

# Benefits of Taxonomy: African Pollinator Initiative (API)

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Taxonomy for Ghana's development and conservation - assessing the needs  
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# What is API ?

- An African based initiative resulting from a group of scientists, biologists, conservationists and ecologists who recognized the important services pollinators provide to the ecosystem and are concerned about the threats to these pollinators (animals, mainly insects) due to activities of man: wrong methods of insecticide application in the environment, destruction of habitats through logging, forest fragmentation, wild fires, construction and urbanization etc.
- Their aim is to create awareness of the important role these animals provide and also to suggest sustainable ways of utilizing their services.

# How API came into existence

- IPI was born in 1999 at Cop 6 when the CBD adopted pollination and decline of pollinators as priority issues that need to be addressed globally.
- API therefore became part of the IPI just as the NAPI, EPI, BPI etc.
- In 2002 a group of scientists met in Nairobi Kenya with assistance from the UN FAO to inaugurate the API and the API secretariat remained in Nairobi.
- The FAO and others have since supported the API activities.
- The API was further divided into the East, West, North and South with coordinators. Apart from the North, the rest have been very active and carrying out various activities on pollination regionally.



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# Role of pollinators

- Pollinators or agents of pollination provide ecosystem service of ensuring fruit and seed production without any effort from man. Through their activities food is made available to both plants and animals leading to sustainable livelihood and food security.
- Pollinators play significant role in biodiversity by producing seeds of various plants on which all animals survive.
- It is estimated the over 75 percent of all plants depend on animal pollinators of which insects form 80%.

# API activities

- An Action plan
- Rapid Assessment
- Publication of a book on Pollinators for Policy
- Part of a Global Project on the Conservation and Management of pollinators for Sustainable Agriculture through an Ecosystem Approach which involve 7 countries (Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, India, Nepal and Pakistan).

# API plan of Action

- Plan of Action of the API include the following:
  - Collect and document baseline information on Pollination and pollinators
  - Conduct both scientific research and survey traditional knowledge on pollinators
  - Build capacity and create public awareness on the importance of pollinators to the ecosystem.
  - Mainstreaming this information into policies of countries and sharing information among member countries.

# API in Ghana

- In 2004 GEF provided funds for the preparatory phase of the global pollinator project proposal (PDF-B). This was for two years after which a final proposal was present to GEF council for funding. This was done in March 2006.
  - In Ghana, two workshops were held involving various stakeholders and institutions throughout the country.
  - We came out with priority areas where we need to focus so far as country needs are concern and was in co-operated into the global project proposal.
  - Unfortunately, the pollinator project was not considered for funding during this year's pipeline by GEF.
  - As a results the FAO has decided to carry out pilot studies in Ghana and Nepal with co-funding money.
- Preparations are far advance for this pilot project to take off at Mankessim Irrigation sites with vegetable farmer in around the catchment areas.

# API in Ghana cont'd

- Held a bee taxonomy training course for farmers, extension agents, horticulturists,, technicians, students and researchers in December 2003 at UCC , Cape Coast.
- Carried out several researches on pollination and pollinators with students both at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- On-going research involve training of 3 students at the PHD level, one on Cashew pollination, and another on Cocoa pollination and one as a bee taxonomists (currently in South Africa).
- There is also one student conducting a survey of tradition knowledge on stingless bees at the masters level.
- Currently an American student is carrying out a nesting behavioural studies of one of the stingless bee species in Cape Coast.
- The Kakum Stingless bee project is looking into the conservation and sustainable utilization of stingless bees for pollination and hive products initially with 5 communities near the Kakum National Park.

# Relevant of API in Taxonomy

- Part of the action plan is to know who pollinates what and to sustainable manage them.
- It should be possible to identify useful pollinators from just flower visitors and correct naming and identification is very important.
- We need to find out the effects/ impact of human activities on pollinators and this demands that we know who we are dealing with.
- pollinators are very crucial so as to sustain human livelihood.



# Case study- stingless bee project

- Stingless bee project is targeting mainly rural communities by to adding value to the peoples livelihood through the utilization of stingless bees for pollination and hive products (honey, propolis, wax, etc).
- It is an Africa-wide project which can involve everybody as pertains in Australia (plan is to extend to all the regions of Ghana and neighbouring African countries)
- Currently, the behaviour of the 5 communities have changed. As they go to their farms, they searched for stingless bee nests and forage sources.
- The farmers originally knew that the honey from stingless bees are highly medicinal but did not know that the bees are pollinators of their fruit crops
- They also did not know that they can be domesticated for their honey and other hive products.



# Thank God for Pollinators:

every fruit you eat or juice  
you drink comes from the  
services of pollinators

Thank you for your attention

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