

GLOBAL NODES TRAINING 2019 Meeting Report



Next steps in Node Management
[Naturalis Biodiversity Center](#), Leiden
17-18 October 2019

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive summary | 2 |
| Workshop preparation | 3 |
| Pre-workshop activity and introduction to workshop topics | 4 |
| Workshop trainers, mentors and participants | 7 |
| Trainers and language support offered..... | 7 |
| Mentors and language support offered..... | 8 |
| Participants..... | 8 |
| Workshop Programme | 10 |
| Workshop materials and e-Learning Platform | 12 |
| Workshop evaluation | 13 |
| Response..... | 13 |
| Satisfaction levels..... | 13 |
| Increased knowledge through the workshop | 14 |
| Suggestions for the future..... | 15 |
| Follow-up actions..... | 16 |
| Next steps | 17 |

Executive summary

GBIF organized a two-day global nodes training workshop just prior to the global nodes meeting and GB26, aiming to assist all node managers in further developing their nodes, irrespective of their current level of development. The workshop focused on the skills that node managers need to develop strategic plans, to identify and engage key stakeholders for their networks, to develop training plans and workshops that benefit from the GBIF community of practice, to resource their activities, and to develop collaborative projects that strengthen the community as a whole. The event had a strong practical approach, based on experience sharing and peer feedback, and including a significant component of group work.

A group of six Node Managers and three Secretariat staff prepared the training with the additional support of a group of five community mentors. The workshop was attended by a further 33 participants from the nodes community.

The workshop was well received, with participants providing very high scores (over 4 out of 5 on average) to all the workshop modules in the evaluation. Participants indicated that they gained most knowledge in the area of strategic planning for nodes, with many committing to developing plans for their nodes after the training. There was also strong support for the high level of peer exchange throughout the workshop, which helped nodes to learn from each other's experience and find partners for ongoing collaboration and mentoring.

This report describes the preparation of the workshop, provides links to the materials online for their reuse, and summarizes the results of the workshop evaluation by the participants. We will continue to document guiding examples and the reusable resources that you shared during this workshop to enrich GBIF's guidance on node management for all node managers to benefit from in future.

Workshop preparation

A core group of six Node Managers and three Secretariat staff (see below) prepared the workshop based on preliminary input from the Nodes Steering Group (NSG). In November 2018, the NSG were asked to help in prioritizing a preliminary list of topics, based on knowledge and perceptions of the needs of the nodes community, either within their region, or globally. The official language of the workshop was English with materials translated into French. Mentors also provided some support in French, Spanish and Portuguese onsite.

NSG members selected their top three topics from a list, which helped to provide some prioritization of topics, although the needs were still broad with some interest in each of the 13 topics (see Figure 1). The most popular topics overall were:

1. Developing work plans for your node
2. Building support for a node within a country or region
3. Communication strategies for nodes to build visibility AND Organizing effective training workshops for stakeholders within the GBIF community of practice

