GLOBAL NODES MEETING 2023
Report

CSIRO offices, Black Mountain, Canberra
17 October 2023

Contents

Executive summary by Nodes Chair, Anne Sophie Archambeau

Our 17th Global Nodes Meeting was hybrid for the first time, hosted by Atlas of Living Australia, in Canberra and online. For those of us who were onsite, it was a pleasure to see each other in real life, for the first time since Leiden in 2019. Lots of interactions happened, and informal discussions went well.

The meeting was a good opportunity to discuss GBIF capacity enhancement programs and new mechanisms such as the Node onboarding program. The "idea storm" activity was rich in contributions that will help strengthen the already proven relevance of these programs to the needs of our community. Breakout sessions by regions contributed to develop capacity within regional communities of practice and discussions also helped to better define and align the link between the nodes and the regional support teams.

Preparation work done by the Secretariat and the update on the new data model and how nodes can engage with it was also highly valuable. The node community, both new and more experienced nodes, was truly engaged and involved at this meeting, demonstrating the willingness to work together to continue to achieve the mission of GBIF.

Meeting preparation and objectives

The meeting was prepared and chaired by the Nodes Steering Group (NSG), with support from the GBIF Secretariat. The topics for the sessions were based on the [Nodes Implementation Plan](#).

A community [webinar](#) was held a month before the global nodes meeting and training to launch the events, introducing the topics and preparation activities and materials to all nodes. A [website](#) was set up to provide context and objectives for each session. The NSG invited all nodes to contribute to the meeting by [sharing their experiences as slides and lightning talks](#) using templates provided.

The overall aim of the meeting was to bring the nodes community together to learn from each other, discuss ideas, develop best practices, share concerns, define recommendations and set priorities.

Four sessions were held, each with specific objectives:

1. **Supporting Nodes through GBIF Capacity Development Programmes**
   - Update nodes on GBIF capacity development framework
   - Share ideas to steer the implementation of work programme items on 3 programmes:
     - CESP
     - BID
     - Onboarding programme

2. **Developing Capacity within Regional Communities of Practice**
   - Discuss ideas for regional nodes meetings in 2024
   - Identify opportunities for regional collaboration
   - Consider how the GBIF economic valuation can help with regional outreach efforts

3. **Expanding our Data Model: Opportunities and Implications for Nodes**
   - Ensure Nodes are up to date with progress on data model work and how to engage with it
   - Discuss the opportunities and implications of the data model work for the Nodes

4. **Future Development of GBIF Regional Support teams**
   - Update all Nodes on the work of the Regional Support Teams
   - Hear regional visions for the development of the teams from Regional Representatives
   - Discuss how the work of Regional Support Teams can best complement the work of the Nodes

Participants and Secretariat support

The meeting was the first hybrid global nodes meeting. It was attended by 52 people onsite in Canberra, of which 26 were Node Managers, and 10 people online, of which 04 were Node Managers.

Jean Paul Kubwimana	Node manager	Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network)	Online/Onsite
Anabela Plos	Node manager/ NC 2nd Vice-chair	Argentina	Onsite
Christian Elloran	Node manager	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	Onsite
Peggy Newman	Node staff	Australia	Onsite
Dimitri Brosens	Node manager	Belgium	Onsite
Quentin Groom	Node staff	Belgium	Onsite
André Heughebaert	HoD Observer	Belgium	Onsite
Jean Cossi Ganglo	Node manager	Benin	Onsite
David Iggulden (P)	HoD Observer	Biodiversity Library	Onsite
Claudia Czarneski	Node manager	Brazil	Onsite
Clara Baringo Fonseca	Node staff	Brazil	Onsite
Sophea Chhin	Node manager	Cambodia	Online
Jean François Moussa	Node manager	Cameroon	Onsite
Zheping Xu	Node manager/ Reg. Re. Asia	Chinese Academy of Science	Onsite
Mao-Ning Tuamu	Node manager/Reg. Dep. Asia	Chinese Taipei	Onsite
Melissa Jean-yi Liu	Node staff/Asia reg support	Chinese Taipei	Onsite
Ricardo Ortiz Gallego	Node manager	Colombia	Onsite
Esteban Marentes Herrera	Node staff	Colombia	Online
Wouter Addink	Node manager	DiSSCo	Onsite

