

# Enhancing capacity for biodiversity data mobilization and use in support of sustainable development in West Africa

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**Programme:** CESP

**Project ID:** CESP2020-005

**Project page:** <https://www.gbif.org/project/ImAtw3uVGvpjrpiYHxvD/enhancing-capacity-to-mobilize-and-use-biodiversity-data-to-support-sustainable-development-in-west-africa>

**Project lead organization:** Department of Plant and Environmental Biology, University of Ghana (Ghana Biodiversity Information Facility)

**GBIF Participant Represented:** GhaBIF

**Project implementation period:** 1/8/2020 - 31/5/2023

**Report approved:** 19/1/2024

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## Narrative Final report

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### Executive Summary

Biodiversity information is critical to achieve sustainable development, yet many West African countries lack necessary capacity to mobilise and develop information resources needed to guide conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. This project has made substantial progress in the area of building human capacity for data mobilisation and publication especially regarding the "Essential biodiversity Variable" and sample-based data. The project has mobilised and published via GBIF.org research-grade sample-based datasets from Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. The project also organised a regional capacity enhancement event on biodiversity data mobilisation and use in support of decision making in West Africa to build capacity in developing biodiversity information products as well as how to mainstream biodiversity information. The project implementation was, however, seriously hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the project has been very successful and the lesson learnt are worth building on.

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### Report on Activities

#### Activity progress summary

The activities described in the project includes project organisation which entailed project inception meeting, operations and stakeholder engagement and these were fully achieved. Mentoring activities were also fully achieved as there were project meetings and discussions and an online course on Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBV) that was delivered by Prof. A. T. Peterson.

Data mobilisation and publication activities was also implemented with data sets published from Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. The regional workshop on capacity enhancement was also achieved but was delayed and highly modified due to the challenges with COVID-19.

The production of BIPs and guidelines on mainstreaming of biodiversity is yet to be published and this will be carried out as a post-project activity (between June and August, 2023).

#### Completed activities

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#### Activity name: Project Organization

**Description:** Project inception meeting, operations, and stakeholder engagements streamlined.

**Start Date - End Date:** 1/8/2020 - 30/4/2023

**Verification Sources:** Notes taken at project meetings

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#### Activity name: Mentoring activities

**Description:** Meetings, discussions, and exercises on biodiversity data mobilisation and publication. Data types to be considered include sample-based data and EBVs data products.

**Start Date - End Date:** 1/10/2020 - 30/4/2023

**Verification Sources:** Virtual training course on essential Biodiversity variable (EBV) GBIF Website (<https://www.gbif.org/project/ImAtw3uVGvpjrpiYHxvD/enhancing-capacity-to-mobilize-and-use-biodiversity-data-to-support-sustainable-development-in-west-africa#news>)

## Activity name: Data mobilisation and publication

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**Description:** Mobilization and publication of biodiversity data including sample-based data from West Africa.

**Start Date - End Date:** 1/12/2020 - 30/4/2023

**Verification Sources:** <https://www.gbif.org/project/ImAtw3uVGVpjrpiYHxvD/enhancing-capacity-to-mobilize-and-use-biodiversity-data-to-support-sustainable-development-in-west-africa#datasets>

## Activity name: Regional capacity enhancement workshop

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**Description:** Hosting of a workshop on development of biodiversity information products.

**Start Date - End Date:** 1/3/2023 - 15/5/2023

**Verification Sources:** See report of workshop attached

## Report on Deliverables

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### Deliverables progress summary

The deliverable described in the project proposal have been achieved to a large extent. The project has enhanced human capacity in West Africa in areas such as biodiversity data types including EBVs, developing of biodiversity data project and mainstreaming of biodiversity data into decision making. We have some videos on the materials used for wider use to impact more people.

The project has also facilitated mobilisation of high quality biodiversity data sets from Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. These datasets are ample demonstration of the fact that partner countries have acquired the needed skills in mobilising sample-based datasets and other data types which was one of the main needs to be addressed by the project.

The deliverable with respect to BIPs and guidelines on biodiversity mainstreaming will be completed as pos-project activities when funds.

### Completed deliverables

#### Title: Efficient project management

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**Type:** Other

**Description:** Project timelines, monitoring and evaluation schemes, reporting plans in place.

**Sources of verification:** Notes of project meeting

**Title:** Enhanced human capacity in biodiversity data mobilization and publication.

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**Type:** Training Workshop

**Description:** About 10 data holding institutions across West Africa trained and experienced in mobilization, cleaning and publishing of diverse biodiversity data types.