NSG Prioritization of topics for Node Management training

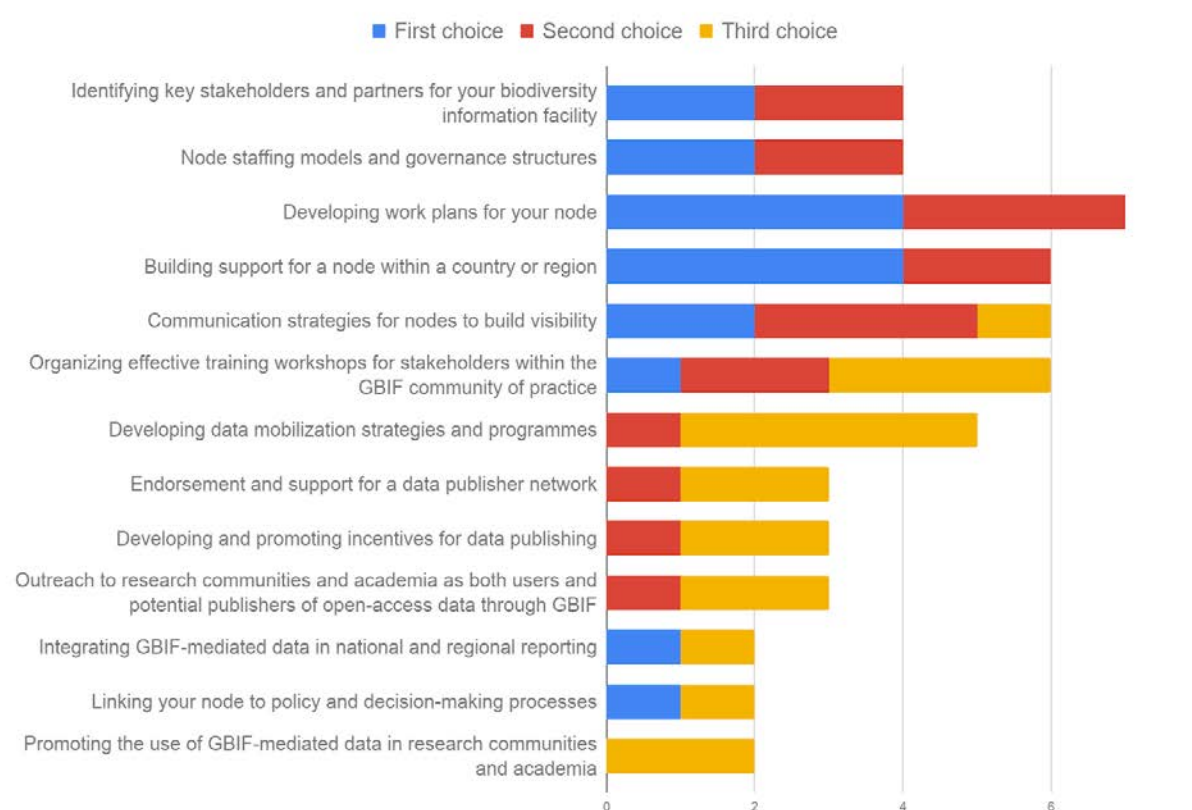


Figure 1: Prioritization of training topics by the NSG (November 2018)

The trainers met in Copenhagen, 9-11 February 2019 to plan the workshop structure, based on this input. They continued working remotely throughout the year with regular teleconferences to coordinate the preparation of the materials.

Pre-workshop activity and introduction to workshop topics

In August 2019, nodes were invited to contribute to a pre-workshop survey to gather guiding examples and introduce the four topics for the global nodes training.

Strategic planning for nodes

A stand-alone strategic plan for the national node is an excellent document to guide your work programme. Not all nodes will have stand alone strategic plans. Sometimes the strategic plan for a node may be part of your larger workplace, such as the museum's or Ministry's strategic plan, or sometimes they are more casual documents that guide a work programme, such as a person work programme.

In the preparation survey, we asked nodes if they have developed a strategic plan specific to GBIF and to consider how such a plan could benefit and raise the profile of their node within the larger institutional framework (figure 2).

Does your node have a current strategic plan?

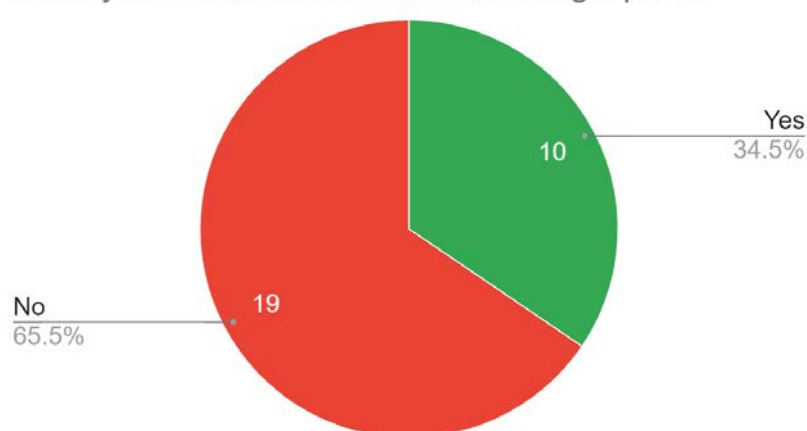


Figure 2: Responses of 29 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on strategic plans.

Only just over a third of the nodes responding to the survey have a current strategic plan. As we move into GBIF's next strategic period 2022-2027, the global nodes training enabled node to work in teams to develop ideas for strategic objectives for the next five years.

Communication and stakeholder engagement

A communication and stakeholder engagement plan is valuable in organizing and maintaining positive visibility for your node. As with strategic plans, not all nodes will have communication and stakeholder engagement plans, but might be mentioned in their host institution's plans. Some nodes' host institutions may have communications teams that could help in crafting and delivering messages to engage their audiences.

Do you have a communications plan for you node?

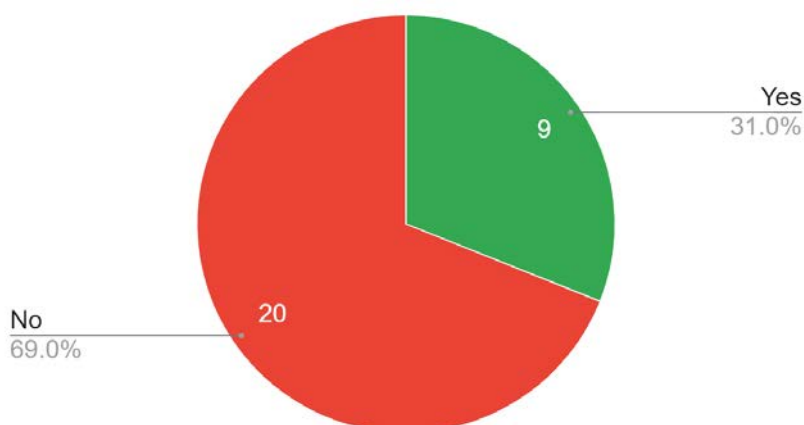


Figure 3: Responses of 29 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on communications plans.

