



Strategic plan 2021 - 2024

N Naturalis
Biodiversity
Center

Table of contents

National institute for biodiversity — 3

Onze uitdaging — 4

Onze strategie — 5

We versnellen het identificeren, beschrijven en begrijpen van biodiversiteit — 6

Wij verstevigen de collectie als fundament voor ontdekkingen — 9

Wij maken iedereen verliefd op de natuur — 12

We zijn een flexibele en duurzame organisatie — 15

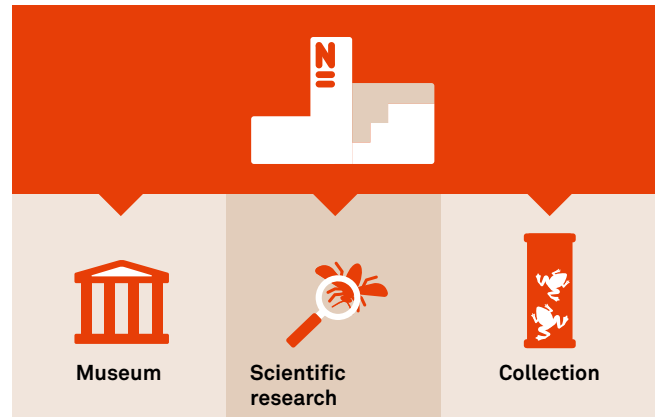
Naturalis institute for biodiversity

Naturalis is one of the world's leading natural history museums. Our collection is one of the best in terms of both scale and quality. The institute is a valued partner within the network of the 12 largest museums of natural history in Europe and America (Washington DC, New York, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Toronto, Berlin, Paris, London, Copenhagen, Brussels, and Leiden) and a core member of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF).

Thanks to our collection, scientific expertise, and research facilities, we play an essential role in biodiversity research at both national and international level. We work with all of the Dutch research universities and several universities of applied sciences. Our contribution towards the academic landscape in the Netherlands is substantial, in the form of chairs, lectorates, supervision of PhD candidates, and BSc/MSc education, but also through scientific conferences, a national research agenda, and subsidy programs.

At an international level, Naturalis is a leading institute when it comes to compiling and providing access to digital biodiversity information. Naturalis employees fulfill management roles within the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Catalogue of Life (CoL), and the international Barcode of Life (iBOL) initiatives.

As the largest museum of natural history and one of the largest science-oriented museums in the Netherlands, we are a leading national provider of educational and public activities. Our activities in this context include membership of the Foundation for Dutch Natural History Collections (SNNC) and the Association of Science Museums and Science Centers in the Netherlands (VSC). The building and the new exhibitions, as well as our online campaigns and activities, are rated highly by the public and our peers.



In 2020, all Naturalis facilities were housed in an entirely new museum building that we have developed, constructed, renovated, and brought into use over the last few years. We have built an open IT infrastructure for national biodiversity data services according to the latest standards, which is suitable for managing large flows of information and high-performance computing applications. Many new employees have found their feet within our organization. We have expanded and strengthened our relationships with our partners in the scientific community, the corporate sector, government bodies, and society.

Our challenge

“We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.”¹

Humans depend on nature. And yet we are at risk of destroying our own living environment. We are living in an epoch in which human activity is having a significant impact on our planet: the Anthropocene. As a species, our actions are causing millions of life forms to die out and could even lead to our own extinction. We still have a chance now to prevent the latter from happening. Our future, our survival, is in our hands.

In order to address climate change and biodiversity loss, we need broad social awareness, scientific knowledge, and solutions. Our institute combines these characteristics: a first-class scientific knowledge infrastructure with top-level research and an educational museum aimed at a wide audience.

Now, more than ever, Naturalis therefore has a duty to guide the way to a sustainable future. To build up the right knowledge about biodiversity, to share the best possible information about the natural world with the public, to raise the profile of nature as much as possible, and to act as a forum for social discourse on biodiversity.

It is our duty to stand up for nature. Our mission is to enhance people’s understanding and appreciation of our natural living environment. We seek a sustainable outlook for both humans and nature.

