

## CONSENSUS EVALUATION REPORT

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Open Call Collection	OC-2015-2
Proposal Reference	OC-2015-2-20203
Proposal Title	<i>Integrating the integrations for biodiversity information in Europe</i>
Proposal Acronym	<i>IIBIE</i>
Review Panel	<i>RP2 - From fundamental sciences to applications for a sustainable, healthy and food secured population</i>
Evaluation Status	<i>Final</i>

### EVALUATION

#### SUMMARY TABLE

S&T EXCELLENCE					IMPACT				IMPLEMENTATION				Marks
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Total
4	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	34

### COMMENTS

#### S&T EXCELLENCE

##### Soundness of the challenge

Q1 - Is the challenge relevant and timely?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a very good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are that the proposal attempts to bring together some of the many European projects and initiatives in biodiversity informatics. It recognises the fragmentation barriers in integrating biodiversity data and approaches the challenge in a holistic way, emphasising on processes and capacity building rather than new tool development.</p> <p>The proposal would benefit from certain improvements on clearly set relations to full data life cycle, added value, and on awarding/motivating data collectors, holders and providers for sharing their data.</p>	4

Q2 - Are the objectives presented clear and pertinent to tackle the challenge?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects in the capacity-building objectives, which they are clear and can effectively contribute in tackling the overarching challenge.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses in the presentation of the research coordination objectives. The proposal fails to show how through these objectives certain innovative research will be supported. The objectives are more relevant to capacity-building rather than research coordination. Where support for research activity is included (e.g. 'harmonise and standardise tools and practices for data capture') this is done in an abstract way.</p> <p>Objective 2 in Section 1.2.2 is to 'implement a training resource repository' which will be 'in collaboration with universities when feasible'. It may be easier to get universities to make some online courses publically available through MOOCs rather than contribute their teaching materials</p>	2



to a repository.

Another weakness is that the main focus is on collection/specimen data only although other kind of datasets i.e. LTER dataset in ecological context was mentioned also.

### Progress beyond the state-of-the-art and innovation potential

Q3 - Does the proposal advance the state-of-the-art and introduce an innovative approach to the challenge?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are the good understanding of the past and current EU-funded initiatives. The main features and progress of GBIF summarized, and more or less the whole progress section (1.3.2) is correct.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses in that the network is trying to do too much. There is sufficient work involved in improving the usability of the data that is already available without additional working groups to increase the quantity of data available (Section 1.3.2) through high throughput biodiversity data capture and digitization (Section 1.3.3).</p>	3

### Added value of networking

Q4 - Is networking the best approach to tackle the challenge?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are the emphasis on outreach and training targeted at Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries (Working Group 3). The involvement of GBIF national nodes as core partners in the proposal is good but as mentioned elsewhere, other partners should be involved too. It is widely acknowledged that the biodiversity informatics landscape in Europe is fragmented so COST Actions that involve all of the most significant actors in Europe are required in order to bring about the necessary coordination in this area.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses including a narrow focus on GBIF. Section 1.4.1 states that 'a number of activities ... are performed independently by GBIF nodes ... with too little coordination ... They will all greatly gain in effectiveness ... by being conducted within a network with a minimum level of coordination'. A COST Action should involve more than GBIF, despite the fact that GBIF is itself a network of national nodes. A COST Action network should also be well coordinated rather than having a minimum level of coordination.</p>	3

Q5 - What is the added value of the proposed network in relation to former and existing efforts at European and/or international level?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are the clear articulation of the added value to key domain stakeholders, especially at EU-project level. A broad range of initiatives are listed with various aspects. Also the proposal coherently present the challenges and the anticipated overall progress in harmonising and integrating available biodiversity-related data in Europe.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses in describing how domain-agnostic overarching initiatives and their products are to be considered. No reference is made to the Research Data Alliance (RDA) and the relevant to biodiversity data Interest and Working groups and their outputs. The proposal emphasises on domain-specific initiatives, however, it fails demonstrate how it will benefit from the needed interaction between overarching domain-agnostic and domain-specific initiatives.</p>	3

## IMPACT

Scientific, technological and/or socio-economic impact

Q6 - Does the proposal clearly identify relevant, and realistic short-term/long-term impacts?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects as the impact is more or less coherent with the main aims and objectives of the Action in general.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses as the anticipated impact to science and society is not clearly defined and not linked to specific actions/objectives of the proposal. Also there is no indication of how these impacts will be achieved by the project.</p>	2

