

**Til: Styret for Naturhistorisk museum**

<b>Sakstype:</b>	<b>Orientering</b>
<b>Saksnr.:</b>	<b>O-SAK 1</b>
<b>Journalnr.:</b>	<b>13/1029</b>
<b>Møtedato:</b>	<b>07.02.2013</b>
<b>Saksansvarlige:</b>	<b>Bjørlykke</b>

**Sakstittel: Videreføring av organisasjonsjusteringene ved NHM.**

På styremøtet den 13. desember ble det fremlagt et forslag om å fremme det enstemmige forslaget fra organisasjonskomiteen om opprettelse av en samlingsseksjon. Etter styremøtet har de to medlemmene fra forskningsseksjonen uttrykt at de ikke står bak utvalgets innstilling. Det er derfor ikke lenger et bredt flertall bak forslaget, og museumsdirektøren vil derfor ikke fremme forslaget på styremøtet den 7. februar.

På styremøtet i desember ble spørsmål om hvordan andre museer er organisert og vedlagt er en oversikt over 11 europeiske museer. Forslaget om en Samlingsseksjon på NHM tilsvarer modell B i denne utredningen. Det var også et spørsmål om fordeling av ansatte på seksjonene ved NHM i dag og med en samlingsseksjon og situasjonen i dag er vedlagt. I forslaget med en samlingsseksjon vil ikke antallet mellom personer samlingsseksjonen og i forskningsseksjonen være vesentlig forskjellig fra antallet i dag fra SKF og SFS fordi noen teknikere vil overføre til forskningsseksjonen fra SKF og noen forskere vil overføres fra SFS til en ny samlingsseksjon.

Bevaring og sikring av samlingene er sektormål 5 i tildelingsbrevet til UiO fra KD og er det eneste målet som er direkte knyttet til museene. Derfor legger vi nå fram en plan for den videre utviklingen av Økern, som er helt nødvendig for å innfri Riksrevisjonens krav. Vi vil stå ovenfor store logistiske utfordringer og i tilknytning til overføring av våre samlinger til Økern har vi store oppgaver knyttet til registrering og digitalisering.

Samlingsplanen som styret vedtok i 2011 vil være retningsgivende for det videre arbeidet og gjennomføringen av plane vil stå sentralt i ledergruppens arbeid.

Forholdet mellom forskning og samlingsarbeid har vært diskutert i de siste ukene. Ledelsen ved NHM mener at forskningsstrategiprosessen med kveldseminaret i april vil kunne avklare forholdet mellom forskning og samlinger bedre. Etter at strategiprosessen er ferdig vil vi vurdere behovet for et nytt utvalg for å se på organisasjonsstrukturen.

**Vedlegg:**

**Rapport om organisering av 11 museer**  
**Organisasjonskart med fordeling av tilsatte**





Project no. 018340

**Project acronym: EDIT**

**Project title: Toward the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy**

Instrument: Network of Excellence

Thematic Priority: Sub-Priority 1.1.6.3: "Global Change and Ecosystems"

## **C3.1.11 Report on organisational structures, models and compatibilities of collections management**

Due date of deliverable (1<sup>st</sup> draft): Month 51

Actual submission date (1<sup>st</sup> draft): Month 57

Start date of project: 01/03/2006

Duration: 5 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: Partner number 7 **NNM**

1<sup>st</sup> draft

<b>Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)</b>		
<b>Dissemination Level ( "X" in the relevant box)</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	X
<b>RE</b>	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

## **C3.1.11 Report on organisational structures, models and compatibilities of collections management**

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### **Summary**

Collections institutions structure their staff in different ways. There is some evidence that structure can affect quality of collections management. This paper considered whether there was an ideal structure by surveying 11 EDIT institutions by questionnaire. Three main staff structural models were identified within these institutions with corresponding advantages and disadvantages. The document suggests some mechanisms that are independent of structure such as cross departmental collections committees that contribute to aspects such as professional development of collections staff and sharing of best practice in collections management without the need to re-structure. This document is intended to stimulate discussion on this topic and assist those considering restructuring. The next steps will be to expand this survey and make available guidelines on staff structuring, collections management staff development and competencies.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Questionnaire
- Appendix 2 Institutions responding to questionnaire with model their structure most closely approximates
- Appendix 3 Figure 1 Models of staff structures

### **Abbreviations**

CETAF : The Consortium of European taxonomic Facilities  
EDIT: European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy  
DoC: Directors of Collections Committee  
SYNTHESYS Network Activity C: the collections standards activity of the EU SYNTHESYS project (Synthesis of Systematic Resources, see <http://www.synthesys.info/>)

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# **Staff Structures and collections management - Is there an ideal structure?**

## **Introduction**

Institutions organise their staff in different ways depending on a range of factors such as tradition, politics, personalities, size of institution, taxon-base, staff development needs and many more. This report describes a sample of the range of structures found in European institutions and how these relate to the achievement and maintenance of best practice in collections care and management. In essence, does the way staff are organised affect the long term preservation, accessibility and development of natural history collections as a research resource?

