Handbook for the GBIF Participant Node Managers Committee and the Nodes Steering Group

Contents

Introduction

This document describes the duties and responsibilities of the GBIF Participants Node Managers Committee (Node Committee) members and the members of the Nodes Steering Group. It is intended that the guidelines and information in this document should assist the Nodes Committee members, especially the Chair in fulfilling his/her obligations and at the same time help to ensure a more effective, efficient, and timely administration of all aspects of the GBIF nodes issues.

Further recommended reading:
This document should be read in association with the GBIF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Rules of Procedure (RoP) and the Terms of Reference for the Participant Node Managers Committee (NC ToR).

Definitions

At present, there are no official definitions for some key terms that have been approved by the Governing Board. Nevertheless, these are provided as working explanations while we seek to formalize them further:

Delegation: the team of people nominated by Participants to represent them in GBIF decision making, under the leadership of the Head of Delegation.

Head of Delegation: the person designated by the Participant to act as its representative to the GBIF Governing Board and take part in the global-level decision making.

Node manager: the person designated by the Participant to manage the activities of the node to coordinate a biodiversity information facility.

Node staff: the team of people working in a Participant node. They are usually focused on specific areas such as user support, scientific liaison or technical development.

Biodiversity information facility stakeholders: any person from within a Participant country or organization who contributes to the overall work of the biodiversity information facility or benefits from it. Some examples include publishers of biodiversity data, users of GBIF-mediated data (e.g. scientific researchers, planning agencies and the private sector) and policymakers involved in the development of data policies.

Role of the Nodes Committee

The Participant Node Managers Committee (Node Committee) serves as a forum for sharing information about the status and best practices of Participants' nodes, and as an advisory committee that will make recommendations to the Governing Board, the Executive Committee, the Science Committee and the Secretariat concerning relevant issues for the nodes (RoP 7.3.3).

The committee will strive to work by consensus in drafting its advice and recommendations (NC ToR I 3.4).

These are the main responsibilities of the Nodes Committee:

Data Publishing

- The Nodes Committee is established to facilitate data publishing among Participants by providing a forum for the exchange of experiences, best practices and information (NC ToR I).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to identify and share best practices in developing and managing GBIF Participant Nodes as a means for Participants to improve key aspects of data publishing and data use (NC ToR I 1.1).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to identify barriers to data publishing experienced by Participants, determine which are held in common, and suggest relevant solutions (NC ToR I 1.2).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to explore, create and promote a range of different models for organising and achieving data publishing among Participants (NC ToR I 1.3).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to communicate the Nodes' requirement to the Science Committee and Secretariat for the development of GBIF standards and data-publishing technology (publishing software, portals, search mechanisms, tools, etc.) based on demand from data publishers and users at the Participant level (NC ToR I 1.5).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to help test and refine through feedback new versions of standards and data-publishing technology (publishing software, portals, search mechanisms, tools, etc.) (NC ToR I 1.6).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to create regular overviews and analyses of data publishing and Participant Node development for the Governing Board, in order to help inform assessments of progress and to inform planning (NC ToR I 1.7).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to help observers and new Participants understand and achieve benefits available from publishing data via GBIF and establishing a Node (NC ToR I 1.9).

Work Programme

- The Nodes Committee will provide the Governing Board with advice on the challenges and practical requirements faced by Participant Nodes, and the ways in which the GBIF Work Programme can help address them (NC ToR I)
- The Nodes Committee will provide expertise and advice to the GBIF Secretariat in support of the delivery and implementation of the GBIF Work Programme as well as participating network development (NC ToR I).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to identify the priority needs of the Participant Nodes that are best addressed through the GBIF Work Programme, and where activity in individual Nodes can offer work that helps achieve the goals set out in the Work Programme for data publishing and service improvements (NC ToR I 1.8).
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to make recommendations that contribute to the setting of longer-term strategic directions for the GBIF Work Programme (NC ToR I 1.9).

