



Assessing Taxonomic Needs in Ghana

Project Summary and Outline

This document outlines a collaborative project between the UK Natural History Museum (NHM), BioNET-INTERNATIONAL (BioNET), the Ghanaian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), BioNET-WAFRINET and the UK Department of the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Project Summary

Introduction

The UK Natural History Museum (NHM), BioNET-INTERNATIONAL (BioNET), the Ghanaian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and BioNET-WAFRINET supported by the WSSD Implementation Fund (WIF) of the UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), are working together to carry out a taxonomic needs assessment in Ghana, in support of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

The Programme of Work of the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) calls for national, regional and global taxonomic needs assessments (TNAs). Ghana's third national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (submitted October 2005) highlighted the need for a TNA at the national level.

The Global Taxonomy Initiative of the Convention on Biological Diversity was created to combat the 'taxonomic impediment' - the lack of taxonomic skills, expertise and facilities that makes carrying out effective assessment of diversity and an understanding of what animals, plants and micro-organisms live in any environment very difficult. However, before the appropriate taxonomic resources can be made available, it is necessary to identify just what problems and gaps they are needed to meet. To do this a Taxonomic

Needs Assessment is necessary. So far the majority of taxonomic 'needs assessments' that have been carried out around the world have focussed on taxonomic capacity and not on taxonomic needs that arise in meeting commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. In contrast, the methodology for a needs assessment as outlined in CBD's (unpublished) 'Guide to the GTI', calls for a focus on the taxonomic problems faced by those managing conservation, sustainable use or access-related work, and on the capacity-building and information requirements that would be necessary to enable these problems to be met. The UK has carried out an assessment of this type, and the support provided by Defra allows the experience gained in the UK to be shared with Ghana, and applied for the first time to a developing country.

Purpose and Project Outline

The Ghana assessment is intended to provide the Government of Ghana and key stakeholders with a clear analysis of the taxonomic needs of priority biodiversity-related sectors in the country. This information can then be used to integrate taxonomic priorities into government policies, and will enable help in-country taxonomic institutes to target the work of on identified needs.

The assessment will be carried out by a Ghanaian national team assisted by the UK partners, who will draw on experience gained during the recent UK taxonomic needs assessment. Information will be gathered through analysis of explicit and implicit needs in published sources, interviews and through questionnaires circulated to in-country stakeholders.

The information gathered will be used to produce a report that will serve as a basis for Government, taxonomists, end-users of taxonomy and funding bodies to prioritise decisions on taxonomic information development and provision.

This report, a report on lessons learned from the assessment, and a best practice manual, will be circulated nationally, regionally and globally to;

- The Government of Ghana
- Contributing stakeholders
- Regional and National Coordinators of WAFRINET – the West African Network of BioNET-INTERNATIONAL
- BioNET-INTERNATIONAL Technical Secretariat, for distribution globally
- The CBD's Global Taxonomic Initiative Programme Officer
- The CBD's Clearing House Mechanism
- The Global Taxonomy Initiative Coordination Mechanism;
- Defra
- GEF implementing agencies and secretariat

The project was inaugurated at a side event at the Conference of Parties to the CBD (COP8) in March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil.

The Project Partners

Both BioNET and the Natural History Museum have a strong reputation in the scientific (taxonomic) and biodiversity conservation fields, not only at a practical level, across the globe but also in engaging in relevant intergovernmental processes such as the CBD. Both partners are represented on the Coordination Mechanism of the CBD's Global Taxonomy Initiative.

The Natural History Museum is the UK's National Focal Point for the Global Taxonomy Initiative. BioNET has been responsible for the development of subregional technical cooperation networks and has experience of assessing taxonomic needs regionally and internationally.

Project Outline

The Project will have the following elements.

