

# Managing biodiversity data from local government

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Local governments around the world have a new tool to help share and use vast amounts of biodiversity knowledge collected in the course of their work.

A best practice [guide](#) published by the [Global Biodiversity Information Facility](#) (GBIF) and ICLEI - [Local Governments for Sustainability](#), details the simple steps needed to preserve data and make them accessible via the Internet.

The intention is to increase awareness of the tools and protocols available to publish [biodiversity data](#) collected as part of local government planning processes, which are often lost after completion of reports or collected in inconsistent formats that cannot be easily archived or shared.

The guide notes that local governments are becoming increasingly important as managers and users of [biodiversity](#) assets, with their responsibilities for [environmental management](#) and planning, regulation of land use, and supporting implementation of policies and strategies relating to biodiversity.

In planning, provision of services and management of urban green spaces, local governments are both significant users and [generators](#) of biodiversity data. The steps outlined in the guide will help improve the availability of and access to readily usable and verifiable biodiversity data.

The guide, supported by the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD), describes how biodiversity data publishing can be incorporated into planning, policy development and decision-making processes in local government.

Among the advantages to local governments of publishing data using the tools outlined in the guide are:

- It enables free and open access to biodiversity data, essential for biodiversity-inclusive planning at local level;
- It facilitates expansion and improvement of local, national and global biodiversity databases leading to more sustainable decision-making;
- It helps practitioners doing specialist work for local government to gain recognition by enabling them to be cited in future uses of data they collect.

GBIF Executive Director Donald Hobern said, "This guide demonstrates that by following simple guidelines and procedures, data collected through local planning processes can be saved and usefully deployed for the benefit of all.

"The document has been a successful partnership between GBIF and our colleagues at ICLEI and the CBD, and shows the potential for combining local and global action to advance biodiversity knowledge. We hope it will be widely taken up and used."

Kobie Brand, ICLEI's Global Biodiversity Coordinator added, "Sound policy is underpinned by sound data. For local governments committed to the conservation of ecosystems and sustainable use of natural resources, this guide constitutes an essential management tool.

"It will help to accelerate the mobilization of high-quality strategic data, thereby underpinning local government planning with a growing knowledge base. We encourage all local governments to make good use of the guide."

The guide also has the endorsement of the CBD Executive Secretary, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, who said, "Local governments have a critical contribution to make towards the implementation of the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and the achievement of its Aichi targets. It is well known that they are responsible for much of the action required to fulfill these aims but their role is also essential when it comes to the assessment.

"[Local governments](#) have access to a wealth of fine-scale data which, if shared in a consistent format, enables effective policy implementation at local level as well as contributing to improved data resolution across the landscape for the benefit of biodiversity practitioners at all levels. GBIF plays a central role in driving this process and has now facilitated it further with this set of guidelines."

In addition to the full guide giving comprehensive background and details of GBIF tools and services, a concise [version](#) is available for local government practitioners.

Provided by Global Biodiversity Information Facility

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