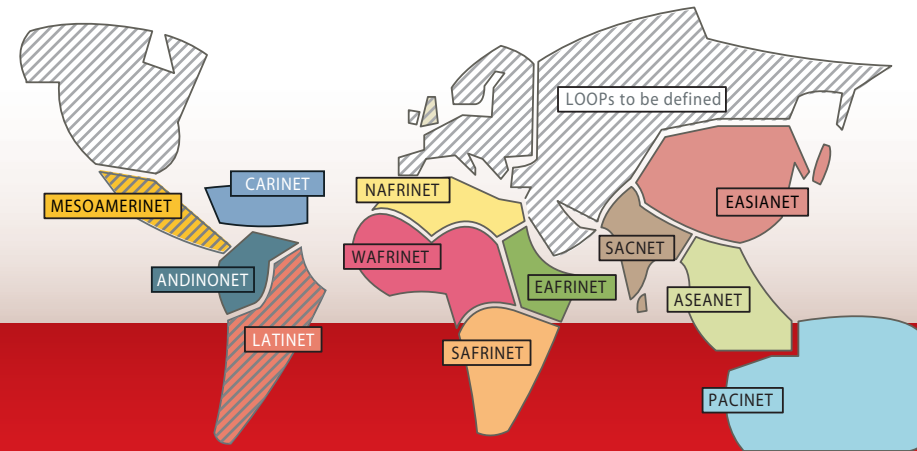


Who is BioNET?

Founded in 1993, today BioNET is the only international not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting taxonomy. The organisation comprises a UK-based Secretariat linking regional, government-endorsed partnerships and over 2,500 experts with international technology, informatics and capacity building partners in **“the most comprehensive network” for taxonomy (Convention on Biological Diversity)**. From the outset, BioNET has worked with governments and scientific institutions to build and mobilise taxonomic capacity at the regional level through “Locally Owned and Operated Partnerships” (LOOPs). Ten LOOPs have been established to date, bringing together institutions from 115 countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania, the Caribbean and Latin America.



Why is BioNET needed?

With few exceptions, taxonomic institutions are in critical decline worldwide. Expertise is fragmenting, the number and range of specialists decreasing. As a result, the provision of taxonomic support and services increasingly depends on the cooperation of institutions in networks and exploitation of opportunities offered by modern technologies. The potential for taxonomy to contribute to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction through trade, health and sustainable agriculture is greatest in developing countries. The capacity of the taxonomic sector to respond to such needs, on the other hand, is very limited in most developing nations, preventing the implementation of key elements of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. This is why BioNET focuses its activities on developing countries in work that is recognised in key decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Get involved - join BioNET's World!

contact: bionet@bionet-intl.org

Become a Friend!

We will keep you in touch with new developments and events in taxonomy and its application to biodiversity conservation and development through the monthly BioNET e-Bulletin.

Become a Member!

If you are interested in contributing to capacity building or have taxonomic product and service needs, we will register you with the BioNET network (LOOP) in your region.

Become a Supporter!

Help sustain and expand our work - contribute to our unique partnership as a funding or technical supporter.

bionet  the global network for taxonomy



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What are the benefits of BioNET's work?

It's not often that a not-for-profit organisation can claim that the scope of their work benefits all mankind. But BioNET really can. People everywhere need to be able to find the correct name and identify the elements of their living world. BioNET aims to make this possible, delivering training, applying technologies and developing resources and tools where they are most needed.

BioNET supports taxonomy which is fundamental for the following and more...

defining hotspots for biodiversity conservation: The data, information and expertise associated with biological collections provide the basis for defining and monitoring the priority areas for conservation that are necessary for reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

discovering life: Identification of new species allows countries to participate in the knowledge economy, much of which is biologically based. To date, only about 10% of species have been discovered by science.

saving crops: Taxonomic know-how underpins the productivity of agriculture and related sectors, for example through diagnoses of pests and pathogens and provision of information and tools for integrated pest management.

enabling trade: Taxonomic tools and training can reduce poverty by removing barriers to trade. They are key to implementing agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary standards, opening markets for developing country exporters, and protecting ecosystems from potentially harmful species introductions.

certifying medicines: Taxonomic techniques are used to assure the contents and safety of medicinal products. Tied to the ability to disseminate this information across the globe, taxonomic knowledge supports the regulation of harvesting, trade and use of medicinal plants.

