



Belgian National Focal Point to the
Global Taxonomy Initiative

With the support of
THE BELGIAN
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 

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 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:	Agbessenou
First name(s):	Ayaovi
Nationality:	Togolese
Date of arrival and departure in / from Belgium	From 09/29/2018 to 10/27/2018
Number of training days:	28
Type of visit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mainly training in taxonomy and collection management <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly access to collections <input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>specify</i>
Location of training:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren <input type="checkbox"/> Botanic Garden of Meise <input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>specify</i>

PART II - GENERAL INFORMATION

Describe concisely how you have learned about the Belgian GTI Project	I was informed of the Belgian GTI Project by Dr Rosina KYEREMATEN, Senior Scientist and Lecturer at the University of Ghana. She is a taxonomist and was also the Coordinator of the African Regional Postgraduate Programme in Insect Science (ARPPIS).
Describe concisely how you have learned about this specific call for proposals	At the beginning of the 2015 year, Dr KYEREMATEN forwarded to her students through her teaching assistant the 2015 GTI call for proposal. I quickly went through the general requirements of the call on the GTI website and I found that I was eligible. Then I have decided to grasp the opportunity.
Describe concisely why you needed capacity building in taxonomy and collection management	Sweet potato is one of the most important root crops for human consumption in sub-Saharan Africa. The sweet potato weevil of the genus <i>Cylas</i> is considered to be the most destructive pest of the crop. Apart from separation of species into sexes, taxonomic separation into species has always come with its attendant problems. It is obvious that weevils play a crucial role in the agro-ecosystem and the identification of the specimens represents the first step in the understanding of their role. In my country, we lack taxonomists in the identification of this pest. It is in the regard that the establishment of the proper identification of this important pest needs to be ascertained, so as it is aid in directing the right management strategies at the identified species.

<p>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</p>	<p>Through the utilisation of equipments such as binocular microscope, stacking photos, and specimens of the collection, I was able to generate a base line data of weevil specimens collected. The identification consisted of the utilisation of a key to assign the suitable name to the specimens collected. My tutor (Dr Wouter Dekoninck) took me through the process of insect preparation, mounting and labelling, preservation in boxes. The identified species were compared and some selected characters of the insect body were measured.</p>
<p>Describe concisely how your gained capacity will help you in your professional duties</p>	<p>This work constitutes a part of my MPhil research studies and as student I will be able to identify specimens from my subsequent collections and assign them confident name. I will also be able to identify specimens in the field base on morphological features and distinguish between specimens within species and between species.</p>
<p>Describe concisely how your gained capacity will be implemented in your institution</p>	<p>The taxon I am interested in is the subject of many works done in my country when it comes to its management. Before understanding the insect behaviour and promoting its control and conservation, it is important to know the group it belongs to. Therefore, I intend to share with my colleagues the various stages that are involved in insect identification through practical sessions in the field and in the laboratory.</p>
<p>Describe concisely what other support you eventually would need</p>	<p>The identification of specimens involves not only the morphological aspect but also molecular method. Molecular techniques are best used to support or augment morphological identification. Therefore, I need a training on molecular techniques to strengthen my skills.</p>
<p>Describe concisely what infrastructural and human resources you and your institution eventually still need to become fully functional</p>	<p>Few equipment exists in our laboratory. We lack an ocular microscope for specimens' preparation, a Leica EZ4D microscope with an inbuilt camera connected to laptop for viewing, capturing and measuring images. We also lack of collections manager to ensure the best care of specimens collected.</p>

<p>Describe concisely how you think the Belgian GTI National Focal Point could further construct capacity for you and your institution</p>	<p>I am grateful for the opportunity given to me to carry out a part of my research project at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences through your capacity building programme. I acknowledge that my taxonomic knowledge has been raised. However much efforts need to be done to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity in my country. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to develop a strong collaborative research with the museum world-class research scientists in order to continue to build my capacities.</p>
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PART III – TAXON SPECIFIC INFORMATION

<p>What is your taxon of interest</p>	<p>Phylum: Arthropods/Class: Insects/Order: Coleoptera/Family: Brentidae/Genus: Cylas</p>
<p>Describe concisely how you intend to make your taxonomic data available to other colleagues</p>	<p>This work constitutes a part of my MPhil research studies and at the end I will provide a copy of my thesis for the libraries of The African Regional Postgraduate Programme in Insect Science and Université de Lomé. Results from my study will also be shared with partners like the International Potato Center, directly involved in farmers' training. I also intend to yield scientific publications and posters in order to target broad audiences.</p>
<p>Describe how your taxonomic work helps improving the status of biodiversity in your country</p>	<p>We are forced into an intractable bind, for we cannot know what we are losing if we don't know all that we have. Then if we are able to identify species of weevil that occur, we will better target particular organisms using sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. Therefore, the other insects which are present in the ecosystem will be preserved.</p>
<p>Describe how your project could help reduce poverty in your country</p>	<p>Most of the actors that play a significant role in the sweet potato's value chain are women. Women's activities are important in such a way that they ensure the marketing of the roots in moving the product from the farm to consumers. It contributes to create employment and generate income which is important for them to gain their daily bread, support their livelihood and sustain education of their children. Weevils cause significant damage to roots which are the consumable part of the crop. Given that, the pest affects women's activities directly and indirectly. Therefore, the accurate identification of sweet potato weevil is a key component to reduce the negative impact of the pest on sweet potato production.</p>