Jaesang Chung	Node staff	East Asia Biodiversity Conservation Network	Online
Victor Chocho	Node manager	Ecuador	Online
William Morris	Node staff	Finland	Onsite
Anne-Sophie Archambeau	Node manager/NC Chair	France	Onsite
Sophie Pamerlon	Node staff	France	Onsite
Mikheili Joglidze	Node manager	Georgia	Onsite
Leslie Melisa Ojeda Cabrera	Node manager/Reg. Rep. LAC	Guatemala, Rep. of	Onsite
Anna Sveinsdóttir	Node manager	Iceland	Online
David Jennings	Node manager/NC 1st Vice-chair	iDigBio	Onsite
Jesse Grosso	Node staff	iDigBio	Onsite
Michelle Judge	Node manager	Ireland	Onsite
Patricia Koleff	Node manager	Mexico	Onsite
Niels Raes	Node manager/Reg-Rep. Dep. ECA	Netherlands	Onsite
Aaron Wilton	Node manager/Reg. Rep. Oceania	New Zealand	Onsite
Dag Endresen	Node manager/Reg. Rep. ECA	Norway	Onsite
Knut Arild Hovstad	Node staff	Norway	Onsite
Rui Figueira	Node manager	Portugal	Onsite
Yi Ming Gan	Node manager	Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)	Onsite
Francisco Pando	Node manager	Spain	Onsite
Veronika Johansson	Node manager	Sweden	Onsite
Katelin Pearson	Node manager	Symbiota Support Hub	Onsite
Steve Baskauf	Node staff	TDWG	Onsite
Elycia Wallis	HoD Observer	TDWG	Onsite

Shelley James	Node staff	TDWG	Online
Raoufou Pierre Radji	Node manager	Togo	Onsite
David Bloom	Node manager/Reg. Rep. North America	VertNet	Online
Luke Jimu	Node manager	Zimbabwe	Onsite
Vijay Barve		Asia Regional Support Team	Onsite
Chihjen Ko		Asia Regional Support Team	Online
Melissa Jean-Yi Liu		Asia Regional Support Team	Onsite
Lily Shrestha		Asia Regional Support Team	Online
Leonardo Buitrago		Caribbean Regional Support Team	Online
Maheva Bagard Laursen	Programme Officer for Community and Capacity	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Matt Blissett	Software Developer	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Kyle Copas	Communications Manager	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Tobias Guldberg Frøslev	Programme Officer for Science Support	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Tim Hirsch	Deputy Director & Head of Participation and Engagement	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Joe Miller	GBIF Executive Secretary/Director of GBIF Secretariat	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Anne Mette Nielsen	Head of Administration	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Daniel Noesgaard	Science Communications Coordinator	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Mélianie Raymond	Community and Capacity Manager	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Tim Robertson	Head of Informatics	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite

Laura Anne Russell	Training Officer for Community and Capacity	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite
Dmitry Schigel	Scientific Officer	GBIF Secretariat	Onsite

Agenda, presentations and discussion summaries

All the meeting materials are available from the website: https://globalnodes.gbif.org/en/gnm/

