

REPORT

Taxonomic training & access to collections in Belgium

NOTICE

The present questionnaire must arrive with the Belgian National Focal Point to the Global Taxonomy Initiative within one month of the official closure of the capacity building visits. Electronic submission on the general e-mail address of the Belgian GTI NFP (cbd-gti@naturalsciences.be) is strongly encouraged. If electronic submission should however be impossible, paper copies may be sent by fax or ordinary mail. The Belgian GTI NFP will acknowledge receipt of all project reports.

If grantees have **relevant pictures** to illustrate their capacity building visit, these may be annexed to the report. The Belgian National Focal Point might use some of these pictures in one of its reporting activities, but only after the copyright holder has given his permission.

Contact and further information

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PART I – CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Family name:	Dela Cruz
First name(s):	Thomas Edison
Nationality:	Filipino (Philippines)
Date of arrival and departure in / from Belgium	05 – 18 January 2014
Number of training days:	14 days
Type of visit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mainly training in taxonomy and collection management <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly access to collections <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>specify</i> Access to journal literatures and books
Location of training:	<input type="checkbox"/> Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Botanic Garden of Belgium, Meise <input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>specify</i>

PART II - GENERAL INFORMATION

Describe concisely how you have learned about the Belgian GTI Project	I learned about the Belgian GTI project through a posting in the email group of the Association of Systematic Biologists of the Philippines. I had my first training last April 2011 at the National Botanic Garden of Belgium in Meise,
Describe concisely how you have learned about this specific call for proposals	For this follow-up training, an email was sent to me by the Belgian GTI for this specific call for proposal.
If this was your first study visit financed via the Belgian GTI National Focal Point, describe concisely why you needed capacity building in taxonomy and collection management	-NA-
If this was not your first study visit financed via the Belgian GTI National Focal Point, describe concisely why you needed further support	My training at NBGB in 2011 strengthened my expertise on myxomycetes and allowed me to establish the Myxomycete Collection of the Philippines including its database in my home university. I am recently interested to start a herbarium collection of macrofungi in the Philippines. The training I had now gave me the tools I need to begin research on macrofungi and establish a herbarium collection.

Describe concisely what support (e.g. training, access to collections,...) you have received and how this training can be related to taxonomy and /or collection management	My two-week training at NBGB provided me with the necessary skill to begin research on macrofungi. I learned how to identify species of <i>Cookeina</i> and some polypores. I also gained access to journal literature including books that are important in the identification of macrofungi. Some references were also provided by NBGB which will definitely help me with my research.
Describe concisely how your gained capacity will help you in your professional duties	I intend to start up our research on macrofungi. Currently, I am supervising two graduate students who are interested to work on these organisms. One incoming undergraduate group expressed interest to work on <i>Cookeina</i> this 2014. My training will be beneficial as I guide them in their research. Furthermore, I intend to maintain my contact with my host researcher here for future research collaboration.
Describe concisely how your gained capacity will be implemented in your institution	When I return back, I intend to revise our laboratory manual for our mycology course. I plan to include what I learned in the two trainings I had in this undergraduate laboratory manual. This will be beneficial to our students. I also plan to guide students in our university to do research on macrofungi. Our collections will serve as the initial specimens to be deposited in the mycology herbarium I plan to start in my university.
Describe concisely what other support you eventually would need	In the future, I anticipate that I will be requiring support in terms of access to herbarium specimens for comparison as well as access to scientific literature and books to aid us in the identification of our collected fungi. Confirmation of species identities by experts in Belgium would also be another support I will need.
Describe concisely what infrastructural and human resources you and your institution eventually still need to become fully functional	To eventually establish this fungal herbarium, our institution needs a small room to house the collection adjacent to a small laboratory where specimen identification and preservation will be conducted. This must be equipped with microscopes. A hands-on training will also be required for the research staff who will be hired to maintain this herbarium. A desktop computer is needed for the database.
Describe concisely how you think the Belgian GTI National Focal Point could further construct capacity for you and your institution	The Belgian GTI National Focal Point could provide research training for the research staff who will be hired to maintain the herbarium. Though I can teach the research staff with the basic skills I learned during my previous trainings, I believe that a personal experience of specimen preservation and herbarium management at NBGB would be a better and more effective way to equip the staff with the tools he/she needs to effectively maintain the herbarium. Furthermore, I think the idea of being around experts in one's field and in an institution equipped with latest technologies in herbarium management would provide the research staff the enthusiasm and motivation to bring the work into a higher level. The Belgian GTI National Focal Point can also provide a minimal funding to purchase microscopes for the herbarium or computer for the herbarium database in order to support and strengthen the project. Physical infrastructure and salary for the research staff can be provided by my home institution.

PART III – TAXON SPECIFIC INFORMATION

What is your taxon of interest	Fungi: Polypores
Describe concisely the different methodologies for collecting your taxon.	Sporocarps of fungal specimens are directly collected in the field using a knife. Portion of substrata, e.g. on dead twigs or decayed logs, are also included in the collection. Collected specimens are wrapped in aluminium foil or placed in paper bags and transported to the laboratory in a basket.
Describe concisely how to best preserve collected specimens of your taxon for taxonomic purposes	To best preserve the collected specimens, the sporocarps are dried using a fruit drier and then, stored as voucher specimens in herbarium.
Describe concisely how you intend to make your taxonomic data available to other colleagues	I am currently establishing the myxomycetes and macrofungi collection in my home university. The collection will be available for researchers interested to compare their specimens with our collected specimens. The database can also be accessed by interested researchers.
Describe how your taxonomic work helps improving the status of biodiversity in your country	Only a handful of people in the Philippines including me work on the taxonomy of fungi. One can thus say that many areas in the country need to be explored for our macrofungi. My research on macrofungi definitely can contribute to the existing information on the biodiversity in the Philippines.

Describe how your project could help reduce poverty in your country

Knowing the correct identities of the macrofungi in our forests allows us to select which of these fungi can be exploited for their economic benefits. Furthermore, edible macrofungi can be known following taxonomic studies though these species may not be locally consumed. In addition, new bioactive compounds can also be extracted from these fungi which can be later exploited for the production of new drugs or alternative medicines.



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Photos:

Dr. Thomas Edison dela Cruz identifying macrofungi at NBGB, Belgium.



