

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### **SANBI-GBIF CALL FOR ESTABLISHING CATALYTIC RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS IN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATICS WITH UNIVERSITY PARTNERS**

**CLOSING DATE: 8<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024**

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SANBI-GBIF is the South African node of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), established and funded by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), and hosted by SANBI. The efforts of SANBI-GBIF are guided by several key strategic objectives, this includes: 1. Grow HCD in Biodiversity Informatics 2. Manage and Grow the SANBI-GBIF Node through strengthening engagements & Partnerships for data mobilisation, use & publication 3. Strategic International and Regional Liaison 4. Promote the mobilisation, use, application and impact of data in research, analysis, conservation, policy and decision making through advocacy, awareness raising and publication in support of the STI agenda and national and international conventions.

One of SANBI-GBIF's key roles is to mobilize biodiversity information and make it freely available on the internet. Currently more than 35 000 000 biodiversity data records have been mobilized through the South African GBIF community, with information accessible through the SANBI-GBIF Node Portal at [www.sanbi-gbif.org](http://www.sanbi-gbif.org). The value of open access and open science principles enables researchers, conservation planners and decision-makers to use the information to make informed decisions that contribute to South Africa's sustainable development. It is critical that core skills are also developed to further mobilise, manage, and use this biodiversity data for research and effective decision making.

The Node is guided by and contributes to SANBI's corporate strategic plan, the SANBI Regional Engagement Strategy for Africa and the GBIF Strategic Implementation Plan. These strategic frameworks give direction and alignment to efforts to grow biodiversity informatics networks and capacities, strengthen technical skills, data management and publishing competency and increase the use and uptake of biodiversity data and information on the continent, in support of sustainable development.

SANBI have made significant strides in developing capacity in biodiversity informatics through following a holistic approach to capacity development through regular training events for students, interns and professionals; the development of a large community of practice (CoP), and smaller subject specific communities; and also working with academia towards developing biodiversity informatics as a discrete field of science with a formalised curriculum. The Node has also developed a five-year strategy for the implementation of a Centre for Biodiversity Informatics, with the primary aim to facilitate capacity development in biodiversity informatics nationally.

To strengthen the endeavours to work towards a Centre, SANBI-GBIF is looking at collaborating with universities to strengthen efforts to drive a stronger biodiversity informatics agenda. SANBI-GBIF is looking at creating research hubs with a strong focus on data-driven research within various scientific research disciplines, with the intention that it will contribute to developing Human Capital in Biodiversity Informatics, and to support the mobilisation and use of biodiversity data, supporting policy relevance and human well-being. This will also tie into meeting the focus areas to strengthen the DSI Decadal Plan, SANBI's Corporate Strategic Plan and the GBIF Strategic Plan. These research areas include:

- A.) A focus on molecular research and insights into publishing molecular or DNA-derived data, and enhancing and expanding reference libraries incorporated into the GBIF taxonomic backbone,
- B.) Explore data mobilization opportunities related to DNA and eDNA efforts, and support and direct additional eDNA data streams to GBIF.
- C.) The university must have a key interest in the development of an approach that seeks to align its bioinformatics work with that of biodiversity informatics to grow this area of research nationally.
- D.) The university must have an interest or may already be involved in efforts to create a biodiversity informatics curriculum or short courses/modules at the postgraduate level (Honours/Masters).
- E.) The institutions may have a strong strategic focus on data science, global change or data-driven biodiversity/ecology-based thematic areas.
- F.) The university must have an interest in teaching and capacity development of students and/or work-based professionals in mobilizing and using biodiversity data for science, policy, and societal benefit, and will actively work with the GBIF Node of South Africa to expand human capital development in that arena.
- G.) Have an interest in developing strategic partnerships to strengthen efforts towards a Centre for Biodiversity Informatics.

#### AWARD INFORMATION

- **Type of award:** Seed money.
- **Size of individual awards per research collaboration grant:** R300,000 over 2 years with the option of extended funding after the initial 2-year period.
- If there are more proposals than funding, good proposals may be considered for a new round of funding in 2025.

#### PROPOSALS MUST ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

**SCIENTIFIC MERIT:** First and foremost, projects will be reviewed for scientific significance

**a. Significance:**

- I. Scientific importance - i.e. what is the key focus area of the research collaboration with SANBI-GBIF
- II. Strategic national importance- priority will be given to research collaborations with a strong strategic focus on data driven activities including potential for mobilising data or using data to forge a clear biodiversity informatics capacity development

approach which is congruent to the SANBI-GBIF efforts and the organisational research strategy.

