

ISTAR — INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF TESTATE AMOEBA RESEARCH

How to Submit a Publication

Companion guide to the online submission form testate-amoebae-resources.org

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Questions? contact@testate-amoebae-resources.org

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1. What is ISTAR and why submit?

The ISTAR Testate Amoeba Repository is a curated scientific database of publications about testate amoebae — a group of single-celled organisms widely used as indicators of environmental change, water table dynamics, and ecosystem health.

The goal of the database is to bring together publications that are currently scattered across hundreds of journals, conference proceedings, old monographs, and grey literature — and make them searchable in one place for the whole research community.

By submitting a publication, you help build a shared resource that will benefit researchers, students, and conservationists worldwide. Contributions are welcome from anyone: researchers, students, or collaborators with access to relevant literature.

Who can submit?

Anyone who has access to a relevant publication — you do not need to be one of the authors. You can submit papers you have read, papers from your reference library, or older literature you have scanned or found online.

2. Before you start

Before opening the submission form, gather one of the following:

- **The DOI of the paper** — a DOI looks like 10.1016/j.soilbio.2021.108234. It is usually printed on the first page of an article or visible in the browser address bar on the publisher's website.
- **A BibTeX or RIS export** from your reference manager (Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote, or similar). This is a text file containing the bibliographic details of one or more publications.
- **The bibliographic details typed out** — title, authors, year, journal name, volume, issue, and pages. This is needed for older literature that does not have a DOI.

Optionally, you may also have:

- **A PDF of the paper** — you may upload it if it is openly accessible (open access articles, or author manuscripts you have the right to share). Do not upload paywalled final publisher versions.

Technical requirements

The submission form requires a **desktop or laptop computer** with a screen at least 1024 pixels wide. It works in all modern browsers: Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Edge. Internet Explorer is not supported.

Preprints are not accepted

The database only accepts peer-reviewed publications. Preprints (e.g. from bioRxiv or EarthArXiv) that have not yet been published in a journal are not accepted. The journal name is a required field.

3. The three ways to enter a record

When you open the submission form, you are asked to choose how you want to enter the publication. There are three options:

Option A — DOI

Enter the paper's DOI and the form automatically fills in the title, authors, journal, year, abstract, and open access status. Fastest option — recommended whenever the paper has a DOI.

Option B — BibTeX / RIS file

Import a file exported from your reference manager. You can import multiple records at once and review them one by one. Best if you have a large collection to contribute.

Option C — Manual entry

Fill in all fields by hand. Use this for older literature, book chapters, or any publication that does not have a DOI and is not in your reference manager.

Always check auto-filled data

When using the DOI or BibTeX option, the form tries to fill fields automatically — but automatic data is not always perfect. Journal names may be abbreviated, author names may be in a different format, or the abstract may be missing. Always review all fields before submitting.

Option A — Using a DOI

On the entry screen, select **Enter a DOI** and type or paste the DOI in the box. Enter the bare form of the DOI: `10.XXXX/XXXX` — do not include `https://doi.org/` at the beginning.

The form will query CrossRef, OpenAlex, and Unpaywall — three large databases of scientific publications — to retrieve the metadata. This usually takes a few seconds. Once complete, you will be taken directly to the review form with most fields already filled.

If the DOI already exists in the ISTAR database, the form will tell you before fetching — this prevents accidental duplicates.

Option B — Importing from a reference manager

Most reference managers (Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote, JabRef, Papers) can export your library or a selection of references in BibTeX or RIS format. These are plain-text file formats that contain all the bibliographic information in a structured way.

How to export from Zotero: Select the references you want to export → File → Export Library → choose BibTeX or RIS → save the file.

How to export from Mendeley: Select references → File → Export → choose BibTeX or RIS → save the file.

Once you have the file, select **Import BibTeX / RIS** on the entry screen and upload the file. The form will show you a queue of records to review one by one. You can skip records, edit fields, and submit each one after reviewing it.

Author keywords are imported automatically

If your BibTeX or RIS file contains author keywords, they are imported into the Keywords field automatically. You can edit them before submitting.

Option C — Manual entry

Select **Enter manually** to open a blank form. Fill in each field yourself. This option is most commonly used for:

- Old literature (19th and early 20th century) that predates DOIs
- Book chapters or monographs not covered by CrossRef
- Papers you found in printed form (e.g. from a library)
- Conference papers, technical reports, or theses

4. Step 1 — Your information

The first section of the form asks for your personal details. This information is not published on the website — it is used only so that David can contact you if he has questions about the record during review.