To achieve this, we develop scientific knowledge and tools and freely share our knowledge. We demonstrate leadership. We reach people at all levels of society, encourage their scientific curiosity, and challenge them to think about the issues that concern us.

1. Quote from Jay Inslee (Governor of Washington State), repeatedly quoted by Barack Obama



Our strategy

3 strategic priorities

Using all the technological, scientific, and museum resources at our disposal, our goal is to transform public understanding of biodiversity.

1



We are accelerating the identification, description, and understanding of biodiversity

By combining excellent science, in-depth taxonomic knowledge, and new promising technologies, we are accelerating the discovery of biodiversity in the world, creating exciting new multidisciplinary lines of research, and training leading scientists and experts to carry out groundbreaking research.

2



We are strengthening our collection as a foundation for discovery

We are strengthening the Netherlands' natural history collection as a fundamental tool for understanding biodiversity. We are furthering our knowledge of the collection and sharing it digitally to provide as many people as possible with information, knowledge, and tools that are relevant to the contemporary societal challenges posed by the Anthropocene.

3



We are making everyone fall in love with nature

Under the pressure of what we can witness happening to the world around us every day, we are driven by curiosity and a sense of responsibility. That is why we want to make the consequences of the Anthropocene a subject of discussion, to help to raise awareness that our living environment will be lost if we do nothing. At the same time, we offer hope and provide direction and guidance for action. We will plant the seeds for a positive approach towards nature. [Continue](#)

We are accelerating the identification, description, and understanding of biodiversity

By combining excellent science, in-depth taxonomic knowledge, and new promising technologies, we are accelerating the discovery of biodiversity in the world, creating exciting new multidisciplinary lines of research, and training leading scientists and experts to carry out groundbreaking research.

Taxonomists have been describing biodiversity since the 18th century. They name the plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms with which we share our planet and on which we rely. Although there are currently around 2 million known species, researchers estimate that there are at least 10 and probably more than 20 million species on earth: 85% of the estimated species that live on earth have not yet been described. The vast majority of biodiversity is 'invisible'. In the absence of information about the dynamics of biodiversity, we have a very limited understanding of what is happening in the soil, in the oceans and rivers, and on land. We understand even less about how they interrelate. There is a lack of true insight into species decline and the introduction of new and invasive species.

At the same time, we are witnessing an alarming decline of biodiversity. Reports indicate that 1 million species are currently at risk of extinction. Biodiversity loss combined with climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction, in particular large-scale logging in the tropical rainforests, is the greatest threat to the environment and our own survival. More than ever before, we must prioritize the identification of the remaining 85% of biodiversity, to improve our understanding of species, species networks, and ecosystems, and to enable us to take targeted action to combat decline. This requires a large-scale and drastic transformation of biodiversity research. Naturalis wants to take a leading role in rising to this challenge along with institutes around the world.



Taxonomists have been describing biodiversity since the **18th century**.

There are currently around **2 million** known species.



85% of the estimated species that live on earth have not yet been described.

We have a very limited understanding of what is happening **in the soil, in the oceans and rivers, and on land.**

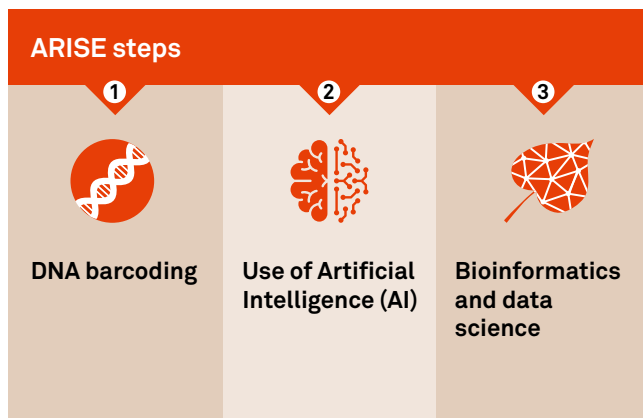


Research infrastructure for rapid comprehensive identification of biodiversity

Over the coming years, Naturalis will be developing an all-new integrated approach with the aim of identifying all multicellular species in the Netherlands and monitoring where they occur and when. At the core of this approach lies the ARISE system (Authoritative and Rapid Identification System for Essential biodiversity information), in which state-of-the-art data science and artificial intelligence are linked to all possible and available information about biodiversity, from natural history collections to observations and DNA samples. This will enable us to gather and process nature information on a considerable scale. We will be able to provide large numbers of users and contributors with access to this information. We will be able to easily link the information in the system to other information on a large scale.

