

Information on National CHM

South Africa

(Updated on 2014-05-09 by Ms. Sediqa Khatieb)

National CHM – South Africa does NOT have a national CHM	
Web address (URL)	
Title	
Brief description	
Responsible organization	
Webmaster name	
Webmaster email	
Content management system (CMS)	
Database system	
Search engine	
Available human resources for maintenance and development	
Other comments	

Other national websites on biodiversity		
Web address (URL) & title	Brief description	Responsible organization
http://bgis.sanbi.org Biodiversity GIS	Offers free spatial biodiversity-related datasets & basic GIS tools	SANBI
http://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org/ Biodiversity Advisor	Guides users to the correct SANBI online biodiversity information resources.	SANBI
http://www.plantzafrica.com/ Plants of southern Africa	Information about plants native to southern Africa and related topics.	SANBI
http://redlist.sanbi.org/ Red List of South African Plants	Up to date information on the national conservation status of South Africa's indigenous plants.	SANBI

Other national websites on biodiversity		
Web address (URL) & title	Brief description	Responsible organization
http://www.ispot.org.za/ iSpot Southern Africa	Tool for uploading pictures of sightings and identifying species	SANBI
http://posa.sanbi.org/ Plant of Southern Africa	Provides taxonomic information drawn from the PRECIS database for plant species occurring in southern Africa.	SANBI
http://sibis.sanbi.org/ SIBIS:SABIF website	Provides access to plant and animal occurrence records	SANBI
http://www.speciesstatus.sanbi.org/ Species Status Database	Status of South African species, descriptions of their habitat, common names and distribution	SANBI
http://enviroindicator.deat.gov.za/cocoon/rsadb/docs/index Environmental Indicators Database	Environmental indicators to help support monitoring and reporting. Indicators is divided into a number of themes to assist you in searching.	DEA
http://data.saeon.ac.za/ SAEON Data Portal	Access to data through a meta-data repository aggregated from collaborators, partners, and linked sites. The shared platform currently houses 15,617 meta-data records from 17 providers.	SAEON
http://sabap2.adu.org.za The Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2	Map the distribution and relative abundance of birds in southern Africa and the atlas area includes South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.	UCT
http://sabca.adu.org.za/ Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessment	Distribution of all butterfly species in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland – conservation assessment	UCT
http://sarca.adu.org.za/sarca.php? Southern African Reptile Conservation Assessment	Distribution maps for every reptile species - vital tool in the conservation assessment process	UCT
www.minisass.org miniSASS	Public collects macroinvertebrates (indicator of river health) and upload results to Google Earth	

Major national organizations involved in biodiversity		
Acronym	Full name	Role
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute	Management of biodiversity resources, knowledge and information management, research and development
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs	Section 24 of the Constitution. Protect environment, conserve natural resources, sustainable development, equitable distribution of the benefits derived from natural resources.

Major national organizations involved in biodiversity		
Acronym	Full name	Role
SANParks	South African National Parks	Conservation of SA's biodiversity, landscapes and associated heritage assets through national parks. Poverty alleviation & research.
SAIAB	South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity	Research into various aspects of aquatic environment
BirdLife SA	Bird Life South Africa	Non-profit. Promote the enjoyment, conservation, study and understanding of wild birds and their habitats.
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	Scientific and technology research, development and implementation organisations in Africa. One aspect of its research is natural resources and the environment.
SAEON	South African Earth Observation Network	Mandate - long-term earth and environmental observation, education, and information management.
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Comments on national situation
<p>South Africa does not have an official national Clearing House Mechanism.</p> <p>SANBI is mandated to “collect, generate, process, coordinate and disseminate information about biodiversity and the sustainable use of indigenous biological resources and establish and maintain databases in this regard”.</p> <p>In 2010, SANBI launched the Biodiversity Advisor website (http://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org). This portal draws together many individual biodiversity information websites with clear guidelines on how to use the information inter alia for biodiversity planning, research and land-use decision making. The website provides access to more than 14 million biodiversity records, hundreds of GIS maps and many biodiversity plans. It also provides information on the conservation status of many species, with maps, images and descriptions to augment the data. The intention is to ensure that everyone from world class scientists to municipal managers is using the available biodiversity information to support research, planning, decision-making, policy formulation, monitoring and reporting.</p>

