

SANBI POLICY DOCUMENT

DIVISION: Biosystematics Research and Biodiversity Collections	POLICY NUMBER: B4
EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 June 2014	LAST AMENDED: 5 May 2014

SPECIMEN LOANS

Background

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) herbaria house about 2 175 000 specimens. Researchers around the world need access to this valuable resource and, through loan agreements, specimens are received by SANBI herbaria and sent out to research institutions worldwide.

The purpose of the loan agreement is to facilitate taxonomic research on the southern African flora which is undertaken by researchers at SANBI herbaria and other local and international botanical institutes.

Herbarium specimens are archival records which should be treated with the necessary care to preserve them for many generations. It is in this spirit that the SANBI herbaria make loans available to other herbaria or research institutions.

Aims of the policy

To standardise procedures for processing specimen loans in SANBI herbaria. To provide guidance and information about conditions, policy and procedures to *bona fide* scientists who wish to loan specimens from the SANBI herbaria collections. To provide guidance about conditions, policy and procedures to SANBI scientists who wish to borrow specimens from other herbaria collections.

Policy

- SANBI herbaria will send herbarium specimens to and receive them from other research institutes.
 - Where physical examination is not required, SANBI will provide high-resolution images of specimens for study.
 - The standard loan period is 12 months for non-type specimens and 6 months for type specimens after which the loan must be returned. Upon request the curators may extend the loan period.
 - Loans are given only to reputable herbaria or institutions and not to individual researchers.
 - Specimens are generally made available on loan for taxonomic research resulting in a publication. A copy of the publication should be lodged with the lending herbarium.
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Process

The procedures for handling loans are separated into four addenda:

ADDENDUM 1: Conditions for loans at SANBI herbaria (summary available on website: www.sanbi.org.za)

ADDENDUM 2: Procedure for outgoing loans (to other institutions)

ADDENDUM 3: Procedure for incoming loans (to SANBI)

ADDENDUM 4: Packaging specimens for dispatch

Refer to Chapter 5 in:

VICTOR, J., KOEKEMOER, M., FISH, L., SMITHIES, S. & MÖSSMER, M. 2004. *Herbarium Essentials: the southern African herbarium user manual*. [SABONET Report No. 25](#). SABONET, Pretoria, pp. 49–58.

ADDENDUM 1

CONDITIONS FOR LOANS AT SANBI HERBARIA

1. Responsibilities of lender

- 1.1. Letter of request should specify the scope, purpose and timeframe of the project.
- 1.2. Loans may not be transferred to other premises without prior written agreement and may not be moved to a private residence.
- 1.3. All specimens borrowed must be annotated before they are returned.
- 1.4. Researchers must use small determinavit or confirmavit labels which are printed, typed or written in archival ink.
- 1.5. Annotation labels should bear the name of the taxon and the author, the name of the annotator, herbarium acronym, institution as well as the date.
- 1.6. Annotation labels must be attached to the specimens.
- 1.7. If samples (e.g. flowers) are removed from the plant with prior permission, either take a digital image of the specimen before the sample is removed or indicate in pencil where it was removed from. No other markings/scribbling are allowed on a specimen sheet.

2. Loan period

- 2.1. Where feasible for study, high resolution digital images should be supplied instead of a loan.
- 2.2. The standard loan period is 12 months after which the loan must be returned.
- 2.3. Type specimens should preferably not be sent on loan unless under exceptional circumstances. The standard loan period for type specimens is 6 months after which the loan must be returned.
- 2.3. Extension of loan may be granted upon application prior to the expiry date.
- 2.4. Applications for loan extension must be directed to the Curator who will base the decision on the scope, purpose and time-frame of the project.
- 2.5. The curators may extend the period for a further 12 months in case of ordinary specimens and 3 months for type specimens. Only under exceptional circumstances will the loan of type specimens be renewed as images of type specimens are accessible online through JSTOR.
- 2.6. Loans of ordinary specimens can be renewed only 5 times (for 5 years) and no extension thereafter. This is to avoid lengthy process of recovering old loans.
- 2.7. All loan material should be returned before a requesting staff member (who used material) retires or resigns from the requesting herbarium/institution.

3. Safe storage of specimens on loan

- 3.1. Herbarium specimens should be handled with care.
- 3.2. Specimens must be stored inside the original folders under safe, dry and dust-free conditions in insect-proof cases/cupboards.
- 3.3. Sheets must not be bent or folded.
- 3.4. Where possible, loan specimens should be stored in a special loans room that is saturated with insecticide like Dichlorvos or Vapona.

4. Removal of material and extracts

- 4.1. Removal of any material from the specimens is only permitted with prior written permission.
- 4.2. If dissection or removal of parts is granted; materials may be removed only when there is sufficient quantity.
- 4.3. Preference should be given to loose fragments and these should be placed in envelopes attached to the specimen.
- 4.4. No existing writing, drawings, photographs, annotations or labels may be removed from the specimens.

5. Imaging

- 5.1. Photocopying or any other process where the specimen is turned upside down should be avoided and is generally not allowed.
- 5.2. Only photographing or scanning with an inverted scanner is allowed.
- 5.3. Where special images (e.g. microscopic images, SEM) are made, copies should be included upon return of the loan.
- 5.4. It should be encouraged to donate copies of scanned material and associated data to SANBI, once the material is returned.

