FINAL REPORT

Sixth Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)-Africa Regional Meeting
18 – 19 July 2016
Milkplum Conference Centre, Pretoria

1. Regional Nodes meeting report summary

The 2016 GBIF-Africa Nodes Meeting was held in Pretoria, South Africa on 18-19 July 2016, hosted by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

The purpose of the regional was to ensure cohesion and coordination of biodiversity informatics endeavours on the continent. The Agenda items for the meeting centred on:

- reviewing the status of the Nodes such as their highlights, achievements and challenges and
- developing the 2016 – 2018 GBIF Africa Work Plan in order to align it with the new GBIF Strategic and Implementation Plan 2017 – 2021.

Nine GBIF Participant Country Nodes attended the meeting: Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Kenya, Tanzania, Togo and South Africa. The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) also attended as a GBIF Organisational Participant. A very important contribution to the meeting was the participation of the Technical Support Unit for the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). It was identified that alignment with IPBES at the regional level was quite critical, to understand the large data gaps on this mega-diverse continent, to mobilise relevant data and ensure that this data feeds into science and policy relevant processes, at all scales.

2. GBIF progress updates

Background, contextualisation of the GBIF – Africa Regionalisation Strategy and recap of the work done in the region

Fatima Parker-Allie, the GBIF-Africa Regional Representative, provided a broad overview of the work done to date to strengthen collaboration across the region, in terms of:

- the GBIF-Africa Regional Strategy
- Progress with revitalising the Africa Coordinating Mechanism (ACM) and specifically the role that SANBI has been requested to play in this regard
- The 5th Regional Meeting which was held in Benin.
- The 'Africa Rising 2015' conference, co-funded by GBIF as part of the SANBI JRS-funded project *Mobilising Africa's Biodiversity Data*.

GBIF Progress update 2016 and Introduction to the Implementation Plan

Melianie Raymond, GBIF Secretariat, provided a progress report on the GBIF workplan implementation, including:
- progress with sampling event data
- the GBIF global survey
- task group progress on enhancing the fitness of use of data
- progress with machine readable data licenses
- Re-engineering of the GBIF website and expected enhanced functionality
- Improved citation and persistence of data to improve the citation of datasets and user downloads
- Biodiversity Information Fund for Asia (BIFA)
- The self-assessment guidelines that have been developed.

BID – progress with the rollout of this initiative and update on the funded projects for the Biodiversity Information for Development Programme

Melianie Raymond provided an overview of progress with the BID activities completed to date, incl. regional meetings, studies, calls for proposals, capacity self-assessments, capacity enhancement workshops, a strengthened community of practise, the promotion of results and guiding examples.

Following the discussion, GBIF was requested to provide the African nodes with a breakdown of all of the BID projects for Africa (funded and unfunded), for informing further collaborations and layering of interventions.

3. Regional Nodes meeting highlights, achievements and challenges

Each node manager provided feedback on progress. Recurring themes were that political support for GBIF remained strong, and noteworthy was the development of large consortiums in the sub-regions engaged in data mobilization activities, the Nodes' involvement and collaboration in broader research projects; collaboration with and amongst African countries; , and ongoing training and

capacity building/enhancement. Very promising was the development of key biodiversity informatics research papers by Node Managers from Benin and Ghana relating to Digital Accessible Knowledge (DAK).

But challenges are ongoing; many nodes were struggling with a lack of operation support, i.e. funding and staffing capacity. Nodes are very dependent on project funding, and progress in mobilising data has therefore been slow. Cleaning data is resource intensive, and this has also impacted on progress; conversely many countries were also concerned about the quality of existing records in GBIF.

Curriculum development was showing positive developments, especially in Benin and South Africa, but concerns were raised about alignment and synergy. Overall it was highlighted that communication within the region needs improvement. Countries also discussed opportunities to move towards increased legislative support for biodiversity-related data sciences.

4.   Regional meeting outputs

The GBIF strategic plan and draft implementation plan 2017 - 2021

Melianie Raymond presented that a new work plan for the GBIF is needed and this year a different approach will be applied. The GBIF work plan will be structured around the five areas of the strategic plan.

Pledges from the participants' activities is needed an annual budget will be drafted per year then prioritised accordingly. The draft for the GBIF implementation plan has been shared with the committees then others will be consulted, after which the draft will be revised.

