

SAFRINET, THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN NETWORK OF BIONET-INTERNATIONAL

SAFRINET is the southern African network of BioNET-International and an official project of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) FANR (Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources). SAFRINET is a network of people, the providers and users of taxonomic services, and its purpose is building capacity for these services. SAFRINET networks frequently with BioNET's East and West African networks.

SAFRINET was asked by the SADC plant inspectors to build the capacity they need to fulfil their daily function of ensuring that pests, diseases and alien invasive species do not move through national ports of importation and exportation. This has therefore become the thrust of SAFRINET's activities. Because it is beyond SAFRINET's reach to train taxonomists and ensure that they will be able to provide taxonomic services, it appears that the development of suitable tools and training for inspectors to do their own identifications is the way to go. Current activities involve networking to establish the best mechanism to deliver what the SADC plant inspectors require. It appears as if technology will be used, but the type of tools has not yet been established.

SAFRINET networks widely and is a member of GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility). At this stage SAFRINET does not have the resources, or see the need, to have its own information node and has therefore developed an association with the South African node (SABIF).

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