We are working with several institutions to develop ARISE as an accessible infrastructure with support from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). Using DNA technology (eDNA), image recognition, and extensive automation of information flows and with the aid of observations from many amateur experts, citizens, and students, it is possible to gain an up-to-date, comprehensive, and in some cases real-time oversight of the patterns and trends in biodiversity in the Netherlands and of interactions between species. ARISE will provide the scientific community and policy-makers with more reliable information, in order to introduce more effective measures and stop biodiversity loss.

We are taking the following steps to make ARISE a reality:



Top-level research

The discovery of species and understanding their relationships, taxonomy, and systematics form the basis of our understanding of nature. The new technologies (genome sequencing, 3D imaging, data science, and artificial intelligence) and the infrastructure we are in the process of developing will give fresh impetus to these disciplines. They facilitate original research into the structure, origin, dynamics, and trends in biodiversity and ecosystems. We will explore unanswered and complex scientific questions. These questions, posed from a more comprehensive perspective of biodiversity, straddle the areas of ecology, evolution, and systematics. We are creating links between the taxonomic expertise built up over the past centuries and the current information flows that enable a new understanding of biodiversity. We are transforming the institute into a training ground for a generation of researchers that transcends disciplines. At the same time, we will continue to safeguard basic knowledge of taxonomy as an important cornerstone of science.

The more species we discover and identify and the better our understanding of their evolution and relationships, the more insight we gain into the complexity of ecosystems. This, in turn, will enable us to more accurately predict the effects of climate change on biodiversity and come up with new solutions to our own survival, such as new medicines, materials, food sources, and sustainable farming solutions. We will be better equipped to deal with major challenges facing society, such as: what makes our agricultural land fertile? How can we make our surface water clean and our cities more livable? How do the oceans affect the climate? This will allow us to make a tangible contribution to current programs aimed at tackling these issues, such as the Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals, missions in Horizon Europe, and the Dutch Research Agenda.



Leading responsibility for biodiversity research

Naturalis has become a respected institute at an academic level – part of the national research infrastructure. Naturalis is firmly established in the scientific landscape of the Netherlands and the international network of natural history museums and research institutes for biodiversity. We are jointly responsible for the Dutch scientific community within biodiversity research. It is for this reason that we aim to:

- use excellent output and multidisciplinary lines of research to encourage excellence and innovation in the fields of biology, biodiversity, and ecology, with the ambition of ranking and retaining our position among the best in the world;
- provide high-level training for scientists, students, and experts, in order to build capacity in taxonomy on a long-term basis;
- create an attractive, inclusive, and exciting scientific environment for talented international early and mid-career researchers and to promote their academic careers;
- deliver a sustainable state-of-the-art national and international research infrastructure;
- continue to support and strengthen the national research community in the areas of biology, biodiversity, and ecology. If we want to improve knowledge of biodiversity in the Netherlands, we

need a nationwide approach to scientific research. To make this possible, Naturalis Biodiversity Center, the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW), the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ-NWO), and the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute-KNAW have now joined forces;

- continue to develop an extensive national and international network that brings together the scientific community, society, government bodies, industry, and the general public;
- expand our leading role in national science policy by calling for an ambitious biodiversity strategy in social and political agendas, thereby acting as a discussion partner for government bodies and policy-makers.

We are strengthening our collection as a foundation for discovery

We are preserving and strengthening the Netherlands' natural history collection as a tool for understanding biodiversity. We are increasing our knowledge of the collection and sharing its information digitally. We are working to create a public network for biodiversity data.

