

## Q&A log from 6 March 2026

### Indicators for national invasion reporting

You mentioned that there was no compensation for survey effort. Don't the occurrence cubes compensate for some surveyor effort?

- Yes, they do. Some of the methods will be presented in other sessions of the Training series. What we highlighted in our report was that we sourced data from different people, different data sources. Hence, the comprehensiveness of that data varies, and one major challenge is how you could use a protocol which will compensate for survey effort when you have different quality of data which you're pulling from different sources. So the short answer is yes, there are ways to estimate that, and we will be trying to implement those, especially learning from what some of the products from the B-Cubed project.
- Just to add to Tsungai's response, the species occurrence cubes downloaded from GBIF do not account for survey effort. They are summary counts of GBIF occurrences within user-selected grids with no measure of sampling effort included. Users would have to apply a separate approach to account for survey effort, although we do provide measures of sampling at higher taxonomic ranks for the species of interest to give an overview of sampling effort more generally for that taxon. Check out our first training session for more info.

What might be the key interventions going forwards and what role will monitoring play?

- We could use an example in South Africa, which is one of the few countries which launched a large-scale monitoring control program mainly looking at controlling invasive plants. There have been challenges because of dedicating a large portion of the fiscal budget to managing a particular project or a particular aspect of a problem in society. Managing biological invasions has to compete with other societal needs, like, for example, money going to health or going to the construction of key infrastructure. So you have to demonstrate how managing biological invasions competes with all the other societal needs. In our case, it was modelled around the narrative that you do control biological invasions, but at the same time, you create employment opportunities. So if such projects or where funding for such projects is made available, and they're sustainable in the long term, I think that's one way to continue the key interventions.

The second one is that we have shown that biological control has been very effective. When you use the cost-benefit ratio, it has one of the highest cost-benefit ratios compared to any other method. Ideally, where funding should have been sustained, it continued in the long term because we have shown that it actually is quite effective. The challenge, as I indicated earlier, is that you need to demonstrate that you are equipping society to get jobs. So to my mind, those will be the two key interventions which they should keep going forward.

As for the monitoring, the challenge is that you need to know where and how abundant alien species are for you to implement any control projects. At the moment,

one of our challenges is that we don't have comprehensive data on the distribution and extent of plant diversions in South Africa. We have tried, and there have been projects which have prioritised certain areas, like areas that they call strategic water areas. These are areas where most of the surface runoff water in rivers or underground water is generated. So they have targeted controlling alien species in those areas and are also trying to map the extent of invasions in those areas. But these projects, I think, were not long-term, and they were funded for a specific period of time. Nowadays, most of them have ended, and there are no plans for how those that can be carried forward. In short, monitoring helps you by informing you which species are there, which species you should focus on and also whether any control measures you have put in place whether they have been effective.

How did your yet-to-be-unpublished paper on South Africa's invasive species statuses define naturalisation? What were the criteria?

- We leaned mainly on the unified framework, and we didn't change that definition.

Can you share your experience regarding how stakeholders across different sectors have reacted to the findings of these reports? Has coordination become easier? Or have there been some polemics

- We actually identified that as a key aspect that was missing from our reports because we had concentrated on just trying to set up the reporting processes and trying to get at least two or three reports out of the way. We have been told by some of the key stakeholders that we need an assessment on whether these reports are actually useful. So as part of this report, we actually designed a survey where we're trying to understand how stakeholders perceive the usefulness of the report. The survey closed last week, and we are in the process of trying to analyse the feedback we got. So we hopefully should publish a paper sometime this year on how that know how stakeholder perceive uh the report.

How has this invasive species influenced ecological restoration

- For our report, we have mainly looked at the remnants of the regulations, which have summarised the status of the species that are known to be alien or introduced in the country and given an assessment on whether the control measures have been effective. We haven't looked particularly at the ecological restoration as part of the indicators at the moment, but we could include it in official reports.