Meeting evaluation

Respondents

We provided an online evaluation form to all meeting participants, both onsite and online, with a deadline for submission of 17 November. We received 24 responses from Node Managers, Node Staff, Acting Node Managers/Heads of Delegation and representatives of affiliated organizations (Figure 1). Responses were received from all six regional groups (Figure 2) and both onsite and online participants (Figure 3).
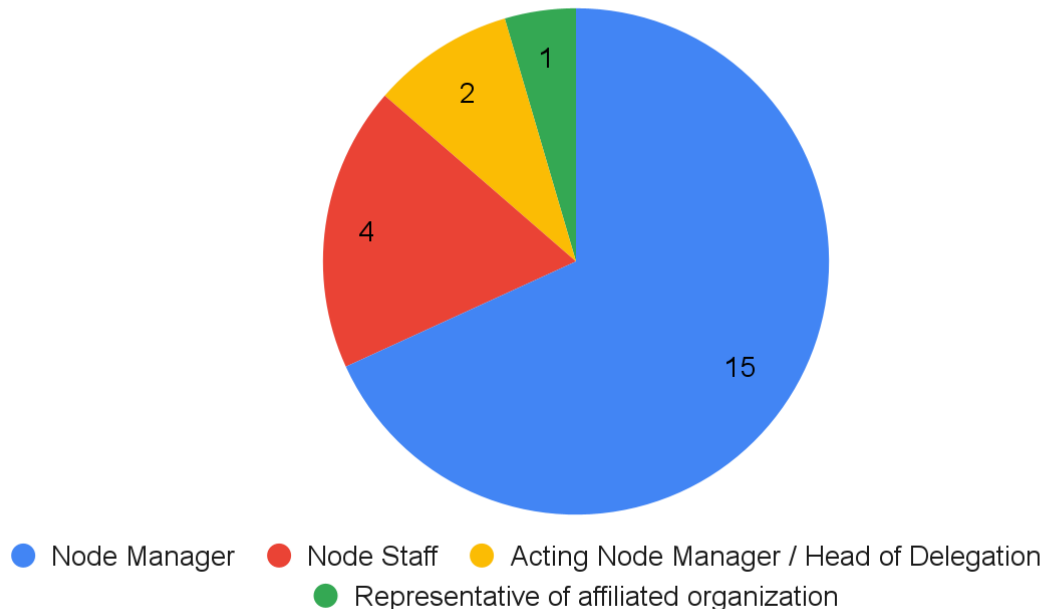
Roles

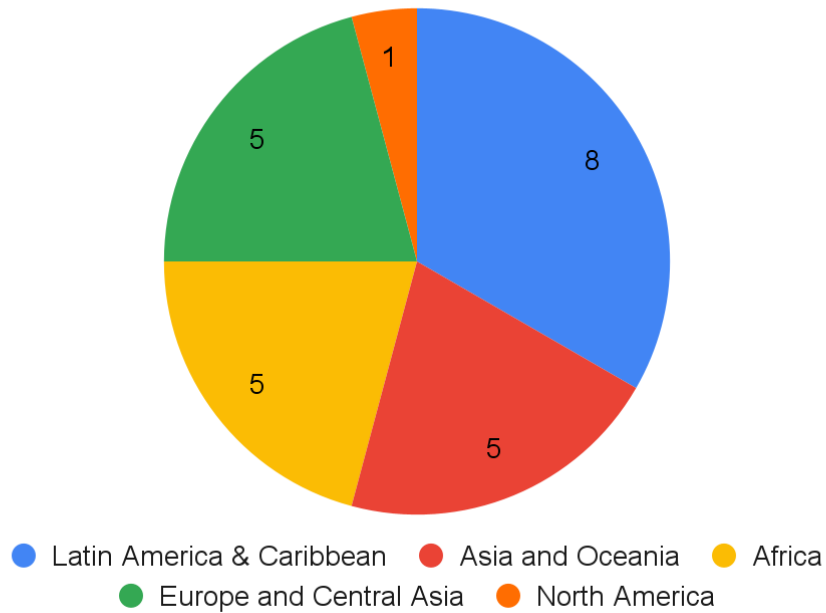Figure 1: Roles of survey participants

Regional groups

Figure 2: Regional groups of the survey participants
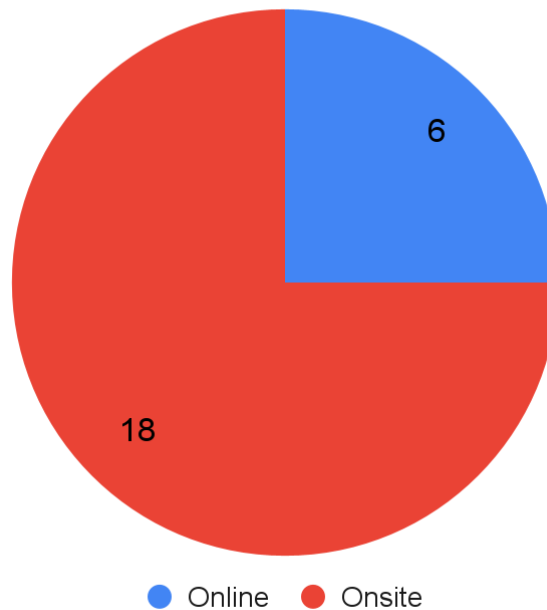
Online and onsite attendance

Figure 3: Attendance mode of survey participants

Preparation activities

The majority of respondents (70%) had reviewed the preparatory materials for the meeting, with an additional 13% having partially reviewed these (Figure 4). Participants were also asked for any feedback on the preparatory materials, and all comments received were

positive, such as "I found the presentation of the materials very practical. I appreciate the time you have dedicated to generating it and putting it online."

