

MID-TERM NARRATIVE REPORT

Guidelines on how to complete this report are included in italics.

Use the information included in your BIFA Full Proposal (reproduced in Annex 1 of your BIFA contract) as a baseline from which to complete this report.

Remember that this report will be made available on your project page on the GBIF website and therefore should not include any contact information, unless you have permission from all mentioned in the report that their contact information can be published.

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Project information

Main contact person and role:	Hicham El Zein
Institution/network/agency affiliation:	NGO Wadi ez-Zouhour
BIFA Project ID:	BIFA4_053
Project title:	Mobilizing plant species occurrence and sampling-event data from the project “Distribution and Red List Assessment of the restricted range endemic <i>Jacobaea mouterdei</i> (Arènes) Greuter & B.Nord
Start date and end date of the reporting period:	April to October 2019
Country in which the activities take place:	Lebanon

Executive summary

Provide a brief explanation of the project and its implementation, the context and the approach taken for the mid-term evaluation, and a summary of progress of your project’s original objectives. Also include any additional objectives that have been defined since the implementation of the project and explain why they’ve been added to the project’s initial objectives. In the event of unexpected challenges which have prevented you to reach a planned project objective, please provide explanations and indicate how you plan to reach these objectives within the project implementation period and if you would like to receive the help of a specific project mentor. (Max. 350 words.)

The Biodiversity Information Fund for Asia will allow the mobilization and publication of the botanical data collected during the project “Distribution and Red List Assessment of the restricted range endemic *Jacobaea mouterdei* (Arènes) Greuter & B.Nord.” which was funded by the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. This project was designed to survey and collect data about the occurrence of this very restricted plant species endemic to the regions of Akkar and Danniye in the North of Lebanon and to assess its vulnerability. These regions shelter the most preserved natural habitats, but also the less studied. There is a significant gap in data availability that should be addressed. Recently, human activities have been seriously threatening natural habitats and there is an urge to act for the conservation of these areas.

The data collection also targeted all other plant species occurring in the different sampled habitat types. Therefore, the study will improve the knowledge on the flora of these regions with recent qualitative and quantitative data on plant species occurrence in time and space and on their ecology. The project will deliver a dataset on vascular plant species of the regions of Akkar and Danniye (Lebanon) and the publication of a data paper. The mobilized data will be free of access and will allow further ecological analyses including population ecology, characterization of habitat types and the understanding of species association in

the different plant communities. These results will also serve as scientific arguments to urgently advocate and implement conservation actions to preserve the unique natural patrimony of these regions.

Nothing has changed from the initial objectives. We estimated that half of the data could be already ready to be published during the mid-term report, however we're still collecting data and the little amount of data entered is partial and we wanted to suggest that we publish the whole set once at the end of the project with the complete data rather than doing it twice with unachieved sets. We would also like some advice for the publication of data paper peer-reviewed. Does GBIF already have some scientific journals working in the field of botany that would be interested about our dataset?

Progress against expected milestones

Please indicate the status of the expected milestones as outlined in Annex 3 of the contract, at the time of mid-term reporting. Please provide links in the sources of verification.

In the event of unexpected delay(s), please provide detailed explanatory notes.

Expected milestones	Completed? Yes/No	Explanatory notes	Sources of verification
Gain certification at BIFA Capacity Enhancement Workshop (Mid-term report milestone)	Yes		Successfully passed the exam. Digital badge awarded.
At least one dataset has been published to GBIF.org (Mid-term report milestone)	Yes	The fieldwork is still being carried out thanks to good conditions of weather. 28% of the dataset has been published.	https://cloud.gbif.org/bifa/resource?r=vascular_plants_danniye_lebanon_2019

Activities

Please indicate the status of the activities as outlined in the BIFA Full Proposal (section 4.4), at the time of mid-term reporting.

The table below should be completed in the same way as in the BIFA Full Proposal, but should include information and updates on the status of each activity. Please indicate relevant source(s) of verification and provide links, or a copy of the source of verification mentioned if no links are available. Attachments should be provided in the Annex.

In the event of unexpected delay(s), please provide detailed explanatory notes and indicate new planned completion date(s) within the project implementation period.

In the event of any additional activities having being completed, please add rows as required.