BioNET in action

Protecting a staple food

Maize provides the staple food for 50% of sub-Saharan Africa. However, this vital food source is under constant threat from pests such as the Maize Stem Borer beetle. Each year some 40% of maize crops are lost to this very destructive pest species.

Now, thanks to BioNET, the Maize Stem Borer beetle's days are numbered. BioNET awarded Dr. Ibrahim Shamie of Sierra Leone a fellowship to work with colleagues at both the University of Cardiff and the regional BioNET coordinating institute in West Africa. Dr Shamie's taxonomic research had a vital role in identifying a species of microwasp that is a "natural enemy" of the Stem Borer beetle. Using the microwasp in biological pest control is not only better for the environment because of the reduction it allows in use of harmful pesticides but it also promises better crop yields for West Africa, dramatically reducing hunger and helping farmers to make a living.



Equal access to open markets

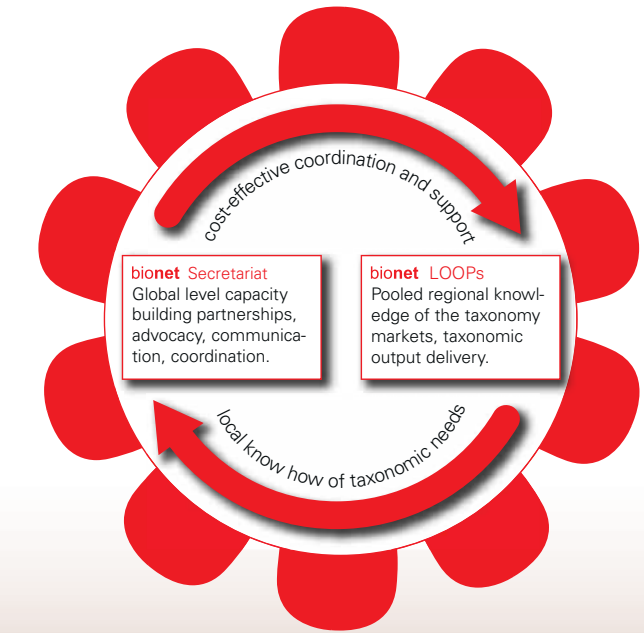
Trade is a major driver in economic growth and hence is critically important to the success of the poverty reduction strategies of developing countries. Yet countries exporting natural and agricultural products face enormous challenges in gaining access to world markets because of the need to meet internationally agreed technical standards.

In Southeast Asia, many countries are both significant importers and exporters of food and other natural products. In Malaysia, for example, small holder fruit production for export is an industry worth over \$100 million annually. Exporting countries must certify shipments are free from pest and disease organisms, many of which may be invasive. Importing countries need to be able to detect potentially harmful but often difficult to recognise insect and fungal organisms in shipments. Regulatory authorities therefore need user-friendly guides to species identification, as well as access to reference collections and taxonomically trained staff. BioNET is a leading partner in a programme to develop such taxonomic resources. In helping countries comply with accepted technical standards, BioNET's work is promoting prosperity in the region while minimising risks to economies and biodiversity internationally.

How does BioNET work?

BioNET's Secretariat leads the delivery of BioNET's Global Programme in partnership with its regional networks (LOOPS) and international partners. Through participation in policy forums, the Secretariat maintains global market knowledge of current and emerging needs for taxonomy related to today's development and biodiversity conservation challenges. It has a critical role in helping LOOPS respond to local taxonomic priorities, providing central co-ordination, technical support, news, advice and development services to the network, as well as mobilising expertise and partnerships with technology initiatives. Underpinning the Secretariat's functions are formal agreements with strategic partners such as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP).

The BioNET Feed Back Loop



The LOOPs are BioNET's unique capacity building and product delivery mechanisms. Their interests extend from taxonomic services (e.g. species identifications), product development (e.g. species identification guides) and packaging species information for decision makers, to expert and technical training, communicating best practice, the provision of facilities for biological and literature collections, and more. LOOPs impart BioNET and its partners with in depth local knowledge and direct insights into local priorities and institutional opportunities for developing taxonomic products and capacity.

