production process.

Although the preparation of this instalment has been a little delayed according to our planned schedule, we are confident that the final site catalogue will be delivered on time by month 48 of the project.

4. Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the TA site managers for their help in compiling the information for the brochure, and for updating their DEIMS site records. We also indebted to Christoph Wohner (EAA) for technical help with DEIMS, to Nathalie Kaffenberger (SGN) for formatting and correcting the publication list and to Heather Lowther (CEH) for commenting on the brochure's design.