Natural history collections are the backbone of research into global geological and biological diversity. Naturalis has made a key contribution in this area since 1820. The national natural history collection of the Netherlands, a collection that dates back to the 16th century, is among the best in the world in terms of quantity and quality. It is of great value in all respects². The collection bears witness to global changes. It provides insight into the origins and evolution of life on earth – which species are dying out, which invasive species are emerging and how species are adapting to climate change or changes in their living environment. The collection enables us to study the Anthropocene and develop models that predict the future. We can go back to it at any time as a reference for our knowledge. The collection serves as a limitless source of new information.

The collection is a vital link between what we already know and what we can still learn about how biodiversity works. The challenge we face is to ensure that it actively and permanently adds value for social and scientific purposes.



Management and preservation is our core task

The careful preservation, management and enrichment of the collection, in accordance with our legal mandate, is our core task. We ensure that the physical collection is permanently available in order to safeguard this source of taxonomic knowledge and as a breeding

2. Based only on the estimated cost of assembling such a collection, it represents a value of € 2.31 billion, assuming replacement costs per object of € 55. In this article, € 50 per specimen is calculated as the cost of collecting a mammal specimen in the field. In Australia we charge about € 60 per specimen for all collections. It should be noted that the scientific value of the objects, many of which are irreplaceable, is infinite.



ground for future applications. We keep the physical collection up to date: usable in the digital era and embedded in information networks. This combination allows species literacy to develop more rapidly as a widely shared source of information for research and social applications. To this end, we are planning the following activities:

- We are cataloging all type specimens in our collection, photographing them, determining the DNA sequence and publishing these results.
- We are systematically updating the collection with the primary aim of keeping a dynamic record of biodiversity and geodiversity in the Netherlands. In addition to creating a DNA barcode database of nature in the Netherlands, we want to use the ARISE infrastructure to enhance the collection with a national reference collection of frozen tissue for DNA analysis of all species of multicellular organisms in our country.
- We will provide the facilities and expertise needed to collect, preserve, and manage new object forms such as ecological samples and tissue.
- Less than a quarter of the collection is currently digitized at object level, while capabilities for the processing and use of detailed data are rapidly evolving both inside and outside our institute. This process is essential for both the study of individual objects and for scientific analyses. We are developing and applying innovative techniques to improve and accelerate the digitization process and to further embed digitization of the collection at object level in our daily activities.



Becoming stronger together

We are committed to strengthening our collection together with our national and international network. The use of common standards and establishing joint priorities in our collection policy adds value to our collection and to the network of collections as a global tool (one world collection). We will analyze where our strengths and weaknesses lie in terms of knowledge of collection management and work with our European partners³ to draw up a development agenda aimed at achieving the desired level of knowledge. We are building up a structural knowledge network of national and international colleagues and experts, focused on exchanging experience and expertise for all functions in the departments responsible for managing the collection. By doing so, we also hope to strengthen relations with our national stakeholders (for example, species specialists and NGOs). Working together in the education and training of taxonomists, through initiatives such as international capacity building programs, enables other institutions to benefit from our knowledge, and vice versa. This allows us to disseminate knowledge of biodiversity beyond the individual institutes.

3. Naturalis is a valued member of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF).



Setting up a public infrastructure for biodiversity data

Building an information network between collections, observations, species names, biological knowledge, and molecular and other data is a major challenge for modern systematics and other sciences such as ecology and evolution. As a national hub for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), we support the mission of the GBIF – to achieve a world in which biodiversity information is freely and universally available for science, society, and a sustainable future. Naturalis will continue to promote the development of international networks for biodiversity information in the coming years. We are developing a strong, open, modern, flexible, distributed infrastructure for the inclusion, linking, and sharing of a wide range of biodiversity information with other infrastructures and for the benefit of researchers and other users. This involves bringing national, European and global networks together. Links between the subject areas have traditionally been weak, and there are significant regional differences. Interoperability of biodiversity information systems across the domains is essential.



National

In the Netherlands, we are committed to strengthening the national network of actors in the field of biodiversity information in order to achieve better coordinated, structured shared data and related expertise. We are doing this together with the Dutch National Database Flora and Fauna (NDFF), the Foundation for Dutch Natural History Collections (SNNC), Observation International, species organizations, heritage institutions, government bodies, and other stakeholders.

