

sDiv working group meeting report

"sMiLE"

Focal areas of discussion, main results/conclusions, and general research discussed

This meeting was a targeted workshop with a subset of sMiLE members to develop the content for an ecological metabolomics handbook, which is a planned output of the wider sMiLE initiative, and also finalise two more projects the group had worked on throughout the last two meetings. With this being our last sMiLE meeting, we focused on three main objectives: (i) finalising, merging, and editing handbook sections; (ii) drafting the main text of a systematic review paper; and (iii) agreeing on a roadmap for the analysis of macroecological patterns in metabolomic data.

General structure of the meeting

The meeting was a hybrid in-person and remote format with 20 participants from eight countries being present. We generally worked on finishing the handbook which had turned into a very comprehensive publication and required intensive input from some of our participants – much of this was either working alone with regular check-ins with the rest of the team or small group working on more challenging sections or finalising figures. We also worked on the other two outputs within break-out groups, including an assessment of macroecological patterns in metabolomic data as well as a systematic literature review of the use of metabolites in ecological research. Depending on need, fatigue and the availability of our online participants, we circulated between these tasks throughout the week.

Next steps and upcoming deliverables

With a roadmap to completion in place, we are now working towards a final draft of the handbook for review by all sMiLE members. We aim to circulate the final draft imminently, with the manuscript being submitted by mid 2024. The other two papers are side-projects of two working group participants and will most likely progress at a slower pace with regular online meetings planned to keep the momentum as much as possible.

General working atmosphere

As ever, sDiv support was excellent. Support included, but was not limited to, physical meeting space, meeting stationery (e.g. flipcharts), IT infrastructure for connecting with remote participants, and licenses for specific software (e.g. Google Docs compatible reference management software). This, alongside the positive attitude and motivation of all meeting participants, led to a stimulating, friendly, and productive working atmosphere.