GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY

Terms of Reference
for the
Participant Node Managers Committee (Nodes)

Approved by the Governing Board at GB20, Berlin, Germany, October 2013

Preamble:

Article 7.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Board states:

The Governing Board may establish and assign responsibilities to *ad hoc* or Standing Committees and other subsidiary bodies as it may require. The Governing Board will set or approve the terms of reference, guidelines and budgets for these committees and other subsidiary bodies.

Article 7.3.4 establishes the Participant Node Mangers Committee as a Standing Committee:

The **Participant Node Managers Committee** will serve as a forum for sharing information about the status and best practices of Participants' nodes, and as an advisory committee that will make recommendations to the Governing Board, the Executive Committee, the Science Committee and the Secretariat concerning relevant issues for the nodes.

This Terms of Reference outlines the purpose, mandate and rules of procedure of I) the Participant Node Managers Committee (NODES), II) the Nodes Steering Group (NSG) and III) Regional Subcommittees.

I: The Participant Node Managers Committee

Purpose

The GBIF Governing Board established the Participant Node Managers Committee to facilitate data publishing among Participants by providing a forum for the exchange of experiences, best practices and information. Additional purposes of the Committee are to:

- provide the Governing Board with advice on the challenges and practical requirements faced by Participant Nodes, and the ways in which the GBIF Work Programme can help address them,
- promote the GBIF Participant Node concept to the international biodiversity community as a unit providing services for data publishers and users of biodiversity data, and
- provide expertise and advice to the GBIF Secretariat in support of the delivery and implementation of the GBIF Work Programme as well as participating in network development (See also regional subcommittees).

1. Mandate

The Participant Node Managers Committee has the following responsibilities:

1.1. To identify and share best practices in developing and managing GBIF Participant Nodes as a means for Participants to improve key aspects of data publishing and data use.

1.2. To identify barriers to data publishing experienced by Participants, determine which are held in common, and suggest relevant solutions.

1.3. To explore, create and promote a range of different models for organising and achieving data publishing among Participants.

1.4. To encourage Participants to use their expertise to help each other directly in developing their Participant Nodes through exchange of knowledge, informal partnerships, or longer term interactions.

1.5. To communicate the Nodes' requirements to the Science Committee and Secretariat for the development of GBIF standards and data-publishing technology (publishing software, portals, search mechanisms, tools etc.) based on demand from data publishers and users at the Participant level.

1.6. To help test and refine through feedback new versions of standards and data-publishing technology (publishing software, portals, search mechanisms, tools, etc.).

1.7. To create regular overviews and analyses of data publishing and Participant Node development for the Governing Board, in order to help inform assessments of progress and to inform planning.

1.8. To identify the priority needs of the Participant Nodes that are best addressed through the GBIF Work Programme, and where activity in individual Nodes can offer work that helps achieve the goals set out in the Work Programme for data publishing and service improvement.

1.9. To make recommendations that contribute to the setting of longer-term strategic directions for the GBIF Work Programme.

1.10. To help observers and new Participants understand and achieve benefits available from publishing data via GBIF and establishing a Node.

2. **Members**

2.1. Each Participant is entitled to have **one** representative on the Committee.

   2.1.1. Each Participant will keep the Committee Chair and the Secretariat informed of the name and contact details of its representative.

2.2. The Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Nodes Committee are elected by the Governing Board according to Article 7.4 of the Rules of Procedure.

   2.2.1. It is required that nominations for the Chair and the Vice-Chairs positions are drawn from members of the Nodes Committee and recommended that they are people directly involved with active Nodes.

3. **Rules of Procedure**

3.1. Meetings

   3.1.1. The Committee will normally meet at least once every second a year (The Global Nodes Meeting).

   3.1.2. Wherever feasible the meetings of the Committee will be organised back to back with the annual Governing Board meeting.

   3.1.3. Meetings will be planned at least three and ideally six months in advance to establish agendas and to allow members to prepare materials for presentation and exchange of experiences.

   3.1.4. Meetings may also be planned to coincide with GBIF training or other relevant activities.

   3.1.5. In general, additional attendees (Nodes staff members etc.) from Participants are welcome to attend Participant Nodes Committee meetings, but these additional attendees should receive prior approval from the Chair as there may be constraints on meeting capacity.

3.2 The Chair will dispatch a draft agenda with documents for the meeting of the Participant Node Managers Committee no later than one week before an agreed meeting date.

3.3. Ad hoc working groups.

    3.3.1. If necessary, the Committee may develop ad hoc working groups, as long as there are no cost implications for the GBIF core budget.

    3.3.2 If the Committee wishes to establish an ad hoc working group whose activities will have cost implications for the GBIF core budget, it may make a petition, including a statement of the rationale for the group and its projected costs, to the Executive Secretary to provide the funding for the group. The group cannot start its work until it receives such approval.,

3.4. The Committee will strive to work by consensus in drafting its advice and recommendations.

3.5. Records

    3.5.1 The Secretariat will keep a record of each meeting of the Participant Node Managers Committee and will circulate the record to the Committee members shortly after the meeting.

    3.5.2 The Secretariat will keep an electronic library of relevant documents and presentations for the benefit of committee members.

3.6. The Chair will provide a report on the Committee's activities and recommendations at each Governing Board meeting. The Chair may also send additional reports to the Governing Board when appropriate.

3.7. Costs of participation by Committee members

    3.7.1. Whenever feasible, it is recommended that Node Managers be included in Participant delegations to the Governing Board meetings.