Just under one third of the 29 nodes that replied to the survey reported having a communications plan (figure 3). The [GBIF communications strategy](#) identifies key audiences, their information needs, and some key messages, which can be helpful for considering communications at the node level. We used this document and some examples from nodes to practice designing communications approaches for key stakeholders during the second module of the workshop.

Developing training for your network

Training is essential to ensuring that nodes' communities - including data holders, data users, biodiversity knowledge experts, decision makers and public stakeholders - can effectively contribute to and benefit from GBIF. Many nodes engage in training individually and with others from the community (see figure 4). The GBIF community has now developed a wealth of training materials that is adapted and reused by many nodes in their training activities.

Has your node organized training workshops?

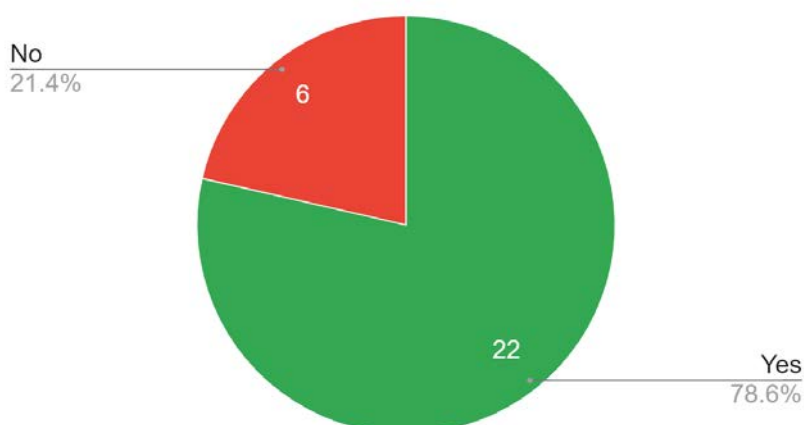


Figure 4: Responses of 28 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on experience organizing training workshops

Taking a strategic approach to planning training for your network can help you to identify training needs and priorities. Just under half of the nodes responding to the survey have a training strategy (figure 5).

Do you have a training strategy for your network?

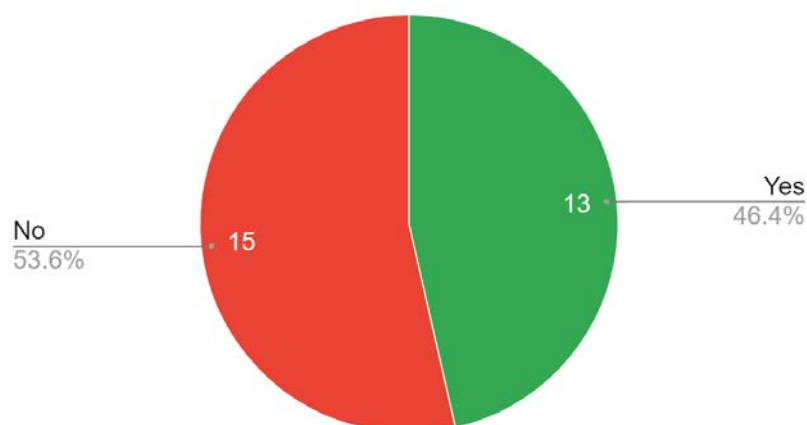


Figure 5: Responses of 28 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on training strategies.

Module three on planning for effective training, draws on nodes' experiences and an overview of GBIF's approach to building a community of practice to support capacity enhancement and training in the network.

Resourcing and collaborative project writing in the nodes community

There is huge variety in the ways that nodes' resource their activities (figure 6). Most nodes combine sources of funding and institutional support to deliver their work programmes. It is not only newly established nodes that need to consider how to make the case for funding their activities, and nodes can learn from sharing experiences on this topic.

Which of the following best describes your nodes funding?

