Associate editor decision: Publish subject to revisions (further review by editor and referees)

Both reviewers think that your short communication on “A database of the global distribution of (U-Th)/He ages and U,Th contents of goethites” is suitable for publication in Geochronology pending revisions. Having read your manuscript myself, I agree with this assessment, although I have a slightly different opinion about the nature of the revisions. The main problem with your manuscript is that it is too long for a short communication and too short for a review article. Therefore, I would like to give you the choice between two types of revision:

1. You can follow the reviewers' recommendations and turn your manuscript into a bona fide review article by expanding it with further background information and definitions. Such a revised manuscript would need to be resubmitted with a different title and re-reviewed.

2. Alternatively, you can shorten the manuscript and stay true to its current title. Short communications are meant to be simple announcements of methodological advances that may be useful to other geochronologists. Thus, you can focus on the database and remove the detailed methodological discussion.

Regardless of which option you choose, I would recommend that you make your database more user-friendly by linking it to an interactive web-platform. In its current form, your database consists of a number of csv files that have been posted on GitHub. The landing page for your GitHub page provides instructions on how to clone the repository, but does not encourage users to issue pull requests, nor provide a mechanism to ensure that the database will be maintained in the future.

One easy way to make your database available to the wider community is to upload your data to existing databases such as the AusGeochem web-portal, which will change its name to EarthBank in the near future, reflecting its global scope. This database includes formats for U-Th-He data. Once you have uploaded your data to this web-portal, you will be able to use the built-in data visualisation tools to enhance the figures in your manuscript.

Reply to Associate Editor

Dear Peter Vermeesch,

We would like to thank you for your suggestions on how to proceed with this manuscript. To publish this work as a Short Communication article, we replaced two sections of the manuscript ([section 3. Geological Environments] and [section 4. Types of goethite]) with a much shorter section ([section 3. Weathering Environments and Types of goethite]) that briefly summarizes key information on weathering environments studied with the formation of goethite suitable for (U-Th)/He geochronology. As requested by the reviewers, we added a Discussion section where we highlight how goethite weathering geochronology helps to unveil the long-term history of landscape evolution of continental landmasses.

We also decided to maintain the database available as a repository in GitHub. Detailed instructions on how to use the database and how to contribute with new data have been described in the Contributing section of the README file.

Contributing

Contributions from the community are welcome! Whether it is a typo error fix, data additions, or improvements to documentation, your help is appreciated. Please follow the guidelines below to contribute to this project.

1. Fork the repository (Fork a repository - GitHub Docs).
2. Clone the forked repository (Cloning a repository - GitHub Docs).
3. Create a new branch for your new entry.
4. Make your changes.
5. Commit your changes.
6. Push your changes to your fork.
7. Create a new Pull Request.

Contact

For any questions or suggestions, please contact Hevelyn Monteiro at hevelynbr@gmail.com.

Finally, we contemplate making the database available through Caltech webpage in the near future.

Sincerely,

Hevelyn Monteiro