

Biodiversity Information for Development

A shared statement from the Caribbean

28 June 2019

Data is the currency of the information age, and biodiversity data must provide the foundation for evidence-based decision-making in the conservation, sustainable use, and management of natural resources. **Critical data deficits impair decision-making** and in order to achieve sustainable development, we require relevant reliable biodiversity information as well as tailored products and services to be available to researchers, natural resource users and managers, and policymakers in appropriate forms. We can only achieve this through **regional cooperation and collaboration that can spur coordinated action** to pool resources, share expertise and best practices, and enhance capacity.

We the participants of the BID Caribbean regional meeting, held at the University of West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad from 25 to 28 June 2019, agree that the BID programme has, to date, made significant achievements in the region in:

- Making 81 valuable biodiversity datasets available—which contain 43,000 occurrence records comprising nearly 3,000 taxa, the majority from new distinct locations—from a region underrepresented in the GBIF network
- Providing a baseline for addressing research needs and decision-making, increasing visibility and awareness of locally acquired data and helping to identify priority data gaps
- Increasing recognition of the benefits of open access to biodiversity data through greater collaboration in the region
- Mobilizing a new community of biodiversity data publishers and users in a region not previously active in the GBIF global network through capacity enhancement actions and shared experience
- Demonstrating the potential value of the BID approach with initial examples of the use of such data through research citation and conservation policy application

However, recognizing the lag between data mobilization and the use of the data, and that these efforts represent the first engagement with data-holding institutions in the region, there is still an urgent need to:

- Promote incentives for and benefits of sharing open-access data to a broader range of institutions, for example, by engaging civil society, educators, and the private sector through local champions and GBIF ambassadors
- Expand the user base within the research community through, for example, integration of biodiversity informatics including the use of data and tools from the GBIF network into university curricula, targeted communications, easily reusable training and guidance materials
- Transmit relevant evidence-based information to decision makers, for example, through national biodiversity reporting processes, including the CBD national reports, and through building relationships with the national focal points of multilateral environmental agreements and regional policy fora
- Leverage capacity developed in the first phase of the BID programme to increase training and knowledge transfer, for example, by promoting institutional exchange, mentoring and workshops, particularly building on the existing strong collaboration between the region's universities
- Ensure sustainability through, for example, strategic partnerships and collaborations, secure sources of funding based on viable business models and the support of international, regional, national and bilateral entities

We hereby declare our commitment to supporting existing and future activities that address these needs and ensure that biodiversity information contributes fully to the conservation, sustainable use, and management of natural resources in the Caribbean.

• For more information, contact bid@gbif.org •