

Rescuing the knowledge base of Venezuela's marine biodiversity

Programme: BID

Project ID: BID-CA2020-025-NAC

Project lead organization: Fundacion Caribe Sur

Project implementation period: 5/7/2021 - 30/9/2022

Report approved: 23/2/2022

Narrative Early Progress report

Executive Summary

Six months since the project's implementation started, we have achieved to publish 27,024 records of marine species in 36 datasets, training 10 people on the use of Darwin Core Standards to mobilise Biodiversity data using GBIF and OBIS and providing basic introductory knowledge to 20 participants through a workshop held in December 2021.

All of the national institutions working with marine biodiversity were contacted and confirmed their participation, unfortunately upon starting activities one institution (FLASA) notified us they would not participate in the Project due to other priorities.

The project's progress has been monitored by means of fortnight meetings with regional/institutional coordinators and the core management team and keeping track of agreed indicators for training and publication of datasets.

In 2021, the Project suffered the unfortunate loss of two Team members due to Covid-19. Both were data providers. Still, the Project has managed to comply with the expected outcomes in terms of most of the deliverables.

Other issues have still to be worked on, such as the digitization of material kept in the institutional libraries, which have been delayed partly due to inconveniences in the delivery of the scanners and portable hard drives purchased and in part to the pandemic situation which has kept the libraries closed and without access to its documents and archives.

Planning phase - User(s) consultation outcome(s)

Defining Data User Needs

Defining Data Needs

Planning Phase Outcomes

Report on Activities

Activity progress summary

While a predictable rather slow start of the Project was expected due to the difficult situation of the national institutions, most of the activities have been achieved and the Project has managed to comply with the expected outcomes in terms of most of the deliverables.

All Team members have received capacity on OBIS and GBIF networks. A Training Workshop on data mobilisation with GBIF and OBIS has been delivered with 20 participants selected among 43

applicants. Two more workshops are planned to be held in April and August 2022.

Nation-wide COVID restrictions have restricted access to universities and their libraries since the beginning of the project. This has impeded any progress on the digitizing of theses, reports and historic issues of national scientific journals in order to contribute to the Ocean Information from Venezuela. We were finally able to buy the scanners and are currently waiting for their delivery to begin.

The inventory of non-digitized biodiversity data is partially completed. We have completed an inventory of the datasets the project will be publishing on top of the 36 already published. Regional coordinators are now in the process of inventorying the literature that will be digitized as universities reopen. We expect that this could be completed by April 2022.

A webinar to promote adoption of DwC standards and use of OBIS/GBIF is planned in April 2022 to showcase the datasets that have been published.

A first meeting to coordinate the production of a data paper was held in January. The publishing of a research article from the datasets produced in the project is expected to be completed by June 2022.

Progress on activities

Activity: Assess number of undigitised data sources for prioritisation and preparation of final data mobilisation plan

Description: An inventory of all data sources available at national institutions was completed in order to prioritize data mobilization efforts. Each institutional coordinator prepared a curated list of datasets by institution, prioritising those whose raw data were semi-digitised or which data providers were easily accessible to answer any query during digitisation. A total of 27 datasets were identified in September 2021. These lists were used to monitor the progress in the workflow established for the publication of datasets.

Start Date - End Date: 5/7/2021 - 15/9/2021

Verification Sources: Inventory of partially digitised datasets

Activity: Build capacity in team members and data holders for data mobilisation

Description: All institutional or regional coordinators and other researchers from different national organizations completed a 4-week long course on Biodiversity Data Mobilization. They are all actively working getting datasets in the workflow for publication, with 36 datasets already published. Training of regional coordinators was delayed by almost 5 weeks due to OBIS trainers changing the starting date of the workshop. This affected the planned dates for the delivery of datasets, as coordinators were able to effectively start working on digitising the inventoried datasets by the end of September 2021. From October we have been hosting fortnightly online Helpdesk Session for the regional coordinators and various researchers who are also digitizing datasets and have been capacitated within the overall activities of the project. These sessions are recorded and available to all participants through the CaribeSur YouTube channel.

We have also completed the design and delivery of the first online workshop training: Introduction to GBIF and OBIS to mobilize biodiversity data. The training started on December 11th 2021. A total of 43 researchers and students submitted applications and 20 were accepted based on the capacity of our team members trained on the BID Capacity enhancement workshop. The training included six modules with practical exercises and a final submission of a user case scheduled for the end of January 2022.

We have shared the training program with learning objectives and activities with our partners from PROVITA who are also organizing a workshop, focused on terrestrial biodiversity within their BID Institutional project.

Two other training workshops are planned to start on June and August 2022.

Start Date - End Date: 17/8/2021 - 30/1/2022

Verification Sources: CaribeSur Team Members Meeting Webinar 18-08-2021 >

<https://youtu.be/4P4AiT7PSHK>

IOC-OTGA-INVEMAR Training Evaluation Webinar 13-10-2021

<https://youtu.be/HMz3i6iNfpc>

• 12-11-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar > <https://youtu.be/p7G05MDkgxQ>

• 24-11-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar > <https://youtu.be/kDC8AZwq9Ow>

• 20-12-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar > <https://youtu.be/ckqwBAfGsu0>

• Introduction to Biodiversity Data Mobilization Workshop Google Classroom:

<https://classroom.google.com/c/NDlyNTk5NzA3MzYy> Code: lq7tqei

- First Q&A Session: 06 Dec 2021: Modules 1,2,3 https://youtu.be/g_W1AJCVVGI

- Second Q&A Session 10 Dec 2021: Workshop Modules 4,5 <https://youtu.be/jZW8Xvoquu4>

Activity: Implement pipeline for preparation and publication of datasets

Description: Using the inventories of datasets by institution/region, the national coordinator has held fortnight meetings individually with each coordinator to track progress. Project documentation is kept in a Google Drive account from the Universidad Simon Bolivar where coordinators and partners can access them.