Activity name	Expected deliverable	Contribution to goals listed in table 4.3 of the BIFA Full Proposal	Status of activity as of mid-term reporting Provide % complete and state either on-track or delayed	Explanatory notes, inc. new planned completion date if necessary	Source(s) of verification
Encoding and preparation of the data collected about all the plant species surveyed during the fieldwork	Dataset (sampling-event data) on vascular plant species from the mountains of the regions of Akkar and Danniye (Lebanon)	The data have to be encoded before the preparation of the data paper which is the ultimate goal of this project with GBIF (Publication of a data paper describing the dataset (sampling-	Around 20% of the collected data were entered on excel sheet but not cleaned yet.	Fieldwork is still carried out in the region thanks to good weather conditions.	None

		event data) on vascular plant species from the mountains of the regions of Akkar and Danniye (Lebanon)).			
Preparation of the data paper	Dataset (sampling-event data) on vascular plant species from the mountains of the regions of Akkar and Danniye (Lebanon)		This activity is for the second part of the project. It is first necessary to have all data entered.		

Deliverables

This section should summarize the project deliverables as outlined in the BIFA Full Proposal (section 4.5), at the time of mid-term reporting. Please highlight any changes from the original plans.

If no result has been achieved on a specific point, please clearly indicate this and provide expected date of completion.

In the event of unexpected delay(s), please provide detailed explanatory notes and indicate new planned completion date(s) within the project implementation period.

In the event of any additional deliverables having being completed, please add rows as required.

a. Data

Details of datasets published and/or pending publication as an outcome of the project. The table below should be completed in the same way as in the BIFA Full Proposal but should include information and updates on the status of each dataset. Please provide links in sources of verification.

If the dataset is not yet published, please provide a detailed explanation, % of digitization and expected date of publication. Add rows as required.

Title of dataset	Data type (checklist/occurrences/sampling event) ¹	Estimated number of records (specimens)	Status of dataset: Published or % of digitization/pending publication and expected date of publication	Data holding institution agreed to publish its data via GBIF.org (Yes/No)	Explanatory notes	Source(s) of verification: DOI or URL
Dataset of vascular plant species (sampling-event) from the regions of Akkar and	Sampling-event	2000-3000 observations	Around 20% of the collected data were digitized and published on GBIF.	The applicant agreed to publish the collected data via	Vascular plant species / Levant – North of Mount Lebanon	https://cloud.gbif.org/bifa/resource?r=vascular_plants_danniye_lebanon_2019

¹ Dataset classes: <http://www.gbif.org/publishing-data/summary#datasetclasses>

Title of dataset	Data type (checklist/occurrences/sampling event) ¹	Estimated number of records (specimens)	Status of dataset: Published or % of digitization/pending publication and expected date of publication	Data holding institution agreed to publish its data via GBIF.org (Yes/No)	Explanatory notes	Source(s) of verification: DOI or URL
Danniye (Lebanon)				GBIF.org Yes	in range / spring – summer 2019	

b. Other deliverables

Describe other deliverables (e.g. publication of data papers, analysis, reports etc.) produced and/or planned to be produced/completed as part of the project. Please provide percentage complete and status of deliverable, together with an indicative dates/estimated time for completion.

Please provide links in the sources of verification. Attachments should be provided in the Annex.

Name and type of deliverable	Status of deliverable Provide % complete and on-track/ delayed	Explanatory notes	Source(s) of verification
Preparation of the data paper (sampling-event data) on vascular plant species from the mountains of the regions of Akkar and Danniye (Lebanon)	0%	This activity is for the second part of the project. It is first necessary to have all data entered.	

Events organized as part of the project

Please indicate the status of the events as outlined in the BIFA Full Proposal (section 4.6), at the time of mid-term reporting.

The table below should be completed in the same way as in the BIFA Full Proposal, but should include information and updates on the status of each event. Please provide links to any documents or web pages documenting the event(s) in the sources of verification. Attachments should be provided in the Annex

In the event of unexpected delay(s), please provide detailed explanatory notes and indicate new planned completion date(s) within the project implementation period.

In the event of any additional events having being completed, please add rows as required.

Event title	Organizing institution	Date held / expected dates	Number of participants	Explanatory notes	Source(s) of verification

Calendar of activities

The calendar should be completed in the same way as in the BIFA Full Proposal (section 4.7) but should also clearly indicate and include any changes (e.g. use of colour-coding to indicate expected changes and/or delays). Please provide explanations for any changes in the "Notes" column and/or the explanatory notes section.

Activity	2019								2020				Notes
	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	

Activity	2019								2020				Notes
	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	
Activity: Encoding and preparation of the data collected about all the plant species surveyed during the fieldwork Creation of an account on BIFA IPT and metadata of the dataset								x	x				Last possible month of fieldwork and then the data will be entered into excel and cleaned from December to January.
Activity: Publication of dataset on GBIF											x		Publication of the dataset on GBIF
Activity: Preparation of the data paper											x	x	During the month of February, we'll be writing and publishing a data paper.
Activity:													

a. Explanatory notes

The dataset will be hosted by GBIF (BIFA IPT) as our organization is not able to do it.