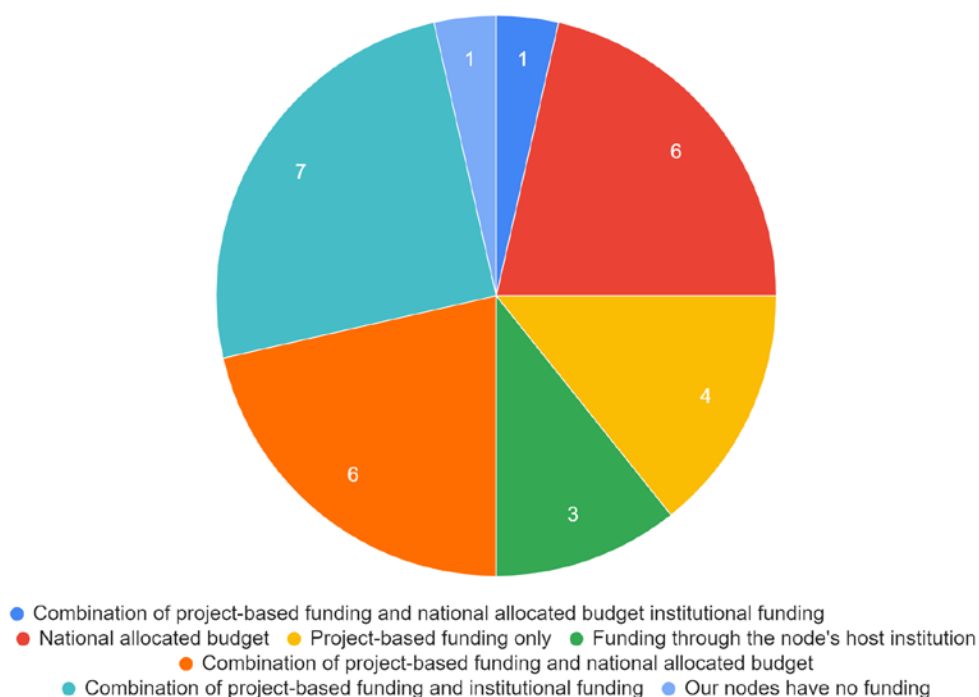


Figure 6: Responses of 28 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on node funding

Many nodes have success stories to share in designing and implementing funded projects based on collaborative actions with other nodes in the network (figure 7). These projects are essential in strengthening the nodes community.

Have you participated in a collaborative project with other GBIF nodes?

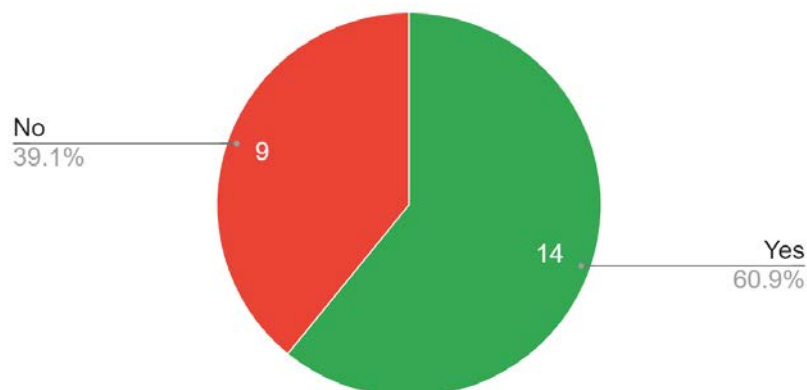


Figure 7: Responses of 28 nodes to the pre-workshop survey question on collaborative projects

In the final module, nodes were invited to share their experiences, tips and recommendations for resourcing their activities, as well as working in groups to consider how to design three typical collaborative project types: mentoring actions, regional events and data mobilization projects.

Workshop trainers, mentors and participants

Trainers and language support offered

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Maheva Bagard Laursen | GBIF Secretariat | English, French |
| Liam Lysaght | Node Manager, Ireland | English |
| Joe Miller | GBIF Secretariat | English |
| Fatima Parker-Allie | Node Manager, South Africa | English |
| Anabela Plos | Node Manager, Argentina | English, Spanish |
| Raoufou Pierre Radji | Node Manager, Togo | English, French |
| Mélanie Raymond | GBIF Secretariat | English, French |
| Laura Anne Russell | GBIF Secretariat | English |
| Carole Sinou | Node Manager, Canadensys | English, French |
| Anders Telenius | Node Manager, Sweden | English |

Mentors and language support offered

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Anne-Sophie Archambeau | Node Manager, France | English, French |
| Rui Figueira | Node Manager, Portugal | English, Portuguese |
| Jean Cossi Ganglo | Node Manager, Benin | English, French |
| Niels Raes | Node Manager, Netherlands | English |
| Cristina Villaverde | GBIF Spain | English, Spanish |