Field	What to enter
Your name required	Your full name or initials, in the same format you use for author names — e.g. Smith J.A.
Your email required	Your email address. David will contact you here if he needs to clarify anything about the record.
Affiliation optional	Your institution or university. This helps David understand the contributor community but is not required.
ISTAR member optional	Indicate whether you are a member of the ISTAR network. This helps David flag records for the contributors page on the website.

5. Step 2 — Bibliographic details

This section contains the core bibliographic information of the publication. Fields marked **required** must be filled before submission.

Field	What to enter
DOI optional	The Digital Object Identifier for this paper. Enter the bare form: 10.XXXX/XXXXX — do not include https://doi.org/ . If the paper does not have a DOI (common for old literature), leave this field empty.
Title required	Full title of the publication as printed. Enter it in the original language — do not translate. Use the formatting toolbar above the title field to add <i>italics</i> (for species names), bold, superscripts, or subscripts as needed. You can also insert special characters (accented letters, Greek letters, etc.) using the Ω button in the toolbar.

Species names in titles

Testate amoeba species names are conventionally written in italics. If the species name appears in the title, click on it and press the *I* button in the toolbar to make it italic. Example: *Arcella vulgaris* should appear in italics.

Field	What to enter
Authors required	One author per line, in the format Lastname F.A. — last name first, followed by initials with full stops. Examples: Smith J.A., Van den Berg P., Müller H. To add an author: click the + Add author button below the list. To reorder authors: drag the handle (::) on the left of each row. To remove an author: click the × button on the right.

Known / New badges

Next to each author name, the form shows a small **known** (green) or **new** (amber) badge. “Known” means that author already appears in the ISTAR database; “new” means this is the first time this author name appears. These badges help David ensure consistency — if you see “known” but the name looks different from how it was entered before, consider adjusting the format to match.

Field	What to enter
Year required	Four-digit publication year as printed (e.g. 2021). For very old literature, enter the year as printed on the publication — even if reprinted later.
Journal required	Full journal name — not abbreviated. Example: Soil Biology and Biochemistry, not Soil Biol. Biochem.. For a book chapter, enter the book title. For a monograph or book, enter the publisher name. The field suggests known journal names as you type — if the journal is already in the database, select it from the suggestion list to ensure consistent spelling.
Volume optional	Volume number as printed. Roman numerals and series designations are accepted (e.g. XIV or Ser. 2 Vol. 3). Leave blank if not applicable.
Issue optional	Issue or number within the volume. Leave blank if not applicable.
Pages optional	Page range (e.g. 234–256), article number (e.g. 108234), or column / plate numbers for older literature. Leave blank if unknown.
Publication type required	Select the type that best describes this publication: • Journal article — a peer-reviewed paper in a scientific journal • Book chapter — a chapter in an edited volume • Book — a monograph or book • Thesis — a PhD or Master’s thesis • Other — reports, conference papers, etc.

Field	What to enter
Language required	Language of the publication. Defaults to English — change if needed. Many older publications in the ISTAR database are in French, German, or Russian.
Abstract optional	Full abstract text, copied from the paper. Use the formatting toolbar for any formatting (italics for species names, etc.). If no abstract exists — common for older literature — leave the field empty. You will be asked to confirm before submitting without an abstract.

6. Step 3 — Access and files

This section allows you to provide links and upload files related to the publication.

Links

Field	What to enter
Official URL optional	Link to the publisher's page for this publication. When a DOI is provided, this field is filled automatically as https://doi.org/[DOI] . You can edit or replace this link.
Free PDF link optional	Direct link to a freely accessible PDF of the paper — for example from PubMed Central, an institutional repository, or the author's website. When a DOI is provided, this is checked automatically via Unpaywall. You can also enter it manually.
Open access optional	Is this paper freely available online? • Yes — the paper is open access (freely readable by anyone) • No — the paper is behind a paywall • Unknown — you are not sure This field is auto-detected via Unpaywall when a DOI is present.

Files

Field	What to enter
Upload PDF optional	You may upload a PDF of the paper directly to the repository. Only upload files you have the legal right to share : open access articles, author manuscripts, or papers with no copyright restrictions. Do not upload paywalled final publisher versions.
Upload transcript optional	For old printed or handwritten literature where you have produced a typed transcript of the original text: upload the transcript as a PDF here. The PDF may include figures, plates, and tables alongside the typed text.
Upload English translation optional	If you have produced a full English translation of a non-English publication, upload it here as a PDF. The PDF may include translated figure captions and plates.
Translation status optional	If you have uploaded a transcript or translation, indicate its status: • None — no transcript or translation • Transcript only — original-language text transcribed, no translation • Full translation — complete English translation available • AI-assisted (unvalidated) — translated by AI, not reviewed by a human • Validated — AI translation reviewed and corrected by a human

Copyright reminder

Uploading a PDF to a public repository creates a publicly accessible copy. Only upload PDFs you are authorised to share. When in doubt, leave the upload fields empty and provide the official URL or free PDF link instead.

