Pfynwald Research Platform

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Preamble

VPDrought Project – WSL Pfynwald

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishes the principles for collaboration, data sharing, and publication within the VPDrought Project hosted by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL) at the Pfynwald Research Platform.

The MoU builds on and complements the Terms of Use (ToU) from May 2024 and the Safety Concept (SC) from July 2024.

1. Parties

This MoU is made between:

Lead Institution:
Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL
Zürcherstrasse 111, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland

Represented by the VPDrought Project Leader, Marcus Schaub

Collaborating Institution / Researcher:

Institution Name: ______________________________________

Contact Person: ____

Email: ____

2. Project Description

The VPDrought Project investigates the effects of atmospheric vapor pressure deficit (VPD) and soil water availability on forest ecosystems by experimentally manipulating these factors in combination with intensive long-term ecological monitoring at the Pfynwald Research Platform. VPDrought is scheduled to run until the end of 2028.

3. Objectives of the Collaboration

a. To facilitate scientific collaboration and data exchange.
b. To ensure responsible data handling and transparent authorship.

c. To enable high-quality publications and enable public data access.

4. Data Access and Use

a. All data generated within the VPDrought Project are owned by WSL.
b. The collaborating party is granted access to relevant data for collaborative research purposes only.
c. Data are under embargo until 31 December 2026. During this period, data must not be distributed outside the project or used for publication (incl. theses, posters and presentations) without written permission from the project leads (Marcus Schaub and Charlotte Grossiord).
d. After the embargo, all short- and long-term data must be publicly released via the WSL-approved EnviDat repository unless exceptions are granted.

5. Data Management

a. Collaborators must follow WSL data standards for storage, metadata, and versioning as outlined in 2.4.1 Data management plan of the proposal.
b. VPDrought produces the following three data categories:
   (1) Automatically collected system control data
   (2) Automatically collected long-term monitoring data (more than one year)
   (3) Non-automatically collected (short-term) data
c. All automatically collected data are transferred, processed, and stored in the WSL-internal PostgreSQL database.
d. All all short- and long-term data must be quality-controlled and fed into the EnviDat WSL Repository to increase the visibility and accessibility of the data and to comply with the Open Research Data (ORD) Policy of the ETH Domain.
e. Modifications to shared datasets must be communicated to the data originator.

6. Publication and Authorship

a. Publications using VPDrought data require approval by the Pfynwald Core Group (see Table 1 in ToU from May 2024) prior to submission.
b. Authorship should follow The Vancouver Recommendations, recognizing substantial intellectual contributions.
c. The Pfynwald Core Group and individual data providers (depending on the data used) must be invited as co-authors, allowing them to decide whether they wish to be included as co-authors on the publication; if they choose not to be involved, their contribution must be acknowledged.
d. Mandatory acknowledgment in all outputs: "This research is including data from the VPDrought project, hosted by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL at the Pfynwald Research Platform."
e. In each output, reference should be made to the VPDrought Methods publication by Schaub *et al*. (in prep) in *Methods in Ecology and Evolution.*

7. Data Citation

a. All published datasets must be cited using their DOI and full metadata citation (see point 5.d.).
b. Any reuse of VPDrought data must include proper citation and credit to the data originator.

8. Conflict Resolution

Any disputes related to data use, authorship, or collaboration shall be resolved in good faith through discussion with the Pfynwald Core Group. If unresolved, the matter may be referred to WSL's research ethics office.

9. Amendments and Duration

a. This MoU is effective upon signature and remains in force for the duration of the collaboration.
b. It may be amended with mutual written consent.
c. Termination may be requested by either party with 30 days' notice.

10. Signatures

For WSL / VPDrought Project
Name: Marcus Schaub
Title: Senior Scientist
Date: 30 April 2025

Signature: 

For Collaborating Institution / Researcher

Name: ____________________________________

Institution: ________________________________

Date: _____________________________________

Signature: _________________________________