

🔒 | POLICY FORUM | NATURAL HISTORY



A global approach for natural history museum collections

Integration of the world's natural history collections can provide a resource for decision-makers

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Abstract

Over the past three centuries, people have collected objects and specimens and placed them in natural history museums throughout the world. Taken as a whole, this global collection is the physical basis for our understanding of the natural world and our place in it, an unparalleled source of information that is directly relevant to issues as diverse as wildlife conservation, climate change, pandemic preparedness, food security, invasive species, rare minerals, and the bioeconomy (1). Strategic coordination and use of the global collection has the potential to focus future collecting and guide decisions that are relevant to the future of humanity and biodiversity. To begin to map the aggregate holdings of the global collection, we describe here a simple and fast method to assess the contents of any natural history museum, and report results based on our assessment of 73 of the world's largest natural history museums and herbaria from 28 countries.

Abstract |

Supplementary Materials

References and Notes

eLetters (2)



Loi du 03 juillet 2022
publié le 28 septembre 2022

Comment obtenir une aide juridique ?

Loi reconnaissant le caractère aliénable des biens liés au passé colonial de l'Etat belge et déterminant un cadre juridique pour leur restitution et leur retour

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3 JUILLET 2022. - Loi reconnaissant le caractère aliénable des biens liés au passé colonial de l'Etat belge et déterminant un cadre juridique pour leur restitution et leur retour (1)

PHILIPPE, Roi des Belges, A tous, présents et à venir, Salut.

La Chambre des représentants a adopté et Nous sanctionnons ce qui suit :

Article 1er. La présente loi règle une matière visée à l'article 74 de la Constitution.

Art. 2. La présente loi a pour objet de déterminer un cadre juridique applicable à la restitution et au retour des biens liés au passé colonial de l'Etat belge.

Ce cadre s'inscrit dans une volonté de dialogue et de coopération entre l'Etat belge et l'Etat d'origine et peut prendre appui sur un accord bilatéral de coopération scientifique et culturelle, par le biais d'un traité à conclure entre ces deux Etats, destiné à compléter les principes établis par la présente loi.

Dans les conditions prévues par la présente loi, lesdits biens sont aliénables exclusivement en vue d'une restitution et d'un retour, à titre gratuit, à l'Etat d'origine.

Art. 3. Au sens de la présente loi, on entend par:

1° bien: le bien meuble relevant d'une collection muséale d'un des établissements scientifiques fédéraux et dont l'Etat belge est propriétaire, à l'exclusion des restes humains et des archives;

2° bien restituable: le bien issu de l'Etat d'origine ayant été acquis durant la domination politique et

de l'Etat d'origine, portant sur le caractère illégitime de l'acquisition du bien restituable, notamment en ce qu'il a été acquis sous la contrainte ou en raison de circonstances de violence.

Il appartient à l'Etat belge et à l'Etat d'origine de définir conjointement, au moyen d'un traité, les modalités de l'examen scientifique.

A la suite de cet examen scientifique, le Roi peut, par une décision spécialement motivée, décider de désaffecter et de restituer le bien restituable au profit de l'Etat d'origine. § 2. La décision de restitution emporte transfert de la propriété du bien restituable à l'Etat d'origine.

Elle est publiée au Moniteur belge.

