Capacity Building in Biodiversity Informatics in the Biodiversity-Rich Tropics

R Prabhabakar
D Balasubramaniam
Thomas Vattakaven
Sangay Dema
Informatics in Biodiversity-Rich Areas

• South America
  – Brazil http://www.imazon.org.br/
  – Mexico http://www.conabio.gob.mx/
  – Costa Rica http://www.inbio.ac.cr/

• South Asia
  – India
  – Sri Lanka

• South-East Asia

• China
Informatics Context in South Asia

• Biologically explored for centuries
• Biological specimens hunted for centuries
• Best software talent in the world

And Yet

• Poor availability of open data
• Very poor representation in global databases
Indian sub-continent

• Mega-diverse region with 10% of the world species
• Two biodiversity hotspots
• Highly populated landscape
• Large development aspirations
• Biodiversity under threat
• Biodiversity information poor.
• Why this scenario??
Biodiversity Informatics in India: Challenges

- Government initiatives very poor
- Surveys as colonial institutions are dysfunctional
- Multiplicity of portals as islands of information
- IBP is Yet Another Portal. YAP!!
- Cooperation among institutions and individuals is challenging
- Consortium building is difficult
- Public participation is slow but developing
- Open data and creative commons sensitization required
Approaches to Strengthen Biodiversity Informatics

- Nurture local and regional initiatives
- Tap into the large local informatics talent
- Build on strengths and encourage open data.
- Build local capacity on Biodiversity Informatics
- Cooperate on equal terms with global initiatives
- Peer-to-Peer interactions with the Global initiatives
IBP to date

• Investment of 0.5 million by CEPF
• An integrated platform with species pages, observations, maps and documents
• Open source biodiversity informatics platform
  – https://github.com/strandls
• Chef platform deployment scripts, allows easy installation and deployment
• Content provider to EoL
Multiple Instances of Platform
Biodiversity Informatics Agenda

• Growth engine should consider impact on environment and biodiversity
• Open data to foster transparency and accountability in governance
• Build awareness capacity in biodiversity informatics
• Private, Government and International investments in biodiversity informatics in South
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Portal Team

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Contributors