Resource title : vascular_plants_danniye_lebanon_2019

Project communications and visibility

Describe the plans and how the results of your project have been and will be communicated and shared with the project stakeholders and broader GBIF community.

Please also review the page describing your project available from <http://www.gbif.org/programme/bifa> and highlight any additional documents, events, news items or links that you would like to add to your page and provide links/attachments in the Annex.

The data paper constitutes the main output of this project. We're also aiming at publishing other journal papers describing habitat types. This is the reason we wanted to know how far a project paper allows this kind of scientific analysis. Also we wanted to know if GBIF has any scientific journal that will accept to publish botanical data from Lebanon.

A video was also realised about the fieldwork carried out for the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (MBZ) as they funded the data collection of the project. However, GBIF was not mentioned as the mobilization of the data was not taken into account at this point. Still we can add a note in the video to thank GBIF for allowing us to mobilize the data, or should another video showing the data entry only should be realised? Any ideas are welcomed at this point.

Mid-term evaluation findings and recommendations for the remaining project implementation period

This section should cover for example:

- *An evaluation of the project activities by mid-term and their outputs/deliverables*
- *Comments on the project implementation, and its efficiency and effectiveness, strength and weaknesses etc.*
- *Any feedback on the project's relevance from the partners and stakeholders*
- *Indications and reasons for any changes which have been made to the project's original plans, and actions to follow-up*
- *The management arrangements for the project, including support from the GBIF Secretariat*
- *Areas of success to build on during the remaining project implementation period*
- *Any request for guidance and/or assistance in the form of a specific project mentor*

(Max. 300 words)

The activities of the main project which aim at collecting data were carried out with success in terms on data quality and discovery, however not in terms of scale as out of the three valleys that had to be explored; only one was explored. We underestimated the size of the area to be explored (60 km²) and the difficulty of the fieldwork. Many areas of the valleys are located on cliffs and steep slopes and it is physically very demanding to reach the areas to be surveyed. This is the main reason that explains why the fieldwork was slower than expected. Another reason was the fact that we underestimated the amount of money for the

project (4500 usd were granted by MBZ fund), especially the fieldwork. The area is located more than three hours away from Beirut and it is more convenient to reach the region by renting a car than relying on public transportations as they are inexistent. A higher grant should have been asked. We're now facing an obstacle concerning the project, as we have to ask the Mohamed Bin Zayed Fund for an extension of the project and for a second round of funding. We didn't receive any answer yet since we contacted them for this request one month ago. If they refuse, we might try with another fund to be able to explore thoroughly the area of interest and to ultimately being able to build a better advocacy for the creation of a natural reserve in this area. Any advice at this stage is also welcomed. We thought that maybe we should reach the end of the project period with MBZ Fund before asking for a second round of grant, but instead we asked in beginning of October.

Whatever happens, we're delighted and proud to publish on GBIF the first dataset for Lebanon. It is already a great achievement for the country and the reluctance of national scientists to share inestimable data with the community.

Sustainability plans

Please provide a description of how the partners involved will build on the results of this project in their future work. This could include future collaborative activities, such as plans to complete any unfinished project activities and how the future impact of the project could be monitored and/or measured. (Max. 200 words).

It is the first time that the NGO Wadi ez-Zouhour is involved in scientific research and botanical surveys in the valley and it was an amazing experience for the NGO which was previously more oriented into social development. We're hoping that the output of this project of data mobilization will efficiently serve the advocacy for the creation of a natural reserve in the valleys. As mentioned above, further exploration has to be carried out in the two other valleys to constitute a fully studied area, but this depends on our ability to bring more funds during for the fieldwork in 2020.

Annex 1 – Additional sources of verification

Sources of verification are for example links to relevant digital documents, news/newsletters, brochures, workshop related documents, pictures, etc.

A link to the video that was realized thanks to the MBZ Species Conservation Fund. The video show the fieldwork carried out in the natural habitats of our target species.

<https://youtu.be/dJ7phsAS5E0>

Annex 2 – Feedback of the reviewers

Critical issue to be addressed in the narrative report:

- No dataset published

Recommended action: Publish the data you already have or else provide a detailed plan of how you will manage data collection, cleaning and publishing in the time remaining.

Answer:

There is no dataset of good quality available and we want to give priority for the last good days of autumn to do data collection. Therefore we chose to provide a detailed plan on how the data collection, cleaning and publishing will be managed using GBIF Calendar of activities: