

WORKSHOP 2

CURATING HERBARIA TO ADDRESS THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

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Description

Herbaria fulfil multiple functions vital to the scientific and conservation responses to the biodiversity crisis. As reference collections, they provide the essential materials for the taxonomic process of naming, classifying and identifying plants. The specimens are records of biodiversity and changing distributions of plants and fungi. Herbaria are also a frontier of biodiversity ‘discovery’, yielding species new to science when accessed by taxonomic experts. This workshop will address the challenge of making herbaria accessible in response to the biodiversity crisis. We will bring together the community responsible for herbarium collections to discuss herbarium curation, collections management, digitisation and resourcing. We will characterise the many contexts in which herbaria operate across the African continent (size, facilities etc) and challenges, some of which threaten the fabric of the collections (e.g. insect pests). Opportunities for shared regional or even pan-African curatorial priorities will be identified, with a view to reducing duplication of effort, leveraging links to herbaria around the world, and making unique collections more accessible.

We plan to share the results – an aligned curatorial response to the biodiversity crisis in Africa - in a publication co-authored by the workshop participants.

Agenda Highlights

Defining shared and unique curation priorities

Identifying opportunities for collaboration between herbaria

Addressing collections management challenges for herbarium curators

Participants: 20

Date: Sunday 3rd August 2025

Duration: Six (6) Hours

Intended Audience: Open to all participants who are responsible for a herbarium collection – please email the organisers if you wish to participate