GBIF

INFORMATION FACILITY

Roles and activities of a node

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NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA
WHERE HERITAGE LIVES ON

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What is a GBIF Participant Node

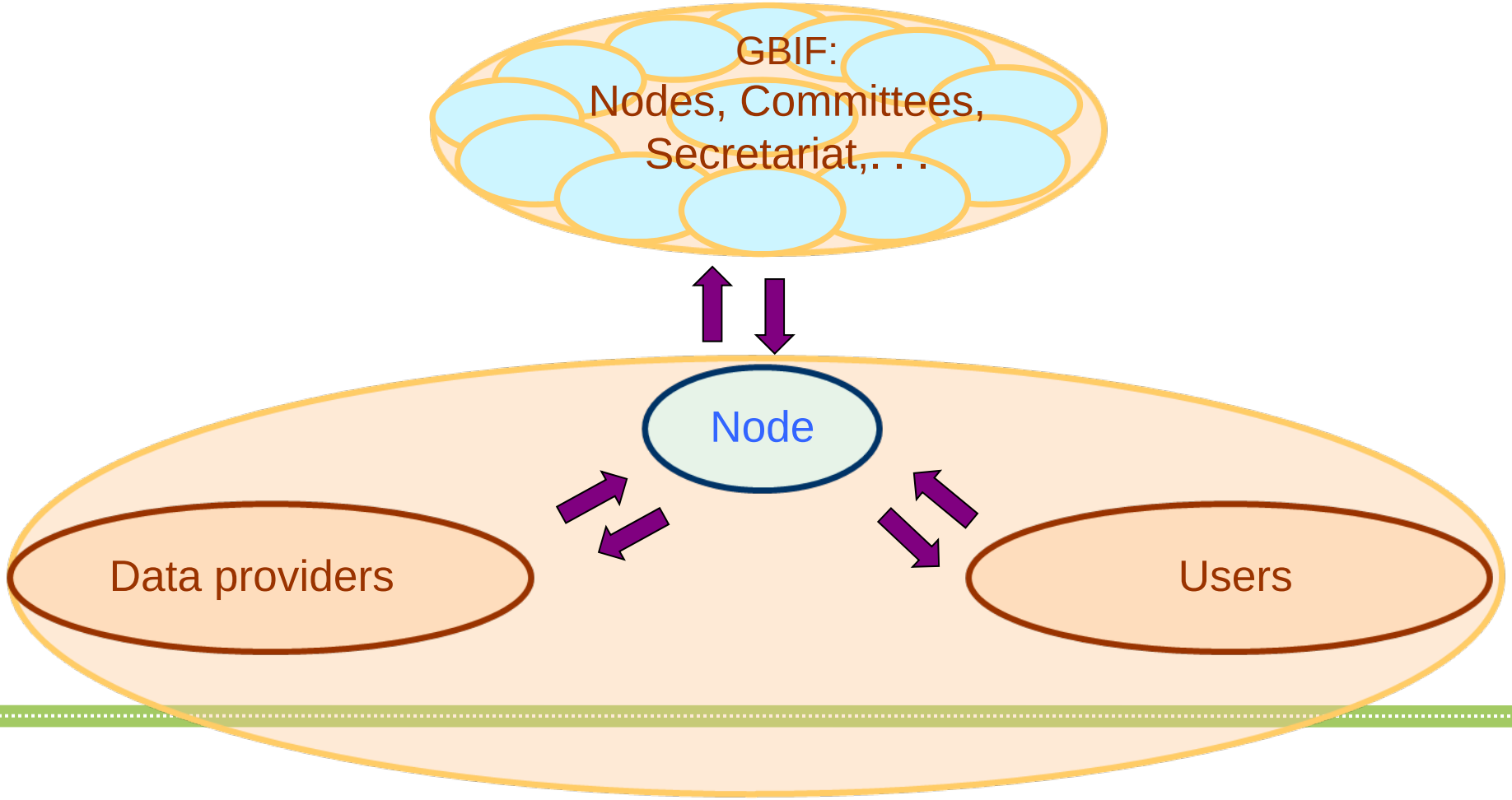
- “A mechanism by which a Participant coordinates and supports its GBIF data-sharing activities”
- A Participant Node includes both physical infrastructure and people.
- Typically a Participant Node:
  - encourages and supports the activities of the Participant’s data providers to both **contribute** and **use** GBIF-served data,
  - provides IT infrastructure and expertise for GBIF activities, and
  - functions as an information gateway among Participants, other partners, and the Secretariat.

