



## **When citizens and scientists work together : a french collaborative science network on earthworms communities distribution**

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Scientists have become more and more interested in earthworms because of their impact on soil functioning and their importance in provision of many ecosystem services. To improve the knowledge on soil biodiversity and integrate earthworms in soil quality diagnostics, it appeared necessary to gain a large amount of data on their distribution. The University of Rennes 1 developed since 2011 a collaborative science project called Observatoire Participatif des Vers de Terre (OPVT, participative earthworm observatory). It has several purposes : i) to offer a simple tool for soil biodiversity evaluation in natural and anthropic soils through earthworm assessment, ii) to offer trainings to farmers, territory managers, gardeners, pupils on soil ecology, iii) to build a database of reference values on earthworms in different habitats, iv) to propose a website ([https://ecobiosoil.univ-rennes1.fr/OPVT\\_accueil.php](https://ecobiosoil.univ-rennes1.fr/OPVT_accueil.php)) providing for example general scientific background (earthworm ecology and impacts of soil management), sampling protocols and online visualization of results (data processing and earthworms mapping). Up to now, more than 5000 plots have been prospected since the opening of the project in 2011., Initially available to anyone on a voluntary basis, this project is also used by the French Ministry of Agriculture to carry out a scientific survey throughout the French territory.