7. Step 4 — Classification

The classification section is the most important part of the submission for making the database searchable. It allows users to filter publications by topic, habitat, method, and geographic area.

When you use the DOI entry method, the form suggests a classification automatically using an AI tool. This suggestion is a starting point — always review it and adjust as needed before submitting.

Select all that apply

For each classification category, you can select multiple values. A paper may belong to several themes, cover multiple habitats, or span more than one geographic area. There is no limit on the number of selections.

Themes

Themes reflect the main scientific topic of the publication. There are six main themes, each with a set of sub-themes. When you select a main theme, its sub-themes appear below it — select all the sub-themes that apply.

Palaeoecology

Holocene reconstruction · Late Quaternary · Sediment core analysis · Transfer functions & calibration · Carbon & peat accumulation · Vegetation & land use history · Climate proxies · Multi-proxy studies

Ecology & Biomonitoring

Community ecology · Environmental drivers · Soil ecology · Aquatic ecology · Functional ecology · Water quality assessment · Soil quality assessment · Ecological indicators · Long-term monitoring

Taxonomy & Diversity

Species description · Morphological diversity · Ultrastructure · Molecular systematics · Phylogenetics · DNA barcoding · Metabarcoding & diversity · Cryptic diversity · Taxonomic revision

Evolution

Phylogenomics · Molecular clock & divergence times · Genome evolution · Transcriptomics · Morphological evolution · Ecological diversification · Endosymbiosis · Origin of major lineages

Biogeography

Distribution patterns · Dispersal & endemism · Climate change & range shifts

Methodological development

Sampling protocols · Sample preparation & processing · Morphological identification guides · DNA extraction & sequencing protocols · Transfer function development · Statistical approaches · Modelling frameworks · Database & data management

Habitat

Select the habitat type(s) studied in the publication. Sub-types appear when you select a parent habitat.

Peatland

Ombrotrophic bog · Fen · Peatland forest · Impacted peatland · Other peatland

Soil

Forest soil · Grassland soil · Agricultural soil · Other soil

Freshwater

Lake · Pond · River/Stream · Wetland (non-peat)

Terrestrial non-soil

Moss · Lichen · Leaf litter · Other terrestrial

Marine/Brackish

Coastal sediment

Multi-habitat

(select when the study covers more than one of the above habitat types)

Methods

Select the main methods used in the study. Choose all that apply.

Morphological · Barcoding · Metabarcoding · Genomics · Transcriptomics · Transfer functions · Stable isotopes · Experimental · Modelling · Multi-method

Geographic scope

Select the geographic area(s) covered by the study. Countries appear under their continent. Select *Multi-site* if the study covers several distinct regions.

Global

Europe

Switzerland · France · Germany · United Kingdom · Russia

North America

Canada · United States

Other regions

South America · Africa · Asia · Oceania · Antarctica · Multi-site

Study type

Select the design of the study.

- **In situ** — field sampling (including subsequent lab work)
- **Controlled conditions** — laboratory experiments
- **Modelling** — mathematical or computational models
- **Meta-analysis** — quantitative synthesis of multiple studies
- **Review** — a review article
- **Taxonomic description** — morphological or molecular characterisation of a new taxon
- **Methodological** — development or evaluation of a method
- **Multi-approach** — combines two or more of the above

Geological period

For studies with an explicit paleoecological or geological scope, indicate the time period(s) covered. For modern ecological studies, select *Not applicable*.

When to use “Holocene”

Select Holocene only when long-term paleoecological reconstruction spanning the Holocene is the primary focus of the study. Do not select it simply because the study was conducted in a peatland or uses sediment cores, unless the temporal reconstruction itself is the main goal.

Holocene · Pleistocene · Quaternary · Neogene · Paleogene · Paleozoic · Neoproterozoic · Multi-period · Not applicable

8. Step 5 — Keywords and translation

Field	What to enter
Keywords optional	Author-assigned keywords from the publication. Separate keywords with semicolons and use lowercase. Example: <code>testate amoeba; peatland; holocene; transfer functions</code> If you imported the record from BibTeX or RIS, author keywords from the file are filled in automatically. Edit as needed — these keywords are public and searchable on the website.

9. Step 6 — Notes and submission

Field	What to enter
Notes for David optional	Any information that may help David during review. For example: a known issue with the data, uncertainty about a field, or context about the source. These notes are not published — they are for internal use only. Examples: <i>“Could not find the full page range — only the first page number was available.”</i> <i>“Author name may be incorrect — only initials were given in the original.”</i>

Once all required fields are filled, the **Submit** button becomes active. Click it to send the record to David for review. A confirmation message will appear when the submission has been received.