Participants

| | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| Jean Paul Kubwimana | Node manager | Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network) |
| Benjamin Komac | Node manager | GBIF Andorra |
| Esperança Maria Eduardo Francisco da Costa | Node manager | GBIF Angola |
| Christian Elloran | Node manager | ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity |
| Oleg Borodin | Node manager | GBIF Republic of Belarus |
| André Heughebaert | Node manager | Belgian Biodiversity Platform |
| Luiz Henrique Mourao do Canto Pereira | Node manager | GBIF Brazil |
| Jean François Moussa | Node manager | GBIF Cameroon |
| Maofang Luo | Node manager | Chinese Academy of Sciences |
| Chihjen Ko | Node manager | Taiwan Biodiversity Information Facility |
| Genuar Román Núñez Vega | Node manager | Costa Rica Biodiversity Facility |
| Veljo Runnel | Node manager | GBIF Estonia |
| Eija-Leena Laiho | Node manager | GBIF Finland |
| David Jennings | Node manager | iDigBio |
| Lawrence Monda | Node manager | GBIF Kenya |
| Benedictus Freeman | Node manager | GBIF Liberia |
| Omokafe Alaba Ugbogu | Node manager | GBIF Nigeria |
| Dag Endresen | Node manager | GBIF Norway |
| Piotr Tykarski | Node manager | Polish Biodiversity Information Network |
| Geoff Ower | Node manager | Species 2000 |
| Pascal Tschudin | Node manager | GBIF Switzerland |
| Abby Benson | Node manager | U.S. Geological Survey |
| David Bloom | Node manager | VertNet |
| Sinh Nguyễn Văn | Node manager | GBIF Viet Nam |
| Dimitri Brosens | Node staff | Belgian Biodiversity Platform |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Maxime Coupremanne | Node staff | Belgian Biodiversity Platform |
| Natalya Ivanova | Russia, Observer | |
| Maxim Shashkov | Russia, Observer | |
| Sylvie Fanta | Acting Head of Delegation | GBIF Cameroon |
| Joe Miller | Executive Secretary | GBIF Secretariat |
| Anne Mette Nielsen | Head of administration | GBIF Secretariat |
| Marlene Dalsgaard Nielsen | | |
| Marie Grosjean | | GBIF Secretariat |

Workshop Programme

| |
|---|
| Global Nodes Training Day 1 17 October 2019 - Naturalis Biodiversity Centre Auditorium |
| 08:30 - 08:45 – Registration <i>Please proceed to the registration table to pick up your name badge.</i> |
| 08:45 - 09:00 – Welcome and introduction to the workshop Niels Raes, Melianie Raymond <i>Introductions from the workshop hosts and partners; workshop overview</i> |
| Module 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR NODES |
| 09:00 - 09:15 – GBIF’s strategic plan Joe Miller <i>An introduction to GBIF’s current strategic plan and community involvement in the development of our next plan.</i> |
| 09:15 - 10:00 – Strategic planning at the node level Liam Lysaght – Experiences from Ireland Anders Telenius – Experiences from Sweden Fatima Parker-Allie – Experiences from South Africa <i>Short presentations on how nodes have developed their strategic plans and how these relate to the GBIF strategic plan.</i> |
| 10:00 - 10:30 – Exercise 1 <i>Activity to collect ideas on the contributions of nodes to GBIF’s next strategic period.</i> |
| 10:30 - 11:00 - Coffee/tea break |
| 11:00 - 12:30 – Exercise 2 <i>Work in pairs to develop new ideas for your node’s next strategic plan. Practice presenting these ideas to your group for feedback.</i> |
| 12:30 - 13:30 - Lunch |
| Module 2: COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT |
| 13:30 13:45 – GBIF’s communication strategy Melianie Raymond <i>An introduction to the key audiences, communication needs and key messages in the GBIF communication strategy.</i> |
| 13:45 - 14:00 – Communication and stakeholder engagement at the node level Carole Sinou, Anabela Plos, Cristina Villaverde <i>How can nodes develop communications plans to assist them in engaging their key audiences? Three nodes share their approaches.</i> |
| 14:00 - 14:30 – Lightning talks of node experiences with communication and stakeholder engagement Cristina Villaverde & Luke Jimu – Experiences from GBIF Spain and GBIF Zimbabwe Raoufou Pierre Radji – Stakeholder engagement in Togo Video presentation on communications at SIB Colombia |

| |
|--|
| 14:30 - 15:00 – Exercise 3 <i>Group activity to collect success stories on engaging key audiences across the nodes community.</i> |
| 15:00 -15:30 - Coffee/tea break |
| 15:30 - 17:00 – Exercise 4 <i>Work in pairs to design a communications approach for engaging a specific audience. Practice delivering your key messages in sharing your approach back to your group.</i> |
| 17:00 End of the day - Group photo |
| 18:00 - 19:00 – Optional data publishing helpdesk and project support desk Lobby of Fletcher Wellness Hotel <i>Having issues with data publishing? Do you have questions about your CESP/BID/BIFA project? Come and speak to data publishing experts and Secretariat staff and we can work through them together.</i> |

| |
|---|
| Global Nodes Training Day 2 18 October 2019 - Naturalis Biodiversity Centre Auditorium |
| 08:45 - Recap from day 1 and introduction to day 2 <i>Opportunity for any outstanding questions from day 1 and review of the plan for the day</i> |
| Module 3: DEVELOPING TRAINING FOR YOUR NETWORK |
| 09:00 - 09:30 - Using training to strengthen a node's stakeholder community Carole Sinou, Anabela Plos, Fatima Parker-Allie, Laura Anne Russell <i>Overview on how to strengthen the capacity of node stakeholders by developing a strategic training plan, how to plan and organize a training, and requirements for an effective training. Will include the GBIF Secretariat training approach and guidance for nodes on training materials available for reuse.</i> |
| 09:30 - 10:00 - Lightning talks - developing and implementing training for your network Christian Elloran - ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) - strategic training plan Jean Cossi Ganglo- Benin Masters Program - curriculum development/reusable curriculum Dag Endresen/Oleg Borodin/Piotr Tykarsky - BioDATA - organizing training, reusing curriculum |
| 10:00 - 10:30 – Exercise 5 <i>Individual and group activity to develop a training strategy. Consider in what ways you need to enhance your nodes community and where the priority falls in your overall strategic plan.</i> |
| 10:30 - 11:00 - Coffee/tea break |
| 11:00 - 12:30 – Exercise 6 <i>Group activity building on the previous exercise to develop and implement a training. Time will be allotted to determine all the practicalities and then to present to others for feedback.</i> |
| 12:30 -13:30 - Lunch |
| Module 4: RESOURCING & COLLABORATIVE PROJECT WRITING IN THE NODES COMMUNITY |
| 13:30 - 14:00 – Lightning presentations on models for resourcing node activities Jean Paul Kubwimana – ARCOS |

| |
|---|
| <p>Anders Telenius - GBIF Sweden André Heughebaert - GBIF Belgium</p> |
| <p>14:00 - 15:00 – Exercise 7 <i>Overview of resourcing in the community and speed dating activity - short exchanges with other node managers on the topic of resourcing for node activities and aiming to capture tips and recommendations.</i></p> |
| <p>15:00 - 15:30 - Coffee/tea break</p> |
| <p>15:30 - 15:45 – GBIF Support to collaborative projects Maheva Bagard Laursen <i>An introduction to collaboration in the community with an overview of the different programmes supported by the GBIF Secretariat and nodes.</i></p> |
| <p>15:45 - 16:00 – Node experiences with collaborative projects Anne Sophie Archambeau - GBIF France <i>There are many ways nodes can get involved in supporting collaborative projects, from leading projects, partnering in them, providing mentoring support, assisting as trainers, supporting assessment and reporting processes.</i></p> |
| <p>16:00 - 16:50 – Exercise 8 <i>We will split into groups focused on one of three typical project types: mentoring projects, data mobilization projects and regional events. Each group will firstly take on the role of assessing fictitious concept notes and then work on developing a full proposal.</i></p> |
| <p>16:50 - 17:00 – Wrap up and evaluation <i>We will review the next steps for summarizing the outcomes of the workshop and seeking further support for node development. All participants will be requested to complete an online evaluation form before leaving to help us in the planning of future events.</i></p> |
| <p>17:00 Workshop end</p> |
| <p>18:00 - 19:00 – Optional data publishing helpdesk and project support desk Lobby of Fletcher Wellness Hotel <i>Having issues with data publishing? Do you have questions about your CESP/BID/BIFA project? Come and speak to data publishing experts and Secretariat staff and we can work through them together.</i></p> |

Workshop materials and e-Learning Platform

The workshop has been designed to be easy to replicate in the future.

All the presentations are available for download in pdf format from the [event page on the GBIF website](#). Event photos are available on [Flickr in this album](#).

We have made use of [GBIF Spain's e-learning platform](#) to make all the presentations and training materials available in an easy structure for reuse. To access the course, you first need to create a user account on the e-learning platform if you do not already have one. You can then access the course entitled “2019 Global Nodes Training – Next Steps in Node Management” from the course catalogue.

We will continue to enrich the materials available on the e-Learning platform with videos and guiding examples as they become available.

Workshop evaluation

Response

Workshop participants were invited to submit their evaluations using an online form. Twenty responses were submitted, representing 50% of the workshop participants.

Satisfaction levels

Participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the workshop on a scale ranging from 1 (lowest; very dissatisfied) to 5 (highest; very satisfied). The participants were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the workshop organization and the four modules, with no score lower than 3 given by any of the participants, and an average score of over 4 for each topics rated.

Of the topics relating to the workshop organization, interaction with peers was given the highest average score of 4.95, reflecting the focus of the workshop design on learning from the experience of other nodes (see figure 1).

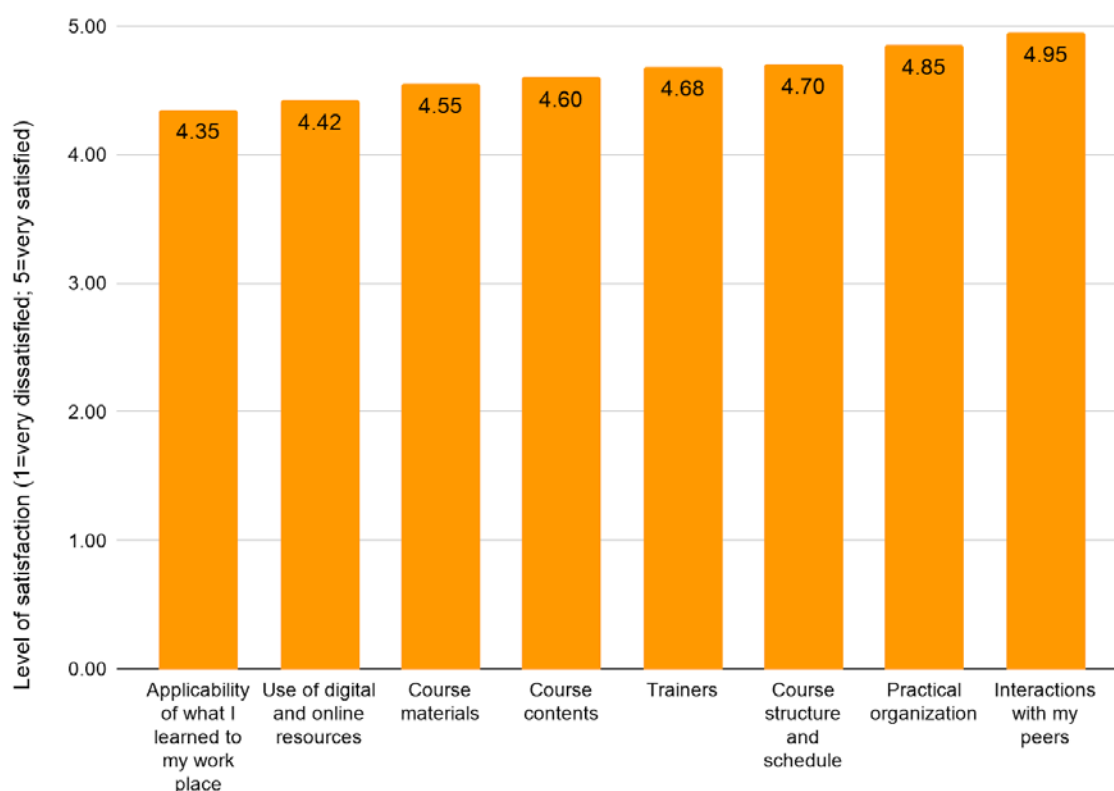


Figure 1: Average level of satisfaction with the organization of the workshop, rated by 20 workshop participants.

The participants were similarly positive in their evaluation of the four modules in the training workshop, with the highest average score going to module 1 on strategic planning for nodes (figure 2).

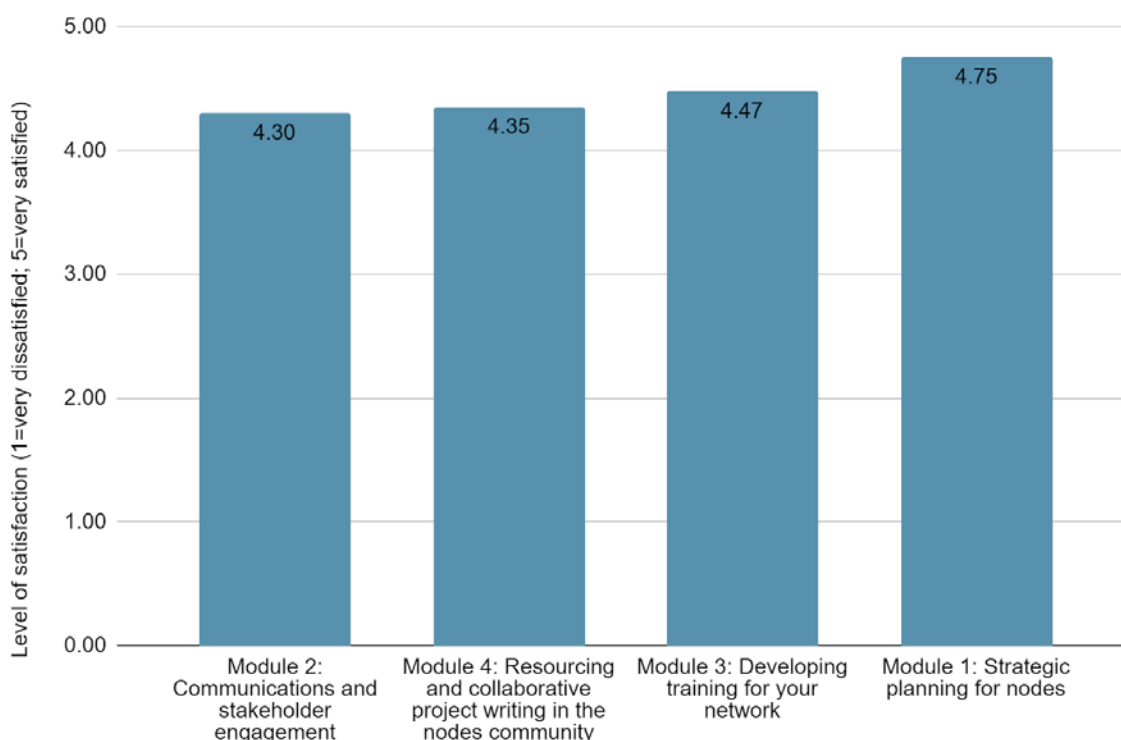


Figure 2: Average level of satisfaction with the four workshop modules, rated by 20 workshop participants.

