

Annual Report 2022

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Introduction

The Observation International Foundation was established on December 1, 2015 for the further international development of Observation.org, the digital platform for registration of species observations. At the time of its foundation, there were three national versions of the platform, namely Waarneming.nl, Waarnemingen.be and Observations.be.

The foundation's statutory purpose is to promote the worldwide collection and registration of reliable and verified observational data of flora and fauna. The target group consists of volunteers, professionals and organizations active in the fields of (scientific) nature research, protection of nature and landscape, nature education and regulations for environmental quality. The aim is for the collected data to be optimally available and used for all these purposes. A core activity of the foundation is the management, exploitation and further development of digital platforms and associated mobile applications such as ObsIdentify. A basic principle is that the system developed is freely accessible to everyone and can be used free of charge.

For the international expansion and development of the system, Observation International actively seeks cooperation in Europe and beyond with local, regional or nationally operating organizations and governments. These can join as partners to contribute actively and financially to the further development and promotion of the digital platform in their own environment.

An amendment to the Articles of Association was implemented in 2020 aimed at strengthening and improving the administrative and executive organization. The extension of the amended articles of association provides for a transitional arrangement with a provisional board whose task is, among other things, to form a definitive board by 30 September 2023 at the latest.

For Observation International, the year 2022 was mainly dominated by further giving shape and substance to the new administrative organization. In addition, changes were made to the implementation organization and personnel.

The Observation.org saw serious international growth in 2022. Our contribution to international open biodiversity data was confirmed by becoming the third largest dataset on the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

Please send questions regarding this report to email address info@observation.org.

Activities

The main activities of Observation.org are focused on collecting, validating and sharing biodiversity data through its technology. In this chapter, we share key metrics for these activities. Additionally, we highlight some noteworthy projects and events.

Data collection

In total, we collected 29.672.296 observations worldwide, a growth of 15.5% compared to 2021. The top 10 countries with the most observations collected in 2022:

Country	All observations	New in 2022	Growth in 2022	New in 2021
The Netherlands	103,445,417	13,981,736	7.72%	12,979,913
Belgium	57,603,653	8,611,579	-1.88%	8,776,423
Germany	4,235,840	2,011,973	180.58%	717,073
France	6,434,769	1,394,879	33.71%	1,043,226
Spain	4,928,113	1,188,351	55.32%	765,120
Austria	663,665	224,149	47.29%	152,179
United Kingdom	619,642	209,793	323.58%	49,528
Romania	1,299,686	121,914	3.76%	117,491
Italy	417,941	97,003	119.10%	44,274
Sweden	412,955	93,455	4.09%	89,781

Data validation

The number of validators in The Netherlands and Belgium was stable. Outside of these countries, we saw a massive growth of 24%.

Country	Active in 2022	Growth in 2022	Active in 2021
The Netherlands	413	-0,2%	414
Belgium	281	-3,1%	290
Other	359	24,7%	288

Data sharing

GBIF

We shared over 70 million occurrences on the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). This included circa 15 million images suitable for identification and research purposes.

The Observation.org dataset is the third largest dataset on GBIF. The Dutch data of Observation.org is the largest Dutch dataset on GBIF with circa 65 million occurrences.

NDFD

Observation.org shares Dutch observations with the Dutch National Database Flora and Fauna (NDFD). In 2022, we shared over 13 million new observations with the NDFD. Observation.org is the largest data provider to the NDFD.

Scientific publications

At least 588 scientific publications published in 2022 used Observation.org data through GBIF. Since our Belgian partners publish their data on GBIF through other publishers, the actual numbers are higher. The table below shows the growth over the past 3 years.

Year	Publications
2022	588
2021	391
2020	135

We do not actively track scientific publications that use our data through other methods than GBIF.

European image recognition

Together with Naturalis Biodiversity Center, we expanded the geographical range of our image recognition from the BeNeLux to most of Europe.

Dutch Caribbean image recognition

Together with Naturalis Biodiversity Center and DCNA, we added image recognition for the Dutch Caribbean.

Stranding.nl

For the Dutch ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, we built a specific subsite for the registration of stranded seals and cetaceans on the Dutch coast.

Open source software

We have actively maintained the open source software packages below.

To indicate the impact of these packages, we have also included the number of stars the package has on GitHub. More stars means more usage.