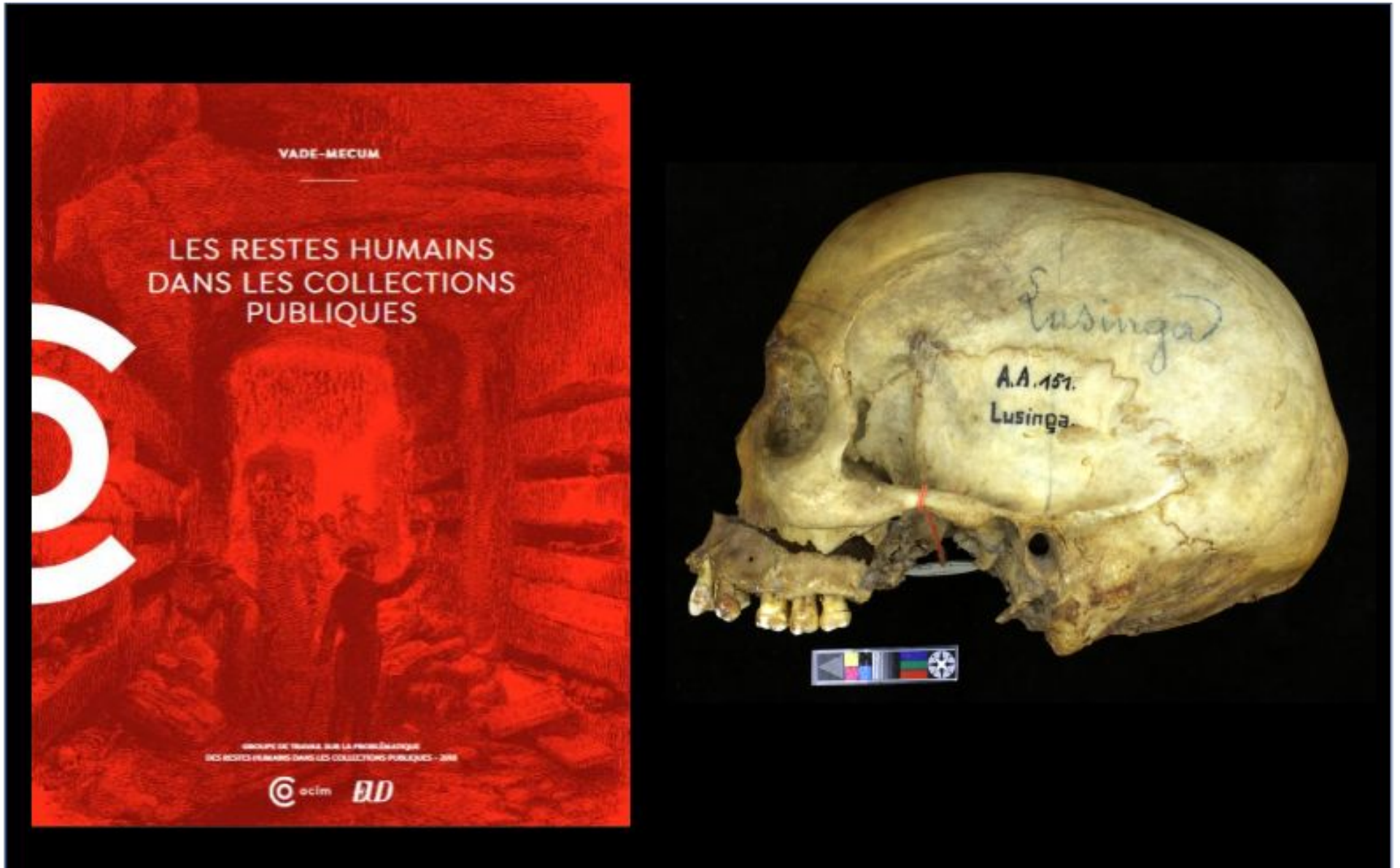
Art. 5. § 1er. Le retour du bien restituable dont la restitution est décidée, conformément à l'article 4, peut être sollicité auprès du gestionnaire.

Il appartient à l'Etat belge et à l'Etat d'origine de définir conjointement, au moyen d'un traité, les modalités de retour du bien. § 2. Quel qu'en soit le motif, si le retour ne peut intervenir immédiatement et aussi longtemps que le bien restituable n'est pas remis matériellement à l'Etat d'origine, il est conservé dans la collection muséale du gestionnaire où il se trouve au jour de l'adoption de la décision de la restitution. Le bien bénéficie, durant cette période, de la garantie de l'inaliénabilité, l'imprescriptibilité et l'insaisissabilité.

Durant cette période, l'Etat d'origine est associé à la conservation, la gestion et à la mise en valeur de ce bien.

Art. 6. La décision de restitution du bien restituable au profit de l'Etat d'origine, visée à l'article 4, sortit ses effets nonobstant toute disposition contractuelle contraire ou prescription acquisitive

Repatriation of human remains



HOME Survey 2020

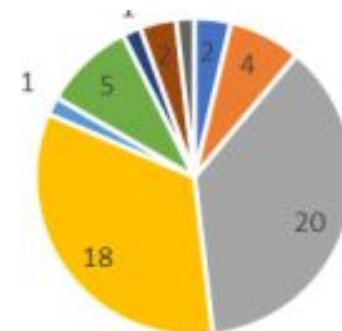
This survey aims to make a catalogue of the human remains housed by public and private collections in Belgium

[FR](#) [NL](#) [UK](#)

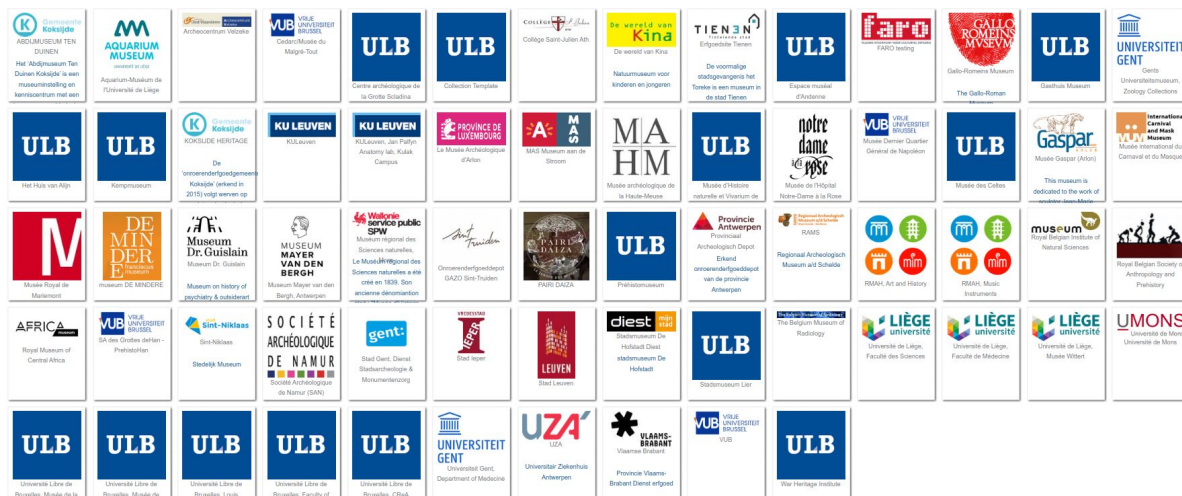


Belgian federal scientific institutions (FSIs), universities, regional and local institutions, and private entities house human remains from many different geographical origins, periods and contexts. Some of these human remains were discovered in the framework of archaeological excavations. Others were collected specifically by the Belgian administration(s), colonials and members of scientific societies and museums to create collections with the aim of documenting humans from various geographical and ethnic origins or to preserve human remains from archeological sites. Some human remains collections result also from hand gifts or donations by private collectors during the 19th and 20th centuries. There is currently no complete inventory of these collections and their associated documents.

This survey is designed and produced by members of the BELSPO BRAIN 2.0 project [HOME](#) (Human Remains Origin(s) Multidisciplinary Evaluation) in conjunction with FARO (Flemish interface centre for cultural heritage). We are also working with [MEMOR](#) who are creating a database of Flemish archeological skeletal collections.



- Private society
- FSIs
- University
- Museum
- High School
- Local institution
- Non profit
- Other
- Archeology dept





28/03/2023

HOME research project recommends repatriation of historical human remains from former Belgian colonies and the creation of a focal point on human remains

post by Reinout Verbeke

A multidisciplinary research team coordinated by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS) is calling to change the law to facilitate the repatriation of human remains where requested and to put human remains out of commerce.

Categories: [Collections](#), [Scientific News](#)

[Read article](#)

Changes should be made to the law to better respect human remains, limit their trade and facilitate their repatriation. Respect and repatriation of human remains is of societal importance because it touches upon human dignity.

- We recommend that human remains are out-of-commerce.
- Human remains cannot be considered as simple objects and the repatriation of ancestral remains can help promote healing and reconciliation between countries and within communities.
- Genetic analysis alone is not recommended to prove a link between two persons or a community and a deceased persons, family relationships are not always based on blood ties, and other lines of evidence such as sociological, historical, and anthropological elements must be considered in each request.

Repatriation of all historical human remains in federal collections relating directly to the colonial past of Belgium should be unconditionally repatriated if requested (with no conditions placed upon their return by the Belgian State).

These recommendations could also be applied to any other historical collections of non-Belgian origin.

Repatriation is a part of a process and/or dialogue that signifies reparation and follow-up

A focal point related to human remains should be set up to provide all information to institutions, administrations, communities and private persons on the status and guidelines of best practices related to human remains to be applied in Belgium and link to the advice of the Belgian Advisory Committee on Bioethics on the status of human remains.

CANAHIIST : Central Africa Natural History Collections



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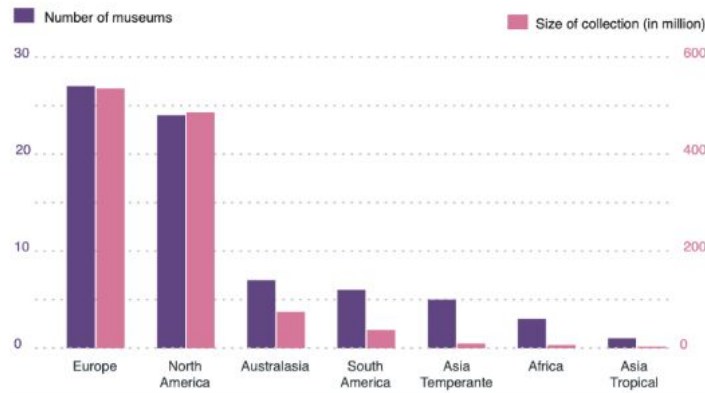
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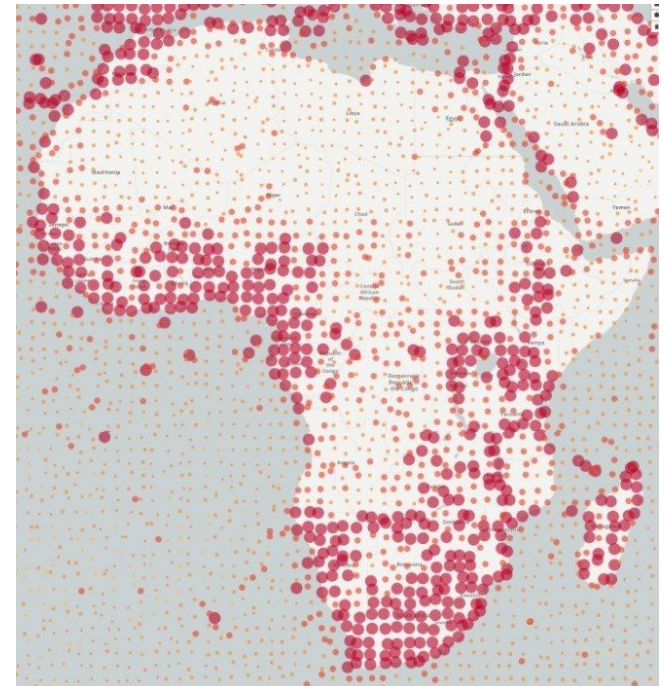
Welcome to CANAHIIST

Collections of natural history reflect both the unique worldwide biodiversity of past and present life and the geological history of the Earth. It is estimated that European Natural history (NH) collections contain up to 1 billion specimens. When used at their full potential, NH collections are able to contribute to understanding and mitigation of critical challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, invasive species or the vectors of diseases.

Africa houses a large part of the terrestrial biodiversity but suffers from the lack of African Natural History History collections and is under-represented at the global scale .



Ranked histogram of number of museums and their collection sizes, grouped by geographic region. From Johnson, Owen and collection group (Science 2022, Supplementary Fig. 1).



CANAHIST : Central Africa Natural History Collections

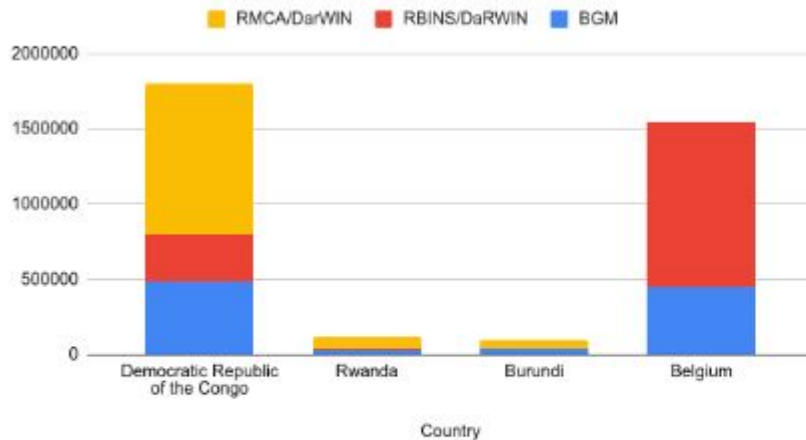


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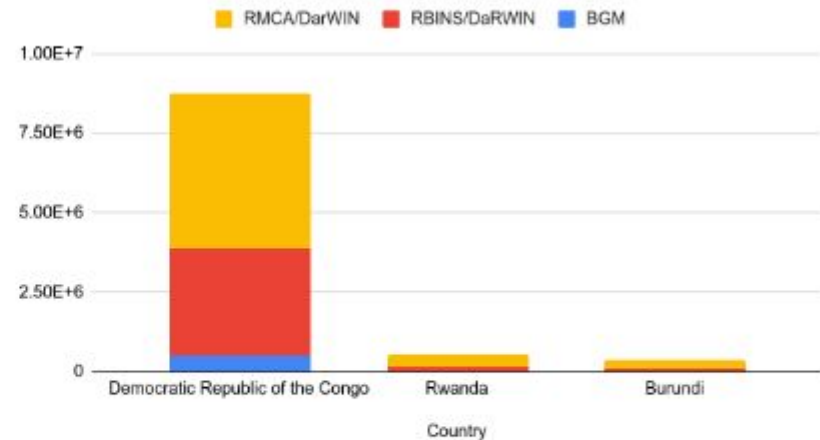
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BGM, RBINS/DaRWIN and RMCA/DarWIN



Number of specimens encoded in the CMS of RMCA, RBINS and MBG

BGM, RBINS/DaRWIN and RMCA/DarWIN



Evaluation of the number of specimens housed by RMCA, RBINS and MBG

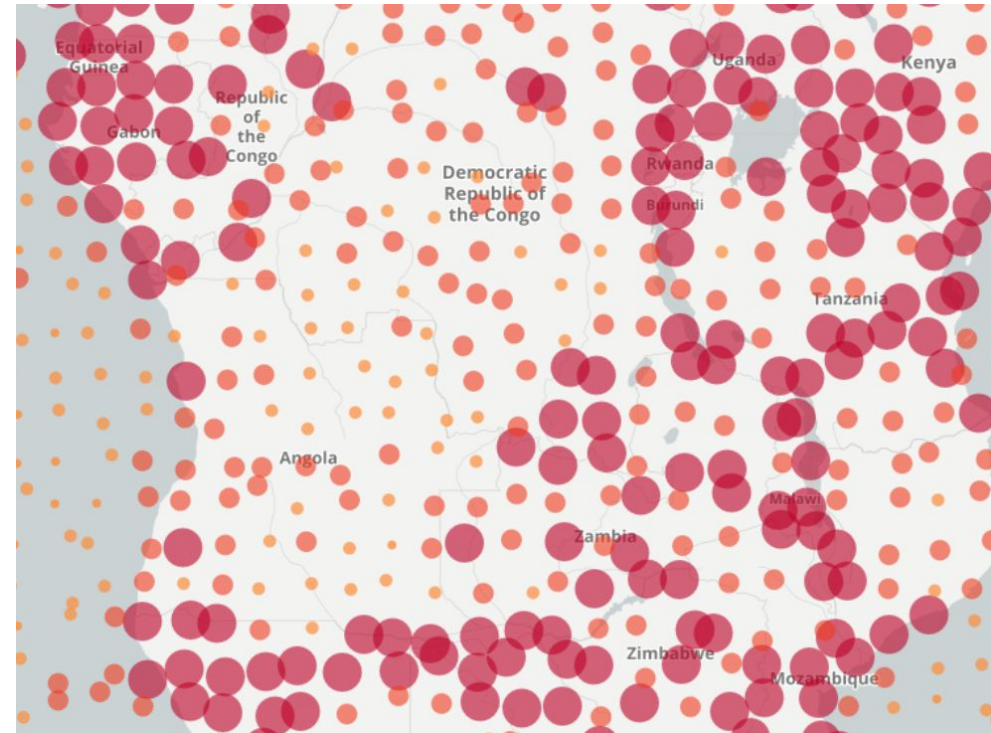
CANAHIIST : Central Africa Natural History Collections



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Collections prepared for restitution at AfricaMuseum

DIGIT
belspo

A yellow square icon containing a black silhouette of a hand holding a pen, symbolizing digitization.

Digitization

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INFRA-FED 2022

CANATHIST

Belgium
partner in development

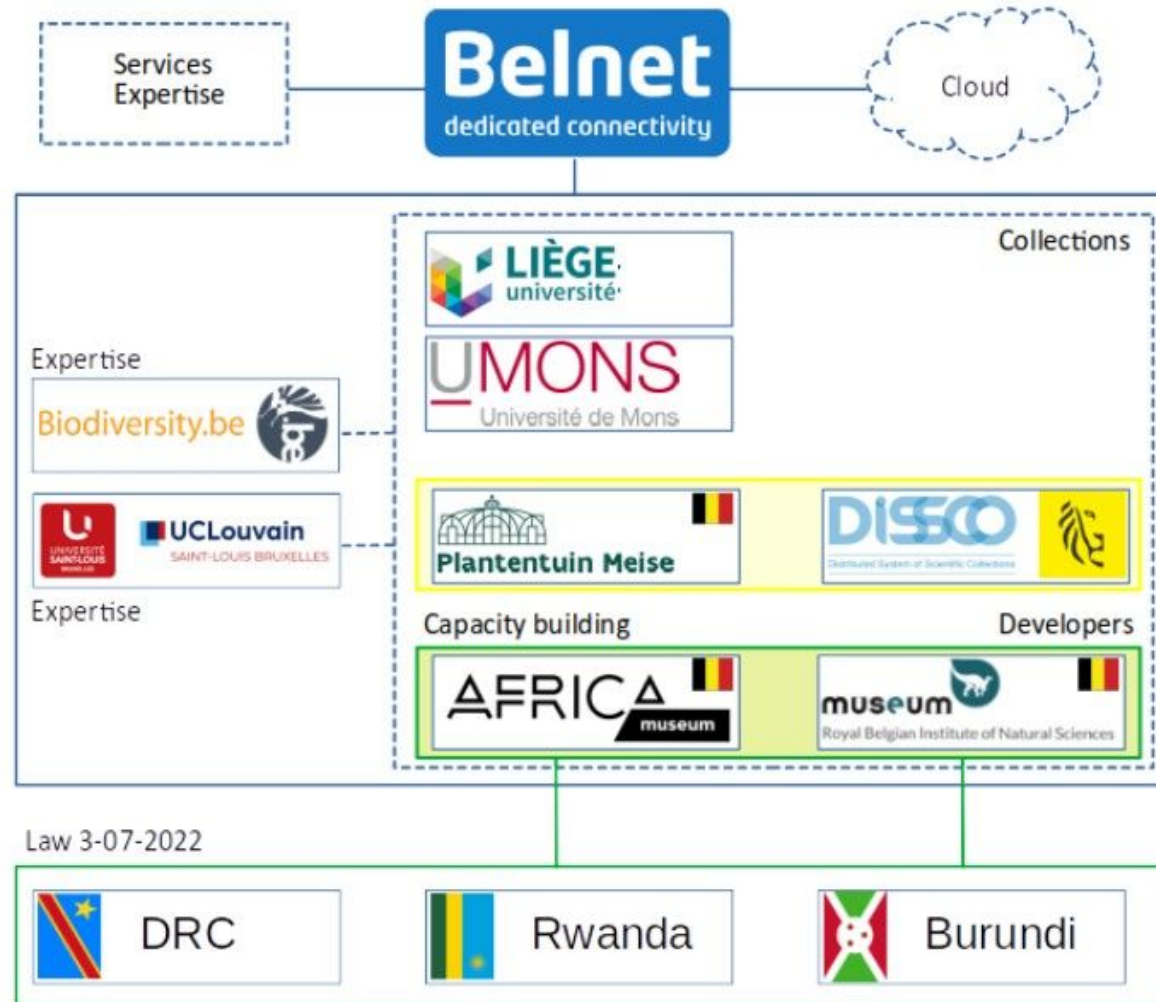
Training and
capacity
building

The 3 funding pillars of the proposed infrastructure

CANAHIST : Central Africa Natural History Collections



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The CANATHIST consortium composed by 7 Belgian partners and 3 African partners

CANAHIST : Central Africa Natural History Collections



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The portfolio of Open Source blocks building the CANATHIST infrastructure

internet connection	internet connection	internet connection or no connection
<i>Cloud servers & storage</i>	<i>Local servers & storage</i>	<i>Standalone workstation</i>