

## Global Biodiversity Information Facility written statement for GEO-XII

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF, <http://www.gbif.org/>) welcomes the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS* and the commitment of GEO to coordinate delivery of open earth observation data to support the needs of society, notably in response to the Sustainable Development Goals. GBIF particularly welcomes GEOSS as a framework for maximizing interoperability between earth observations across SBAs.

GBIF is a partnership of national governments and international organizations that publish biodiversity data based on specimens and field observations. The data include when and where species were recorded and other associated information.

GBIF supports the development of capacity at national and regional levels for publishing and use of biodiversity data. GBIF also supports GEO BON activities which contribute to GEO's focus on capacity building, integration and user needs. These include the BON in a Box toolkit for establishing and strengthening national, regional and thematic observation networks, and the establishment of a pole-to-pole Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON).

As of November 2015, the GBIF network has mobilized 500 million georeferenced data records and represents the largest single global database of primary species observations.

GBIF is the essential data infrastructure for biodiversity-related research. More than 350 peer-reviewed publications use GBIF data each year.

GBIF underpins actions to address many of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including those relating to invasive alien species, establishment of protected areas, assessing and addressing species extinction risk and resilience of agriculture through conservation of genetic diversity. The data support several of the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and in informing actions relating to food security, human disease risk and adaptation to climate change.

The priorities in GBIF's next 5-year *Strategic Plan* align closely with the GEO Core Functions in relation to the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Sustainability SBA. GBIF is particularly focused on improving understanding of the data needs of significant user communities and identifying and addressing major gaps in coverage and quality in existing data.

GBIF considers GEOSS, the GEO community, and more particularly GEO BON as a key channel for integration and use of these data in earth models and sustainable development. GEO BON has a key role to play in support of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) by operationalizing the Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBV) concept as modeled data surfaces, based on evidence such as 'in situ' data mobilized and integrated through GBIF, and satellite observations.

GBIF welcomes increased engagement from all countries and GEO members to improve publication of quality assured biodiversity data through GBIF, and the use of these data in national and international biodiversity assessments. GBIF has been established as an international governmental organization for this purpose.