Within these structures are a range of skills and qualifications of staff associated with collections which varies from professionally or vocationally trained researchers with parts of their jobs devoted to collections management to full time collections managers/technicians with extensive training, practical experience and knowledge of collections management as well as or in place of a knowledge of specialist research science.

There is some evidence that staff structure does affect collections care and access. SYNTHESYS Network Activity C assessed 15 European collections against a series of criteria including one relating to staff structure. In some institutions the survey teams identified that the system of staff and operating resource organisation was a barrier to the effectiveness of collections management and conservation and also communication, sharing of best practice and staff development. In addition, over the last 30 years a number of institutions have radically changed their structures to give separate and greater prominence to collections management functions. As far as it is known there has been no formal assessment of the benefits achieved by these changes although there are some prominently cited examples of improvements in efficiency and use of best practice.

## **Aims**

The aims of this EDIT Directors of Collections (DoC) activity are to:

- Gather data from EDIT and later on CETAF institutions, identify common trends and types of systems that exist and analyse their advantages with regards to managing collections
- Produce a report that can be used to assist institutions considering either radical restructures or modifications to improve existing structures if restructuring is not an option.
- Identify the different staff roles relating to collections that exist in the institutions and how if possible they can be mapped to each other leading to greater chances for mobility of staff across Europe.

This report covers the first two aims. More work will be needed to complete the third.

## **What staff structures are there?**

At the start of this project three models were established based on the DoC team's wide knowledge and experience of collections-based institutions around the world. These are shown diagrammatically in APPENDIX 3 figure 1.

**Model A**

Staff have responsibilities for both collections management and research. Sometimes but not exclusively more junior scientific staff have a larger proportion of their work devoted to collections management although often basic tasks such as re-spiriting collections are assigned to technical staff with minimal qualifications. Some institutions surveyed were satisfied with this system and felt that it ensured that all staff were closely involved with and contributed to the management and development of the collections avoiding an “us and them” situation.

**Model B**

In contrast to Model A, collection management is entirely the responsibility of specialised collections staff organised in a separate Department of Collections with a “Head /Director of Collections” often reporting directly to a Director of Science or General Director. Researchers have the vast majority or all their time allocated to research with some exceptions and are managed through a research department(s). Institutions with this system point to the benefits to professional development of collections staff, sharing of best practice and direct representation of collections at senior level.

**Model C**

This model is an intermediate between A and B where collections and research are divided within departments rather than at institutional level. Managing collections and carrying out research are separated into career paths/work areas but within a departmental structure so for instance a Department of Zoology would have a collections head/leader who would be responsible for a team of staff managing the zoological collections. This individual would report to the Head of Department rather than the Director. The benefits identified are similar to B.

**The survey**

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was devised to gather more structured information on staff structures and their relative merits and to test the validity of these models. This was completed by representatives of 11 European institutions belonging to the EDIT DoC (listed in Appendix 2 with the structure to which they most closely match). Note that some institutions are currently undergoing re-organisation so these structures may have changed

In analysing the results and taking into account additional experience a number of points were considered relating to collections management as follows:

Does the structure

- Allow staff to develop skills and knowledge in collections management and progress in career, position in hierarchy etc ?
- Encourage sharing of knowledge without the institution failing on best practice in collections management?
- Contribute to well informed decision making on collections development, preservation and access?
- Ensure that collections meet the needs of internal and external users?
- Ensure sharing of expertise and knowledge of best practice across the institution?
- Enable standard approaches to collections management?
- Encourage cost effectiveness in purchase of materials, collections furniture etc?
- Ensure efficient and appropriate management of collections budgets?
- Ensure that performance in collections management is recognised and rewarded?

## Results

The questionnaire showed that as expected most institutions fitted one of the three models with relatively minor variations. Interestingly most institutions believed that their system worked well in spite of some disadvantages although there were some declared exceptions. A few organisations were on the point of changing their structures.

