

Data submit guidelines

Dataset description

Datasets submitted to VLIZ will be described in the Integrated Marine Information System (IMIS) using the information provided in the [online submit form](#). The IMIS record of the dataset will primarily serve to inform other scientists about the existence of your dataset. If you decide to make your dataset publicly available, a [DOI can be assigned](#), and the IMIS record will contain a link from where the dataset can be freely downloaded.

A good dataset description contains at least following elements:

- 1) **Title:** VLIZ recommends that the title gives an indication of the content of the dataset; the time period and the region of sampling.

For example: "Macrobenthos collected in the Westerschelde between 1965 and 1974"

- 2) **Citation:** The proposed dataset citation should reference the dataset, and not a paper using or describing the dataset. Therefore the dataset title should be included in the dataset citation. VLIZ recommends the following format.

Data Creator(s) Person; Data Creator(s) Institute (division); (Publication Year). Title.
Identifier

For example: Braeckman, U.; Marine Biology Research Group - Ugent, Belgium (2014). Ocean acidification effects on nitrification in natural sediment communities from Belgian part of the North Sea. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14284/1>

Data Creator(s) Person or *Data Creator(s) Institute* can be omitted if not applicable. However, the dataset citation needs to contain at least 1 data creator.

3) **People involved:**

a) **Contact person:** is the person who should be contacted in cases of questions regarding the content of the dataset or any data restrictions. This is also the person who is most likely to stay involved in the dataset the longest.

Its highly recommend that this refers to a person, or if this is not possible (e.g.: someone is working in an institute only for a short term: a project, a master thesis,...) it can refer to a division of an institute.

b) **Data creators:** All people and/or institute (divisions) who are responsible for the creation of the data(set). Data creators should receive credit for their work and should therefore be included in the citation.

4) **Abstract:** An abstract is a short summary (max 1000 characters = about 5 lines) of the dataset. It contains an indication of its content.

5) **Availability:** VLIZ advocates free data exchange. If you choose to make your data freely downloadable, it can be published formally with a DOI, under one of the different [Creative Commons licenses](#).

You can choose to make your dataset not publically downloadable, in this case no DOI will be assigned.

VLIZ recommends completing all the additional information requested in the submit form. If there are **publications** (or **websites**) based on/or describing the dataset or other datasets related (or preceding) to this dataset it is highly recommended that they are referenced as well. A link will be made between the publications, (related) datasets, projects and websites.

Dataset Checklist

When preparing your dataset for submission please take care to provide all necessary information for other scientists to interpret the data correctly. VLIZ provides a checklist which can help make sure all necessary or available information is included:

Technical metadata

1. **Parameters:** Is it for all parameters unambiguously clear what was actually measured (e.g. wet weight vs ash free dry weight)?
2. **Units:** For all parameters, are the associated units mentioned?
3. **Used instruments, protocols and information on calibration:** this information can be provided in an extra tab in an excel file, a separate file or by referencing a publication.
4. **Georeference stations:** Do all stations have coordinates? Is the used coordinate system indicated? Are measuring depths or heights recorded?
5. **Dates and time:** Is the time zone specified (UTC, GMT, MET, CST, ...)? For notation [ISO format 8601](#) is recommended.
6. In **what framework** (project, context,...) was the data collected, or gathered? Where can the user find additional information?,...

QC process

Although VLIZ will perform a basic technical quality control on the data submitted for a data publication, we recommend the data provider to carry out a first quality control before submission.

For Marine Biological data, taxonomy can be standardized by referencing the matching `aphia_id` from the World Register of Marine Species. This way, differences in spelling, or accepted species will be corrected. <http://www.marinespecies.org/aphia.php?p=match>. Additional data quality checks (Georeferencing, data format (Darwin Core, OBIS),...) can be performed using the LifeWatch e-lab <http://www.lifewatch.be/en/e-lab>