

GBIF Work Programme 2005-2006

**Approved by the GBIF Governing Board at GB9
October 2004, Wellington, New Zealand**

INTRODUCTION TO WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005-2006

In February 2004, GBIF attained a significant milestone by opening the GBIF prototype data portal to the general public. As a result, GBIF now has a highly visible “product” to provide to the world. As of July 2004, the prototype data portal was serving more than 35 million specimen and observation records from nearly 70 data providers, as well as 600,000 scientific names from about 20 names providers.

The Work Programme for 2005-2006 is intended to allow GBIF to build on the prototype portal by improving its user interface and functioning, developing links to new kinds of data, establishing or improving standards and protocols, and increasing the data content accessible through the portal. In addition, the Work Programme for 2005-2006 lays the groundwork for GBIF to continue to expand its membership to include a wider range of organisations and countries and, most importantly, to provide logistical support to the Participant nodes, which are the lifeblood of GBIF. Finally, the Work Programme continues to develop robust training and outreach activities.

This two-year Work Programme will see GBIF through the end of the time period covered by the first Memorandum of Understanding. It will allow us to achieve the vision and the targets laid out in the GBIF Strategic Plan and in the accompanying document “GBIF Vision and Targets for 2006”.

Four Themes

As in 2004, the 2005-2006 Work Programme is structured around integrating themes. We have retained the three themes from 2004:

1. **Nodes and GBIF Network Implementation:** Developing the GBIF network, including the Participant Nodes, to implement the basic architecture and standards identified in 2003 and 2004.
2. **Digital Biodiversity Science:** Establishing the foundations for carrying out scientific activity in a fully digital environment.
3. **Furthering Participation, Impact and Benefits of GBIF:** Considering how GBIF can realise its potential to support the widest possible community.

In response to requests from several Participants, in the 2005-2006 Work Programme we have clustered all the training and capacity building activities into a fourth theme:

4. **Training and Capacity Building in Biodiversity Informatics:** Providing training activities, tools and mechanisms that will allow GBIF Participants, data providers and users to actively participate in and fully benefit from GBIF.

Structure of Spreadsheets

The Work Programme for 2005-2006 consists of two spreadsheets.

1. **Summary Work Programme.** This four-page document indicates the themes and subthemes for 2005-2006 and indicates the budgets for each of these elements.
2. **Detailed Work Programme.** This more detailed annex identifies the particular activities being proposed within each subtheme. It also provides a timeline and milestones for each activity.

The two spreadsheets have the following structural elements.

- The first two columns provide a number and name for each theme, subtheme or activity.
- The Comments column provides short explanations for each theme, subtheme or activity.
- The Involvement columns indicate the cross-cutting nature of the activities. An “X” identifies the lead programme for that activity and a “+” shows other programmes involved in it.
- The Timeline/Milestones column indicates the milestones and time of implementation for each activity to be funded from the Core Budget.
- The Supplementary Activity column provides milestones and time of implementation for each activity for which Supplementary Funds are needed.
- Finally, at the right of the spreadsheet are four budget columns.
 - The columns labelled “2005 Core” and “2006 Core” indicate the core budget funds to be spent on each element.
 - The columns labelled “2005 Unfunded” and “2006 Unfunded” identify the additional funding needed to fully implement many of the activities. These sums can be achieved via donations or in-kind contributions to the GBIF Supplementary Fund, or via grants from private foundations, industry, or national/international aid agencies, or by Participants aligning their national or organisational spending to achieve these milestones.

Rationale for and Consequences of a Two-Year Work Programme

Previously, each Work Programme has been for a single year. We are now moving to a two-year Work Programme for the following reasons:

1. The experience we have gleaned from the two previous Work Programmes makes it feasible to now plan farther ahead. Previously, GBIF was on a steep learning curve, but now we are able to better predict what activities will be needed for the next two years.
2. Taking a two-year perspective provides greater efficiency in, for example, crafting future seed-money competitions (see further explanation below).
3. The current GBIF Memorandum of Understanding expires at the end of 2006. Since we do not currently know the fate of GBIF after the end of the current MOU, we must carefully plan our expenditures for the next two years so that we neither have a deficit nor significant unspent funds when the MOU expires.

Specific Items

1. **Seed money competitions.** Both DIGIT and ECAT will continue making seed-money awards in the 2005-2006 Work Programme. However, to maximise the effect of the spending and to minimise administrative costs, they will hold a single competition in this two-year period, and combine the funds from the two years. DIGIT plans to make approximately seven awards of USD 100,000 each to international consortia of institutions working to digitise very large numbers of records for targeted taxa. ECAT plans to make approximately ten awards of USD 50,000 each, again focused on priority taxa.
2. **Nodes Liaison Officer.** The original staffing plan for GBIF did not contemplate the need for a staff member in the Secretariat to focus on the development and oversight of Participant nodes. However, experience during the last two years has made it clear that a Nodes staff

member is definitely needed. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient funds to hire such an individual.

The accompanying document "Proposal to recruit a Nodes Liaison Officer" identifies a solution in which the Secretariat will provide USD 50,000 per year (total of USD 100,000) to be used either (a) to supplement the salary of an individual temporarily seconded to the Secretariat by one or more of the Participants, or (b) to set up a matching fund to seek additional funding from developmental aid agencies to hire an individual from a developing country. In either case, preference would be given to applicants who are citizens of a GBIF Voting or Associate Participant country.

The needed funds will be derived from two sources. First, the 2004 Work Programme contained an activity (1.2.3.1) for setting up an expanded helpdesk for network services, but we have not yet implemented this activity and instead will use the funds for the Nodes Liaison Officer. Second, we have included USD 25,000 per year in the OCB budget (activity 4.2.d) to provide the rest of the funds.

These budgetary and procedural solutions are compromises to get us through the next two years. If GBIF is renewed beyond 2006, the Secretariat strongly believes that a Nodes Programme Officer should be included in the new staffing plan for GBIF.

Budgetary Considerations

For the 2003 and 2004 Work Programmes, GBIF was able to capitalise on relatively large unspent funds from the previous year's budgets. However, it is not likely that there will be any significant amount of unspent funds at the end of 2004 or 2005. Therefore, the amount spent on the Work Programme will have to be reduced. We have budgeted USD 1.5 million for the Work Programme in 2005 and an equal amount in 2006.

In addition, the Secretariat will spend at least an additional USD 1.5 million per year from its operating funds to implement the Work Programme.