

For Immediate Release

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## New JRS Grant Will Help Understand Pollinator-Plant Interactions in Sub-Saharan Africa

SEATTLE, Washington – January 22, 2018– The JRS Biodiversity Foundation announces a new \$324,000 award to the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) to develop an African Pollinator Plant Interaction (APPI) database, a public platform containing pollinator-plant interaction records.

Pollinator biodiversity loss is occurring worldwide, predominately due to the destruction of natural habitats and the use of chemical insecticides in agriculture. In East Africa, where the livelihood of millions of rural families depends on insect pollinated agriculture, there is an urgent need for scientifically sound and practical strategies for pollinator conservation. However, a major obstacle for management is the lack of information on pollinator-plant interactions. The associations between plants and their pollinators are governed by complex interactions that are vulnerable to ecosystem change, and their alteration can have significant multiplier effects in biodiversity loss. In Africa there is a lack of knowledge on how pollinator diversity and distribution relates to local flora, and available data are weak and often scattered in specialized publications and project reports.

The team at ICIPE, led by Dr. Michael Lattorff, aims to improve existing information and make data easily accessible by establishing a public database containing pollinator-plant interaction records. [Strand Life Sciences](#), which previously partnered with the [Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment](#) on a JRS funded grant developing the [India Biodiversity Portal](#), will complete the data architecture and design for the APPI database. The project will populate the database with field-based observations and literature surveys, and utilize the data for species distribution models. Furthermore, this project will develop the first ever database standards for biodiversity data of biotic interactions, which will conform to the species level standards developed by the [Biodiversity Information Standards](#). Analysis of pollinator-plant interactions will allow policymakers to more precisely address effects of ongoing climate change on pollinator-plant interactions, and will allow for informed conservation strategies to maintain biodiversity and food security.

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation believes that elevating the value of biodiversity data will increase demand for its use by decision makers; and when they have greater access to data that is high quality, relevant, easily-accessible, and timely, they will fight to preserve biodiversity by making informed decisions about conservation and sustainable development. The award to ICIPE contributes to a growing constellation of JRS awards in East Africa that work to create richer data sets and information platforms as part of JRS' program on [Pollinator Biodiversity and Services](#).

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See “[ICIPE \(2018\) – Integrative Pollinator-Plant Interaction Assessment for Sub-Saharan Africa](#)”

**About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation** – The mission of the JRS Biodiversity Foundation is to increase access to and use of information that will lead to greater biodiversity conservation and more sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation supports biodiversity data and knowledge tools that are used to preserve biodiversity in developing economies where biodiversity is most threatened. The foundation has awarded \$16M in grants since 2007. Visit online at <http://jrsbiodiversity.org>

**About the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology** – ICIPE is a leading not-for-profit research institute in Sub-Saharan Africa devoted to insect science for food and health. It has an almost 50 year history in pioneering global science in entomology to improve the well being and resilience of people and the environment to the challenges of a changing world, through innovative and applied research. Almost 500 employees contribute collectively to steadily increase ICIPE’s influential position as a scientific organization working actively in more than half of all the countries on the African continent. Visit online at <http://www.icipe.org/>.

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