Did you review the preparatory materials for the Global Nodes Meeting?
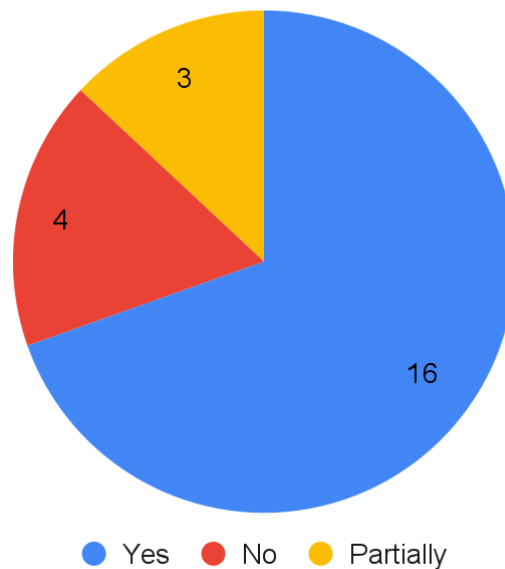

Figure 4: Use of preparatory materials by survey participants

Meeting assessment

Respondents were asked to rank various aspects of the Global Nodes Meeting on the following scale: 0= N/A, 1=Very bad, 2=Bad, 3=Neutral, 4=Good, 5=Excellent. The responses were very positive across all aspects of the meeting with average scores between good and excellent. The information sharing and organization of the meeting ranked highest among all aspects rated (Figure 5).
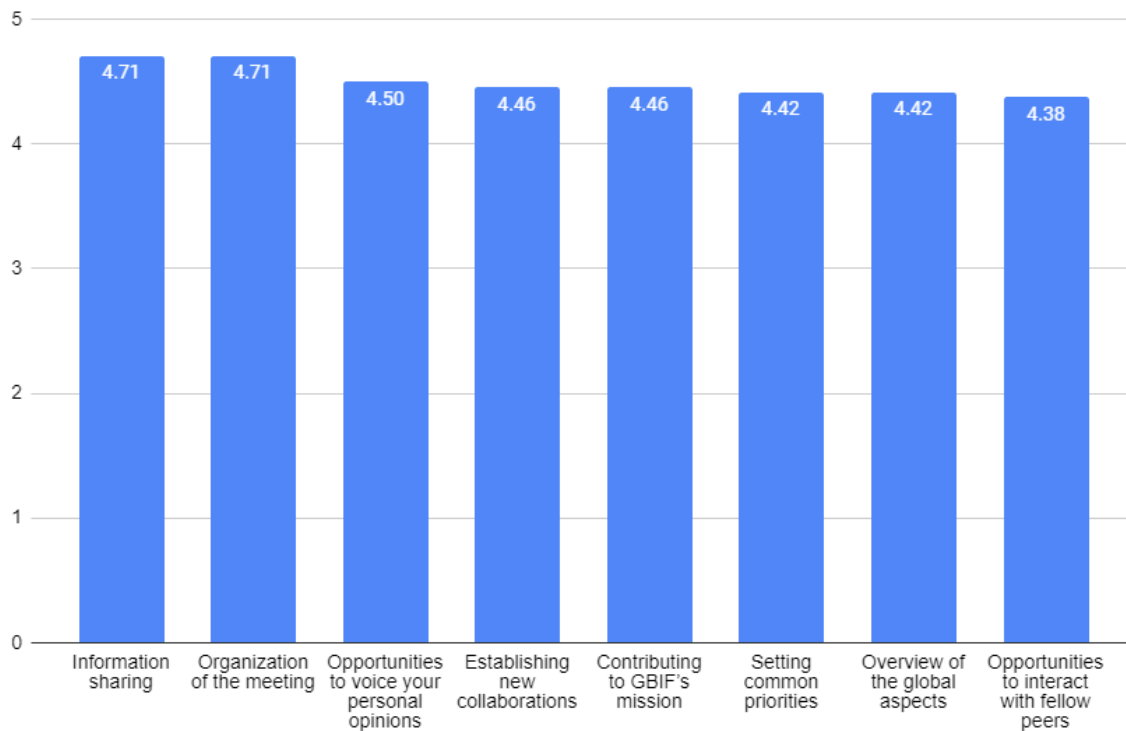
Figure 5: Average scores provided by the 24 survey respondents when asked to assess various aspects of the Global Nodes Meeting.