Nodes are a key element in GBIF

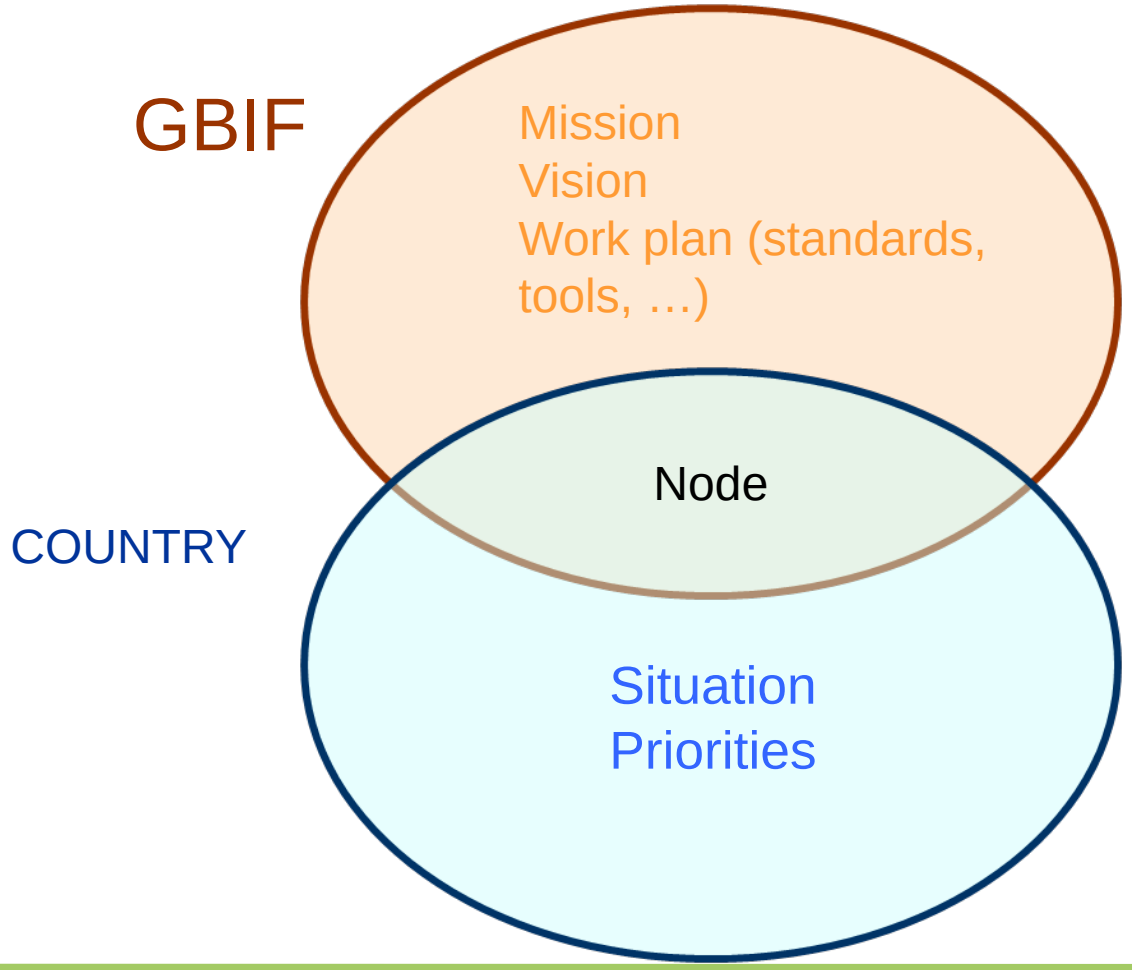
- Nodes are at the front of GBIF activities
  - Contact with the Secretariat
  - Contact with the data providers and users
- In most cases they have the only people in the country working in GBIF activities full time (±)
  - Experience accumulate
    - Challenge: make that experience available to other nodes

