A Mega-Diverse Continent

• It is one of the most megadiverse continents in the world.
• Here biodiversity plays a critical role in sustainable development, provides vital ecosystem services and is one of our greatest regional assets.
• Africa is a continent grappling with many challenges, but it is also alive with possibility and brimming with optimism.
SANBI REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

2. PURPOSE
   2.1. Strategic Objectives
   2.2. The case for strengthening regional engagement
   2.3. SANBI’s role in the National & Regional Landscape

3. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT
   3.1. Context: South Africa’s role
   3.2. Policy framework
       3.2.1. International; 3.2.2. Regional; 3.2.3. National

4. PAST, CURRENT INITIATIVES LED & SUPPORTED BY SANBI

5. THE WAY FORWARD
Purpose

- The SRES has been developed to guide SANBI’s efforts in the region in support of national and regional priorities for biodiversity management.

- It provides a framework for the implementation of biodiversity priorities in the African region, as **opportunities for collaboration on the continent are growing**, due to an increase in **emerging economies** and **investment** on the continent.

- This provides an ideal opportunity for SANBI to consider its strategic role in the African biodiversity research, management and policy landscape.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 1:
Collaboration and partnership with **African botanical gardens** to serve as windows into national biodiversity and culture.

Strategic Objective 2:
Strengthen capacity to **mobilise foundational data to fill the data and knowledge gaps** in support of education, research and analysis that is necessary for decision making for sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 3:
Build capacity to support Biodiversity Research, **Assessments & Planning** to inform decision making.

Strategic Objective 4:
Build institutional capacity **in Biodiversity Information Management** through empowering stakeholders to produce, make accessible and use accurate biodiversity data, information & knowledge in support of sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 5:
Strengthen SA’s role in supporting SADC & other African countries in fulfilment of the National Development Plan & international conventions (UNFCCC, CITES, UNCCD, CBD & IPBES (through support to DEA)).
THE CASE FOR STRENGTHENING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Some Questions

• To what extent is SANBI already engaged regionally?

• Could SANBI’s regional activities benefit from better planning & coordination?

• Why should SANBI choose to strengthen or limit its regional engagements?

• Which strategic drivers & factors should determine SANBI’s regional thematic & geographical niche space?

• How might SANBI fit within the framework of regionally-active partners & initiatives so as to maximize synergies & avert duplication?
THE CASE FOR STRENGTHENING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Address transboundary issues as environmental problems are transboundary in nature
- To give voice and support the African position, through leadership and diplomatic engagements, in global initiatives
- Facilitate knowledge exchange & enhance capacity through mutual observation and learning practice
- Cost-effective & avoid duplication of effort
- Increase financial stability & sustainability
- Enliven & enrich careers in the conservation sector
SO1: Collaboration and partnership with African botanical gardens to serve as windows into national biodiversity and culture

- Explore opportunities to partner with, and support, the management and development of **African botanical gardens**
- In partnership with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and other strategic partners, explore the establishment of an **African Botanic Gardens Network**
- Support the **capacity building and development of staff associated** with African botanical gardens
- Mutual sharing and **transfer of skills** and knowledge between SANBI and African botanical gardens staff
- Explore opportunities to expand and enhance African botanical gardens biodiversity conservation **collections** and contributions towards national and international research, education, tourism and conservation initiatives
- Develop effective **management plans to prevent new biological invasions** and to manage areas of African botanical gardens that are invaded by invasive alien species.
SO 2: Strengthen capacity to mobilise foundational data to fill the data and knowledge gaps in support of education, research & analysis that is necessary to support decision making for sustainable development

• Mobilise historic and priority primary biodiversity records to be published on the GBIF platform which will support analysis and modelling, monitoring & assessment & inform foundational data gaps

• Assist African countries (SADC) to address sampling gaps (including barcodes), for priority species by participating in field trips. This will improve the quality of baseline data.

Mobilise: digitization of new/existing specimens or, making accessibility non digital accessible data (digital but not published as yet)
SO 3: Build capacity to support Biodiversity Assessments & Planning to inform decision making

• Support & participate in species & ecosystem assessments for countries in the region, in line with agreed priority SADC countries.

• Support spatial biodiversity assessment & planning as a tool in NBSAP development on the continent, and for developing map products, headline biodiversity indicators & guidelines; in line with agreed priority SADC countries.

• Support the development of capacity for undertaking spatial biodiversity assessment & planning,

• Participate in capacity building activities in support of Natural Capital Accounting & management of biological invasions.

• Enable information sharing & gathering on Invasive Alien Species pathways in the SADC region in support of CBD.
SO 4: Build institutional capacity in Biodiversity Information Management through empowering stakeholders to produce, make accessible and use accurate biodiversity data, information & knowledge in support of sustainable development

• Build capacity to ensure fitness for use, management & publishing of data for science & policy

• Ensure that technology, tools, systems and infrastructure that is used and developed, for data sharing is relevant to the African context for easy adoption

• Build BDI capacity in the use of approved biodiversity standards and tools, to enable the sharing of data for SADC & eventually the continent.