Nodes were also invited to share their highlights from the meeting, which included many references to the importance of getting together again after the long break due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. These are grouped below.

Meeting atmosphere and interactions
- "A supportive community"
- "Interaction with other countries"
- "Making personal connections with the other node staff"
- "Collaboration among nodes"
- "Beyond the training and the meeting agenda, which have been very interesting and appropriate (although, as always, more time would have been better ;)) it has been very comforting from a personal point of view to be able to meet in person after so many Zoom meetings. Clearly we needed to be able to meet, share a coffee and thus discuss new and old topics…"

Meeting organization and format
- "Demonstrations and practical exercises"
- "GBIF community engagement e.g. Node managers share their experiences and lessons learned"
- "Great organization and participation of nodes"
- "Getting to network with other node managers"

Sessions and topics covered
- "Developing Capacity within Regional Communities of Practice"
- "Breakout session on ideas for community and capacity programmes"
- "Update on new data model"
- "The regional meeting and the information about the data model"
- "The presentation about the new data model (particularly eDNA) enabling us to track the progress of other nodes in these areas as well."
- "Idea storm and more information about the data model. But perhaps most just meeting everyone again."
- "The workshop to gather ideas around CESP, BID projects and Onboarding programme (Including Fiesta latina ;))."

Regional sessions

Respondents were asked to rank various aspects of the regional group discussions specifically, using the same scale (Figure 6). Participants appreciated the regional discussions on all aspects, particularly the roles of the facilitators, and all responses given were either "neutral", "good", "excellent" or "not applicable".

Average scores given to aspects of the regional group discussions (0= N/A, 1=Very bad, 2=Bad, 3=Neutral, 4=Good, 5=Excellent)
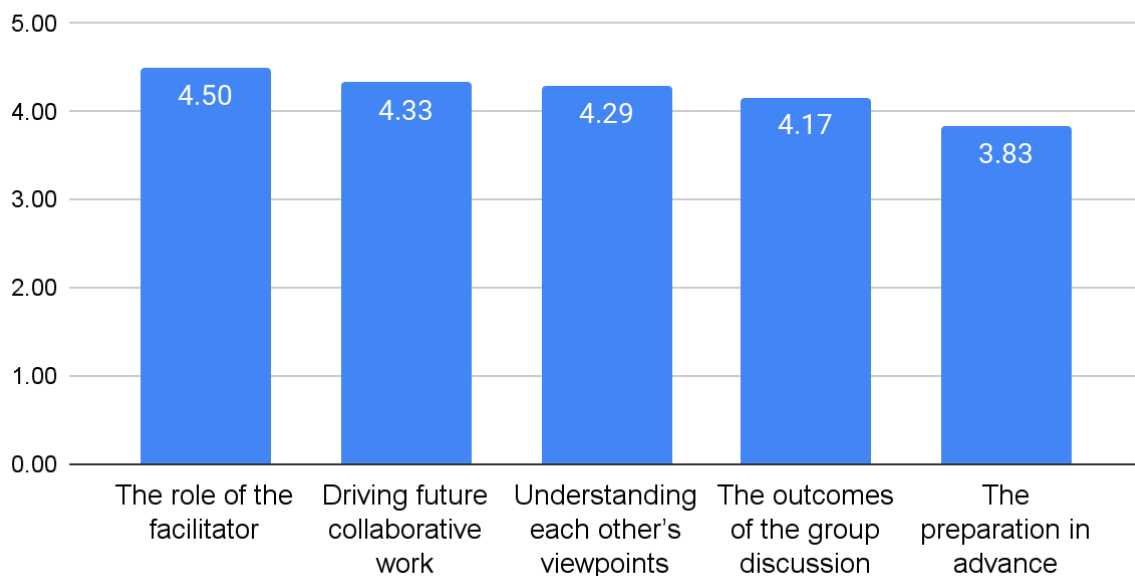

Figure 6 Average scores provided by the 24 survey respondents when asked how they assessed the regional group discussions.

