



# OBIS-GBIF Joint Strategy for Marine Biodiversity Data

OBIS • GBIF

Version febc05a, 2024-05-27 15:11:00 UTC

# Table of Contents

Colophon .....	1
Suggested citation .....	1
Licence .....	1
Persistent URI .....	1
Document control .....	1
Preamble .....	1
Objectives .....	1
Areas of Collaboration .....	2
Governance .....	2
Status of this strategy and action plan .....	2

# Colophon

## Suggested citation

OBIS & GBIF (2024) Joint Strategy for Marine Biodiversity Data. GBIF Secretariat: Copenhagen.  
<https://doi.org/10.35035/doc-kcqs-5h52>

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## Persistent URI

<https://doi.org/10.35035/doc-kcqs-5h52>

## Document control

May 2024

## Preamble

GBIF and OBIS signed a five-year agreement in 2020 to promote further cooperation across a wide range of activities and services between the two global biodiversity data networks.

The [Letter of Agreement](#) targets both technical collaboration covering data standards, publishing and processing; and institutional collaboration to ensure closer ties between OBIS and GBIF nodes, shared training opportunities and aligned documentation.

OBIS - the Ocean Biodiversity Information System, was founded in May 2000 under the Census of Marine Life, as the Ocean Biogeographic Information System. It is now a programme component of the [International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange](#) (IODE) programme of the [Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission](#) (IOC) of [UNESCO](#). It aims to be the most comprehensive data and information gateway on the diversity, distribution and abundance of marine life to support its Member States in achieving a healthy and resilient ocean ecosystem.

GBIF—the Global Biodiversity Information Facility—was formally established in September 2001 as a voluntary collaboration between governments, with the aim of providing anyone, anywhere with free and open access to data about all types of life on Earth. The mission of GBIF, as agreed by its Governing Board within the 2023-2027 Strategic Framework, is ‘to mobilize the data, skills and technologies needed to make comprehensive biodiversity information freely available for science and decisions addressing biodiversity loss and sustainable development’.

This strategy and [rolling annual action plan](#) builds on the letter of agreement to set out a set of shared organizational objectives and actions to ensure that marine biodiversity data is freely and openly available through both GBIF and OBIS for the benefit of science and decision-making.

## Objectives

GBIF and OBIS will collaborate and seek efficiencies where possible, respecting the vision, mission

and values of each, supporting the mandates and nurturing the strengths and expertise of their respective networks and communities of practice. This collaboration aims to achieve the following objectives by 2030 and set the stage for requirements post-2030:

- The best available marine biodiversity data, respecting FAIR and CARE principles, is available to meet the needs of all relevant users, supporting the goals and targets of the UN Ocean Decade, including the OBIS 2030 UN decade project, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the future UN High Seas Treaty and other international policy objectives
- Marine biodiversity data is securely archived and our respective networks persist and can operate sustainably into the future

## Areas of Collaboration

GBIF and OBIS agree to collaborate in two focus areas:

- **Technical Cooperation.** GBIF and OBIS will explore opportunities for technical cooperation, including the development of interoperability standards, data exchange protocols, and tools to facilitate the exchange, integration, visualization, and application and use of biodiversity data.
- **Community and Capacity.** GBIF and OBIS will collaborate on capacity-building activities and resources to enhance the skills and expertise of data providers and users for data integration, biodiversity informatics and marine biodiversity research.

## Governance

OBIS and GBIF are to extend invitations to each other's Steering Group and Governing Board meetings where they will be asked to report on progress on the actions outlined within this strategy and action plan. Implementation of the action plan will be monitored by an implementation committee comprised of representatives of OBIS and GBIF Secretariats and nodes that reflect activities across technical cooperation and community and capacity. Both the GBIF Nodes Steering Group and OBIS Nodes Steering Group should be regularly updated on progress towards the objectives of this strategy and action plan by the respective Secretariat focal point:

- GBIF: [Andrew Rodrigues](#), Data Partnerships Officer
- OBIS: [Ward Appeltans](#), Programme Manager

## Status of this strategy and action plan

The current letter of agreement between GBIF and OBIS remains in effect until 31 August 2025 and this strategy and [rolling annual action plan](#) is aligned with its ambitions. Upon the Letter of Agreement's expiration, this document will form the basis of a new Letter of Agreement to remain in force until 2030.