

Collaboration Nature4Life and Brazilian BIOTA program.

In 2017 the *Nature4Life* knowledge agenda was formally presented to Sander Dekker, the former Secretary of State OCW. The initial focus of *Nature4Life* was on the Netherlands, but the themes presented in the agenda also have a global relevance and impact. Therefore, in an early stage it was decided that also collaboration with international partners would be initiated. The initial focus has been on Brazil as it is one of the seventeen biodiversity megadiverse countries as recognized by the Conservation International; home to 13 to 18% of all species found on the planet. For the promoters of *Nature4Life* Brazil is the perfect living lab in studying the major knowledge gaps concerning biodiversity research and to come up with solutions towards societal issues, and our researchers involved already had a standing research involvement in the country.

The collaboration has been sought with the BIOTA program that has been supported by São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) since 1999, so more than 18 years. The program is a Virtual Biodiversity Institute bringing together more than 1200 scientists from leading universities, research institutes and non-governmental organizations in the state of São Paulo (such as Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Universidade de São Paulo, Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio de Mesquita Filho, and the Instituto de Botânica / Jardim Botânico de São Paulo) to participate in joint research projects. The program has funded more than 270 major projects leading to information on more than 15000 species, of which 3000 new to science, circa 1800 scientific articles and 25 books. Most impressively, and proof of its success, in the state of São Paulo 23 legal instruments (laws, decrees and resolutions) were prepared on the basis of the results of the program, with the program actually mentioned in the legal instrument.

In order to kick-start and further facilitate the collaboration we organized a workshop in November 2016 in São Paulo (financed by NWO-ALW) bringing together Dutch researchers from the *Nature4Life* consortium and Brazilian researchers of the BIOTA program to discuss the major challenges towards biodiversity and biodiversity research.



The discussions during the workshop and visits to research institutes showed a common interest and urgency, and four major challenges were recognized (*how to advance biodiversity discovery, (inter)species identification and description of the functional diversity; understanding of ecosystem functions and services and the correlation with biodiversity; understanding global change, the correlation with and*

impact on biodiversity and to predict and monitor future changes, and how to get the general public involved, and; how to reach sustainable socio-ecological systems).

The found common interest led to a second workshop towards formulating one specific flagship project to initiate the collaboration between BIOTA and Nature4life. In between the workshops and during the second workshop held in February 2018 (again in São Paulo) we jointly worked towards the concept of a collaborative project towards 'A functional analysis of the Atlantic Forest for successful restoration and sustainable use of tropical forests'. The workshop showed that there is a lot of enthusiasm to work together (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYYcJUmKA9M>) with almost one hundred Brazilian participants during the open sessions.



Around 20 Dutch and 20 Brazilian researchers contributed to the flagship idea. Currently we have identified eight objectives (1 Learning from the past to inform AF restoration, 2 Study of the plant and soil community composition of AF, 3 Study of the environmental services of the AF, 4 Study of the species interactions in AF, 5 An integrated approach to socio-ecological systems, 6 Study of the socio-economic aspects of forest use restoration and conservation of the AF, 7 Extending the research infrastructure, 8 Translating the results towards stakeholders) and four priority areas.

NWO-FAPESP bilateral call

FAPESP and NWO have a formal collaboration since 2013, with an annual bilateral call (e.g. on bio-based economy, sustainable urban development). Both organizations have been involved with this initiative since the beginning, and it is great to announce that our efforts have been recognized. NWO and FAPESP have agreed that their 2018 bilateral call will be on *biodiversity*. It is expected that the call will formally open at the end of April or beginning of May. This will be the perfect opportunity to initiate the abovementioned collaboration.