Hybrid format

Most of the survey responses were from onsite participants (see Figure 3). The survey asked respondents to assess the hybrid meeting format (Figure 7). There was appreciation for the hybrid format in terms of enabling broader participation in the meeting. There was a range of responses to the communication between online and onsite participants, which

scored lower overall.

Average scores given to aspects of the hybrid format (0= N/A, 1=Very bad, 2=Bad, 3=Neutral, 4=Good, 5=Excellent)
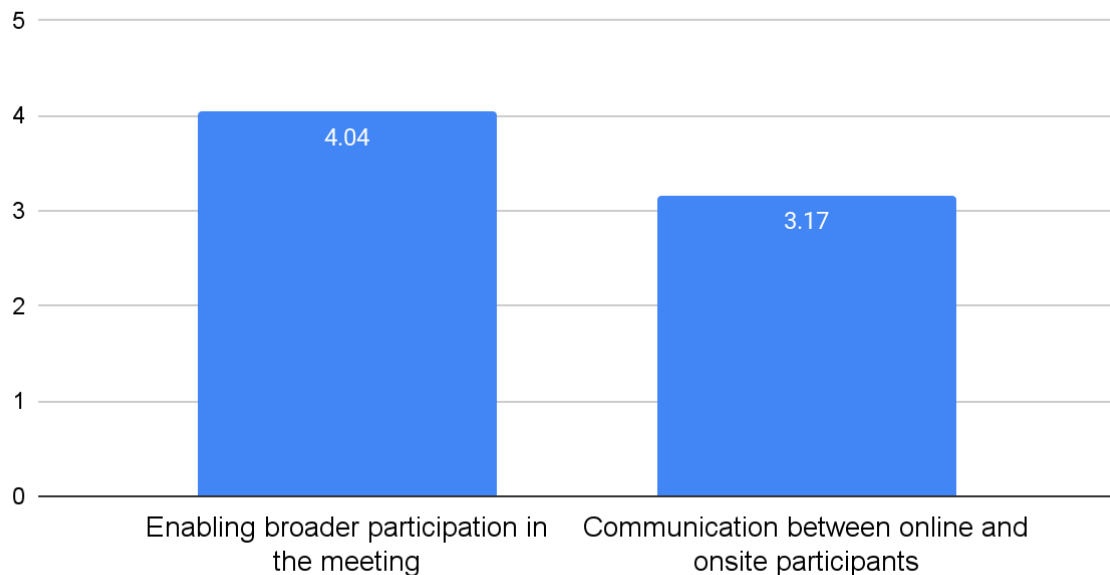

Figure 7: Average scores provided by the 24 survey respondents when asked how they assessed the hybrid meeting format.

Participants were asked for any feedback on the hybrid meeting format, and the responses are provided here:

Issues with hearing the discussions on the floor
- "In discussion session, it would be better to use microphone even on the floor."
- "It would be great if there's multiple microphone for the floor."
- "Maybe a group chat? Not sure how to manage, I do think that participation needs to be enabled for those who can't be there in person, but I think that it's sub-optimal to join online."

Timezone differences
- "Open to other timezones"
- "Could be useful only in some parts of the meeting, because the difference of times."

Other suggestions
- "I found the hybrid model useful for those who have not been able to travel, but in no way should it be equated to an in-person meeting, only as a partial solution to the impossibility of traveling. It requires adapting to the schedules of the in-person meeting and that is not always easy for the participants. I understand that funds are not always available, but ensuring that as many people join in person is essential to ensure fluid and equitable participation of (almost) all members of the meetings."
- "I believe that virtual participation is a viable solution, but it would be even more effective with an alternating approach. For instance, having all meetings either entirely virtual or entirely in-person. As mentioned in the Governing Board (GB), both

formats have their respective advantages. However, maintaining communication in a hybrid format may become challenging if there is a significant time difference or if there are issues with signal quality."
- "Hybrid meetings are never great. But they are probably better than people missing out entirely. I'm sure we are still get used to them and the technology can only improve. One would hope."

