**e-Flora of South Africa policy**

**Preamble**
An e-Flora for South Africa (e-Flora) is being maintained and expanded to contribute towards the first target of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (Convention on Biological Diversity). Target 1 is aimed at producing an online Flora for the world and South Africa contributes approximately 8% of which 4% is unique.

**Purpose**
A policy to guide the decisions and procedures relating to compiling and updating the e-Flora is necessary to ensure that all contributors and users of the South African e-Flora have a clear understanding of what information is included and the methods and procedures that are implemented to compile, maintain and publish the online Flora are clear.

**Legislation**
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 10 of 2004

**Links to SANBI policies**
South African National Plant Checklist policy

**Scope**
This policy is applicable to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) staff of the Foundational Biodiversity Sciences Division: Plant Research, Herbarium as well as external collaborators contributing to the e-Flora. The policy impacts on all end-users of the e-Flora.

**Policy statement**
The e-Flora e-Flora is co-ordinated by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The e-Flora is compiled and updated by the e-Flora coordinator with assistance from the deputy e-Flora coordinator, e-Flora support officer, technicians and contributions from all SANBI plant taxonomists and external contributors, national and international. The e-Flora contributes to the World Flora Online project and is disseminated online through the World Flora Online (global context) and Biodiversity Advisor (local context) portals. Compilation of the e-Flora follows the procedures outlined in Appendix 1.
Appendix 1: e-Flora of South Africa project guidelines

The approach followed by the World Flora Online (WFO) project (Target 1 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity) guides the development and maintenance of the e-Flora of South Africa project (in short ‘e-Flora’). The South African National Plant Checklist is used as the e-Flora’s taxonomic backbone. The e-Flora is updated on an annual basis to incorporate changes made in the previous year’s South African National Plant Checklist. The e-Flora database is also expanded by uploading new information.

The e-Flora project is managed by SANBI and is an aggregator of information. Taxonomic information is taken from published literature, contributed by taxonomists from within SANBI or external to SANBI.

Permission is obtained from either the author or publisher for the sole use of the e-Flora and WFO.

The Botanical Research And Herbarium Management System (BRAHMS) is the platform that hosts the Botanical Database of Southern Africa (BODATSA). All floristic data is deposited in BODATSA.

A single staff member, with a sound knowledge of plant nomenclature and floristic literature, takes responsibility for coordinating the e-Flora (senior level researcher) and aligns the project to international guidelines and data standards, and is assisted by a deputy e-Flora coordinator (researcher) and support officer (technician). A group of SANBI scientists and technical staff, as well as external taxonomists and citizen scientists, assist in finding and extracting the most appropriate data.

Appendix 2: Procedures for creating, maintaining and expanding the e-Flora of South Africa content

Up-to-date names with authorships for all taxa within South Africa (covering family, genus, species and infraspecific taxa) and all related taxonomic information is provided from the Checklist. Additional data elements harvested (selected to be in agreement with the WFO) include:

- Descriptions
- Protologue citations
- Phenology (flowering time)
- Altitude range
- Habitat
- Distribution
Literature references and credits giving attribution to authors, providers of information and sources of data
Specimen citations
Links to identification keys to families, genera and species, where available; links are accessible from https://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org/contentmanagement/index?guid=e6872ff6-1d4c-4f71-a6e0-ce146a004f1c
Images (photographs, scans of herbarium specimens, and/or drawings) of at least one species of each genus (ideally, linked to voucher specimens with barcodes)
Online links to external data and data sources about the species, e.g. DNA barcodes

The e-Flora database may further be enhanced with the following data elements, where available:

- Vernacular names
- Traditional, economic, and medicinal uses
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) statuses
- Conservation statuses

Multiple descriptions may be available for a single taxon. The primary description or preferred description (primary source) will be flagged accordingly in BODATSA and appears first, followed by any other descriptions that may also be available, arranged in chronological order. Should there be no recent revision available or if the latest revision is of insufficient quality, or SANBI does not have permission from the author or publisher to re-use the information, older literature may be used or a reference provided to the most recent publication.

**Appendix 3: Dissemination**

The e-Flora will be published online, administered by the Biodiversity Information Management Directorate (BIM).

An updated version will be published annually after its first publication.

The website will have a commentary feedback system in place where users can comment on content in order to improve the website; feedback on improvement should be provided to the users.

The e-Flora data will be shared with the WFO, published on the WFO portal (http://www.worldfloraonline.org/), and updated annually.

**Appendix 4: Statistics**

Contributors (authors of descriptions) will be able to download statistics of how many times information for a particular taxon is viewed/downloaded.

Appendix 5: Branding
The e-Flora has its own branding in terms of a logo. All documentation and activities use this logo and name, but the SANBI logo is also included. The WFO project’s logo may also be used on documentation or publications.

References

