

data

GIVD, a new ecological metadatabase

The newly established Global Index of Vegetation-Plot Databases (GIVD) is available online at <http://www.givd.info/>. This major initiative is hosted by the Ecoinformatics and European Vegetation Survey Working Groups of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS) as well as the Section “Vegetation Databases” of the “Netzwerk Phytodiversität Deutschland” (NetPhyD). GIVD aims at making metadata on as many vegetation databases around the world as possible available on one single platform. This shall help to raise the awareness about this underestimated source of high-quality biodiversity data and to facilitate their use in joint research projects.

Additionally, all databases that are registered by a certain date will have the opportunity to publish a “Short Database Report” (1-page with standardised information automatically generated from the database, without peer-review) or “Long Database Report” (up to 20 pages, with peer review) in the international (print and open access) journal *Biodiversity & Ecology* for free (similar to the concept of “Data papers” in *Ecology*).

Already 108 databases from around the world and representing more than 2,300,000 relevés (i.e., vegetation-plot records with co-

occurrence, structural and environmental data) have uploaded their metadata. Calculating with an average of 20 species per plot, this means that GIVD presently represents approx. 46 million species records, all with compositional data and most of them with precise location, with environmental and structural data, i.e. an invaluable source in ecoinformatics that has the potential to greatly contribute to macroecological research but also to applied questions as well as to complement tradition plant species records available via GBIF (and related platforms).

If you are interested in using the data registered in GIVD for your own research, we invite you to visit our homepage and test the search and analytical tools that are already there (we plan to extend the functionalities during the next time and hope for your suggestions).

If you host a vegetation database (either big or small, private or institutional, emerging or finished), we kindly invite you to upload your metadata – it will take less than 30 minutes, but contribute much to the visibility of your database and provide you with a citable reference to your database via the Database Report in the international journal *Biodiversity & Ecology*.

If you have any questions or suggestions, or know of other similar databases not yet included in GIVD, please contact us.

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Figure 1. Density of relevés around the world, measured as number of individual relevés per country area. Updated 22/09/2010.