Nodes in context

- Nodes, are central in the GBIF organizational and data architecture
- Nodes are crucial to making GBIF a megascience endeavor



Each participant node is different



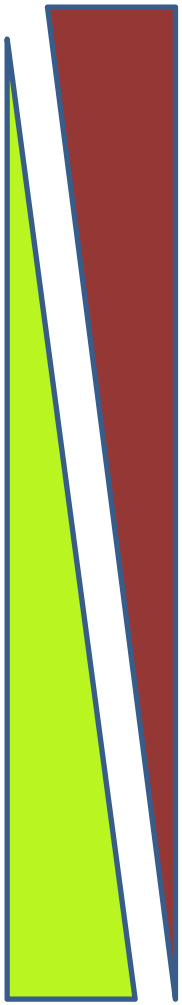
Tolstoi starts Anna Karenina in this way:

"Every happy family is similar to another happy family; every unhappy one is deeply unhappy in its peculiar way"

What do we find in the happy nodes?

- A national mandate
- A budget
- A Coordination Team
- A good engagement with the «Biodiversity Communities»: scientists, managers, policy makers, conservationists,..
- A good engagement with the Country needs and priorities

Node's range of activities



- Data digitalization
- Data publication on-line
- Registration of centers, collections, projects and databases dealing with biodiversity data
- Support and performance assessment for projects and centers
- Support for collection management data publication software and other software tools
- Web communication portal
- Data portal and data hosting services
- Training for providers and users
- Fostering participation: Outreach, community building & data dissemination
- Participation at international level (GBIFS, TDWG, other nodes)

Node's range of activities (other view)

- Build capacity
- Provide Informatics infrastructure
- Build , maintain support communities; build bridges between them
- Build efficiencies:
  - Standards
  - Disseminate good procedures, tools
  - Identify redundancies, gaps; work to solve them
  - Align national and international priorities
- Participate at the global and regional levels

Perceived as a success in the country

- Serving the scientists
  - Provides training
  - Brings resources for the whole scientific process
  - Solve problems (technical assistance, liaisoning)
  - Keep them informed
- Fulfills the expectations of the supporting bodies
  - Better science? Better collections? International leadership? Access to data for biodiversity conservation and management? Millennium Development Goals?

The Node has to build trust

The node is there to help; it is not a competitor, nor a dictator, it has to work to facilitate the work of the communities.

The node does not apply for grants, does not hold collections, does not use data, does not treat its host preferentially

…does not take advantage of its position

As a way of conclusion

"it is essential that all GBIF members will see this [GBIF] as a partnership. So the Secretariat Staff has to be very conscious about this: that they are not the top of an hierarchical system but are servants to the partnership … The next problem is to make sure that national agencies, who are nodes, should also see themselves as servants to a national partnership."

Jon Fjeldså
Copenhagen Zoological Museum
GBIF Outreach & Capacity Building Subcommittee

GBIF guidance to new GBIF Participants on how to establish a Participant Node

- **Towards establishing a functional GBIF Participant Node: definitions and general consideration**
  - http://www2.gbif.org/Nodes_establishing.pdf
- **The role and mandate of GBIF Participant Nodes at the national level**
  - http://www2.gbif.org/Nodes_role.pdf
- **Setting up a Participant Node coordinating unit: suggestions on structure and staff requirements**
  - http://www2.gbif.org/Nodes_staffing_en.pdf

For more information:

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