Naturalis provides infrastructure that various parties in the Netherlands can use to store and link biodiversity data from collections and observations in order to make these data available to the scientific community, policy-makers, government bodies, and the business sector. We offer accessible research and analysis tools for anyone working with biodiversity data and services for large-scale, rapid species identification.

International

We play an active role in the global community of biodiversity information with the aim of improving, expanding, and coordinating shared data and related expertise. To this end, we are taking part in projects such as the Catalogue of Life, GBIF, Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG), and the International Barcode of

Life (iBOL). In the wake of Biodiversity_Next, a joint conference held in 2019 by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG), and the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo), we are continuing to work on a common agenda in the context of the Alliance for Biodiversity Knowledge.

As part of the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo) project, Naturalis is heading up a consortium of 120 institutes in 21 European countries to create a single digital research infrastructure based on all affiliated natural history collections. By pooling, connecting, and providing access to permanent and validated data, these data become more valuable and more readily available for research. With open data, including big data, that are accessible to everyone, we can eliminate obstacles to international and interdisciplinary collaboration, giving an unprecedented boost to the social and scientific relevance of collections.

In line with our strategy to become a European iBOL hub, we will also barcode all materials we collect. We will analyze and publish the DNA of our most valuable objects, the type specimens, so that the whole world can access this important information.

We are making everyone fall in love with

Under the pressure of what we can witness happening to the world, we are driven by curiosity and a sense of responsibility. That is why we want to make the importance of biodiversity a subject of discussion, to help raise awareness that our living environment will be lost if we do nothing. At the same time, we offer hope and provide direction and guidance for action. We will plant the seeds for a positive approach towards nature.

We can see how human activity is leading to the rapid loss of our natural living environment. For us as a natural history museum, this is a highly topical and important issue. Naturalis has access to a unique combination of resources to investigate and discuss the relationship between humans and nature, to create awareness of the urgency, and to identify solutions for better sustainability and habitability. We have the knowledge, we tell the story, and we inherently appeal to a broad audience.

Through our research, we gather information about nature. As an inevitable consequence, we are highlighting irreversible biodiversity loss. However, the story of nature is also one of resilience, of surprising evidence of the power of ecosystems. It is a narrative that offers hope and a vision of the future. It gives people faith that we can tackle the problem together. We play an active role in society based on these motives and with this narrative.

We do this because we want to make a difference, because we believe the message is important. We want to be of value and have an impact. We want to raise awareness and set the agenda. We want to create together. To achieve this, we will listen to various audiences and other stakeholders to understand their needs and involve them in our work. By building relationships and creating tools together, our goal is to help people themselves work towards a sustainable world.

To inspire enthusiasm for nature in as wide an audience as possible, our story starts with a sense of wonder at the abundance, diversity, elegance, resilience, and beauty of nature. To this we add knowledge, in a way that encourages curiosity and involvement. We then offer the tools to take action. This is our community engagement model.

Museum as a home base

The new building and permanent exhibitions provide a strong base for our public mission. Both literally and figuratively. This is where we meet our audience. Our exhibitions and activities enable families and schools to learn about nature and marvel at its beauty and diversity. We awaken their curiosity, raise their awareness, and engage through experience and emotion. We view our success in this endeavor as a first step towards welcoming as many visitors as possible in the years to come, including people who do not usually visit museums. We will continue to develop the museum in the years ahead and to organize low-threshold and accessible participation activities aimed at families.



The LiveScience gallery as a public ‘shop window’ for our research and collection work plays a special role in this process. We will create the biodiversity garden that was originally planned to exist alongside the museum. The museum building also still has space for a permanent exhibition on the origin of life and evolution, plus a temporary exhibition space for temporary programming. Over the coming years, we will be filling this space with larger and smaller-scale exhibitions.

Open and inclusive

A sense of wonder about nature, as inspired by the museum, is our starting point for the urgent and topical issues we want to address in relation to the Anthropocene. The intention is to do this in a way that is not superficial or exaggerated, but factual and in depth, based on our scientific knowledge. We aim to be a safe space where people can discuss issues such as climate change with each other and work on ideas for solutions. We want to separate these issues from party politics and facilitate a constructive dialog.

Education at the museum, at school, at home, and outside

We make the best possible use of what Naturalis has to offer in order to translate our mission into educational activities with an impact.

