

MEMBERSHIP OF SPECIES 2000

Membership of Species 2000 is open to any organisation, project or individual interested in advancing the aims of the organisation, which are to create a synonymic species checklist for all the known species on earth (animals, plants, fungi and microbes) as the baseline dataset for studies of global biodiversity. The distinctive feature of Species 2000 is its distributed architecture: individual taxonomic datasets maintained by their custodians are connected together to create both the Annual Checklist (on-line and on CD-ROM) and the Dynamic Checklist (on-line). Species 2000 is contributing these to the Catalogue of Life, a joint product with the North American ITIS organisation that will also be used by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

Species 2000 began as a joint program between CODATA, IUBS and IUMS in the early 1990's, which led to a workshop supported by UNEP and the GEF in Manila, the Philippines, in 1996. At this meeting eighteen taxonomic database organisations agreed to convert Species 2000 into a legal entity as the vehicle for developing the global Species 2000 programme. Species 2000 is registered in England as a Company Limited by Guarantee. This means that it is an independent organisation, and the equivalent of "not for profit" – no income can be distributed to Members or Officers other than for services provided to Species 2000. The individual Members each agree that if, for any reason, the Company has to be closed down, (something that is not expected to happen), they would each contribute the sum of one pound sterling (1GBP) towards any liabilities which existed at that time. These are the only commitments – to support the aims of Species 2000 and to agree to contribute one pound sterling (the "guarantee") if required. There are no membership fees or other financial or scientific commitments.

Membership of Species 2000 is open to anyone interested in advancing these aims. Typically, member organisations or individuals are taxonomic institutions, the custodians of taxonomic databases, taxonomic software teams and organisations or individuals involved in using taxonomic checklists in biodiversity, agro-forestry and conservation. Membership brings the benefit of closer involvement in Species 2000, including the opportunity to receive reports from the Directors and help formulate and influence policy through decision making at the Annual General Meeting.

Some organisations – such as government or international agencies – may for technical reasons not be able to become Members of a Company, and for these Species 2000 would be willing to discuss entering into a Memorandum of Understanding. Alternatively, some such organisations have an individual member of staff who has become a personal Member and so able to represent their interests.

Any organisation or individual who would like to become a Member is invited to send a formal letter of application – guidelines are provided overleaf – to 'The Directors' at the address above.

Specimen application to become a Member of Species 2000

This letter can be modified as required so long as the first two paragraphs remain unchanged. The Secretariat would be happy to help formulate suitable wording to deal with particular circumstances, examples of which are included in the third and fourth paragraphs below.

I / We the undersigned wishing to become a Member of Species 2000 hereby undertake that if admitted to membership I / we will use my / our best endeavours to advance and promote the interests of the Company as set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I / we also undertake to contribute to the assets of the Company in the event of the same being wound up while I am / we are a Member or within one year of ceasing to be a Member, for payments and liabilities of the Company contracted before I / we ceased to be a Member, and of costs, charges and expenses of winding-up and for the adjustment of the rights of members amongst themselves such amount as may be required not exceeding one pound sterling.

Becoming a member of Species 2000 does not commit the Member to provide access to all or part of any databases which they may have. However for those who would like to be specific about this, the following additional paragraph is suggested:

This application is without prejudice to subsequent decisions and licence agreements concerning taxonomic databases that I / we may make available for access through Species 2000.

It is sometimes the case that the application for membership must be signed by one of the Officers of an organisation, but that the primary point of contact should then be an individual more closely involved with the Species 2000 programme, and an additional paragraph could be included to explain this.

While I am making this application on behalf of [organisation], I would prefer that future correspondence regarding Species 2000 be addressed to [preferred contact name and address].

Further Information

Copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association which set out the objectives, powers, and rules of Species 2000 in more detail, can be obtained from the Secretariat, who will also be happy to provide any other information about Species 2000 which may be required.