Promotion and exchange of knowledge

- The Nodes Committee will promote the GBIF Participant Node concept to the international biodiversity community as a unit providing services for data publishers and users of biodiversity data (NC ToR I)
- The Nodes Committee has the responsibility to encourage Participants to use their expertise to help each other directly in developing their Participant Nodes through

exchange of knowledge, informal partnerships, or longer term interactions (NC ToR I 1.4).

Ad hoc working groups

- If necessary, the committee may develop ad hoc working groups, as long as there are no cost implications for the GBIF core budget (NC ToR 3.3.1). If the committee wishes to establish an ad hoc working group whose activities will have cost implications for the GBIF core budget, it may make a petition, including a statement of the rationale for the group and its projected costs, to the Executive Secretary to provide the funding for the group. The group cannot start its work until it receives such approval (NC ToR 3.3.2).

Nodes meeting planning

- Meetings of the Nodes Committee (Global Nodes meetings) will be planned at least three and ideally six months in advance to establish agenda and to allow members to prepare materials for presentation and exchange of experiences (NC ToR 3.1.3).

Special for Chair

- It is up to the Chair to decide if additional attendees (Nodes staff members etc.) can attend the Global Nodes meeting. Such attendees need to receive prior approval from the Chair as there may be constraints on meeting capacity (NC ToR I 3.1.5).
- The Chair will dispatch a draft agenda with documents for the meeting of the Participant Node Managers Committee no later than one week before an agreed meeting date (NC ToR I 3.2). The Secretariat will assist in developing the agenda and documents and making them available in electronic format to the committee.
- The Chair will provide a report on the committee's activities and recommendations at each Governing Board meeting. The Chair may also send additional reports to the Governing Board when appropriate (NC ToR I 3.6).

Role of the Nodes Steering Group

A small Nodes Steering Group has been established to ensure an effective planning and execution of the mandate of the Participant Node Managers Committee and to act as an interface between the Nodes and other parts of the GBIF Governance (NC ToR II).

These are the main responsibilities of the Nodes Steering Group:

Recommendations

- The Nodes Steering Group has the responsibility to formulate specific recommendations to the relevant GBIF bodies (the Executive and the Science Committees, the GBIF Secretariat, and the Nodes Committee themselves) based on the feedback provided by Participant Nodes individually or collectively – including priorities, needs, solutions, opportunities, suggestions (NC ToR II 2).
- The Nodes Steering Group has the responsibility to communicate to the Nodes Committee members any recommendations or relevant information from other GBIF bodies or groups (NC ToR II 2).

Work Programme

- The Nodes Steering Group has the responsibility to provide advice on the GBIF Work Programme to ensure it addresses effectively the priorities identified by Participant Nodes, and that Participant Nodes are actively involved in its planning and implementation (NC ToR II 2).

Working/steering groups

- The Nodes Steering Group has the responsibility to establish working/steering groups to be responsible for executing specific Nodes related parts of the Work Programme, in consultation with the Secretariat (NC ToR II 2).

Special for Chair

- The Chair will dispatch a draft agenda with documents for the meeting of the Nodes Steering Group no later than one week before an agreed meeting date (NC ToR II 2.2). The Secretariat will assist in developing the agenda and documents and making them available in electronic format to the committee.

Members of the Nodes Committee

The composition of the Nodes Committee is:

- 1 Chair (elected)
- 2 Vice-chairs (elected)
- 1 node manager from each Participant

Chair

The Nodes Committee Chair will be elected by simple majority for a two-year term. The chair has to be elected among Voting Participants (RoP 7.4.1.). The Chair may be elected for only two consecutive terms in the same position (RoP, 7.4.5.).

It is required that nominations for the Chair position are drawn from members of the Nodes Committee and recommended that they are people directly involved with active Nodes (NC ToR 2.2.1).

Vice-chairs

The two Nodes Committee Vice-chairs are elected by simple majority for a two-year term. The 1st Vice-chair has to be elected among Voting Participants (RoP 7.4.1). The 2nd Vice-chair may be from Voting or Associate Participants (RoP 7.4.2). The two Vice-chairs may be elected for only two consecutive terms in the same position (RoP, 7.4.5.).

It is required that nominations for the Vice-chair positions are drawn from members of the Nodes Committee and recommended that they are people directly involved with active Nodes (NC ToR I 2.2.1).