Families and education

All must feel welcome with us – for a sustainable world, we need everyone. We are committed to inclusivity. We are focusing initially on consolidating and enhancing a coherent package of educational activities in and around the museum for both families and schools. This includes active engagement with social partners and the further development of LiveScience, with online and live presentations, demonstrations, and debates. The priorities here are to regularly introduce new elements for returning visitors, to tie in with current events, and to attract and serve new target groups. Our key objectives are to promote scientific literacy and to generate enthusiasm

for nature. At the same time, we are working towards the democratization of science. We relate as many activities as possible to research and the collection.

We want schools to view our offering as an integral part of the curriculum and therefore aim to work towards new and stronger ties with schools and an offering that allows more scope for a tailored approach.

Creating learning pathways

Promoting and setting up learning ecosystems in the region remains a priority; we will seek new ways to become more effective in this area. We tie in the in-school offering with the out-of-school offering to create varied pathways so that anyone, regardless of background, time, and location, can take the next step in learning about nature. There is always more to learn. We have already put this into practice as part of our Nature around every corner (Natuur om de hoek) and A world of wonder around every corner (Verwonder om de hoek) projects. We will continue to promote the idea of ‘immersion in nature’, with a special focus on disadvantaged groups.

Working with partners, including those outside our immediate domain, makes us strong. We present ourselves as a leading educator amidst the existing mainstream offering from schools, educational publishers, the media, and so on. We actively participate in knowledge sharing, knowledge enhancement, and innovation through research partnerships and innovative projects such as the Nature Lab. We remain curious ourselves, which is why we will continue to carry out research into effective learning about nature in collaboration with various partners.

We have succeeded in involving large numbers of people in our work as part of various citizen science projects, including the Netherlands’ National Bee Count and EvoScope. Thanks to partnerships with organizations such as EIS Kenniscentrum insecten, Natuur & Milieu, LandschappenNL, and IVN Natuureducatie and due to the strength of our alliance with Waarneming.nl, our formula is very strong and our projects are successful. We will continue to organize projects like these in the coming years.



Stories from the collection

The collection is a much richer and more diverse source than solely of natural history information. It tells stories of remarkable collectors, of eminent scientists, of discoveries, of the emancipation of science, and of changing relations with far-off lands. These stories offer different perspectives, provide inspiration to anyone with an interest in science, history, and cultural history, and form the basis of what we say in the museum and elsewhere. But we also want to listen and facilitate. We will work with various audiences and users to identify the other ways in which the collection is relevant to them as a source of knowledge and inspiration. Our approach is broad, but with a particular focus on our social challenge.

Research in the Anthropocene

Our taxonomic research forms the basis for our research activities on the Anthropocene. Human impact is a common theme of many of our research programs. We are carrying out research into the past and current impact of human activity on biodiversity in the Amazon region. We are looking at nature in the built environment, for instance through research into rapid evolutionary change under human influence. We are investigating the role of our natural capital in our food. We are working in very different habitats around the world on research into marine organisms to figure out how they are responding to rapidly changing conditions due to global warming and acidification combined with pollution and over-exploitation. Looking at the past helps us learn more about the future: we are using paleoecological time series to document the causation of and recovery from previous

biodiversity crises in order to better understand the development of biodiversity in the Anthropocene.

Exerting influence

More and more businesses and politicians are recognizing the importance of biodiversity and looking for answers. We are using our infrastructure, our knowledge, our research, and our reach to exert influence and to contribute towards science-based solutions. Within our region, in the Netherlands, and at an international level, we are helping to shape the transition of our living environment with the business sector and governments. Our activities in this area include our contributions to the "Green Circles", in which government bodies, industry, and knowledge institutions work in partnership towards a circular economy. We are also a partner in the Delta Plan for the Restoration of Biodiversity. We will use our knowledge to influence policy through our participation in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and the EU Green Deal program.

We are a flexible and sustainable organization

We are turning our new building into a home for ourselves and our guests: for museum visitors, scientists, and volunteers. We are investing in sustainability through both our business operations and our behavior. We are working to create a healthy and flexible organization, connected to the world around us and able to respond to the challenges that lie ahead. We explicitly seek to promote diversity in the composition of our workforce. We are building a robust and secure IT infrastructure that is in tune with the world and that matches our ambitions.