5.   Alignments between GBIF and IPBES

Michelle Walters from the CSIR, and the Technical Support Unit of the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), delivered a presentation discussing possible GBIF involvements in IPBES, as there are approximately 40 African countries who are IPBES members, and who are anticipated to contribute to the IPBES Regional Africa Assessment. However, she emphasised that a challenge remains in obtaining biodiversity data especially from North, West and Central African countries. This GBIF-Regional Meeting provided an ideal opportunity for the Nodes and IPBES to explore mutual areas of cooperation and support in an endeavour to support the data-science-policy interface, and in this manner the relevant conventions which our national governments are committed to.

6.   Needs, priorities and actions for 2016 – 2018 for input into the ACM business case:

This task was undertaken as a brainstorm. Meeting participants were instructed to form and work in pairs and highlight Needs and planned Activities. Fatima Parker-Allie would collate and structure these inputs for further discussion after the meeting.

7. Presentation of the GBIF-Africa 2016- 2018 Action plan and discussion

Fatima Parker-Allie provided a summary of the GBIF Africa 2016 – 2018 Action Plan.

8. Feedback from the regional representatives on NSG matters

Fatima Parker-Allie provide an update and discussions were held regarding key issues to take to the HODs by Alex Asase. There is uncertainty with the loss of a secretariat post. Nodes reflected on the negative impact of unstructured communication within the NSG. It was recommended that the issue of communication must be raised at the governing board meeting. Nodes also reflected on the variability of interest and impact of HODs. It was recommended that GBIF consider issuing guidance on the role of HODs, which will also support clarity between the roles of Node Manager and HOD, which was also being experienced as an issue.

9. Recommendations for GBIF elections: Positions of Nodes Chair and Vice Chairs

Francis Oguya chaired the discussion. The NSG has one Chair and two Vice Chairs. Fatima Parker-Allie and Hulda Gideon are member representatives of the NSG. Alex Asase is completing his term as Vice Chair. The Chair and two Vice Chair positions are open for nomination and election.

Francis Oguya emphasised that the post is open to current node managers only and one can serve two consecutive terms.

Following discussion, the meeting that resolved that GBIF Africa Region members would be encouraged to pursue a bloc nomination for Fatima Parker-Allie for the positions of Chair, 1st and 2nd Vice Chair.

10. Input into the GB 23 meeting and items for the side event
After much deliberation, the meeting agreed to discuss the following issues with HODs, for taking forward:
• To re-establish midterm meetings
• The need to understand structural changes within GBIF
• A clear and coordinated communication strategy
• The way task groups are formed and the involvement of the NSG
• An appreciation of the project funding and programmes in Africa
• SANBI providing a leadership role in GBIF-Africa

11. Closing Remarks

The meeting was closed by Kristal Maze, senior manager at SANBI responsible for Biodiversity Information and Policy Advice. Kristal Maze thanked all the GBIF-Africa node managers present, many of whom endured long journeys in order to be present at the Sixth GBIF-Africa Region, as well as the speakers, facilitators, translators and SANBI colleagues for their participation and involvement in making this meeting a success.

SANBI's commitment and continued support to the ACM was emphasised, as well as its intention to finalise the business case for presentation to the South African Department of Science and Technology.

GBIF-Africa regional meeting Participants List and Agenda

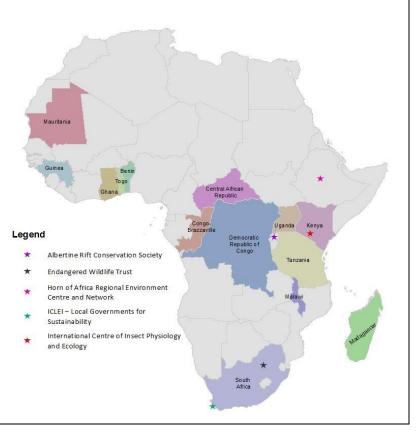|	NAME	SURNAME	COUNTRY	ORGANISATION	Email
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6th GBIF Africa Regional Meeting
18th – 19th July 2016

Purpose of meeting

- The key purpose of the meeting is to ensure cohesion and coordination amongst endeavors at the Africa level