**b. Feasibility:**

- I. Experience and expertise of main PI of the application in the relevant area of work.
- II. Experience and expertise of team as relevant.
- III. In the event of data sharing, please provide further information with regards to strategy and approaches
- IV. In the event of a focus on data use, please provide further information with regards to strategy, potential analysis, research questions and outputs and approaches
- V. In the event of human capital development, training curriculum/course development, please provide further information with regards to strategy and approaches
- VI. Details of processes and timelines provided in the workplan should show sound planning.

**RELEVANCE:** Projects will be favourably considered if, in addition, they demonstrate a potential for one or more of the following:

- I. Producing products that will make a significant contribution to one or more national/global initiatives.
- II. Production of end-products like training materials/course curricula/frameworks and/or strategies that address the needs of society, the environment, and/or science.
- III. Training and capacity building with a focus on equity and redress issues.
- IV. Have an interest in open-access data-sharing
- V. Leveraging additional funding to support biodiversity informatics efforts.

<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>
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- I. Open to all universities in South Africa.
- II. All data mobilized through the SANBI-GBIF Human Capital/Research Collaboration Grant, as well as any other products of the projects, such as training material, must be made available under either a CCO waiver or CC-BY 4.0 licence.
- III. All data/ information made available through the project will follow the SANBI data sharing policies.
- IV. Data will be made available in accordance with SANBI's Biodiversity Information Policy Framework which sets out to protect data on sensitive taxa, and the SANBI data sharing agreement guidelines will be followed.
- V. Institutional representatives will be required to contribute to SANBI-GBIF training workshops where relevant, and/or to any jointly identified conferences and Forums.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- I. University Partners will be expected to enter into a collaboration with SANBI, and a collaboration agreement will be signed.
- II. Applicants must commit co-funding (in-kind or cash) to this collaboration and provide details of this co-funding in their proposals. Co-funding refers to real costs that are incurred by the applicants while executing the funded project's activities. These could be in-kind contributions that directly contribute to the project activities (like staff time, travel costs, equipment etc.,) or any in-cash contributions to activities from other funding sources. The level of this co-funding will be taken into account when evaluating cost-effectiveness of proposals.

## PROCESS AND TIMELINES

### PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To apply, please complete the application form and provide any associated documentation. Proposal submissions should be emailed to Ms. Duduetsang Rafapha ([d.rafapha@sanbi.org.za](mailto:d.rafapha@sanbi.org.za)). Proposals that do not meet these requirements will not be considered. We encourage your interest in this process, and we look forward to receiving your applications by **8<sup>th</sup> May 2024**.

Content-related questions or requests for further information to the Call for Proposals can be sent to Fatima Parker-Allie ([F.Parker@sanbi.org.za](mailto:F.Parker@sanbi.org.za)).

SANBI reserves the right not to proceed with the proposals.

**REQUIRED FORMAT OF PROPOSAL**

**PROJECT TITLE**

**CONTACT DETAILS OF PRINCIPAL APPLICANT/MANAGING INSTITUTION**

**Contact name:**

**Tel:**

**Postal Address:**

**Email:**

**PROJECT SUMMARY - AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROPOSAL (200 WORDS OR LESS)**

**FULL RESEARCH COLLABORATION DESCRIPTION - PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS**

**Outline in detail, in which way/s the research collaboration will support the SANBI-GBIF vision and the Human Capital Development Approach for Biodiversity Informatics. Some relevant information can be found at [www.sanbi-gbif.org](http://www.sanbi-gbif.org)**

**What are the potential outputs and/or contributions that your research hub will enable?**

Provide a brief outline of the experience and expertise of the participant/s to be involved in this research collaboration. Please provide any supporting documentation.

Indicate the expected duration of the project (include start and end dates). Please include a work plan with milestones and deadlines.

**Start:**

**End:**

Comment on the project's potential contribution to national and international collaborations/initiatives.

Comment on how the project will contribute to training and capacity development in the Biodiversity Informatics area, including equity and redress issues (e.g. linking to DST's White Paper for STI and the DSI New Decadal Plan).

Comment on any plans related to data mobilization and sharing, associated with this grant.

Explain how this project would make a significant contribution to one or more national and/or global biodiversity initiatives.

List and explain the potential end-products that address the needs of society, the environment, and/or scientific knowledge.

## BUDGET TEMPLATE

Provide a broad-level budget and indicate the co-funding that will be associated with the research hub.

ITEMS	MOTIVATION	COST inclusive of VAT (please provide details)	Co-funding