Members

Each GBIF Participant is entitled to have one representative on the Nodes Committee (NC ToR I 2.1).

Members of the Nodes Steering Group

The composition of the <u>Nodes Steering Group</u> is:

- 1 Chair (Nodes Committee Chair)
- 2 Vice-chairs (Nodes Committee Vice-chairs)
- 6 Regional representatives (representing Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, Oceania)

Chair
The elected Nodes Committee Chair will be the Chair of the Nodes Steering Group (NC ToR II 1).

Vice-chairs
The elected Nodes Committee Vice-chairs will be the Vice-chairs of the Nodes Steering Group (NC ToR II 1).

Regional representatives
Each GBIF region will select a Regional representative who will serve on the Nodes Steering Group for an initial two-year period, which can be extended with an additional two years (NC ToR III 2.2). Each regional sub-committee decides how to select their regional representative (NC ToR III 2.3).

Meetings of the Nodes Committee

Face-to-face meetings
The <u>Nodes Committee</u> will normally meet at least once every other year for a Global Nodes meeting (NC ToR I 3.1.1). Wherever feasible, the meeting will be organised back-to-back with the Governing Board meeting (NC ToR 3.1.2). Whenever feasible, it is recommended that Node managers be included in Participant delegations to the Governing Board meetings (NC ToR I 3.7.1).

Nodes meetings may also be planned to coincide with GBIF training or other relevant activities (NC ToR I 3.1.4).

In general, additional attendees (Nodes staff members, etc.) from Participants are welcome to attend Participant Nodes Committee meetings, but these additional attendees should receive prior approval from the Chair as there may be constraints on meeting capacity (NC ToR I 3.1.5).

Meeting quorum
In order to transact business, a quorum for the Nodes Committee must be present. A quorum for the Nodes Committee meeting is defined as a total attendance, constituted by at least 50% of the Voting Participants, coming from at least 4 regions, plus either the Chair of one of the Vice-Chairs, and some representation from associated countries (NC ToR 3.1.6).

Meeting planning

The GBIF Secretariat will provide administrative support in connection with meetings of the Nodes Committee and the Nodes Steering Group. This includes helping with drafting and sending out agenda and documents, setting up meeting room, minute-taking, etc. See separate document 'GBIF Secretariat administrative support to committees' for more information.

The agenda and supporting documents should be sent out to the committee no later than one week before an agreed meeting date (NC ToR I 3.2).

The Secretariat will keep a record of each meeting of the Participant Node Managers Committee and will circulate the record to the committee members shortly after the meeting (NC ToR I 3.5.1). The Secretariat will keep an electronic library of relevant documents and presentations for the benefit of committee members (NC ToR I 3.5.2).

Meetings of the Nodes Steering Group

Face-to-face meetings

An annual meeting of the Nodes Steering Group will be scheduled as part of the GBIF mid-term committee meetings (NC ToR II 2.1).

The regional deputies can on request replace the regional representatives in NSG meetings if required (NC ToR II 5.)

Teleconferences

The Nodes Steering Group may also hold meetings via electronic means as often as necessary to conduct its business.

It is recommended that the Nodes Steering Group meetings and teleconferences are coordinated to precede the meeting of the Executive Committee by approx. a week as the Nodes Committee Chair can then report to the Executive Committee.

Meeting quorum

In order to transact business, a quorum of the Nodes Steering Group must be present. A quorum for a Nodes Steering Group meeting is defined as at least three regional Nodes representatives, or their deputies, plus either the Chair or one of the Vice-chairs (NC ToR II, 1.).

Meeting planning

The GBIF Secretariat will provide administrative support in connection with meetings of the Nodes Committee and the Nodes Steering Group. This includes helping with drafting and sending out agenda and documents, setting up meeting room, minute-taking, etc. See separate document 'GBIF Secretariat administrative support to committees' for more information.

The agenda and supporting documents should be sent out to the committee no later than one week before an agreed meeting date (NC ToR II 2.2).

The Secretariat will keep a record of each meeting of the Nodes Steering Group and will circulate the record to the committee members shortly after the meeting (NC ToR II 2.2).