• Develop BDI as a field of science through development of curricula & a research agenda, towards the vision for a Centre for Biodiversity Info for Africa.
SO 5: Strengthen SA’s role in supporting SADC & other African countries in fulfilment of the NDP & international conventions (UNFCCC, CITES, UNCCD, CBD & IPBES in support of DEA)

- SANBI to play a regional coordination role in support of the conventions in line with DEA and for sustainable development

- Participate in regional governance & networks to coordinate continental processes
  - Hosting **IUCN Red list Authorities** (e.g. for southern African plants, chameleons, cycads) to support threat assessments at regional or continental scale.
  - Through the Scientific Authority, engage with **CITES** structures and develop capacity in other African countries to improve oversight of species in trade
  - Support the **IPBES** regional and thematic assessments in support of the data-science-policy interface.
  - BIMPA leads & coordinates the **GBIF-Africa Network**, in support of improved biodiversity data publication & use
  - BIMPA plays a coordination role of **BHL-Africa Network**, in support of improved biodiversity publications & use
  - As an accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, SANBI participates in **UNFCCC** to access funding support for SA & collaborates with African countries, to develop policy recommendations from best practice.
Highlights

SO1: Collaboration and partnership with African botanical gardens to serve as windows into national biodiversity and culture

• SANBI has engaged in a number of capacity development and training activities with other African gardens over the last decade; including through the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) which link to the global plant conservation strategy

SO2: Strengthen capacity to mobilise foundational data to support education, research & analysis that is necessary to support decision making for sustainable development

• SANBI has actively engaged in the mobilisation of foundational biodiversity data through initiatives such as SABONET (10 countries of Southern Africa), the African plants initiative (API). Here a strong core of taxonomists and plant diversity specialists were developed in response to the needs of the CBD
SO3: Build capacity to support Biodiversity Research, Assessments and Planning, to inform better decision making

- Over the past 15 years, SANBI has worked largely within SADC to strengthen the scientific evidence to support sustainable use of wildlife. Including regional collaborations for assessments:
  - Example - devil’s claw in RSA, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe,
  - transboundary assessments of wildlife use (e.g. elephants in RSA and Botswana)
  - and the development of capacity for more effective implementation of CITES (e.g. hosting training workshops & trade analyses for the SADC region).

- In the Policy Advice arena, SANBI participated as members of the SA delegation to establish **Natural Capital Accounting** at the regional level (under the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa).

- The “Mapping Biodiversity Priorities” guidelines will be used to support biodiversity assessment and prioritisation, in 3 pilot countries in Africa.
SANBI is playing an active role in developing Biodiversity Informatics as a field of science through the development of a standard global curriculum, through the GBIF network and other partners.

SANBI-GBIF initiated a project called “Mobilizing Policy Relevant Data for Decision Making”, which produced a toolkit and guidelines to support data mobilization.

SANBI-GBIF is leading a JRS funded project which aims to mobilise data in 4 African countries and develop extended networks in Biodiversity Informatics in Africa.

SO4: Build institutional capacity in Biodiversity Information Management through empowering stakeholders to produce, make accessible and use accurate biodiversity data, information & knowledge in support of sustainable development
SO 5: Strengthen South Africa’s role in supporting SADC and/or other African countries in fulfilment of the National Development Plan and international conventions including UNFCCC, CITES, UNCCD and the CBD (in line with support from DEA)

SANBI participates in **regional governance and networks** to coordinate continental processes

• The Biodiversity Information Management and Planning Directorate leads and coordinates the **GBIF-Africa Network** (approx. 20 countries) and the **BHL Network**, to facilitate improved biodiversity data and literature publication and use

• In its emerging work in Climate Finance, SANBI participates actively in a network of African and other developing country institutions who are accredited as global fund entities.
SANBI has been managing the SANBI-GBIF Node since 2006, and since 2009 the GBIF governing board endorsed the recommendation to have a series of regional meetings to improve the coordination & collaboration amongst nodes.

Node Managers from approximately 15 countries and 5 Participant org, have shown a continual increase in collaboration and capacity, with a number of funded project consortia have formed.

Through the JRS funded “Mobilizing Policy Relevant Data for Decision Making”, a regional BI coordinator was appointed, this project culminated in the “Africa Rising” Conference, bringing together delegates across the data-science-policy interface.

SANBI has played a strong leadership role in the GBIF, and in October 2015 at a GBIF-Governing Board side meeting in Madagascar, a Communiqué was drafted, requesting that South Africa plays a leadership role in the establishment of the African Coordinating Mechanism (ACM), which is the ultimate Vision for a Formal Regional Structure for BIM on the continent.

Through the ACM, the African Nodes strive to become the data-science interface for Africa.
More than 21 000 000 Biodiversity Records mobilised from 12 GBIF Participants. W. Africa forming consortiums and mobilising a substantial amount of data (500 000). Many data publishers in Benin, Togo and South Africa—reflection of an active national community of scientists.
Way Ahead - Regional Strategies

- Development of the Biodiversity Information Business Case for Africa
  - Concept Note
  - Structure and ToR
Thank You