- django-marina
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-marina>
 - 2 stars
- django-bootstrap3
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-bootstrap3>
 - ~2,300 stars
- django-bootstrap4
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-bootstrap4>
 - ~1,000 stars
- django-bootstrap5
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-bootstrap5>
 - 281 stars
- django-icons
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-icons>
 - 72 stars
- django-modeltrans
 - <https://github.com/zostera/django-modeltrans>
 - 46 stars
- django-tables2
 - <https://github.com/jieter/django-tables2>
 - ~1,700 stars

We have also contributed to other open source software packages through bug reports and code contributions.

Events

Observation International attended the following events.

EBCC Conference

The 22nd EBCC Conference Bird Numbers 2022: Beyond the Atlas: challenges and opportunities took place in Lucerne, Switzerland, 4–8 April 2022. The conference was organized by the Swiss Ornithological Institute in Sempach,

Groene Hart Annual Event

At the annual event of the “Green Heart” region of The Netherlands on 23 September 2022, we met with several government officials, administrators and site managers of the region.

Sovon Annual Event

We were present at the annual Sovon event on 26 November 2022. Here we met with hundreds of users from The Netherlands.

GBIF Governing Board

Observation International actively participated in the 29th meeting of the GBIF Governing Board in Brussels, Belgium, 2-6 October 2022.

Sponsoring and business partners

In 2022, we were sponsored by Natuurhuisje / Nature House. At the end of the year, Natuurhuisje informed us that the sponsorship would not be renewed due reallocation of funds on their end. We will look for new sponsor opportunities.

The webshop Veldshop handled our merchandise in 2022. This is not a major source of income for Observation.org. We have agreed with Veldship to continue the partnership in 2023, and evaluate again in the second half of that year.

Governance

Board

During 2022, the composition of the Board was as follows.

Position	Name	Year of appointment
Chairman	Olaf Bánki	2021
Secretary	Henk Schmitz	2021
Treasurer	<i>vacancy</i>	N/A
Member	Szabolcs Nagy	2021

Board interaction was through phone calls, video calls and email. In addition, a combined form of progress meeting and board meeting between chairman, secretary and director Dylan Verheul took place on average biweekly.

We were unable to find a suitable treasurer, the search for a treasurer will continue in 2023.

Global Team

The Global Team consists of representatives from partner organizations and former board members that have been invited to join as experts. The powers, composition and working method of the Global Team are globally regulated in the amended articles of association. In addition to this, the Board and Global Team established internal rules of procedure in 2021 with further agreements on the composition, working method, financial contributions, decision-making and voting rights of this advisory board.

Organisations that have joined Observation International as partners can nominate a representative (head of delegation) to the Global Team. If desired, this official contact person can be accompanied or replaced by a second person (associate delegate) during the meeting.

In addition to the formally appointed members of the Global Team, the following people generally also attended the meetings as advisors or listeners: Dylan Verheul (managing director Observation International), Martine Lemmens (employee of Observation International) and Julio Rabadán González (coordinator for Observation International in Spain).

In 2022, the composition of the Global team was as follows:

Name	Position	Organisation	Country or Region
Olaf Bánki	chairman	Observation International	The Netherlands
Henk Schmitz	secretary	Observation International	The Netherlands
Marc Herremans	head of delegation	Natuurpunt	Flanders, Belgium
Jean-Yves Paquet	head of delegation	Natagora	Wallonia, Belgium
Jean-Sébastien Rousseau -Piot	associate delegate	Natagora	Wallonia, Belgium
Jan-Ole Kriegs	head of delegation	LWL-Museum für Naturkunde	Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany
Peter Kaufmann	head of delegation	Haus der Natur Salzburg	Austria
David Tempelman	expert member	None	The Netherlands
Ulrich Haese	expert member	None	The Netherlands
Szabolcs Nagy	expert member	None	Hungary
Hans Verdaat	expert member	None	The Netherlands
Tineke van Bussel	head of delegation	Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)	Dutch Caribbean

Staff

In 2022, Observation.org had a staff size of 15 people / 10 FTE.

One person was directly employed by Observation International.

13 people were contracted from our long time business partner Zostera.

Two people were contracted from other companies.

Finances

For a report on finances, we refer to the Financial Report 2022 which is published on our website at <https://observation-international.org/en/reports/financial-report-2022/>.