The Secretariat will keep an electronic library of relevant documents and presentations for the benefit of committee members (NC ToR II 2.2).

The Secretariat has created a secure web repository where the meeting agendas and supporting documents for each Nodes Steering Group meeting can be found. Only current members of the group will have access to the documents.

The Nodes Steering Group documents can be accessed from http://directory.gbif.org/documents/nodes_steering_group/.

Funding of the Nodes Committee

The Chair, Vice-chairs and members of the GBIF Nodes Committee are not paid positions.

Attending meetings in conjunction with the Governing Board meetings

Members of the Participant Node Managers Committee will cover their own travel and accommodation costs to attend meetings of the committee (NC ToR I 3.7.2).

Committee members from developing countries may apply to the GBIF Supplementary Fund for financial support to offset the costs of participating in committee meetings (NC ToR I 3.7.3).

According to the GBIF Travel Guidelines committee members that receive full or partial funding from GBIF must book their own travel and submit a travel reimbursement form no later than 3 months after the meeting.

Funding of the Nodes Steering Group

The Chair, Vice-chairs and members of the GBIF Nodes Steering Group are not paid positions.

Attending meetings in conjunction with the Governing Board meetings

Whenever meetings of the Nodes Steering Group are held in conjunction with the annual Governing Board meeting and related events, the travel, hotel and per diem costs are to be paid by the Participant from which the group members come (NC ToR II 3.1).

Attending intersessional meetings

Whenever the Nodes Steering Group is meeting intersessionally such as the annual mid-term meetings, the group members' costs for participating in these meetings will be covered by the Secretariat (NC ToR II 3.2).

It is recommended that the Nodes Steering Group meetings and teleconferences are coordinated to precede the meeting of the Executive Committee by approx. a week as the Nodes Committee Chair can then report to the Executive Committee.

According to the GBIF Travel Guidelines committee members that receive full or partial funding from GBIF must book their own travel and submit a travel reimbursement form no later than 3 months after the meeting.

Annex 1 – Current composition of the Nodes Committee and Nodes Steering Group

Composition of the Nodes Committee and Nodes Steering Group as of 17 October 2018.

Nodes Committee

Chair	André Heughebaert, Belgium
1st Vice-chair	Anders Telenius, Sweden
2nd Vice-chair	Hulda Gideon, Tanzania
Members:	One Node manager from each Participant

Nodes Steering Group

Chair	André Heughebaert, Belgium
1st Vice-chair	Anders Telenius, Sweden
2nd Vice-chair	Hulda Gideon, Tanzania

Regional representatives:
- Africa: Fatima Parker-Allie, South Africa
- Asia: Chihjen Ko, Chinese Taipei
- Europe: Anne-Sophie Archambeau, France
- Latin America: Anabela Plos, Argentina
- North America: David Jennings, United States
- Oceania: *Pending appointment*

Annex 2 – List of Nodes Committee Chairs and Vice-chairs over time

List of GBIF Nodes Committee Chairs

- André Heughebaert, Belgium   (2016-
- Hanna Koivula, Finland   (2014-2016)
- Steve Wilkinson, United Kingdom   (2012-2014)
- Francisco Pando, Spain   (2008-2012)
- Lawrence Way, United Kingdom   (2004-2008)
- Guy Baillargeon, Canada   (2002-2004)

List of GBIF Nodes Committee 1st Vice-chairs

- Anders Telenius, Sweden   (2016-
- Alex Asase, Ghana   (2012-2016)
- Steve Wilkinson, United Kingdom   (2008-2012)
- Jim Croft, Australia   (2006-2008)
- Maria Mora, Costa Rica   (2004-2006)

List of GBIF Nodes Committee 2nd Vice-chairs

- Hulda Gideon, Tanzania   (2018-
- Wouter Addink, Netherlands   (2016-2018)
- Manuel Vargas, Costa Rica   (2012-2016)
- Francis Oguya, Kenya   (2010-2012)
- Dag Endresen, Norway   (2006-2010)
- Elizabeth Watson, Sweden   (2004-2006)