



Vacancy

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the equivalent of twenty-one working days (21) to work on a sub-component of project VARUNA entitled “*Renforcer les capacités, pour la mobilisation et l’utilisation efficace des informations biologiques et écologiques*”, to create a plan of action for the databasing, imaging and online publishing of biodiversity data contained in the herbaria of the Western Indian Ocean Islands, as a tool to improve curation and increase the long-term use of these natural collections.

1. Overall objectives

The aim is to increase the accessibility of natural history collections in the Western Indian Ocean Islands of Comores, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Réunion, and the Seychelles, through improving the existing network of herbaria. The above mentioned subcomponent of the VARUNA project, aims to train herbarium staff on and foster the implementation of best practice for long-term preservation, databasing and online publishing of herbarium data. The ultimate aim is to foster greater accessibility of information stored in collections to support evidence-based decision making for biodiversity conservation and valuing of the natural capital.

2. Project Background

Madagascar and the islands of the south-west Indian Ocean form one of the world's biodiversity hotspots where high anthropogenic pressures are threatening a diverse and unique biota. Effective biodiversity conservation rest on a robust understanding of biodiversity information that may be readily made available locally, regionally and beyond. This subcomponent of the VARUNA project aims to strengthen the existing collaborative network of herbaria created from the [2015 Biodiversity Program of the Indian Ocean Commission](#), especially by increasing the capture and sharing of data from botanical collections, and enhancing both the human and institutional capacities of constituting, curating and sharing information from the collections in support of biodiversity conservation.

3. Scope of Work

Through electronic means (e.g. email, questionnaires, video calls) and face-to-face meetings, the consultant will evaluate the state of digitization (including databasing, barcoding and imaging) of each of the active herbaria of the region (four in Madagascar, two in Réunion, and one in each of the islands of Comoros, Mauritius, Mayotte and Seychelles). The information will be used to formulate an executable regional plan of action to standardize digitization of specimens (and other related resources when applicable) and for the publishing and maintenance of online databases, which are easily discoverable and accessible. It is expected that nearly all herbaria collections will be digitized, imaged and made available by the end of 2025. The plan of action must also contain recommendations to ensure longer-term sustainability and possibilities of new deliverables after 2025.

4. Schedule and Work Plan

This is a consultancy for a total of twenty-one (21) days over two months. The main milestones to be delivered are: 1) A status report of digitization of the collections of each

herbarium concerned; 2) The needs for digitization for each herbarium concerned; 3) A draft regional plan of action with achievable and measurable targets for digitization and online publishing of collections from around mid-2023 to end of 2025; 4) A final and approved regional plan of action. The consultant will report to the PI and its collaborator once a week.

5. Payment

The consultant will be paid a fixed sum of 320 Euros per day (exchange rate based on the day of grant disbursement to the UoM). Consultant will receive 25% upon submission of the draft regional plan of action, and the remaining at the satisfactory completion of the task. This consultancy is funded by the [VARUNA](#) subproject allocated to the University of Mauritius.

6. Special Conditions

A) Qualifications: The consultant should have experience with botanical taxonomy, use of dedicated herbarium database software, curation (including databasing and imaging) of natural history collections and data publishing. The consultant should have a university degree in a relevant field. Post-graduate qualification in a relevant field will confer an advantage.

B) Past Experience: Proven experience in consultancy.

C) Facilities to be Provided by the Consultant: The consultancy fee includes all expenses involved in contacting and gathering information from all herbaria in the region and developing the regional plan of action.

D) 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 to the Consultant.

E) Other special conditions: Fluent in French and English.

F) Evaluation Criteria: Based on previous experience in consultancy, qualifications, natural history collections experience, language skills, and other 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) consultancy reports/contracts, testimonials, and (iv) other documents that can support special conditions enumerated above are to be sent by email to the Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Mauritius, Réduit (Email: deanfos@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 **Friday 16 June 2023 by 16:00 (-4 GMT) latest**. Applications received after the closing date will not 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.