

# Bylaws

## Global Index of Vegetation-Plot Databases Consortium

### Article 1. Name and status

The Global Index of Vegetation-Plot Databases Consortium (further: GIVD Consortium) is a self-organised international network of individuals interested in vegetation science and ecoinformatics.

### Article 2. Objectives

The objectives of GIVD Consortium are to facilitate the use of vegetation-plot data by

- (a) maintaining and improving the metadatabase “Global Index of Vegetation-Plot Databases (GIVD)”,
- (b) providing a unique permanent identifier to the databases registered in GIVD,
- (c) making the information contained in GIVD accessible online and in print publications, and
- (d) raising the awareness about the possibilities of vegetation-plot databases.

### Article 3. Membership

Membership in the GIVD Consortium is obtained by registering a vegetation-plot database in GIVD and uploading the minimum required information to the GIVD metadatabase. For each database the one person listed in the metadata as custodian acts on behalf of this database as the member. When a database changes its custodian, this terminates the membership of the old custodian and starts the membership of the new custodian upon notification of the GIVD Steering Committee.

### Article 4. Steering Committee

The GIVD Consortium is governed by a Steering Committee (further: SC) consisting of five persons, elected for 3-year renewable terms. Candidates, who do not necessarily need to be custodians of GIVD-registered databases, can be nominated by members and by cooperating groups during a nomination period of at least 10 days. Candidates must provide a short biosketch and agree to serve if elected. Elections take place via electronic ballots during a period of at least 10 days. Each member can vote for up to five candidates independent from the number of databases or number of registered vegetation plots. The five candidates with the highest number of votes are elected. In case of ties for the fifth position, all candidates with the same number of votes are elected. The SC members have equal rights and take their decisions with simple majority. Each member of the SC is entitled to represent the GIVD Consortium within the framework of decisions taken by the SC.

### Article 5. Duties of the Steering Committee members

- (a) The SC promote the interests of the GIVD Consortium and serves as primary contact both for members and third parties.
- (b) The SC maintains the GIVD metadatabase and its online representation and improves their functionality.
- (c) The SC attracts new databases to GIVD.

- (d) The SC increases the visibility of GIVD and the GIVD-registered databases, e.g. by providing options to publish GIVD-authorized Database Reports in international journals as well as reports about content and usage of GIVD.
- (e) The SC informs the members through electronic newsletters and other means about developments concerning GIVD.
- (f) The SC is entitled to start and terminate formal cooperations with other organizations or initiatives.
- (g) The SC is responsible for attracting the funding needed to maintain and improve the metadatabase and its online representation.

#### **Article 6. Cooperations**

GIVD Consortium can establish formal cooperations with other organizations or initiatives (further summarized as “groups”) that share interests. Such cooperation is typically offered to groups that provide GIVD Consortium access to funding schemes and/or wish to use metadata of vegetation-plot databases maintained and provided by GIVD. A cooperation with GIVD as a minimum requires that GIVD Consortium and the other group reciprocally present themselves in their online platform and provide links to the other partner. In elections to the GIVD Steering Committee, cooperating groups have the right to propose candidates. Any further requirement for a cooperation has to be defined in a written Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **Article 7. Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members participating in an electronic ballot extending over a period of at least 10 days. Such an electronic ballot can be required by a majority vote of either the SC members or at least 10% of the members.

Approved by GIVD Founders, Florian Jansen and Jürgen Dengler  
Greifswald and Bayreuth, 17 February 2015