6. Packaging (see also ADDENDUM 4)

- 6.1. Herbarium sheets are packed in small bundles between two cardboards and wrapped in waterproof material. These bundles are packed in strong boxes between shock-absorbing materials that will avoid damage in transit. This must be adhered to at all costs as some specimens lose leaves or flowers as a result of poor packaging.
- 6.2. Type specimens should be sent by courier and other specimens by traceable registered parcel mail.

7. Publications

- 7.1. Copies of publications resulting from the research must be lodged at the SANBI lending herbarium at the Curator's Office and he/she shall make the publication available to the library and Brahms Content Manager.

8. Compensation for lost or damaged specimens

- 8.1. The loaning herbarium must indicate the parcel contains 'scientific material of no commercial value'. The Curator will provide a replacement value of the specimens if lost or damaged for countries that require a value.

ADDENDUM 2

PROCEDURE FOR OUTGOING LOANS

1. Selection

- 1.1. Selection of specimens is done by the scientist responsible for the plant family or may be delegated to a technician.
- 1.2. Visiting researchers may do their own selection of specimens.
- 1.3. When requesting a loan, both the current and previous (synonyms) names should be given.
- 1.4. No more than 50% of specimens in a specific group (family or genus) may be out on loan at any given time.
 - This should include specimens representing the full distribution range of the group.
 - Relevant incertae (sp. or cf.) specimens should be included in loans and does not count towards the 50%.
 - If the collection has 4 or fewer specimens, then the number loaned out should be at the discretion of the curator.
 - Additional specimens may be loaned only if all the initial specimens have been returned.

2. Recording loan

- 2.1. All specimens must be entered into the loans database by the Loans Officer.
- 2.2. Details must include: genus and species name; number of specimens loaned, herbarium name, researcher's name and contact details.
- 2.3. A list of specimens sent out on loan must be filed in the herbarium cupboards.
- 2.4. The address list of all the corresponding institutions must be maintained.
- 2.5. Specimens to be suitably packaged to avoid damage. See ADDENDUM 3, point 6 and ADDENDUM 4 for procedure for packaging loan specimens.
- 2.6. File parcel acknowledgement forms.

3. Transferring loan

- 3.1. Transferring of loans from one institution to another will only be considered under the following conditions:
 - 3.1.1. The institution that requested the loan sends a formal request to SANBI for approval.
 - 3.1.2. The receiving institution should send a letter (signed by its Curator or Director) to SANBI acknowledging acceptance of the loan.
 - 3.1.3. The institution accepts to adhere to SANBI loan conditions as stipulated and as may change without any notice.

4. Material required for DNA/sampling

- 4.1. All specimens required for DNA sampling must be treated, in line with SANBI policy on Access and Benefit Sharing.

ADDENDUM 3

PROCEDURE FOR INCOMING LOANS

1. Requesting a specimen loan

- 1.1. All requests for loans to SANBI must be signed by the Curator (or delegated staff member) before being sent to the relevant institute. Researchers may not directly request a loan.
- 1.2. The 'Conditions of loans' form received from the sending herbarium must be signed by the Curator or delegate, and returned to the lending institute.
- 1.3. Staff is advised to adhere to the conditions of loans as stipulated and guided by the lending institute.

2. Receiving loan

- 2.1. All specimens received on loan must be checked for damage, which must be immediately reported to the lending institute (together with photos if necessary).
- 2.2. Specimens must be decontaminated before entering the herbarium and before being returned to the lending herbaria. Place specimens in a freezer continuously for 72 hours.
- 2.3. On receipt, the specimens will be handed over to the requesting researcher by the Loans Officer.

3. Recording incoming loan

- 3.1. All specimens must be entered into the loans database by the loans officer.
- 3.2. The details must include: genus and species name; number of specimens loaned, herbarium name, researcher's name and contact details.
- 3.3. Ensure there is a safe place to store the material where it will not be incorporated in the main SANBI collection. Refer to Policy D2 on handling and care of herbarium specimens.

4. Returning loan

- 4.1. Every attempt must be made to return specimens on loan within the stipulated loan period.
- 4.2. If entire or part of the loan is required for a longer period, the researcher must liaise with the Curator to apply to the lending institute for an extension.
- 4.3. All the specimens should be covered with a species cover stamped 'LOAN' and be returned with the same cover.
- 4.4. All loan material should be returned in their entirety before a SANBI staff member (who requested and used the material) retires or resigns. Upon the death of a staff member, provision must be made for the return of a loan.
- 4.5. Specimens on loans are to be returned via the Curator (or delegated staff member).

ADDENDUM 4

PACKAGING SPECIMENS FOR DISPATCH

From Victor, J., Koekemoer, M., Fish, L., Smithies, S. & Mössmer, M. 2004. *Herbarium Essentials: the southern African herbarium user manual*. [SABONET Report No. 25](#). SABONET, Pretoria, pp. 49

1. Pack the material carefully, with each specimen individually protected by a flimsy.
2. Place a cardboard sheet at the bottom and the top of the pile, as well as between every approximately 20 specimens.
3. Include a list of specimens and loan conditions in the parcel.
4. Strap the pile securely and wrap in waterproof and shock-absorbing material, such as bubble wrap.
5. Place the wrapped pile in a reinforced mailing box to prevent the specimens being squashed and damaged. No more than 100 specimens should be placed in a box.
6. Type specimens are packed separately and sent via courier or registered mail.