Many institutions employed technical grade staff to do basic work such as re-spiriting collections, preparing loans for despatch and in some cases replacing specimens in the collections.

Table 1 summarises the strengths identified for the three models

Model	Summary	Institutions.	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>A</b>	Collections management and research functions integrated	4	Ensures research needs are met by the collections Avoids “us and them” situation between research and collections management Potentially ensures input of all staff in developing the collections e.g. acquisition policy	Risk to sharing of and institutional commitment to best practice if collections management is only the responsibility of junior staff
<b>B</b>	Collections management and research functions completely separated at institution level	4	Informed representation of collections management at senior level Facilitates corporate cross-institutional collections projects e.g. developing policies and procedures, shared quarantine facilities etc Facilitates parallel progression for collections staff and professionalization of collections management based mainly on competency in collections management rather than research Facilitates common approaches to collections management particularly across large multidisciplinary organizations Allows sharing of best practice irrespective of discipline	Risk of poor communication between collections staff and researchers and poor understanding of research needs

			Acknowledges the different skills, competencies and personal qualities needed for research and collections management. Allows simpler management of budgets allocated to collections management	
<b>C</b>	Collections management and research functions separated at department level	3	Similar to B Allows progression based on competency in collections management at least within departments if not through to senior level Relatively easy to implement in larger, multi-disciplinary organisations	Risk of variance between corporate collections aims and departmental research and collections goals

## Discussion

It is clear that many institutions feel that their system works well for them whether model A, B or C and they all have relative merits depending on how they are implemented. More research is needed but the results of this small survey and previous experience suggest that there might be other overlaying factors that put collections at risk whatever the system. So can this risk be mitigated against without changing the system? One concern has been that there is no merit in being good at or innovative in collections management if progression/performance measurement is heavily biased to research indicators such as publishing scientific papers.

One institution points out that their system whilst having collections management distributed through a number of staff at varying levels allows staff to join the organisation with either collections management or research experience. This paper is written from the stand point that skilled, well-coordinated collections management is highly important and should rank at least as highly as research when staff and other resources are allocated. Very often these are national collections and monies are paid by governments for collections conservation, preservation and display as well as for access and research.

Restructuring is time consuming, always expensive on time and energy and disruptive and not a decision to be taken lightly. The process can be made less painful, disruptive and expensive by gradually introducing new roles and structure as staff retire and new staff are recruited for instance.

If the system works and there is no evidence that the collections, their development and accessibility are suffering then why change? If there are some weaknesses can they be addressed in some other way?

Assuming that the aim is to:

- ensure sharing of expertise and knowledge of best practice across the institution
- enable standard approaches to collections management
- encourage cost effectiveness in purchase of materials, collections furniture etc
- ensure that performance in collections management is recognised and rewarded

then the following actions could be taken. These apply to all models although they are implicit in certain models:

- A senior staff member trained in collections management represents the interests of collections at senior executive level within the institution. (This should be the norm in model B)
- A cross-institutional group is in place, with representatives of all departments, all of whom have some experience/training in managing collections. This group is charged with delivering defined projects aimed at improving collections standards across the institutions (Can apply to all systems)
- A set of competencies in collections management is in place which all staff working with collections should meet or exceed in their performance (again all systems)
- Staff who exceed these competencies should be given opportunity for reward/progression in the departmental structure (Easier in model B and C)

## Conclusion

Each of the three models postulated has been found in one or more of the institutions surveyed. Each system has strengths and weaknesses and whilst mechanisms for establishing a cross-institutional approach to best practice and policy in collections management maybe more easily achieved with Models B and C, there are clear advantages to the research/collections interaction encouraged by Model A.

## Next steps

The next main aim is to provide a stimulus to institutions that have identified a need to modify their structure and help them think through the possible models and how appropriate they are to their type of institution i.e. large/small, single taxon group/broad coverage etc. To achieve this next aim we will

- Circulate this document to a broader audience of the CETAF/EDIT membership to gather additional data and test the robustness of the three models
- Make the three models with their respective advantages available to the wider community via the SYNTHESYS/EDIT collections managers' forum website currently being developed.
- Develop a worked example of how one might achieve the aims of improving professionalization of collections management, sharing best practice and raising standards through modification to staff structure..
- Provide examples of how collections competencies and research performance might be acknowledged and rewarded
- Provide examples of possible cross institution collections groups/committees etc.
- Use additional information gathered by the questionnaire to begin discussion on collections staff levels and responsibilities



## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaire

#### I Overall structure

Q1 Please look at the model staff structures A, B and C. Please draw a diagram that reflects your structure

Q2 Does organization vary between departments and if so how?