The Submit button is greyed out?

The Submit button is disabled until all required fields are filled. Check that the following fields are complete: Your name, Your email, Title, at least one Author, Year, Journal, and Publication type. Scroll through the form to look for any fields highlighted in red.

10. What happens after submission

After you submit a record, it enters a review queue. David reviews each submission before it is published on the website. Here is what to expect:

1. **Review** — David checks all fields, corrects any formatting issues, verifies the classification, and ensures the record is not already in the database.
2. **Contact** — If David has questions or needs additional information, he will contact you at the email address you provided.
3. **Publication** — Once approved, the record appears on testate-amoebae-resources.org and is immediately searchable.
4. **Timeline** — Review typically takes a few days, depending on the volume of submissions.

No confirmation email

The submission form does not currently send a confirmation email. If you want to confirm that your submission was received, contact David at contact@testate-amoebae-resources.org.

11. Formatting tips

Author names

Use the format **Lastname F.A.** — last name first, followed by initials separated by full stops. This is critical for consistency: if an author already exists in the database under one spelling, using a different format will create a duplicate entry.

Correct	Incorrect
Smith J.A.	John A. Smith / J.A. Smith / Smith, J.A.
Van den Berg P.	van den Berg, P.
De Jonge C.R.	de Jonge C. R.
Müller H.	Muller H. (preserve accented characters)

Journal names

Always use the **full journal name**, never an abbreviation. The ISTAR database stores journal names in full — abbreviated names create duplicates and make filtering unreliable.

Correct	Incorrect
Soil Biology and Biochemistry	Soil Biol. Biochem.
Journal of Paleolimnology	J. Paleolimnol.
The Holocene	Holocene

The journal field shows a suggestion list of names already in the database as you type. Selecting a name from this list ensures consistent spelling.

Title and abstract formatting

The title and abstract fields have a small formatting toolbar. Use the buttons to apply:

- ***I*** — Italic (use for species names, e.g. *Arcella vulgaris*)
- **B** — Bold
- **x²** — Superscript (e.g. cm²)
- **x₂** — Subscript (e.g. CO₂)
- **Ω** — Special character picker (accented letters, Greek letters, symbols)

For BibTeX imports, LaTeX formatting commands are converted automatically — `\textit{Arcella}` becomes *Arcella*, `$^{14}$C` becomes ¹⁴C, and so on. Review the result and correct anything that was not converted correctly.

DOI format

Enter DOIs in their bare form, without the URL prefix:

- **Correct:** 10.1016/j.soilbio.2021.108234
- **Incorrect:** <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soilbio.2021.108234>
- **Incorrect:** doi:10.1016/j.soilbio.2021.108234

12. Frequently asked questions

Can I submit a paper I did not write myself?

Yes. You do not need to be one of the authors. Anyone who has access to a relevant publication can submit it. This is especially encouraged for older or obscure literature.

Can I submit multiple papers at once?

Yes, using the BibTeX or RIS import option. Export a selection from your reference manager, import the file, and the form will let you review and submit each record one by one.

The DOI lookup did not find anything — what should I do?

Some older papers or conference proceedings are not indexed in CrossRef. If the lookup returns no result, switch to manual entry and fill in the details yourself. The DOI field can be left empty if the paper does not have one.

The form filled in the wrong journal name (abbreviated) — should I fix it?

Yes. Always replace abbreviated journal names with the full name before submitting. Use the full name exactly as it appears on the journal's website.

I am not sure about the classification — should I leave it blank?

You can leave classification fields empty if you are unsure, and add a note for David explaining which part you were uncertain about. David will complete or adjust the classification during review. However, even a partial classification is helpful — select the categories you are confident about and leave the rest.

The AI classification looks wrong — should I correct it?

Yes, always review the AI-generated classification. The AI makes suggestions based on the title and abstract, but it can misidentify themes or miss important context. Treat it as a first draft that you review and correct, not a final answer.

The abstract field is empty but I can see the abstract on the publisher's page — what should I do?

You can copy the abstract text from the publisher's page and paste it into the field. The DOI lookup pulls abstracts from CrossRef, which does not always have the full abstract for all papers.

I made a mistake after submitting — can I correct it?

Contact David at contact@testate-amoebae-resources.org as soon as possible. If the record has not yet been reviewed and published, he can correct it before approving it.

Is there a limit on how many records I can submit?

No. Contributions of any size — one paper or a thousand — are equally welcome.