Strategic Vision
<p>SANBI is currently working on a blueprint that will guide SANBI's development of biodiversity information architecture that will be world class and adaptable for use by other countries. This new system will incorporate existing elements from the current systems of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), but will have to integrate information from GBIF, EoL, BHL, genetics info systems, citizen science and others.</p> <p>The aim is to develop a new architecture that will reduce the operational costs and the suite of skills required to develop</p>

Strategic Vision
and maintain systems but provide a coherent and responsive approach to support research, planning, decision-making, policy advice and monitoring. We are working towards developing a similar system to the Atlas of Living Australia, but applicable to South Africa.
Selwyn Willoughby is responsible for driving South Africa's information architecture. He can be contacted at s.willoughby@sanbi.org.za

Roadmap				
Priority	Objective	Activity	Responsible	Requirements
1	Describe the functions and services of the website	Develop wireframe/vision/blueprint for biodiversity information architecture.	SANBI (S Willoughby & B Daly)	OK (Currently in the process of being developed)
2	Establish a functional portal	Hire web developers or consultants to implement vision of website.	SANBI (S Willoughby & B Daly)	OK
2	Ensure that site is functional – no broken links, no bugs etc	Test site before launching	SANBI	CR (finding users to test the site might be problematic)
3	Ensure that there is dedicated personal to maintain the site	Allocate roles and responsibilities within SANBI	SANBI	OK
3	Ensure that SANBI employees are capable of editing the content of site	Train SANBI colleagues to maintain the site	Consultants	OK
4	Ensure that site is used	Promotion of site to CHM community AND stakeholders within SA (government organisations, researchers, environmental consultants)	SANBI	CR (SANBI might require the assistance of CHM community to promote the site)
5	Share knowledge with other countries	Support other National CHM	SANBI	ARR

Notes:

- Priority: 1=urgent, 2=high, 3=medium, 4=low; 5=very low
- Objective: challenge, issue, problem to resolve
- Responsible: organization or person in charge
- Requirements: Code + text
 - OK: Can be done with existing resources
 - DR: Decision required
 - CR: Collaboration required
 - ARR: Additional resources required (support, cooperation)

Comments on roadmap

SANBI is currently working on a blueprint for biodiversity information architecture. The idea behind this blueprint is the creation of a single website that incorporates elements of existing systems. This website will act as the national CHM. SANBI will need to communicate this to the CBD. SANBI needs to integrate this website in the NBSAP.

The Biodiversity Information Management (BIM) team at SANBI has recently held interviews for the following positions: data manager and systems analyst. These individuals will assist in the development and maintenance of SANBI's information architecture. Unfortunately SANBI hasn't always been successful in recruiting individuals and this could set back timelines.

Once a new system has been created by the consultants, the BIM team will need to be trained on how to maintain the website. This task should be coupled with the assignment of roles and responsibilities within the BIM unit. To ensure that the website is relevant and used by stakeholders, it needs staff that are committed to updating and maintaining the site.

The promotion of the website is a constant task. It is a useful mechanism to obtain feedback from users regarding the usability of the site. It also gives insight into what additional functionalities are required by users.

Cooperation opportunities / Type of support needed

Cooperation between neighbouring countries. SANBI hosts an annual Biodiversity Information Management Forum (BIMF) – where attendees discuss concerns, innovations, lessons learnt in the bioinformatics industry. This forum is open to anyone within the bioinformatics community. SANBI would love to share its experience with other African countries. SANBI would also appreciate any advice from countries that have created a similar site.

SANBI is also open to the idea of hosting data of other neighbouring countries on its website.

Thank you!