Q3 What do you see as the strengths of this system

Q4 What are the weaknesses

#### II Specialist Roles

Q5 Do you employ specialised collections related staff such as Conservators, a Registrar, Digitizing technicians and if so how many of each:

Q6 Do you employ technical levels staff to carry out basic collections tasks e..g re-spiriting, plant mounting?

Q7 Do all departments have access to these or just some?

#### III Accountability and decision making

Q8 Who makes decisions or manages the following

	Example	Post	Departmental variations
What material to send on loan?	Collections managers		
How collections should be arranged	Head of Department		
What should the institution be acquiring	Research staff		
Who has training in collections management	Head of Department		
Collections policies	Registrar		

Q9 What mechanisms are there for staff to exchange ideas on collections management/ best practice etc. (e.g. a collections committee of researchers and collections managers, manager to junior staff etc.)

#### IV Volunteers and short term staff

Q10 To what extent do you use short term staff /volunteers

#### V Training

Q11 What training, education skill levels are expected in collections staff? E.g. PhD level, technical qualifications etc ?

Q17 Any other information?

## APPENDIX 2

**Institutions responding to questionnaire with model their structure most closely approximates**

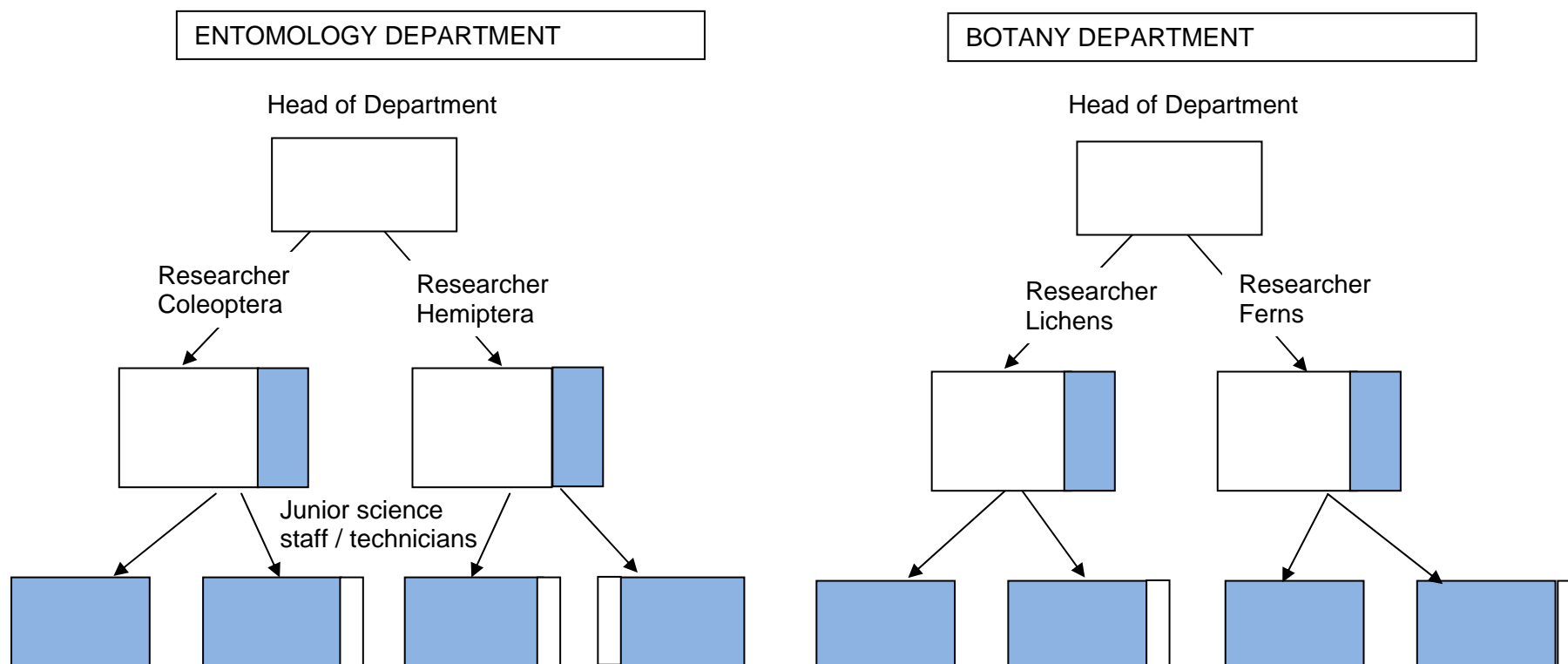
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Nearest Model</b>
Royal Belgian Institute of Biodiversity, Brussels	A
Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren	A
Royal Botanic gardens, Kew	A
Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest	A
Museums für Naturkunde, Berlin	B
Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem	B
National Natural History Museum, Leiden	B
Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid	B
State Museum of Natural History, Stuttgart	C
Natural History Museum, London	C
National Botanic Gardens of Belgium	C

