

Belgian landscape of Natural Sciences Collections

Research institutions, synergies and added value of DiSSCo Belgium

Gaël Lymer

Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences



_____ Be.DiSSCo-FED Final Event - 10/06/26 - RBINS



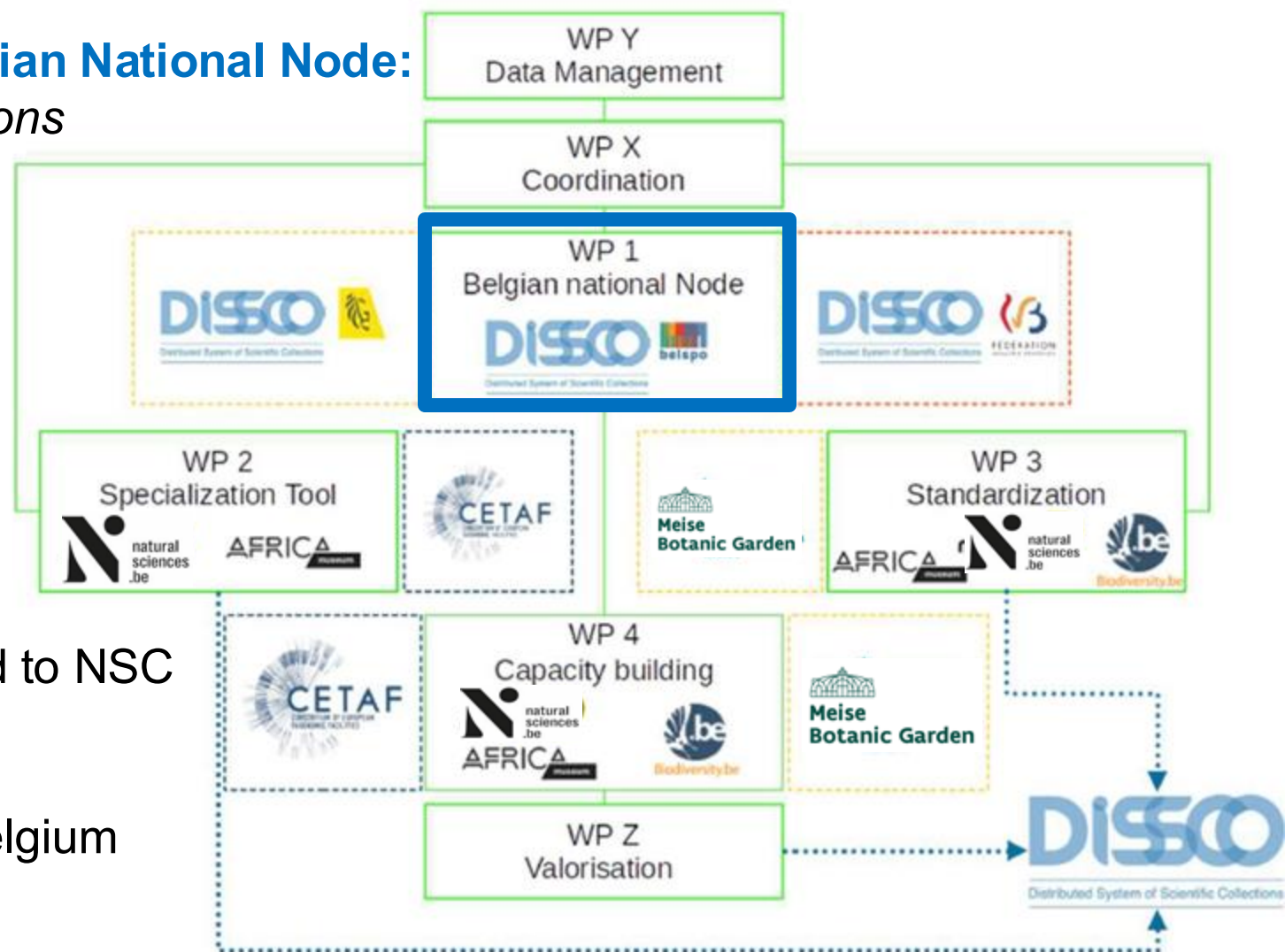
Context

Results from 2 deliverables under **WP1, Belgian National Node:**

- D.1.1.1 *Report on national research institutions*
- D.1.3.1 *Identification of synergies*

