

# Using apps for biodiversity data collection



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# Why use mobile apps?

- It **saves time** – there is no need to transcribe data from paper to a digital format
- It **reduces errors** – there are no transcription errors while entering data into a computer
- Data can be **formatted correctly** from the start – which means that limited/ no data cleaning is needed
- It is possible to collect **digital media** with each record (e.g. photographs, video and sound recordings, GPS coordinates, etc)



# Software to use for app creation

Free options:

- ODK (Open Data Kit)
- KoBo Toolbox

Commercial options:

- Survey123 (part of the ArcGIS suite of software)
- All are based on XLSforms ([www.xlsform.org](http://www.xlsform.org))



# Steps to creating an app

- 1) Designing the form
- 2) Previewing the form
- 3) Editing the form**
- 4) Previewing the form**
- 5) Deploying or publishing the form
- 6) Loading the form onto a mobile device
- 7) Collecting data
- 8) Getting the data from the form onto your computer for analysis



# Exercises in KoBo Toolbox

In the next set of exercises, we will:

- 1) Develop and deploy a simple app
- 2) Collect data (from a web browser or Android device), view data and download data into Excel
- 3) Import an xlsform to create an app



# ***Things to remember when designing a data collection app***

- **Make it smart**

- Don't treat a mobile app like an electronic piece of paper – consider what features of using an electronic device can you harness for data collection e.g., relevance, drop-downs, default settings, logical flow, etc
- Use the features of your phone e.g. GPS capture, photos, audio recordings, videos, to enhance the data

- **Testing, testing ..**

- Repeatedly test your app. A poorly designed app won't save you time and may frustrate you, and you'll default back to using paper



# ***Data collection app exercise***

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