Coronavirus

The SARS-CoV-2 virus and measures to prevent its spread are having a major impact on our employees, visitors, partners, and suppliers. We have drawn up our projected results and business operations based on a careful risk analysis and scenario planning. Working partly from home will remain necessary for some time. That is why we will be continuing to support this new way of working and to invest in activities and measures (agreements, provisions, courses, and training), to ensure that we can stay in close contact in the new situation. We will continually seek a good balance between work at the institute and at home/online.

Provided we are able to continue limited work activities at the institute in combination with working from home, we anticipate that we will achieve our projected results for collection management and research to a reasonable extent. We expect to receive fewer visitors than usual: 200,000 in 2021, rising to 350,000 in 2024. We are continuing to develop and provide online activities, including for schools.

Building

Our modernized, future-proof building is a magnificent icon. The building houses all of our major facilities under one roof: the exhibition galleries, the collection warehouses, the research laboratories, and the office spaces. In the coming years, we will ensure that the facilities are even better adapted to suit our needs and those of our visitors, turning the building into a home for us and our guests. Areas we plan to tackle include the car park and the museum restaurant.

We care about our living environment and want to live up to our values. Our new building is already much more sustainable than the old building, and energy consumption has been greatly reduced. We will embrace sustainability even more in our business operations, in terms not only of buildings and installations but also the behavior of our employees and suppliers.

People

Our organization has a very diverse skill set: from professor to attendant, from software developer to collection manager, from foreign graduate student to Leiden-born volunteer. We view this diversity of expertise as a strength. We can inspire each other and will respect each other. We will continue to develop and utilize this awareness, the power of diversity – in terms of age, gender, and cultural background – by incorporating it more explicitly in our human resources policy. We will clarify and use information about diversity to strengthen our organization. To achieve our ambitions, we need to learn from each another and from our partners. We want to be able to benefit from an open culture and flexibility.

Income

With effect from 2021, Naturalis will receive long-term funding under the Heritage Act (Erfgoedwet). In addition, the foundation receives an ongoing subsidy from central government on the grounds of national research and science policy. This subsidy was cut five years ago and has not been adjusted to reflect price and wage trends



for many years. According to our calculations, the foundation has consequently missed out on a growing sum of around €1.2 million a year in ongoing research funds. Project grants are also a major source of income for the funding of activities and research in particular. We budget for an annual sum of €3.2 million in indirect government funding and contract research funding. The generation of additional income through consultancy assignments, fundraising, and sponsorship focuses on the one hand on specific projects and on the other hand on the institute as a whole. Tailored fundraising is carried out in relation to public activities, collection, and educational activities. The BankGiro Lottery is a special and important partner to Naturalis, with which we have a long-standing relationship that we look forward to continuing and strengthening. The Mondriaan Fund is also one of our major partners. We will continue our fundraising efforts among donors in the friends scheme.

We have secured a growing number of assignments related to research for policy in recent years. This is a steady flow of income that we want to develop further. A number of current assignments in the area of concept design for exhibitions and museums will continue. Direct income from sources such as admission, shop sales, and food service has fallen due to reduced visitor numbers. We expect the recovery of these sources of income to be slow.

Information

We have extensive IT infrastructure in place to support our grand ambitions in terms of biodiversity data, but also for things such as the ever-increasing use of large information flows in research. Continued development to bring this infrastructure to and maintain it at the necessary level to meet current and future needs, in line with our grand ambitions, requires a concerted effort. A substantial part of this work will be carried out in conjunction with or as part of the ARISE program. Within this context, we are also placing a strong focus on better use of existing large data infrastructures for biodiversity data, such as GBIF and CoL.

Performance impact

We want to exert influence, be of value, and have an impact. Collecting information, monitoring our performance, and understanding our impact are vital extensions of all our activities. We will continue to try out new ideas and initiatives and to assess what works. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation and monitoring of our audience, research, collections, diversity, and visitor profiles, as well as overall quality assessments via inspections, guide our development.