



VACANCY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates (individual or team) for a consultancy equivalent of ten (10) person-days to contribute to a sub-component of project VARUNA entitled “*Renforcer les capacités, pour la mobilisation et l'utilisation efficace des informations biologiques et écologiques*”. The consultancy consists of: 1) harvesting relevant specimen data available from open herbaria databases to accelerate data entry of the ten Western Indian Ocean Islands herbaria; and 2) propose tools or pipelines to be used to minimise redundant data entry for shared duplicates and to ensure consistency of information about specimens across collections.

1. Overall objectives

The objective of this consultancy is to improve efficiency of digitisation and enhance data quality of the ten herbaria collections in the Western Indian Ocean Islands of Comoros (HKM), Madagascar (TAN, TEF, CNARP, DBEV), Mauritius (MAU), Mayotte (MAO), Réunion (REU, CBNM), and the Seychelles (SEY). The broader aim of this VARUNA project sub-component is to foster accessibility and quality of information stored in herbaria collections to support evidence-based decision making for biodiversity conservation and valuing of the natural capital, including the recognition of the importance of the herbarium collections themselves.

2. Project Background

Madagascar and the islands of the south-west Indian Ocean form one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. The effective conservation of the region's biodiversity rest on a robust understanding of biodiversity information that may be readily made available locally, regionally and beyond. This VARUNA project subcomponent seeks to strengthen the regional collaborative network of herbaria by improving data capture and quality, data sharing, and enhancing institutional capacity for managing botanical collections. A Symbiota portal (<https://wioh.symbiota.org/portal/>) will be used to this end. An assessment of the ten herbaria collections and digitisation from 2024, shown that TAN and TEF have many specimens duplicated in MO and P. As significant collections of TAN are to be databased, harvesting data from already digitised collections could accelerate progress. Also, MAU and REU share duplicates with P and K, often with only one of the herbaria having the original detailed label, while the others have limited information on the labels of duplicates. Cross-checking duplicates could improve data quality across collections.

3. Scope of Work

The consultancy is remote, although if the consultant (or someone in the team) is based in one of the islands, face-to-face meetings could be arranged. Therefore, through electronic

means (e.g. email, video calls, messaging), the consultant or team will 1) Identify the most appropriate methods and tools to harvest data from open sources; 2) Compile and provide these data to the network partners in accessible format (.csv, .xls, or similar); and 3) Develop workflows or recommend easily accessible tools to identify potential duplicates and compare their associated data.

4. Schedule and Work Plan

This is a consultancy for an equivalent of ten (10) person-days within a maximum one-month period to be completed by 12 June 2026. The main deliverables are: 1) A compiled dataset of specimens of the region provided in an easily accessible format, with clear documentation of data sources and methods used; 2) A set of recommended tools and/or workflows for identifying and comparing duplicate specimens. The consultant or team will report to the Principal Investigator (PI) and collaborator, and will record number of hours worked and outputs to be submitted for payment and audit purposes.

5. Payment

The all-inclusive consultancy fee is fixed at 700 Euros per day, summing to 7,000 Euros. The selected consultant or the team will receive the payment upon submission of the agreed and record list of tasks performed. This consultancy is funded by the VARUNA subproject allocated to the University of Mauritius (<https://varuna-biodiversite.org/en/project/projet-2-mobiliser-les-chercheurs-autour-du-capital-naturel/>).

6. Special Conditions

A) Qualifications: The consultant or team (which is understood can have experts of different fields, as plant taxonomy and bioinformatics) should have experience with dedicated herbarium database software. The consultant or someone in the team should have a university degree in a relevant field. Post-graduate qualification in a relevant field will confer an advantage.

B) Facilities to be Provided by the Consultant or the Team: The consultancy fee includes all expenses involved in contacting and gathering necessary information from all herbaria in the region, searching open access databases, and finding or developing tools for duplicate checking.

C) Facilities to be Provided by the Client: The consultancy rate is fixed. The PI and his main collaborator in this sub-project will provide guidance.

D) Other special conditions of consultant or team member: Fluent in French and English.

E) Evaluation Criteria: Based on previous experience on natural history collections and databasing experience, qualifications, language skills, and related experience that would be considered advantageous to the proposed task.

Mode of Application

A letter of application together with (i) A detailed *Curriculum Vitae*, (ii) scanned copies of qualifications, (iii) Other documents that can support special conditions enumerated above and (iv) Suggested plan of work, are to be sent by email to the Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Mauritius, Réduit (Email: deanfjos@uom.ac.mu) with copy to Associate Professor Dr. F. B. Vincent FLORENS, Principal Investigator, Faculty of Science, University of Mauritius, Réduit [Email: Vin.Florens@uom.ac.mu] by **Thursday 07 May 2026 by 16:00 (-4 GMT) latest**. Applications received after the closing date cannot be considered.

The University reserves the right:

- To call for interview only the most appropriately and best qualified applicants.
- Not to make any appointment as a result of this advertisement.
- To conduct a written and aptitude test as and when required.

27 April 2026

**Acting Dean
Faculty of Science**