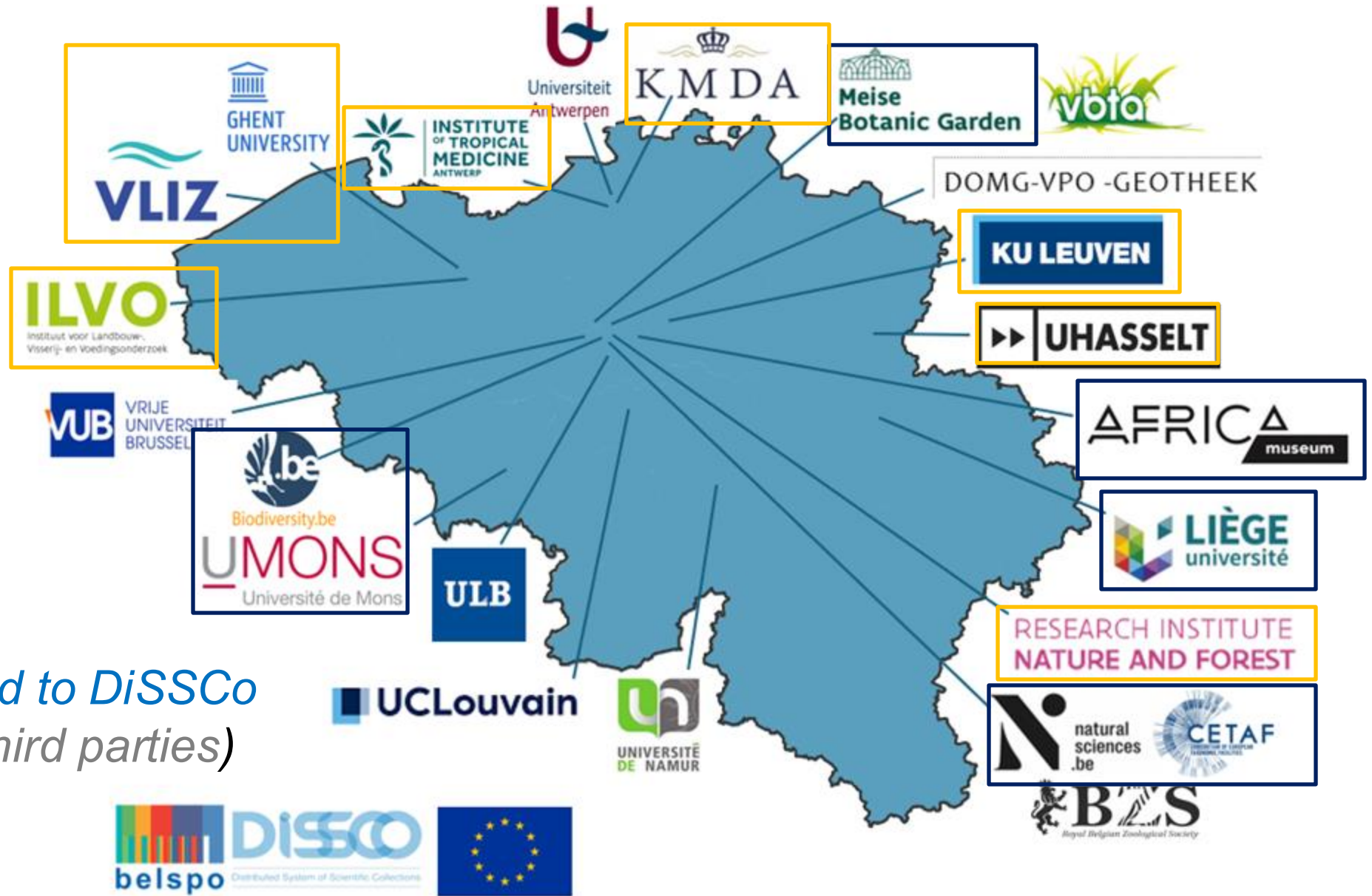
Activities included:

- Mapping Belgian institutions working/linked to NSC
- Mapping collections
- Looking for synergies
- Highlight the added value of DiSSCo in Belgium



WPs and architecture of BE DiSSCo Fed

Belgium's Natural Science Collections



*Institutions related to DiSSCo
(Fed, Flanders, third parties)*

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

Institutions

Institutions		RBINS	RMCA	Meise BG	ULiège	ULiège Hexapoda Insectarium	UMons	VLIZ	ILVO	KU Leven	INBO	UGent	UHassel	ITM	Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp	UAntwerp	VUB	DOMG-VPO - GEOTHEE K	ULB	UNamur	VBTA	SUM	Sum per collection			
Entomology	Specimens	20000000	6000000			6000000	200000		2026	2000													32204026			
	Type specimens	20000				1000																		21000		
	DNA								8500															8500		
	Living collection													1000										1000		
Zoology	Various				X					6000		57000				12000			X	X				75000		
	Invertebrates specimens	15000000	1000000						4000															16004000		
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Palaeontology	Biological samples - blood, tissue, hair														1000000									1000000		
	(Fossils)	3000000	18000		1000000					158000														4176000		
Anthropology	From colonialism	500																						500		
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Geology	Various						12000					50000	300			100					X			62400		
	Minerals	37000	17000		20000				5000													4500		83500		
	Rocks		200000						10000															210000		
	Meteorites	2076																						2076		
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	Sediment samples								300															300		
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Plants in alcohol																						8000			8000	
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Wood samples			80000																						80000	
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Seeds				14700					1000		500	50000													66200	
(Micro)Bacteria					500				2528						1246											4274
Dendrochronology					X																				0	
Brendel Models																							180	180		

Collections per fields of Natural Sciences and per institutions

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

RBINS Meise

RMCA

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+38m 10m 4m

Can you guess who is the 4th in line?

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

RBINS

Meise

ULiège /
Hexapoda

RMCA

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+38m 10m 4m 1m 6m

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

RBINS

Meise

ULiège /

VLIZ

RMCA

Hexapoda

UMons

GEOTHEEK

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Fields

1000 c
12+ km
X

10000
10000
75000

12km

+38m 10m 4m 1m 6m

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

RBINS

Meise

ULiège /
Hexapoda

VLIZ
UMons

RMCA

ITM

GEOTHEEK

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+38m 10m 4m 1m 6m

Bacterias and
living
mosquitos

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

Bot. Gard.
and
arboretum
soc.

RBINS

Meise

ULiège /
Hexapoda

VLIZ
UMons

RMCA

ITM

GEOTHEEK

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+38m 10m 4m 1m 6m

Bacterias and
living
mosquitos

83000

Belgium's Natural Science Collections



Groenenberg

Anthropology	From colonialism	500		
	Archaeology	200		
Geology	Various			
	Minerals	37000	17000	20000



Hof Ter Saksen

VLIZ
UMons
ITM

Liège	UMons	VLIZ	ILVO	KU Leven	INBO	UGent	UHassel	ITM	Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp	UAntwerp	VLIZ
6000000	200000		2026	2000							



Liège



Wespelaar



Heverleebos

Bot. Gard. and arboretum soc.

6m

Belgium's Natural Science Collections

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Belgium's Natural Science Collections

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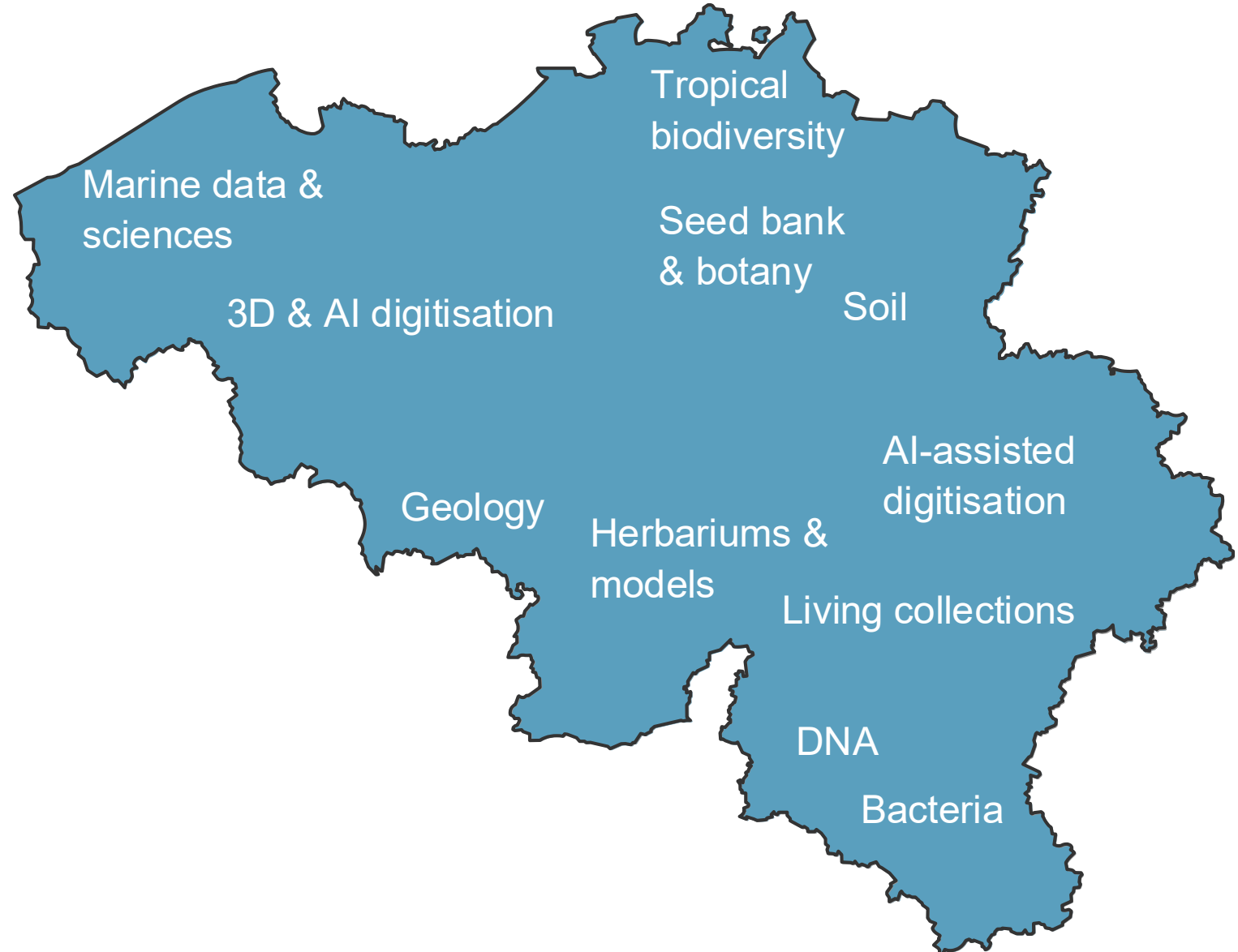
How many items in Belgian NSC in total?

+ 61.250.000

Beyond collections, a network of expertise

Every institution brings a unique set of strengths and expertise

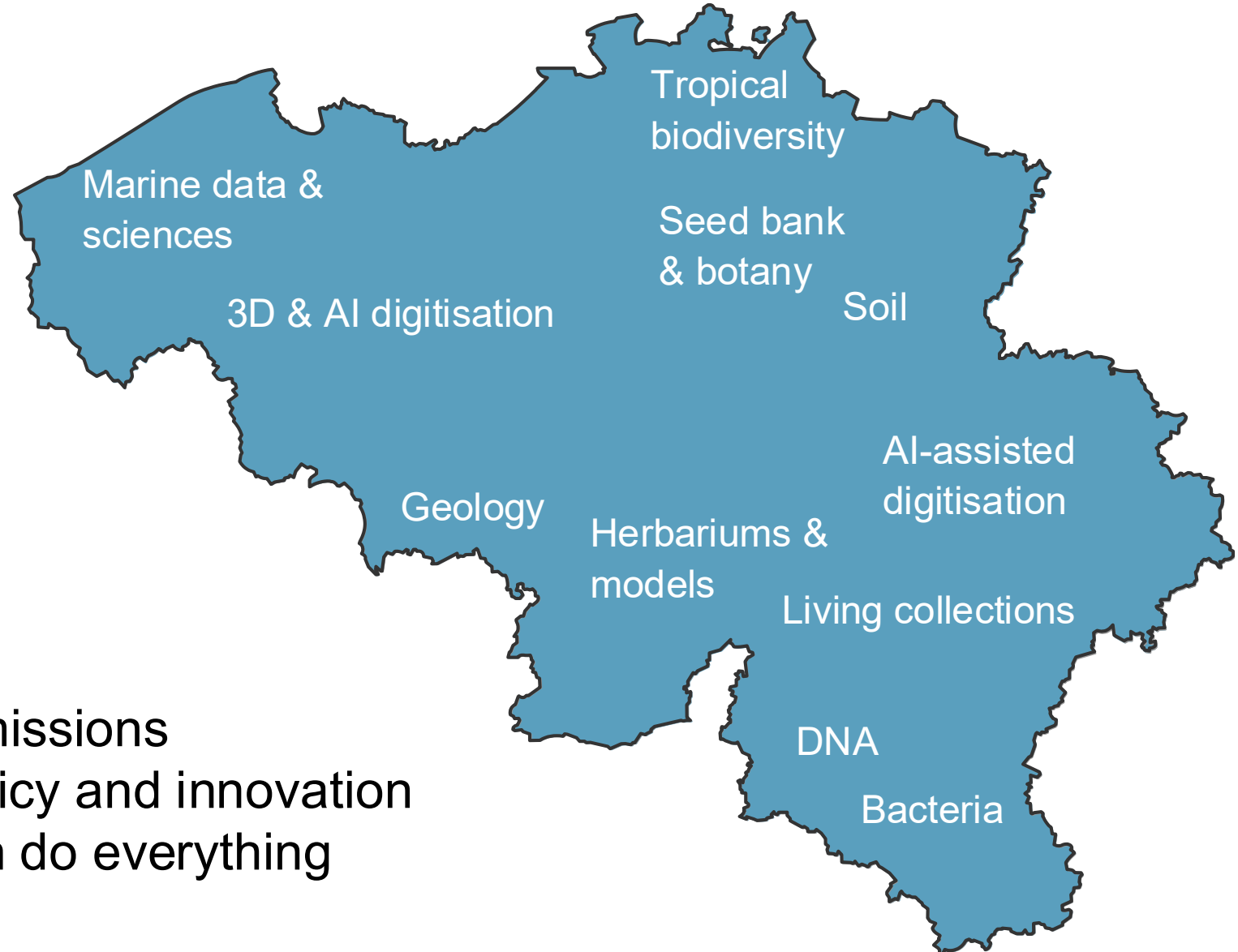
United, Belgian institutions, collections and expertise cover the entire biodiversity knowledge chain.



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United, Belgian institutions, collections and expertise cover the entire biodiversity knowledge chain.



Some common points:

- Fundamental societal missions
- Supporting science, policy and innovation
- No single institution can do everything

Synergies already exist

Belgian institutions already collaborate: 3 flagship examples



One portal connecting collections from RBINS, RMCA and Meise.



Federal programme accelerating digitisation.

17.000.000	6.000.000	6.000.000	
70.000	10.000	10.000	

Entomology digitisation partnership – P. Semal

> Services & contributions to initiatives (GBIF, CETAF, LifeWatch, EOSC, LTER, EMODnet)

DiSSCo in Belgium does not start from scratch: it builds upon existing successful collaborations

DiSSCo in Belgium:

Opportunity to transform a collection and expertise landscape into an integrated research infrastructure connected to European levels

