

Task group on mobilization and use of biodiversity data for research and policy on invasive alien species

Invasive alien species are a major threat to nature, nature's contributions to people, and good quality of life, with their impacts increasing rapidly and predicted to continue rising in the future. The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) can play a critical role in providing the underlying data to drive invasion science and in the development of effective policies to prevent and mitigate their negative impacts through effective management. The critical role that GBIF plays in delivering data and information on invasive alien species is recognised in the IPBES Assessment on Invasive Alien Species and their Control (2023).

Since 2007, GBIF has identified the use of GBIF-mediated data in 1,425 peer-reviewed scientific papers on invasive alien species, and the number of papers using GBIF-mediated for invasion research is increasing year on year. This increasingly useful source of primary biodiversity data has been further enhanced through the publication of the Global Registry of Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS) through GBIF, which provides validated and verified national checklists of introduced (alien) and invasive alien species at the country, territory, and associated island level.

While there may be an increasing amount of invasive relevant data being made available via GBIF, large gaps in invasive knowledge and data gaps remain and these need to be addressed to be able to effectively inform the threat posed by invasive species. In the 2023 IPBES thematic assessment, a number of knowledge and data gaps were identified:

- Gaps in biomes, units of analysis and species groups
- Regional gaps in data and knowledge
- Interoperable data for monitoring invasive alien species and effects of drivers of biodiversity change
- Gaps in how invasive alien species affect nature's contributions to people
- Management and policy approaches
- Gaps to fill to support the implementation of policy and management
- Gaps in knowledge on invasive alien species of particular relevance to Indigenous Peoples and local communities

While GBIF cannot be expected to address all of these gaps, GBIF can continue to contribute to increasing the relevance and fitness for use of these data for addressing invasive species questions. GBIF is re-convening a task group on mobilization and use of biodiversity data for research and policy on invasive species aiming to:

- improve the coverage and representation of relevant data,
- support the required uses of the research community, and
- strengthen GBIF's position on the science-policy interface.

Task Group Mandate

The group will guide GBIF data mobilisation and use priorities for invasive species research, as well as support the development of GBIF's new data model. The task group will both

represent the interests of the invasive species community within GBIF as well as act as GBIF ambassadors.

Task Group Objectives

Data

1. Consult with invasive experts to determine the key questions that need to be addressed on data availability and use and to document and share tools and data management solutions.
2. Identify key datasets to be mobilized by GBIF
3. Based on previous examples developing GBIF's new data model, develop an invasives use case that can further develop the GBIF data model to fully meet the data needs of the invasives research community
4. Provide recommendations on the long term connection of the GRIIS within GBIF

Policy support

1. Provide a synthesis of recent developments of the science policy interface and where GBIF's role lies within them
2. Provide recommendations on how GBIF can best address the knowledge and data gaps as identified within the 2023 IPBES Assessment on Invasive Alien Species
3. Provide guidance on invasives issues in international policy fora including the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular with regard to national reporting on Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Outputs

The main deliverable will be reports to the Executive Secretary of GBIF on activities, including practical recommendations on the issues defined under the Terms of Reference presented.

Timeline

The task group will operate for a period of 24 months, starting from September 2024 after the members have been confirmed by the GBIF Secretariat. The group will be expected to produce a final report on its work by 26 September 2026, with regular reporting of its activities to GBIF's governance structures including the governing boards in an appropriate format.. Renewal of the task group will be considered after the final report.

Timeline Activity

June 2024	Candidate members agree to work on the Task group. Election of chair. GBIF Secretariat approves candidate members of the Task Group.
Oct 2025/26	GBIF Governing Boards 31 and 32
Mar 2025/26	GBIF mid-term meetings
June 2026	Final deliverables delivered

Mode of operation

The task group will deliver its recommendations to the GBIF Governing Board through the Secretariat. The group will be coordinated by, and report through, the Data Partnerships Officer at the GBIF Secretariat. The group will mostly operate remotely through email and associated collaborative tools such as Google Docs and conference calls; the group may hold up to two face-to-face meetings per year. Travel, accommodation and other essential costs related to these meetings will be met from the GBIF Work Programme, subject to available resources. The task force may arrange face-to-face meetings as satellites to other events of interest, or use those opportunities to hold additional meetings.

Task Group membership - GBIF Secretariat will invite 6-8 domain experts that should reflect a diversity of geographic regions, career seniority and gender. Additional members could be invited and added to the group, if agreed by the group and approved by the current group chair and GBIF Secretariat. The Task Group is expected to consult widely within the research community and the GBIF community, including GBIF stakeholders. The GBIF Secretariat will provide support for this consultation. The task group is intended to be the core team that will author the reports, but will consult widely with other experts, institutions, initiatives & projects. The Chair is elected for each of the six-month periods; rotation is expected, but the same person can be re-elected.

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- Peer reviewed literature using GBIF–mediated data for invasives research:
https://www.gbif.org/resource/search?contentType=literature&topics=INVASIVES&relevance=GBIF_USED&peerReview=true
- IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control:
<https://www.ipbes.net/ias>