

Submission

2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Capability Issues Paper

Name	David Johnson
Title/role	PhD ecology researcher
Organisation	Australian National University

Question 19: Are there any international research infrastructure collaborations or emerging projects that Australia should engage in over the next ten years and beyond?

Last year I visited two sites belonging to Germany's Biodiversity Exploratories (<http://www.biodiversity-exploratories.de/1/home/>).

The project was established 10 years ago to facilitate biodiversity research in grassland and forest ecosystems in Germany, with the following overall study objectives: (i) the understanding of the relationship between biodiversity of different taxa and levels, (ii) the role of land use and management for biodiversity, and (iii) the role of biodiversity for ecosystem processes.

While the ecosystems in Germany are different in many ways to Australian ecosystems, the questions about biodiversity and its relationship with land use and management are equally important in Australia. The BE research facilities not only facilitate research into known questions, the ongoing accumulation of data relating to a broad range of taxa - from microbes to mammals - provides time-series data allowing research to also investigate new questions as they arise, potentially without the need for further field research.

I believe that a similar proactive approach to biodiversity research on important threatened ecosystems in Australia, such as grassy woodlands, would accelerate our understanding and vastly improve our ability to manage them in ways that will arrest further degradation.