

September 2015



Quarterly update from the Global *Musa* Genetic Resources Network
www.musanet.org

Regional Workshop on Plantain Characterization and Documentation at CARBAP in Cameroon, 11-15 May 2015

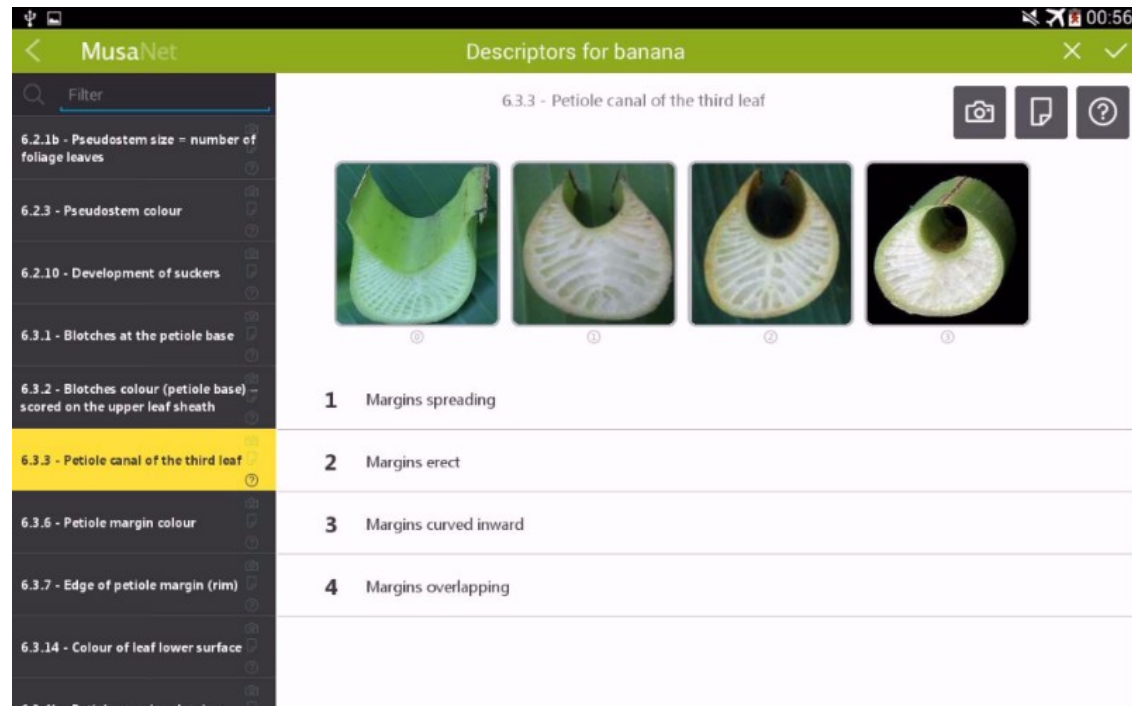
A MusaNet regional workshop on plantain characterization and documentation was held at the Centre Africain de Recherches sur Bananiers et Plantains (CARBAP), in Njombé, Cameroon, from 11-15 May 2015. In attendance were 12 invited curators of national *Musa* collections across West and Central Africa, key experts, and staff from CARBAP and Bioversity. On the agenda was the development of a minimum list of descriptors for plantain, field and documentation management. A major highlight of the week was the field component, where the curators tested descriptors that are particularly discriminating for plantains with a new mobile device application (see below). The programme and descriptor lists were developed by an Expert Team from CARBAP and Bioversity, led by *Musa* taxonomists Edmond de Langhe and Kodjo Tomekpe. The successful workshop was financed by the European Union.

[Read more here](#)

Mobile Device Application for *Musa* Field Characterization

One of the focus topics of the CARBAP workshop (see above) was the trial of a new mobile device application for *Musa* field characterization. The yet

unnamed application was used by the 12 curators in the field sessions, who then delivered vital feedback that is being used to fine-tune the software before its official release later this year. The European funding also allowed the curators to each take a tablet back to their national collections.



Position Paper on Distribution of BSV Infected Germplasm

As part of the MusaNet Conservation Thematic Group, a task force of virologists and genebank curators from the University of Queensland, the ITC, IITA and CIRAD conducted a workshop in Montpellier on 5th May 2015 to develop a strategy for the exchange of germplasm infected with endogenous Banana Streak Viruses (BSVs). This would have major implications for the *Musa* research community; for example, it would allow the distribution of over 300 accessions (mostly plantains) currently held in the ITC *in vitro* collection. The Position Paper prepared by the task force was posted on the MusaNet website in August so that MusaNet and ProMusa members can give their feedback on the proposal before the task force finalizes it in October.

[Read more here](#)

Integration of GMGC into MusaNet

The Global *Musa* Genomics Consortium (GMGC), an international network of scientists applying genomics tools to better understand and utilize the banana, will from now on be the 5th thematic group within Musanet, the Genomics Thematic Group (GTG).



This integration brings together under one network scientists who already have strong ties through research, and allows GMGC members to join the other thematic groups (Conservation, Diversity, Evaluation and Information) according to their research interests, thereby fostering more collaboration. Instructions for GMGC members on MusaNet membership will be announced soon.

Edmond de Langhe's lasting contribution to MusaNet



Edmond de Langhe, one of the foremost *Musa* taxonomists and Professor Emeritus at KULeuven, served as the Chair of the Diversity Thematic Group (DTG) since MusaNet's launch in 2011 and is a founding member of the Taxonomic Advisory Group (TAG) among many other activities. He was instrumental in developing the first Global *Musa* Strategy in 2006 and is leading the revised Strategy and seeing to its successful completion before the end of this year. Edmond also led the development of the Taxonomic Reference Collection (TRC) and contributed his expertise to the ongoing Field Verification Exercise that ensures the genetic integrity of ITC germplasm. Edmond was also key in the development of three successful workshops on *Musa* characterisation and documentation (Guadeloupe, India and Cameroon). These are only a few examples of his impact in the field of *Musa* genetic resources in recent years. Edmond stepped down as the chair of the DTG in June 2015. MusaNet will be poorer without his leadership, but would like to thank him for his important contributions. Fortunately, he will

remain involved as an active member and is always ready to respond to fellow scientists. Thank you Edmond!

Upcoming Events

No MusaNet events are planned at present

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