Collections / Institutions / Services

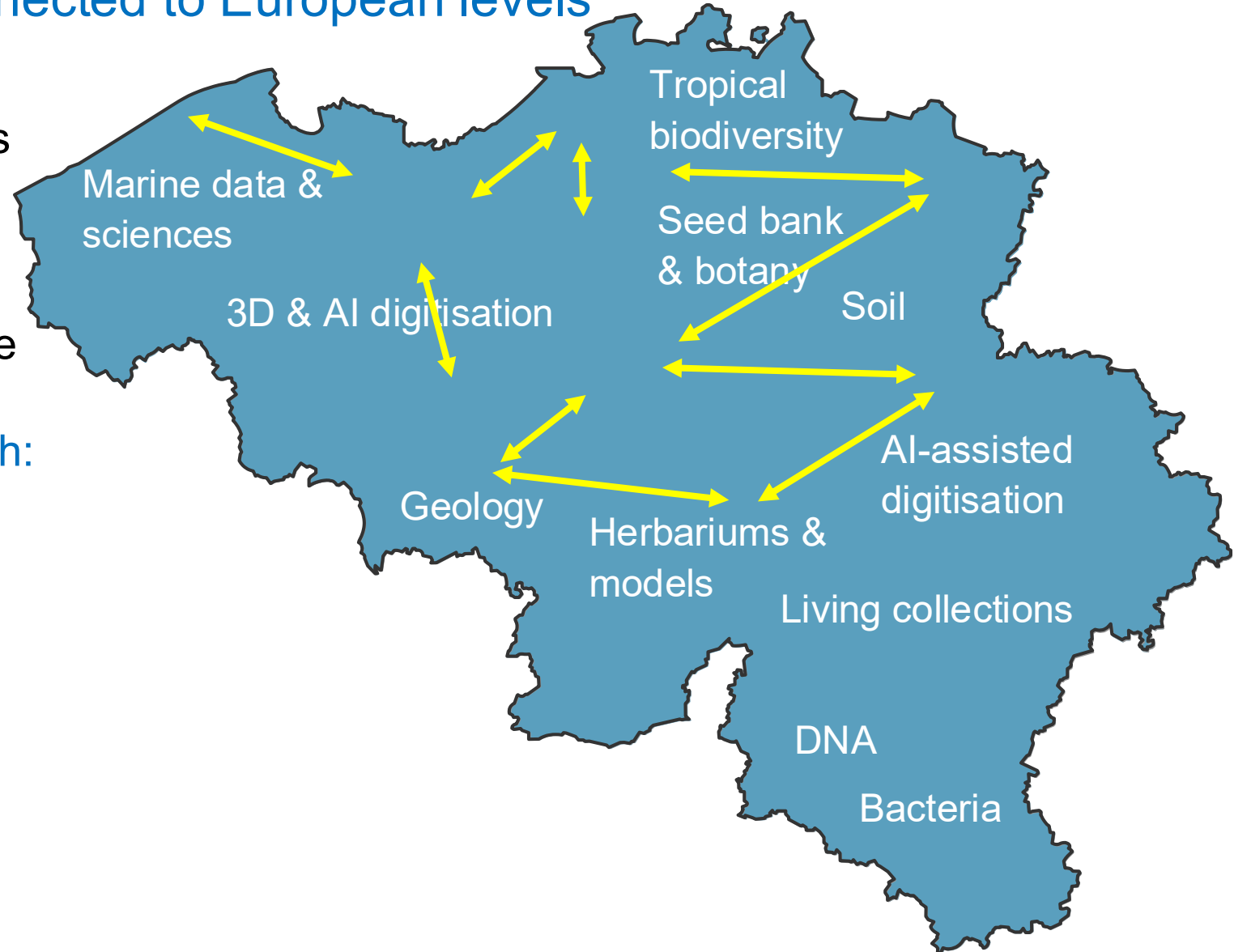
→ DiSSCo Belgium

→ DiSSCo ERIC

→ Europe

Structured network equipped with:

- National Node
- Centres of Excellence
- Shared collections
- Shared services
- Shared standards
- Shared objectives



DiSSCo in Belgium:

Opportunity to transform a collection and expertise landscape into an integrated research infrastructure connected to European levels