**Sources of verification:** Mentoring report

**Title:** Large volume of research-grade data records available via GBIF.org

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**Type:** Resources

**Description:** At least 9 datasets consisting of sample-based data related to EBV data product on species abundance and distribution will be mobilised and published via GBIF.org.

**Sources of verification:** DOIs/ Report on published data DOI10.15468/cp59qq DOI10.15468/3gytb9 DOI10.15468/cs6mdh DOI10.15468/zkkrum DOI10.15468/vxu44b DOI10.15468/s7326m DOI10.15468/2vbx4 DOI10.15468/z2xqpf DOI10.15468/pfp3bk

**Title:** Enhanced human capacity in data analysis and development of BIPs

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**Type:** Regional Event

**Description:** About >10 stakeholders across West Africa trained in biodiversity data analysis, development of BIPs and mainstreaming of biodiversity information in decision-making.

**Sources of verification:** Workshop report

## Events

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### Online Course on Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBV)

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**Dates:** 8/2/2021 - 11/3/2021

**Organizing institution:** GhaBIF

**Country:** Ghana

**Number of participants:** 55

**Comments:**

**Website or sources of verification:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzO9-tQzZ4g>

## Events

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### Capacity enhancement workshop on biodiversity data mobilisation and use in support of sustainable development in West Africa

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**Dates:** 8/5/2023 - 12/5/2023

**Organizing institution:** GhaBIF

**Country:** Ghana

**Number of participants:** 18

**Comments:**

**Website or sources of verification:** Workshop report and <https://youtu.be/6XPFEpMdprw>.

## Communications and visibility

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The results of this project are being and will be shared with project stakeholders and broader GBIF community via a number of ways available to us. We will continue to share information about the project such as the course on the Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) among project stakeholders, and widely among GBIF Africa participants using the group GBIF Africa Group WhatsApp platform.

The project resources / products such as those from the course on EBVs including the videos and presentations are being / and will be made available via YouTube and BITC website. We will also share information and promote visibility of the project via the project page. We would like the project mid-term project report, and flyers, videos and presentations from the project to be shared on the project page.

## Monitoring and evaluation

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### Monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned

#### Final Evaluation:

The monitoring and evaluation plan put in place has been very useful in the implementation of project activities. The project mentors have provided useful advice to the project leader in taking concrete decisions about the project. The regular project meetings has been very useful in keeping partners active in the project activities.

The execution of the project activities were very successful although there have been significant delays due to the impact of the COVID. The partners in West Africa have increase in their capacity in biodiversity data mobilisation and use. The support of the GBIF has been phenomenal. The human capacity enhancement, data mobilisation and use aspect of the project needs to be build on. Overall, the project has been successful although could have been better if not for the serious impact of COVID-19.

#### Best Practices and Lessons Learned:

The best practices learnt from this project has to do with mobilisation and publication of biodiversity data types especially sample event datasets. The project partners have acquired advanced skills and knowledge on biodiversity data types, digitisation, cleaning as well as publication sample data sets that are crucial for decision making.

The second best practice and lesson learnt from the project has to do with biodiversity data use in decision making. The project teams acquire skills in the types of data required in various sectors at the local/ national / regional levels, the actors, kind of information products required as well as how to incorporate information into decision making.

#### Post Project Activity(ies):

There are two post-project activities that are crucial for this project: First, is publication of examples biodiversity information products. Second, is deployment/ production of guideline on biodiversity data mainstreaming into decision making. These project deliverables are crucial and will be done once funds are released from GBIFs.

## Sustainability plans

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The partners involved in the project will continue to build on the achievements of this project as part of

in their routine activities in biodiversity data mobilisation and use. It is expected that partners will be able to mobilise other biodiversity data types such as sample-based data beyond occurrence data and publish via GBIF.org. Partners will also be able to support mainstreaming of biodiversity data into various sectors where they work to promote sustainable development. The Project Leader and Mentor (Prof. A. T. Peterson) will be able to incorporate ideas from the project in the \$1 million National Science Foundation (Award Number DBI-2223875) funded project on digitisation of African plants held in herbaria and museums across the U.S.

#### **Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation**

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The impact of COVID-19 on implementation of this project was significant. First, there has been significant delays in the implementation of project activities such that there has been a number of requests for project extension. Second, the in-person regional workshop for mentors will have to be delivered online due to changes in the schedule of mentors. Thirdly, we did not have all mentor participate in the regional workshop as initially planned due to the pandemic. Thus COVID-19 negatively affected the project.

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