

Guidance material for use by GBIF nodes to engage academia in data publishing and sharing

(Lessons learned from CESP2018_025)

Summary of institutions approached:

	UNESWA (University of Eswatini)	UFS (University of the Free State)	MUST (Malawi University of Science and Technology)
University data policy	Being developed	Intellectual property policy exists, but not well known by researchers*	Non-existent. Scope for data champion to develop this
Data ownership	Being discussed	Institutional	Not defined
Willingness to share data	High	High	High
Knowledge of GBIF	Low	Low	Low
Dataset publication	None	None	None

Issues to consider:

- Engagement worked best in institutions with which we had a **PERSONAL CONTACT** or other long-standing institutional relationship.
- Outside of South Africa, **FEW DATA POLICIES ARE IN PLACE**. This presents an opportunity to engage in the development of institutional data policies.
- There was general **RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA MANAGEMENT RELATED TRAINING** for researchers and students. Failure to participate or complete activities was due to time pressure on both the project coordinator and project participant level.
- Researchers were surprisingly **OPEN TO SHARING OF DATA**. Failure to do so appears to be almost exclusively a capacity issue (both lack of time and skills).
- **PRINCIPLES VERSUS TECHNOLOGY** - researchers were generally less interested in learning about good data management practices and principles, but were excited about the technology that could help to do this automatically (e.g., OpenRefine, various online tools and templates, data collection apps).
- Researchers were interested to **IMPROVE THEIR CVS** with new skills, opportunities to publish more, and add to their CVs with published datasets and data papers.

Training logistics:

- **UNIVERSITY TERM DATES** need to be considered. If training is conducted during term time, access to facilities is limited, and staff are not available to attend the training. If training is conducted outside of term time, there tend to be fewer people to attend training, but facilities are available.
- **INTERNET ACCESS** for training is crucial – all countries had good mobile internet access, but not all institutions. This remains an issue in Africa, but both infrastructure and individual access are increasing exponentially. Internet access has to be budgeted for and provided in any training.

Resources:

An introductory webinar about data sharing and GBIF is available at <https://learning.ewt.org.za>.

A free online course introducing GBIF, biodiversity data management, publishing and sharing is available at <https://learning.ewt.org.za> (Biodiversity Data Management), but requires registration.

* <https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/all-documents/management-of-intellectual-property-112-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=0>. However, this policy is not explicit about how the University views data and databases.