Increased knowledge through the workshop

Participants were asked to state in their own words in which area they increased their knowledge the most as a result of the workshop. **Strategic planning was the topic mentioned most often** (in twelve responses), but the responses mentioned all the topics covered by the modules, for example:

"In theory I knew it but now I am convinced to work on the strategy for my node."

"Communication and engagement, but it's difficult to single out one direction. More clear understanding of what to do further appeared."

"I am relatively experienced in many of the topic areas, but the speed-dating exercise was very informative. I appreciated learning more about how other nodes are structured and operate."

The topics that participants considered would be the most useful for them in the future were also focused on **node planning**, including:

"Using training to strengthen a node's stakeholder community."

"Develop a communication plan"

"Strategic planning, sourcing resources"

"The training strategy. Any case it is essential activity for long-term development."

Interactions with the nodes community ("Interactions avec la communauté des nœuds")

"Collaborative projects"

"Examples of strategies of nodes"

Suggestions for the future

The participants were asked to consider if there was anything they would like to have added to the course. Seven replied that they wouldn't have added anything. One response suggested including the **topic of node staff management**. Other suggestions included **topics relating to developing relationships to data users and decision makers**, for example:

"A specific way to get more collaboration of CBD and CITES Focal Points"

"I think more on node engagement with decision makers or funding agencies"

"More samples on datasets or use cases"

"How to use data in the decision making"

Other suggestions and comments suggested **feedback to individual nodes, more time for group discussions, more time to work on your own training plan and power-supply for laptop use**:

"I would appreciate feedback from GBIF on the operation and activities of my node. We are not always certain that what we provide to the community is of significant help to the community or to GBIF in meeting it's goals and objectives. It would be great to know, too, if there are other things that we could provide that we do not currently."

"I would recommend to provide more time for group discussions to effectively understand the requirements of the exercise"

"The selection of one idea for the group to elaborate a training plan - did not work well because the pair/group then drives one persons plan - this exercise needs to be reconsidered to have maximum benefit. It is better to think/brainstorm and then formulate your idea and elaborate this plan on your own so that the product is more tangible and you can get guidance. But too much time on someone else's idea, did not feel useful. Maybe there is some learning, but it is not a shared experience."

"Unfortunately, I used e-learning platform and another online resources during the workshop very little, because the sockets for laptop charging were unavailable."

Follow-up actions

Participants were asked what follow up activities they will be doing following the training. Most responses related to **developing node strategies and ongoing node-to-node support, particularly through mentoring and GBIF's capacity enhancement support programme (CESP)**, for example:

"More conversations with new nodes to support them in their efforts."

"Planning the strategy for my node and trying to reuse some of the concepts for trainings in my network."

"I'll try to keep in contact with new nodes I have met for first time here and I will try to start thinking in an strategic plan for my node to be developed next year"

"Exchanging with other node managers while developing our strategic plan."

"Developing my new Nodes strategic plan. This was a very, very helpful exercise"

"cesp proposals"

Mentoring with other nodes ("mentoring avec d'autres noeuds")

"I think we will make a strategic plan for 1 or 2 next years, and think about how to improve communication through social networks."

Other actions included **developing new nodes** (observer countries), and **further developing training** through organizing follow up workshops, continuing use of the eLearning platform and developing guidelines.

"Continue developing a joint training concept"

"eLearning Platform to follow activities and participate on diverse forum"

"May be preparing brief guidelines on the most successful and prospective topic for each group."

"A repository of Nodes Strategic/Communication plan"

"A one day workshop to present and resume 4 specific topics of this training"

Finally, some nodes offered **congratulations**:

"Well planned 2 days course, good network community. Thanks a lot"

"Congratuations to GBIFS and Trainers"

Next steps

Nodes are invited to continue to review the workshop materials on the eLearning platform and share experiences or question in the forum. We will be working with the trainers to develop videos of some of the key presentations, so that these are easier to reuse.

We have a standing invitation to all nodes to share their experiences and success stories as guiding examples on the GBIF website (see example from [Benin](#)). We will be following up with Node Managers to try to capture as many of the examples shared during the training as possible to enrich the guidance available to strengthen the nodes community.

We are inviting nodes to share their strategic plans on the country pages of the GBIF website (see [Belgium](#) for example) to increase their visibility.

We will also work with the Nodes Steering Group to discuss options for reusing the workshop alongside the regional meetings in 2020. The materials can also be used in node-to-node mentoring through volunteer [node manager mentoring](#) or projects under the [GBIF Capacity Enhancement Support Programme](#).

Any further suggestions are welcome. Please send them to info@gbif.org.