



SLU-Global Bioinformatics Centre

by Erik Bongcam-Rudloff

Head of SGBC, EMBnet Chairman

The SLU-Global Bioinformatics Centre (SGBC) is part of the Core Facility at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU); it is a research and education initiative that aims to build a sustainable bioinformatics infrastructure serving SLU and life-science research communities in Sweden and beyond.

SLU focuses on “*areas of strategic importance to the SLU concept of operations and educational mission*”, “*pursues research of the highest quality and international excellence in these strategic areas*” and provides “*environments that promote and stimulate pioneering excellence in research.*”

One of the most important ways to realise these goals is to participate in projects and initiatives with leading international and national institutions. Accordingly, SGBC has initiated and joined projects that agglutinate leading bioinformatics groups both in Europe and worldwide.

A major project that SGBC coordinates is the ~€2 million, 3-year [EU Horizon 2020 B3Africa](#) initiative. B3Africa brings together 11 partners from African and European countries to develop a collaborative framework and informatics infrastructure to accelerate and facilitate biomedical research across continents – to address global health challenges together.

SGBC has helped build a strong bioinformatics facility at BECA/ILRI, Nairobi (KE), where, annually, it jointly delivers an advanced course for researchers across East and Central Africa. This work was initiated with the collaboration of the Kenya EMBnet node.

EBioKits were deployed at 6 National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in Cameroon (University of Buea), Kenya (KALRO), Sudan (National Center for Research), Tanzania (MARI) and Uganda

(NARO & Makerere). More than 100 scientists from NARS received bioinformatics training using the eBioKit via in-country institutional capacity-building workshops and group training workshops at the BecA-ILRI Hub.

SGBC is one of the founding members of [GOBLET](#), the Global Organisation for Bioinformatics Learning, Education and Training, and provides the eBioKit stand-alone bioinformatics platform to the GOBLET portal.

SGBC is also active in [H3ABioNet](#) activities. H3ABioNet is a Pan African Bioinformatics network comprising 32 bioinformatics research groups distributed amongst 15 African countries, and 2 partner Institutions based in the USA, which will support H3Africa researchers and their projects while developing bioinformatics capacity within Africa. SGBC provides eBioKits and training. More about SGBC at <http://sgbc.slu.se>.





GOBLET in 2015

by Teresa K. Attwood

At a meeting held during its 24th AGM in Uppsala (SE), June 2012, EMBnet and leaders of nine other bioinformatics, biocuration, biocomputing and computational biology societies and networks agreed to establish an umbrella organisation to coordinate bioinformatics training activities world-wide. The vision was to work together to solve a common problem: specifically, how to deliver tangible benefits to local communities with limited funds and just a handful of time-pressed volunteers. Thus was born GOBLET, the Global Organisation for Bioinformatics Learning, Education and Training.

Within months, GOBLET was established as a legal foundation, to provide a global, sustainable support structure to foster international communities of bioinformatics trainers and trainees. The foundation aimed to facilitate bioinformatics capacity development in all countries; to develop standards and best-practice guidelines for bioinformatics training; to act as a hub for fund gathering; and to reach out to high-school teachers, to bridge the gap to the next generation of bioinformaticians.

Remarkably, GOBLET is already preparing for its 5th AGM, and membership has grown more than threefold. As with all volunteer-based organisations, GOBLET relies on the commitment and passion of its members – the goodwill is tangible, and the outputs impressive for such a young organisation.

Notable highlights from the past year's main achievements include welcoming two new organisational members (the University of Cambridge and the Galaxy Training Network); publishing an overview paper in *PLOS CB*; co-organising several training workshops (at ISMB 2015, Dublin (IE); at TGAC, Norwich (UK); in Ljubljana (SI) with ELIXIR-SI; in Sao Paulo (BR), during the 11th International Conference of the AB3C and Brazilian Bioinformatics Symposium; and at GOBLET's 2015 AGM, Cape Town (ZA)); presenting a poster at ISMB 2015 and securing our 1st promotional booth; and planning the 5th AGM in Brisbane (AU), to be held early November, 2016.

To consolidate the outputs of some of its workshops, GOBLET is preparing two further articles for publication. In the coming years, the foundation also aims to develop high-quality, branded courses and materials, with support from a substantial donation pledged by EMBnet – an achievement of which EMBnet can be justly proud. To learn more, visit www.mygoblet.org and join us: www.mygoblet.org/about-us/membership.



2015 AGM Cape Town, South Africa



The Global Bioinformatics Network

EMBnet.digest

EMBnet.Spotlight is a quarterly release of InFocus sections published in EMBnet.digest (www.embnet.org/embnet-digest), EMBnet's monthly publication that provides a round-up of news from the community. The InFocus section features member activities, projects, initiatives, etc., especially from new members, that may be of interest both to the network and to EMBnet's associated communities, societies and projects.