1. Development of MOUs between relevant institutions.
These will include Terms of Reference for each participant.
Actors: BioNET, Natural History Museum, CSIR, WAFRINET.
Starts: March 2006. End: May 2006.
2. Production of Assessment Information Pack by UK team.
This will be based on the recent Taxonomic Needs Assessment carried out in the UK, and information from the unpublished 'Guide to the GTI', together with other documentation, particularly in electronic form. If further information resources are required the Project Partners will attempt to provide them.
Actors: BioNET, Natural History Museum, CSIR, WAFRINET.
Starts: April 2006. End: May 2006.
3. Building in-country project team.
The team is likely to comprise:
 - one person in overall control as Project Leader, who can ensure the work is done and the budget managed (although not necessarily undertake the assessment work themselves).
 - An in-country Steering Committee with expertise in the needs for taxonomic information and services in support of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), agriculture, plant health, trade and other environmental and economic priorities in Ghana. The project team will be identified in consultation with the in-country Project Leader, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), BioNET-WAFRINET National Coordinator (Ms Millicent Cobblah, University of Ghana) the Africa Pollinator Initiative National Coordinator (Dr Peter Kofi Kwabong, University of Cape Coast) and others as identified in-country.
 - One person as Principal Investigator (PI) assessment leader, who would be responsible for the work being carried out, and undertake most of it themselves. This person would report to the Project Leader. The post is likely to be part-time.

- Additional staff to assist the PI on short-term contracts, as required.
- Project Secretary / Research Assistant

Actors: This will be managed by the project participants in Ghana.

Starts: April 2006. End: June 2006?

4. Preparation for Assessment, carried out by Ghanaian project team, with Helpdesk assistance from UK team, including:
- a. Organisation of planning meeting for the in-country Project Team, Natural History Museum and BioNET International Secretariat.
Objectives: May 2006.
 - b. Familiarisation with the taxonomic needs assessment framework and process proposed by the Natural History Museum and BioNET.
 - c. Identification and review of all available key documents relevant to taxonomic support for CBD implementation in Ghana, including National Reports and Thematic Reports to the CBD.
 - d. Identification and review all available key documents relevant to taxonomic support for agriculture, plant health and trade.
 - e. Identification of key sectors relevant to implementation of the CBD in Ghana and prioritisation of these in terms of their significance for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing in Ghana.
 - f. Identification of the main stakeholders within each key sector and prioritisation according to their importance within each sector.
 - g. Preparation of draft questionnaire in consultation with the Natural History Museum and the BioNET Secretariat in order to gather information on the needs of biodiversity conservation stakeholders in Ghana for taxonomic information and services.
 - h. Development of prioritised list of stakeholders based on tasks (e) and (f) and identification of those key stakeholders that must be interviewed, and those stakeholders that should be sent a questionnaire.

Actors: All project partners

Starts: April / May 2006. Ends: June 2006?

5. Assessment, carried out by local team, with helpdesk assistance from UK partners, including:
- a. In-country workshop for stakeholders from key sectors in order to launch the project, secure stakeholder buy-in to the aims of the project, and to finalise the process and questionnaire for the assessment. Suggested timing: July 2006.
 - b. Circulate the finalised questionnaire to relevant stakeholders with a deadline for response that allows adequate time to analyse responses received.
 - c. Arrange and carry out a series of interviews with key stakeholders, focussing on highest priority stakeholders/sectors first.

Actors: All project partners

Starts: June / July 2006. Ends: February/March 2007

6. Analysis of results, carried out by local team, assisted by UK partners. Compile and analyse data gathered through activities 4c, 4d and 5.
7. Design and preparation of final outputs by local team, Natural History Museum and the BioNET Secretariat. Products will be tailored to meet needs of Government, CBD, Clearing-House Mechanism, other in-country stakeholders and publication.
Actors: All project partners
Starts: Reports in final draft end of May 2007.
8. Final in-country workshop, with regional observers from the BioNET-WAFRINET Coordinating Committee and interested international biodiversity organisations.
Actors: All project partners

Project ends August 2007