## APPENDIX 3

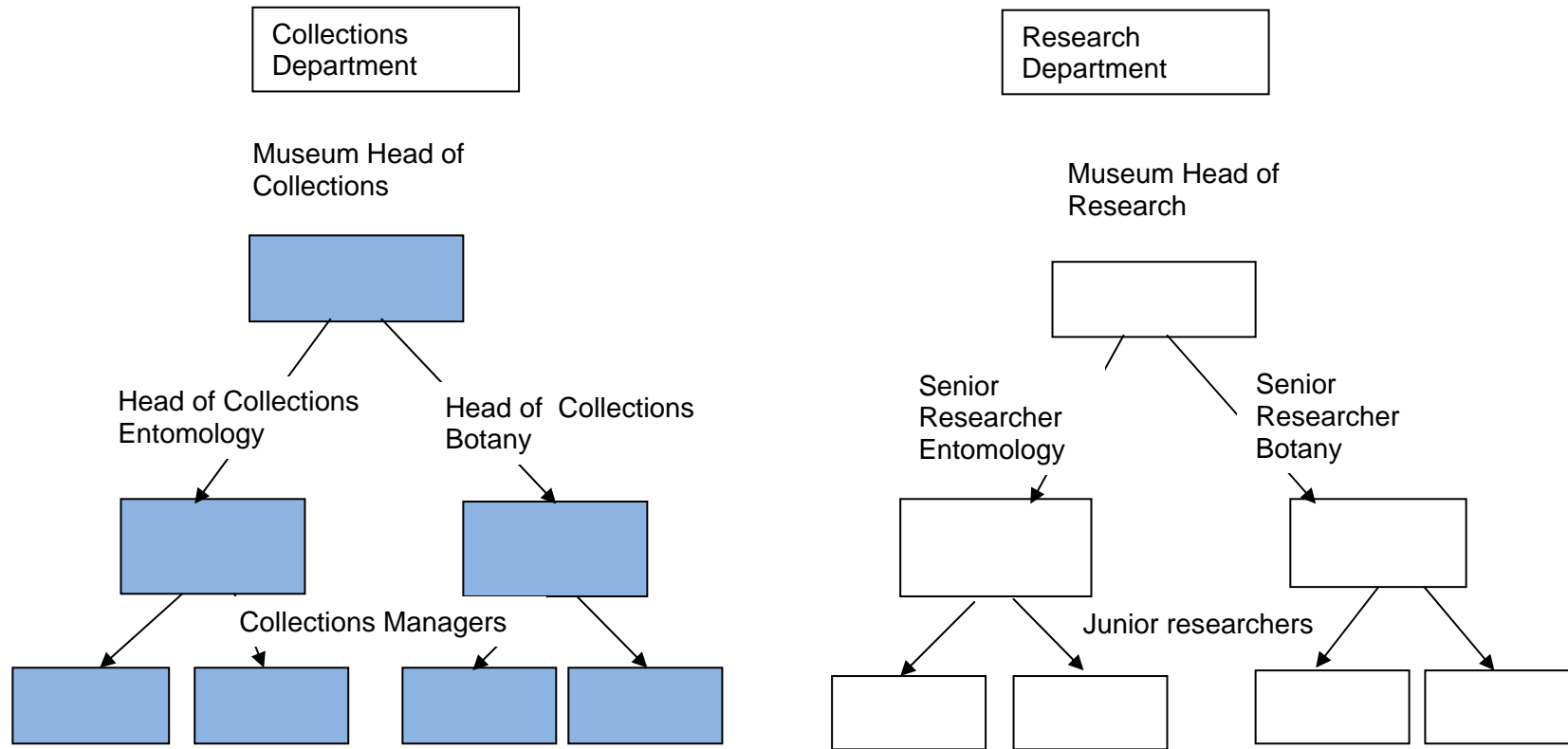
### Figure 1 – Models of staff structures