Once the core and extensions are ready and revised, regional coordinators complete the metadata on a training IPT set up and managed by the OBIS Caribbean node and informs the node representative who conducts a final check before moving the dataset to the OBIS IPT. We set up a dedicated WhatsApp group to provide support and discuss issues that arise during the digitization and data cleaning stage of the pipeline, as well as fortnight help desk session led by OBIS Caribbean node.

Start Date - End Date: 18/8/2021 - 7/1/2022

Verification Sources: OBIS HelpDesk Webinars:

- 12-11-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar
- 24-11-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar
- 20-12-2021 OBIS HelpDesk Webinar

These are available through links in Caribe Sur YouTube channel

Activity: Integrate digitised products (dataset and literature) to host databases and repositories

Description: A total of 36 datasets with 27,024 records have been moved from the training IPT to OBIS. 24 core files are uploaded to the training IPT and are in the process of completing the metadata and publication process.

Currently three scanners have been purchased in order to digitize literature kept in the institutional libraries, this action has been delayed partly due to inconveniences in the delivery of the scanners and portable hard drives purchased and in part to the pandemic situation which has kept the libraries closed and without access to its documents and archives.

Start Date - End Date: 2/9/2021 - 13/7/2022

Verification Sources: See Project Page <https://www.gbif.org/project/BID-CA2020-025-NAC/rescuing-the-knowledge-base-of-venezuelas-marine-biodiversity#datasets>

Activity: Prepare and submit midterm report

Description: on going activity

Start Date - End Date: 1/12/2021 - 31/1/2022

Verification Sources: Nothing to report on this

Activity: Produce datasets on marine biodiversity

Description: Up to this date a total of 36 datasets with 27,024 records for marine species have been published in OBIS and are also accessible through GBIF. This represents 33 % more of the total number of datasets planned for the project to deliver.

COVID restrictions have restricted access to universities' libraries since the beginning of the project.

This has impeded any progress on digitizing literature to upload to OceanDocs and limited progressing with the following datasets:

1. Marine biodiversity of La Restinga National Park *
2. Ichthyoplankton of the northeastern Venezuelan coast *
3. Phytoplankton of the Northeastern Venezuelan coast *
4. Zooplankton of the Northeastern Venezuelan coast *
5. Seagrass-associated molluscs from the northeastern coast of Venezuela *
6. Decapods of Margarita Island *
7. Crustacea Decapoda of Zulia, Venezuela *

These represent 25% of the datasets originally planned to be delivered. However, the impact on this deliverable is reduced by the increased number of datasets identified on the national inventory made by the institutional coordinators.

Start Date - End Date: 30/9/2021 - 31/7/2022

Verification Sources: See Inventario Datasets docs

Activity: BID Capacity enhancement workshop certification obtained

Description: Two Project Team members, Jeannette Perez, an institutional coordinator and Francoise Cavada, a volunteer researcher, completed the online training and submitted the user case for evaluation. They are currently waiting the certification outcome.

Start Date - End Date: 1/8/2021 - 31/12/2021

Verification Sources: Advance badge received by one of the participants. Currently waiting the certification outcome for the second participant

Activity: Contact and engage relevant stakeholders to increase participation in GBIF network and geographic coverage within OBIS datasets

Description: We have been in contact with our Project partners from PROVITA and are participating in a meeting with the Director of the National Office of Biodiversity, Mrs Carliz Diaz. This meeting has been constantly postponed on her end and we still do not have a date for it.

As part of our planning for the webinars we will engage with University Department heads and students' associations to also publicize the trainings. However, the restriction to access universities has proven a difficult barrier to mobilize university staff and students.

Start Date - End Date: 1/8/2021 - 31/7/2022

Verification Sources: No report attachmets

Report on Deliverables

Deliverables progress summary

To date, a total of 36 datasets with 27,024 records for marine species have been published in OBIS and are also accessible through GBIF. This represents 33 % more than the total number of datasets planned for the project to deliver.

COVID restrictions nationwide have impeded access to universities' libraries since the beginning of the project. This has hindered progress on digitizing literature to upload to OceanDocs and limited progressing with the following datasets:

Marine biodiversity of La Restinga National Park *

Ichthyoplankton of the northeastern Venezuelan coast *

Phytoplankton of the Northeastern Venezuelan coast *

Zooplankton of the Northeastern Venezuelan coast *

Seagrass-associated molluscs from the northeastern coast of Venezuela *

Decapods of Margarita Island *

Crustacea Decapoda of Zulia, Venezuela *

These represent 25% of the 27 datasets originally planned to be delivered. However, the impact on the project is reduced by the increased number of datasets identified on the national inventory made by the institutional coordinators of which 36 datasets are already published.

Progress towards deliverables

Deliverables - Project planning phase

Deliverables - Project data mobilization phase

Deliverables - Project evaluation phase

Events

Introduction to Biodiversity Data Mobilization Workshop

Dates: 2021-12-01 - 2021-12-10

Organizing institution: CaribeSur

Country: Venezuela

Number of participants: 20

Comments:

Website or sources of verification: <https://classroom.google.com/c/NDIyNTk5NzA3MzYy>

GBIF leads the Biodiversity Information for Development (BID), a programme funded by the European Union. The programme provides supplementary support for activities addressing the needs of regional researchers and policymakers through mobilization and use of biodiversity data.