Measures to maximise impact

Q7 - Does the proposal identify the most relevant stakeholders and present a clear plan to involve them as Action's participants?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects which include the fact that the proposers leave open the possibility that additional stakeholders will emerge from the activities of the COST Action.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses the proposal fails to identify the key stakeholders and makes no reference to stakeholder categories and what specific actions will be needed to engage them with the Action. The proposal does not describe well a real plan for involvements (i.e. "They are thus in an ideal position ..."), except mentioning workshops at the start that will identify relevant stakeholders.</p>	2

Q8 - Is there a clear and attainable plan for dissemination and/or exploitation of results?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects as dissemination and exploitation is planned within and also beyond the GBIF community.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses in particular, reducing the focus of the proposal on GBIF. Section 2.2.2 gives the impression that the COST Action is about improving the use made of GBIF data and the profile of GBIF in the international community.</p> <p>No specific actions are described. The proposal refers to the development of interactive platforms and web site, but fails to identify potential audiences</p>	2

Level of risk and level of potential innovation/breakthroughs

Q9 - How well does the proposal succeed in putting forward potential innovation/ breakthroughs with a convincing risk/return trade-off?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects in how it will improve return of investment for ongoing initiatives, making them more efficient and productive. The proposal aims to increase significantly the return-of-investment of many ongoing initiatives.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses as that the proposal gives a good (but short) description of the problems that the COST Action is intending to address and the breakthroughs that might be achieved. How are these breakthroughs going to be achieved by this COST Action? Also, the potential innovation/breakthroughs are not set clearly and convincingly.</p>	2

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Overall Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan

Q10 - Is the work plan (WGs, tasks, activities, timeframe and deliverables) coherent, realistic and appropriate to ensure the achievement of the objectives?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are that the deliverables are achievable for the duration and scale of the proposal. They are well distributed across the phases of the proposal and dependencies of Tasks are carefully planned out (GANTT diagram). The inclusion of a Working Group on Quality Control is good - this is necessary and important when dealing with biodiversity data.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses principally that there is too much repetition between the different Working Groups. For example, the five tasks in Working Group 1 are almost identical to the tasks in Working Group 2. If they are so similar, why not merge these working groups? There are also too many working groups for one (perhaps this) COST Action. STSMs, though mentioned in other sections of the proposal, are not incorporated in any of the Tasks under the WGs and are not presented as any of the deliverables. Deliverables needed to be defined clearly; two of the workshops "gathering data holders and users with GBIF Nodes" (WG4.1, WG5.4) - seem to be exclusive to GBIF community; Semantic web (WG5) has task for training overlapping with Outreach and training (WG3); Working group activities are planned to run in parallel with no logical interconnections, i.e. Outreach and training (WG3) has no input defined from the most important WG's.</p>	3

Q11 - Does the proposal identify the main risks related to the work plan and have a plan for contingencies?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are that the risks well identified and include all key aspects. They are consistent with the work plan and most of them well fit to existing working groups.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses including the risk of internal difficulties and disagreements between the COST Action members which might threaten the whole consortium. The proposal could also address the potential risks involved in trying to align the COST Action management structure with the 'regional coordination procedures of GBIF in Europe' (Section 3.2).</p>	3

### Appropriateness of management structures and procedures

Q12 - Are the management structure and procedures appropriate?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a fair manner.</p> <p>There are positive aspects in the way the management structure is presented.</p> <p>However, there are significant weaknesses as it is not defined clearly how the structure and management of the Action will ensure independence from GBIF. There are potential risks and tensions here with respect to the non-GBIF partners.</p>	2

Network as a whole

Q13 - Does the proposed Network envisage the critical mass, expertise and geographical distribution for addressing the challenge and the objectives? If not, does the proposal identify the gaps in the Network and present a clear plan for overcoming the gaps? Are mutual benefits clearly ascertained in case of involvement of NNC and IPC institutions?	Mark
<p>The proposal addresses this question in a good manner.</p> <p>The main strengths are a strong network of proposers, with good representation from a geographical and an expertise point of view; A very good approach in engaging international partners to the proposed Action. The GBIF community is well organized. It will ensure the critical mass, expertise and geographical distribution.</p> <p>The proposal has some weaknesses that there are a lot of countries/institutions with no GBIF nodes - contribution and benefit of these members are not well defined.</p>	3