

JRS Announces Two New Grants to Support Biodiversity Information in Africa

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SEATTLE, August 8, 2014 — The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is pleased to announce the funding of two new awards that expand upon the outstanding work of two previous grants. JRS awards funding to the Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Benin) and to Tulane University (USA) to continue important work in the foundation's focus region of Africa. "JRS is excited to extend our partnerships and capacity building in Africa through the continued development of Benin's biodiversity information portal and by supporting regional participation in global biodiversity information efforts," said JRS Biodiversity Foundation Executive Director, Dr. Don Doering. "These projects showcase knowledge exchange among global and African biodiversity information experts to help ensure that future research, conservation and policy in Africa is informed by state-of-the-art tools and technology."

Tulane University - Taxonomic Data Work Group 2014-2015 Collaboration Building, \$106,950.

The [Taxonomic Data Work Group](#) is the premier global effort for standardizing biodiversity occurrence data that is vital to understanding global biodiversity and human impacts upon biodiversity. JRS has funded [Tulane University since 2011](#) to provide funds to send a group of Sub-Saharan African biodiversity specialists to the annual Biodiversity Informatics Standards TDWG conference.

Traditionally, attendance by specialists from this region has been very low, yet Sub-Saharan Africa faces one of the largest gaps in biodiversity data in the world. The increased attendance of Africans in this conference inspired TDWG to bring their 2014 Conference to Nairobi, Kenya. To address this, funding has been used to send small contingents of Sub-Saharan Africans to TDWG conferences in New Orleans, USA (2011), Beijing, China (2012), Florence, Italy (2013) and Jönköping, Sweden in October 2014. The increased participation of Africans in recent TDWG conferences inspired TDWG to bring their 2015 Conference to Nairobi, Kenya.

The JRS award will support a week-long training workshop for 25 Sub-Saharan African Biodiversity Specialists prior to the anticipated 2015 TDWG conference in Nairobi, Kenya, supporting their participation in the conference and supporting efforts to engage African participants in collaborative research ventures with TDWG members.

The 2015 workshop will feature a mix of basic Biodiversity Informatics training and advanced training. The ultimate aim of this training and the TDWG conference experience is to increase the capacity of Africans to mobilize and use biodiversity data to address conservation concerns across all of Sub-Saharan Africa, and to build collaborations to sustain their participation in future TDWG conferences.

"Thanks to our many partners, information specialists from Sub-Saharan Africa are developing a much deeper understanding of the inner workings of TDWG, and interest in participating in future TDWG conferences is at an all-time high. We expect the high level of African participation in the 2015 TDWG

conference and the pre-conference activity to result in sustained African participation in TDWG conferences for many years to come, and online publication of much more biodiversity information from all of Sub-Saharan Africa.”

Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques de l’Université d’Abomey-Calavi – Benin NBIS Implementation, \$150,000.

Biodiversity data in Benin and its contribution to knowledge and decision making is currently limited due to a lack of digitization as well as few published biodiversity records. In 2010, JRS awarded funding to the National Institute of Biodiversity ([INBio](#)) of Costa Rica to provide training and technical support for the development of the Benin National Biodiversity Information System (NBIS). INBio and its Beninese partners successfully established the Benin NBIS, greatly increasing Benin’s capacity for biodiversity informatics.

Dr. Jean Ganglo, Professor of Forestry at the Université d’Abomey-Calavi leads the second phase of this initiative to build access to biodiversity data in Benin by digitizing and publishing much of the data held within the country and overseas on the NBIS and GBIF portals. The Global Biodiversity Information Facility of Benin ([GBIF Benin](#)), led by Professor Ganglo, provides the platform for the Benin NBIS.

“Our research team at the Université d’Abomey-Calavi is excited about the opportunity to increase the capacity and accessibility of the Benin NBIS through this new funding opportunity,” said Ganglo. “ We are grateful to our collaborators at INBio and our Beninese partners for their helpful support that enables Benin to publish its Biodiversity data.”

For additional information, please see:

[Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques \(UAC\): Implementation of the National Biodiversity Information System \(NBIS\) of Benin](#)

[Tulane University 2014: Pre-TDWG 2014-2015 Collaboration Building](#)

[Tulane University 2011: African Biodiversity Information Scientist Mentoring Program in Conjunction with Annual TDWG Conferences](#)

[National Biodiversity Institute \(INBio\) of Costa Rica: Benin National Biodiversity Information System \(2011\)](#)

About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation

Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation focuses upon supporting biodiversity informatics that are used to preserve and to sustainably manage biodiversity, especially in those developing economies where it is most threatened. Since 2007, the foundation has awarded more than \$12M in grants. For more information contact Don S. Doering, Executive Director at info@jrsbiodiversity.org, (206) 454-7915.

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