Collections / Institutions / Services

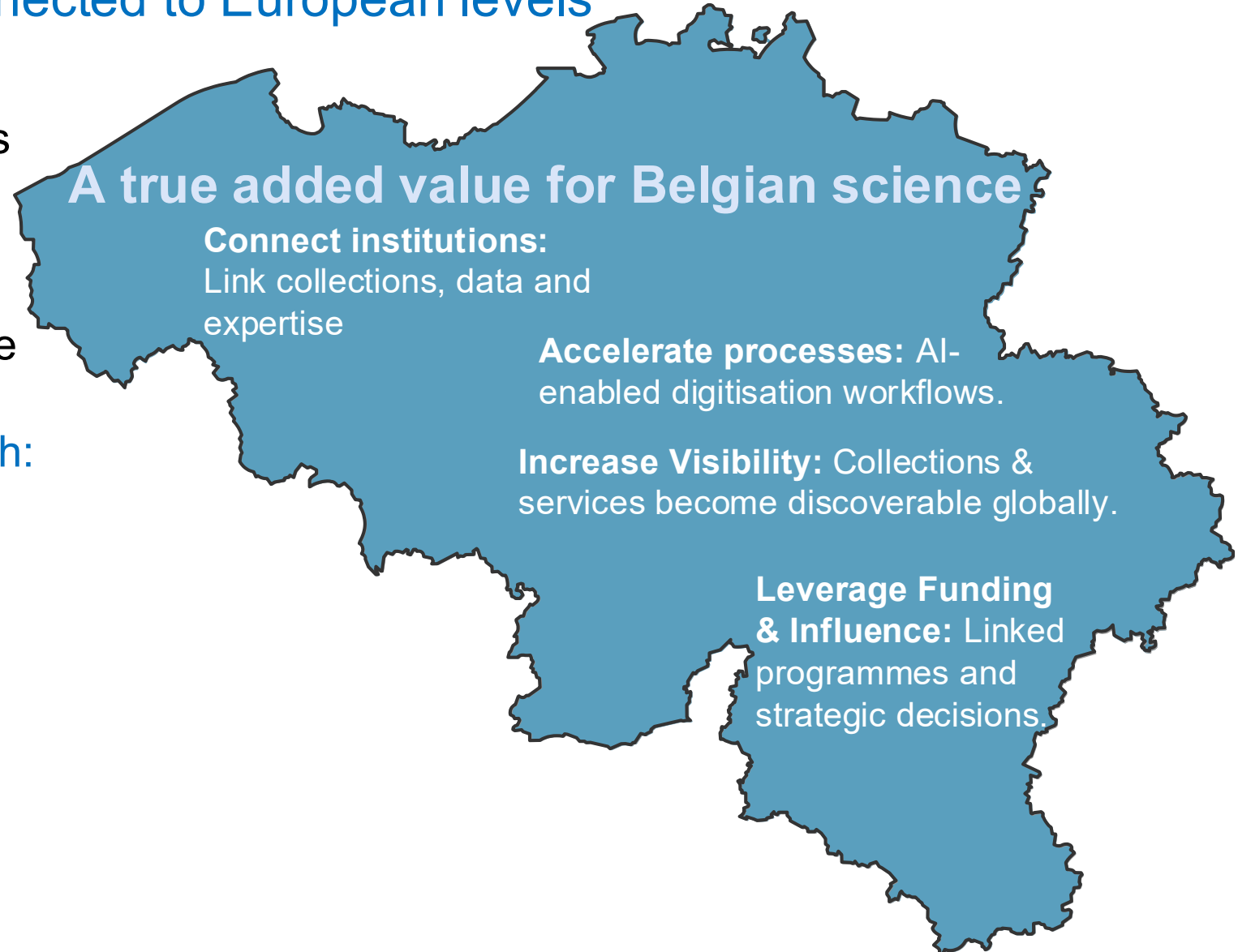
→ DiSSCo Belgium

→ DiSSCo ERIC

→ Europe

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Conclusion

Belgium already contributes globally to Natural Sciences:

➔ Collections, Synergies, Services, Initiatives (GBIF, CETAF, LifeWatch, EOSC, LTER, EMODnet)

DiSSCo Belgium would give these contributions a common voice and stronger impact at the European and international levels.

DiSSCo Belgium support Belgian knowledge to become even more discoverable, connected, reusable and ready for future science and policy



THANK YOU

