GBIF's global data coverage 2009

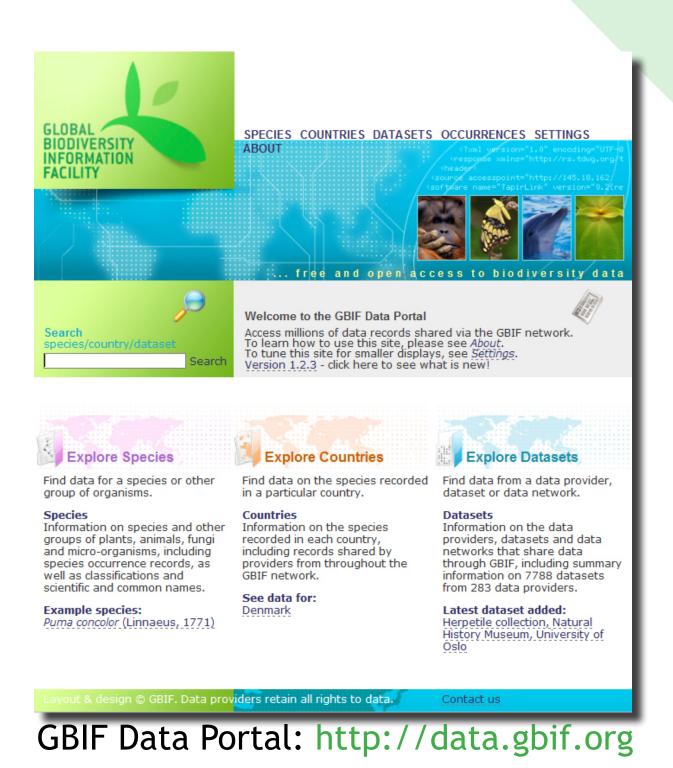
Enabling Long-Term Climate Policy: Lessons from GBIF - global infrastructure, data and tools to inform climate and biodiversity policy

Lessons learned - inspiration for other collaborative science-policy networks

The GBIF establishment model can be inspirational for other international scientific data and information sharing networks, irrespective of thematic focus. Three key components need to be considered in setting up a network organization: the governance, the content and the informatics platform. The latter includes a negotiated set of data standards, exchange protocols, a robust IT architecture etc. Even though a MOU is a weak governance instrument it can fairly quickly be put in place among countries and if they are in general agreement as to what they want to achieve it can be an adequate instrument, as in the GBIF case. Managing consensus is critical in such an organisation, in particular to develop a funding model that is regarded as transparent and fair to all Participants. Ultimately, success will depend on the content mobilised; it is imperative to identify from the outset what purposes the data are and can be used for. Without this guidance it is difficult to convince Participants to mobilise data, but if they approve the overall purpose in sharing their data and are given sufficient 'accreditation' for their participation, the network can

Such a distributed network structure as GBIF need not be hugely expensive. In serving the science community, it is also of use to governmental decision-making at the local and national level; in addition to the common, multi-lateral goals it should also support individual national purposes. This is also the basis for any sustainability strategy.

grow quickly.



Finding solutions to the current global environmental changes requires access to high quality data in many science fields, and tools for analysis of these data.

Regarding biodiversity, billions of biodiversity data exist world-wide but are often not digitised, easily accessible or fully useful. They are however critical to establishing baseline knowledge of species and ecosystems, against which changes can be tracked, enabling forecasts of future trends. The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is a multi-lateral initiative, currently involving 50 countries and 39 international organisations, set up to enable mobilisation of these biodiversity data. This poster summarises the multi-lateral negotiation process that lead to the formation of the GBIF.

A 1999 report by the OECD Mega-science Forum Group on Biodiversity Informatics presented to the OECD Science Ministerial recommended that an international mechanism was needed to make biodiversity data and information freely accessible worldwide via the internet. The Report proposed the formation of GBIF as this mechanism.

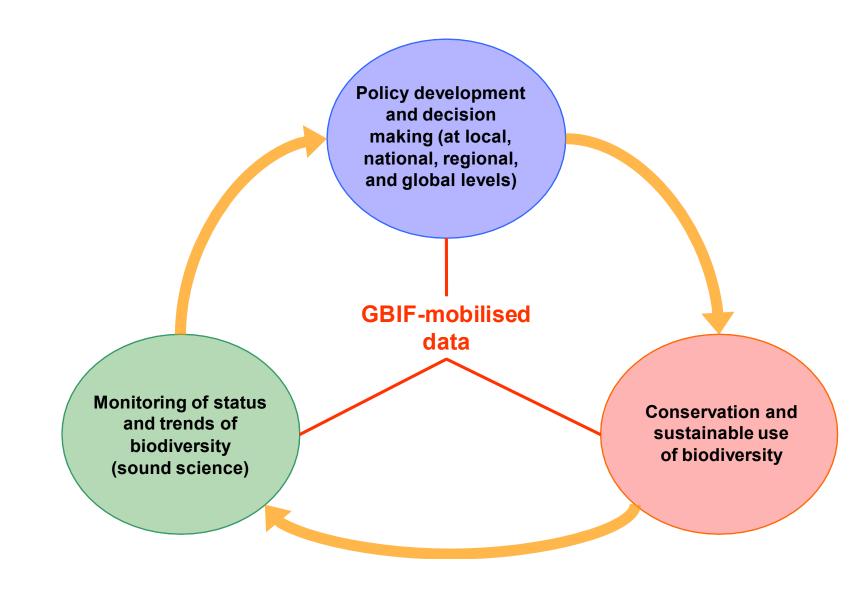
Science Ministers endorsed the Recommendation in 2000, recognising however that GBIF had to be autonomous and open to all countries and relevant international organisations. An Interim Steering Committee (ISC) of 17 countries was established and by December 2000 an agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was opened for signature and a letter of invitation to participate in GBIF was sent to Science Ministers of all countries.

As signatories to the MOU, countries express their willingness to share biodiversity data in a distributed infrastructure whereby the providers retained control over their data and over what they make available, especially certain categories of sensitive data. As part of a global network the Participants are also required to establish a national focal point - a National Biodiversity Information Facility - to coordinate the work at the national level amongst relevant institutions.

GBIF has been in existence for seven years. Over 171 million records from over 7600 datasets and 260 institutions worldwide are already accessible online through the GBIF data portal (http://data.gbif.org). GBIF enables access to previously inaccessible primary data, enabling analyses which were previously impossible, improving understanding and informing new policy development. GBIF provides a template for establishing similar global science-policy informatics infrastructures.



...free and open access to biodiversity data



About GBIF

openly and freely available on the Internet for everyone, and endorses both open source software and open data access.

http://www.gbif.org

GBIF provides scientific biodiversity data for decision-making, research endeavours and public use. http://data.gbif.org

GBIF is a network of data publishers who retain ownership and control of the data they share. Linked datasets provide a more robust representation of biodiversity than any single dataset.

GBIF provides access to primary biodiversity data held in institutions in developed and developing countries.

Data shared through GBIF are repatriated data.

GBIF is a dynamic, growing partnership of countries, organisations, institutions and individuals working together to mobilise scientific biodiversity data.

GBIF invites you to download species occurrence data freely and openly from http://data.gbif.org

GBIF invites you to join the GBIF network and share your biodiversity data, as well as participate in developing new tools and services.