- Review current status of the Nodes: highlights, achievements and challenges

- Developing the 2016-2018 GBIF Africa Workplan; aligned to the new GBIF Strategic and Implementation Plan 2017-2021

- Inputs for Governing Board Meeting GB 23

Legend

★ Albertine Rift Conservation Society

★ Endangered Wildlife Trust

★ Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network

★ ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

★ International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology

| **Monday, 18th July 2016**
SANBI, Pretoria – Milkplum Conference Venue
Nodes status update, GBIF contextualization and contributions to global and regional initiatives |

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Day One

Time	Session Title	Speaker(S) /Facilitator (F)
09:30- 10.00	Registration – arrival coffee/tea	**Programme Director – Kristal Maze**
10.00-10.15	Welcome address and opening remarks by host country	Tanya Abrahamse
10:15 – 10.30	**Setting the scene** Background, contextualisation of the GBIF –Africa Regionalisation Strategy and recap of the work done in the region	Fatima Parker-Allie
10.30-10.45	GBIF Progress update 2016 and Introduction to the Implementation Plan	Mélianie Raymond
10.45-11.15	BID – progress with the rollout of this initiative and update on the funded projects for the Biodiversity Information for Development Programme	Mélianie Raymond
11.15 – 12.30 11.15 11.30 11.45 12.00 12.15 12.30	**Nodes Feedback on highlights, achievements & challenges** Benin Congo, Democratic Republic of the Ghana Guinea Kenya Madagascar	**Facilitator:** Hulda Gideon Node Managers
12.30-13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.30 13.30 13.45 14.00 14.15	**Nodes Feedback on highlights, achievements and challenges** Mauritania South Africa Tanzania Togo	**Facilitator:** Hulda Gideon Node Managers

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14.30 14.45	Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability	
15.00-15.15	Tea/Coffee	
15.15-16.00	Plenary session to distil issues emanating from the Node Managers presentations	Facilitator: Fatima Parker-Allie
16.00 – 17.00	IPBES – How can the GBIF Nodes Support the IPBES **data** /science/policy requirements process [Focus on the data element] Overview of data mobilization trends for Africa	**Facilitator: Alex Asase** IPBES TSU and Nodes Mélianie Raymond
16.30 - 17.00	Meeting Close	
	Hosted Dinner – Venue to be confirmed	

Tuesday, 19th July April 2016 SANBI, Pretoria – Milkplum Conference Venue Way ahead on the Regional Work Plan, the ACM and items for GB23		
Day Two		
Time	**Session Title**	**Speaker(S) /Facilitator (F)**
09:00 – 11:00	GBIF Strategic Plan and implementation plan update 2017-2021 Introduction of the process to develop a new GBIF-Africa Action Plan (2016-2018) **Background documents:** GBIF Strategic plan, Implementation Plan, GBIF-Africa 2015-2016 Workplan and the Africa Rising Action plan Next steps and way ahead with implementing the Africa Regional Action Plan **Defining Needs, Priorities and Actions for 2016-2018 for input into the ACM business case** Strategic input into Key Areas: Progress and alignment with the 5 GBIF Strategic areas: (1) Deliver relevant data (2) Improve data quality (3) Fill data gaps (4) Enhance biodiversity information infrastructure (5) Empower global network Outcome: Alignment with GBIF Strategic and Implementation Plan, to advance the implementation and uptake of the GBIF Work within the region	Mélianie Raymond (S)

11:00 – 11:15	Tea/Coffee Break	
11:15 – 12:00	Defining Needs, Priorities and Actions for 2016-2018 for input into the ACM business case Continued from above	
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch	
		Programme Director: Kristal Maze
13:00 - 13.30	Presentation of the GBIF-Africa 2016-2018 Action Plan and discussion	Fatima Parker-Allie (S)
13:30 – 13.45	Feedback from the Regional Representative on NSG matters	Fatima Parker-Allie (S)
13.45 - 14.15	Recommendations from the Africa region for GBIF elections : - positions of Nodes Chair and Vice Chairs	Francis Oguya (S)
14:15 – 15:15	Input into the GB 23 meeting and items for the side even	Alex Asase (F)
15.15 - 15.30	Closing Remarks	Kristal Maze
15:30	Meeting Close – Tea/Coffee	