Final suggestions

The survey asked participants if the meeting offered enough opportunities to voice opinions and suggestions to the broader Nodes Committee and GBIF Secretariat and to suggest ideas for improvement. Responses were mostly positive:
- "It was great to hear other region's nodes opinions and GBIF secretariats"
- "Yes, every GBIF meeting provides an opportunity to each nodes for technical discussion"
- "The meeting gave us ample opportunity to express ourselves."
- "I do feel that there was enough opportunity. For my first meeting, I found that everyone was very friendly and approachable."
- "Yes the meeting was a good opportunity for collaboration and helped initiate new ones"

Suggestions included a need for more time, translation and an opportunity to prepare statements:
- "I consider that, as always, time was limited to be able to discuss all the topics we should have. After the 2019 meeting, GBIF has made progress on many fronts (data model, GrSciColl, regional supports), we have new nodes and new colleagues. I understand that it is not always possible to have more time, but considering that the heart of GBIF is the data which flows from the nodes, we must seek virtual spaces, after the meeting, to exhaust any doubts, comments, suggestions, on new topics."
- "Yes,maybe it is possible to send some statements before and during the meeting."
- "Si. Sería ideal contar con un traductor Inglés-Español"

Participants were also asked to reflect on how this meeting compared with previous in-person meetings, as well as providing any final suggestions. Responses are shared below:

Some first time participants
- It was my first meeting
- Was my first
- Have not attended previous meetings
- It is my first time attend the meeting.
- This was my first meeting.

Noting fewer participants from Africa than in previous meetings
- "They were less participants from Africa"

Appreciation for the meeting organization and format
- "The meeting was a success. All the equipment needed for this type of meeting was available. The working environment was ideal"

- "The website for the meeting was an improvement and I really appreciate the structure and clarity of it! I really liked the nodes-buddy system, but it would have been good to get some more time in advance to arrange a meet-up."
- "Many improvements were made in terms of preparing participants for the workshop."
- "This meeting was well organised, promoted interaction among participants."
- "This occasion we have seen more participation of the nodes."

Suggestions for improvement on regional sessions
- A clear set of expected deliverables should be defined for each region session, which should be defined prior to the session and fitted to the needs of the region
- In regional meetings, there are numerous topics to address, and it often feels like there isn't sufficient time. Perhaps scheduling some virtual meetings beforehand could prove beneficial. These preliminary virtual meetings could help the Global/Regional Node Meeting focus solely on resolving new issues or reaching agreements. Additionally, prioritizing activities, with a strategic emphasis on matters related to the secretariat, could also yield considerable benefits due to their participation in the meeting.
- I encourage group leaders to be proactive

Suggestions on meeting location and duration
- "For countries located very far from the country hosting the meeting, give an extra day to allow the body to adapt to the time difference."
- "Yes, for countries long distance away to host the meeting, find the way to encourage more participation from Africa"
- "Try to chose the country that host the meeting, have less migratory conditions or facilitate it. Because the Australian visa was so expensive for me and others participants."
- "Maybe hybrid is the new norm"
- "Short! Although it was the same length as our last pre-COVID meeting in Leiden. Again, it was very good to see everyone in person, share a coffee, a chat in the hallways, photos and jokes."

Suggestions on topics, icebreakers, field trips
- "Maybe a slightly longer Ice-breaker??? Joke! Well, not so much...longer would have been nice. I think it would be interesting to continue with the Buddy model, perhaps with more nodes in each group, but I consider it a good idea to help the inter-regional communication of the nodes."
- "Perhaps a session or idea storm about novel ideas or applications to suggest functions or other activities that might not fit within the relatively streamlined agenda."
- "Field trips is also important"
- "Maybe I missed some more technical sessions. Hands on on eDNA or new DNA data model would be a good choice (I think). (Maybe we need an extra day :D)"
- "I would have liked to meet everyone but didn't get the chance. That's not to suggest we should do more broad (and naff) ice breaker activities though."

Next steps

The next Global Nodes Meeting will take place in 2025 alongside GB32. Until then, the Nodes Committee and NSG will:

- Update the Nodes Implementation plan for 2024
- Continue to support capacity development through participation in CESP and BID
- Prepare and organize the Regional Nodes meetings in 2024
- Consider how to strengthen the onboarding programme for new nodes, including the buddy system
- Continue to explore the regional support team mechanism and opportunities for support for nodes where appropriate