The three diagrams illustrate the three simplified models for staff structure in natural history collections institutions. The shaded area indicates the percentage of staff members' time devoted in some way to managing collection

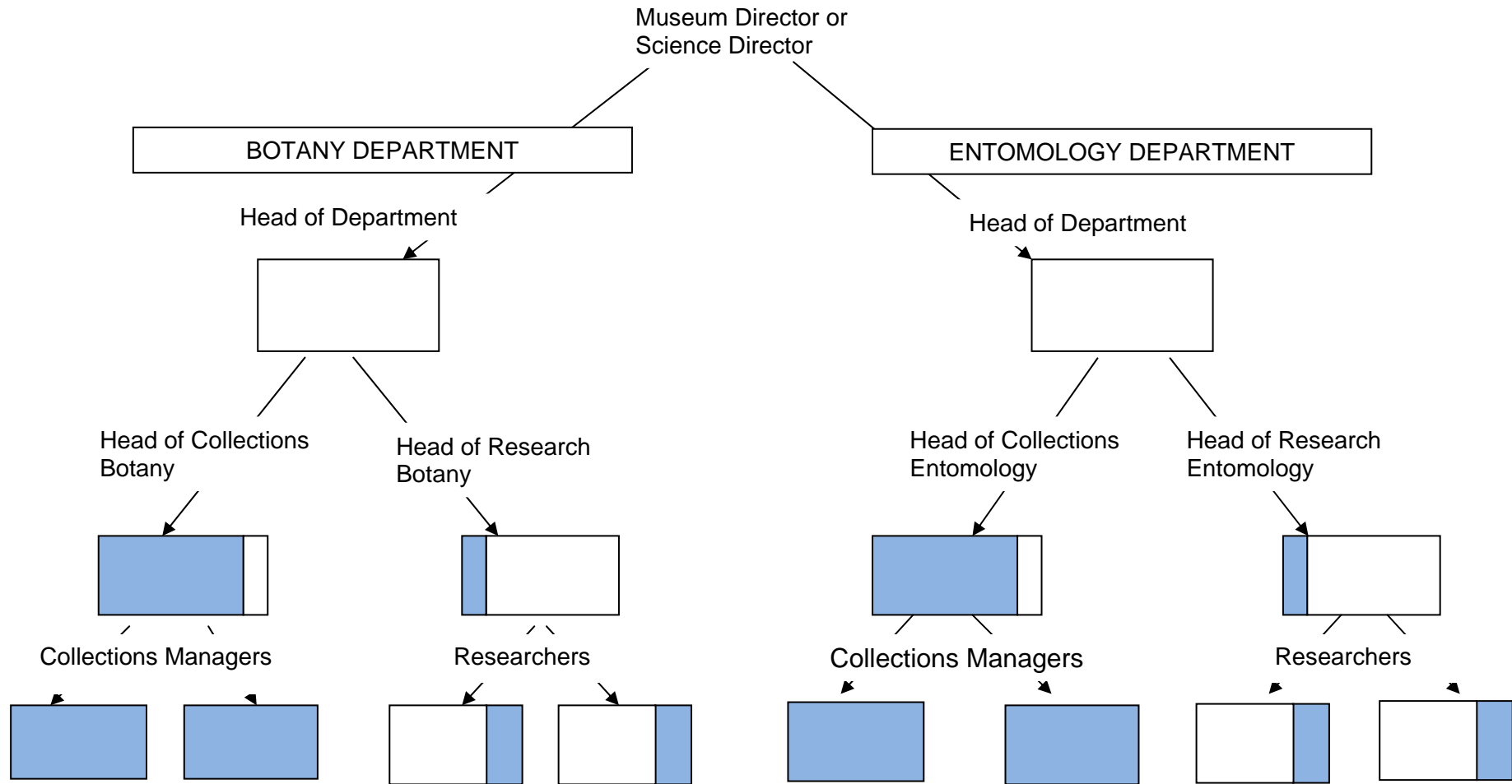
#### MODEL A - Full integration



### MODEL B - Separate Departments of Collections and Research – Two highly specialized sections



### MODEL C - Collections and research separated within departments



## Antall fast tilsatte pr. seksjon januar 2013

