

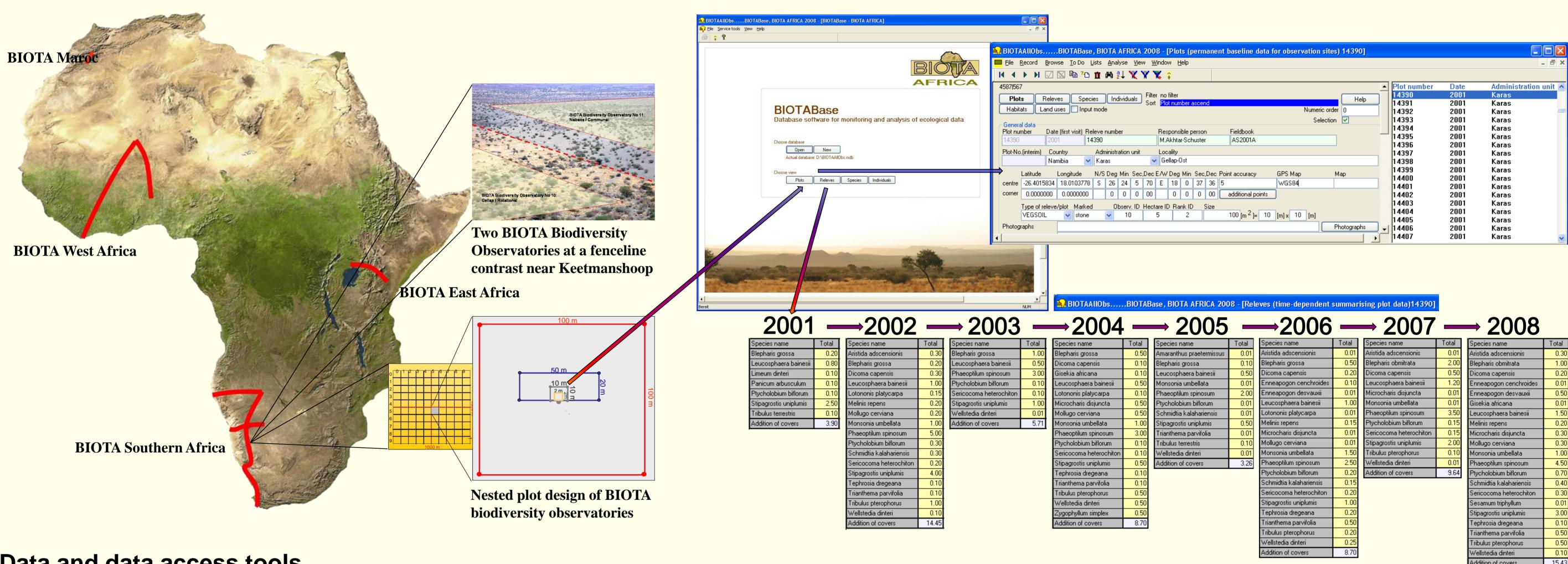


BioMonitoring Data Facility

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The BioMonitoring Data Facility forms a joint infrastructure of all regional projects, BIOTA Maroc, BIOTA East Africa, BIOTA West Africa, and BIOTA Southern Africa. BIOTA AFRICA aims at providing robust scientific information about the current status, recent change and future development of biodiversity in hot spot areas of the African continent. To reach these objectives, a vast array of data has to be managed and made available under the aspects of different user interests, dissemination of scientifically meaningful data and results and long-term availability and utilisability. The present activities of the BioMonitoring Data Facility include the continuous effort to inventory and archive all central biota data, the presentation of data and information by internet and the web-facilitation of communication between all BIOTA partners.



Data and data access tools

Since the start of the BIOTA AFRICA project eight years ago, a wide array of digital data has been gathered by over 50 subprojects, work- packages, core topics of BIOTA and associated projects. Due to the different subjects and key questions within the various disciplines, this data is of relatively heterogeneous structure. For establishing a BIOTA AFRICA data archive, the data files in their different formats have been collected and archived in a central data pool at the IT centre at the University of Hamburg. BIOTA AFRICA project participants and third parties are provided with data based on a Data Sharing Protocol. A subset of monitoring data is stored in the BIOTABase database system. African zoological voucher specimens from several BIOTA AFRICA subprojects are collected and digitised with the BIODAT database. Online photographic guides help to identify plants from the African ecosystems. Also the tools of the Diversity Workbench and Navikey provide data gathered within the context of BIOTA AFRICA. Much data are available online via the BioCase and GBIF portals. In the long run such data pools are best located at Natural History Collections as so-called Memory Institutions. On the internet a user can look for available data. There is more than one way to search and find data: A first look for an observatory and then what data are available or a first look for a topic and then at which observatories data are available.