    3.7.2. Members of the Participant Node Managers Committee will cover their own travel and accommodation costs to atttend meetings of the committee.

    3.7.3. Committee members from developing countries may apply to the GBIF Supplementary Fund for financial support to offset the costs of participating in Committee meetings.

II: Terms of reference for the Nodes Steering Group (NSG)

A small Nodes Steering Group has been established to ensure an effective planning and execution of the mandate of the Participant Node Managers Committee and to act as an interface between the Nodes and other parts of the GBIF Governance.

1. Composition

The NSG comprises the Nodes Committee Chair and Vice Chairs, and six Regional Representatives (see Section III). The Chair and the Vice Chairs of the Nodes Committee are the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the NSG.

2. Mandate

The Nodes Steering Group (NSG) has the following responsibilities:

- Formulate specific recommendations to the relevant GBIF bodies (the Executive- and the Science Committee, the GBIF Secretariat, and the Nodes Committee

themselves) based on the feedback provided by Participant Nodes individually or collectively - including priorities, needs, solutions, opportunities, suggestions.

- Provide advice on the GBIF Work Programme to ensure it addresses effectively the priorities identified by Participant Nodes, and that Participant Nodes are actively involved in its planning and implementation.
- Establish working/steering groups to be responsible for executing specific Nodes related parts of the Work Programme, in consultation with the Secretariat.
- Communicate to the Nodes Committee members any recommendations or relevant information from other GBIF bodies and groups.

2.1. An annual meeting of the NSG will be scheduled as part of the GBIF mid-term committee meetings.

2.2. As for meetings and a record of meetings see Participant Node Managers Committee above (section 3.2 and 3.5).

3. Cost implications

3.1. Whenever meetings of the Nodes Steering Group are held in conjunction with the annual Governing Board meeting and related events, the travel, hotel and per diem costs are to be paid by the Participant from which the group member's comes.

3.2. Whenever NSG is meetings intersessionally such as the annual Mid-term meetings, the group members' costs for participating in these meetings will be covered by the Secretariat.

III: Terms of reference of the Regional Sub-committees

The Participant Node Managers Committee has established six Regional Sub-committees for the 2011-2016 to encourage and strengthen regional collaboration and information exchange among Participants.

1. Regions

The six regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and Oceania and the Sub-committees are composed of GBIF Participants in those regions.

2. Mandate

The Regional Sub-committees have the following responsibilities:

- Serve as a platform for communication, coordination and collaboration among GBIF Participant Nodes at the regional level.
- Capture and compile feedback from Participant Nodes at the regional level on Work Programme priorities, needs, implementation plans and opportunities, among others.
- Present and discuss regionally compiled feedback with the Nodes Steering Group, as well as any other issues raised by Nodes as part of their regional interactions.
- Play a pivotal role in promoting and facilitating regional collaboration and capacity building.
- Appoint a Regional Representative to the Nodes Steering Group preferably from among its Voting Participant members.

2.1. Only Node Managers as official members of the Nodes Committee are eligible to be appointed as Regional Representatives).

2.2. Regional Representatives to the Nodes Steering Group are appointed for an initial two-year period, extendable for a further two years.

2.3. Each Regional Sub-committee decides how to select its Regional Representative.

3. Members of the Regional Subcommittees

3.1. Membership of the Regional Subcommittees is restricted to members of the Participant Node Managers Committee.

3.2. Each member of the Participant Node Managers Committee will be initially assigned by the GBIF Secretariat (in conjunction with the Nodes Committee Chair) to one of the six Regional Subcommittees according to the geographical location of the GBIF Participant that each Node Manager is representing.

3.3. For Committee Members from Associate International Organisations, the regional assignment will initially be based on the location of the organisation's headquarters.

3.4 Participant Node Managers Committee members can request to the GBIF Secretariat and the Nodes Committee Chair to be assigned to an alternative Regional Committee (rationale supporting such request must be provided).

3.5. Participant Node Managers Committee members can also request to be involved as observers in other Regional Subcommittees than that of their primary affiliation. Such requests should be submitted to the relevant Regional Representative(s) and the Nodes Committee Chair with copy to the GBIF Secretariat Programme Officer for Participation.

4. Rules procedure and reporting

Each Regional Subcommittee will decide on its own internal structure and rules of procedure (taking into account the following articles concerning the appointment and role of the Regional Representative) consistent with the goals and mission of GBIF.

4.1. The Regional Sub-committees, through their Regional Representatives, are required to keep the GBIF Secretariat and the Nodes Committee Chair informed of their activities; likewise, they are required to submit the reports from any Subcommittee meetings, workshops, or training events offered to Nodes – if of general interest – or the Secretariat.

4.2. In particular, the Regional Representatives are expected to prepare and present one draft regional report in preparation for the GBIF mid-term meetings, and a final report to the Nodes Chair as part of his report to the Governing Board.

5. Responsibilities of the Regional Representative

The main objective of the Regional Representative is to serve as a liaison between the Nodes Steering Group, the GBIF Secretariat, and their respective Regional Subcommittee.

Regional Representatives are expected to:
- help with the coordination of regional-level activities,
- ensure the flow of information and communication between the region and the other GBIF bodies and groups, and
- play a key role in promoting GBIF regionally and engaging the Participants in the implementation of the GBIF Work Programme.

6. Costs implications

6.1. For the years in between global meetings of the Nodes Committee, and dependent on budget availability, the GBIF Secretariat will issue a call to provide partial financial support for the organisation of meetings of the Regional Subcommittees.

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