



19th Annual International
Biocuration Conference

CONFERENCE AGENDA

20 - 24 April 2026
Cape Town, South Africa



BIOCURATION 2026
Cape Town, South Africa

19th Annual International Biocuration Conference

Workshops: Day 1

Monday, 20 April 2026

Time	Venue: Atlantic 1	Venue: Pacific 2
08:00-10:30	<i>Cont'd</i>	Pathways towards biocuration: an African perspective for supporting biocuration within LMICs Dr ThankGod Ebenezer, European Bioinformatics Institute
10:30 - 11:00	Tea Break (Atlantic 2)	
11:00 - 13:00	Spatial Transcriptomics for the Data-Minded: Blueprints for Developing Metadata Standards for Adoption by a Community Mx Wei Kheng Teh, European Bioinformatics Institute	<i>Cont'd</i>
13:00 -14:00	Lunch (Au Bleu)	

Workshops: Day 1

Monday, 20 April 2026

14:00–16:00

Genotype Imputation and Data Analysis for African Populations: A Hands-on Tutorial Using AfriGen-D's Curated African Genomic Resources

Mr Mamana Mbiyavanga, University of Cape Town

Cont'd

16:00–16:30

Tea Break (Atlantic 2)

16:30–18:00

Cont'd

Community-Driven Biocuration for Microbiome Research: A Workshop on the BugSigDB Semantic

Dr Svetlana Ugarcina Perovic, & Ms Chioma Oselu, University of Trento

Workshops: Day 2

Tuesday, 21 April 2026

Time	Venue: Atlantic 1	Venue: Pacific 2
08:00-10:30	<p>Pharmacogenomics in Africa: Ethics, Consent, Data Governance, and Equity</p> <p>Prof Collet Dandara, Ms Nosipho Mabizela, University of Cape Town</p>	<p>Sharing, Searching, and Analyzing Bio-medical Data using the Open-source Gen3 Platform for Building Data Commons, Meshes, and Hubs</p> <p>Dr Christopher Meyer, University of Chicago</p>
10:30 - 11:00	Tea Break (Atlantic 2)	
11:00 - 13:00	<p>FAIR-enabling standards, repositories and policies - How FAIR-sharing helps You</p> <p>Dr Allyson Lister, University of Oxford</p>	<p>Structuring Scientific Knowledge with Ontologies</p> <p>Dr Elliot Sollis, European Bioinformatics Institute</p>
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch (Au Bleu)	
14:00 - 16:00	<p>Motivate, Incentivise, Curate: Turning Scientists into Data Contributors</p> <p>Dr Maja Rey, Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies</p>	<p>Elevate Your Impact: Building Data Portals with Overture</p> <p>Mr Mitchell Shiell, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research</p>
16:00 - 16:30	Tea Break (Atlantic 2)	

Workshops: Day 2
Tuesday, 21 April 2026

16:30 - 18:00

Overview of curation and resources to facilitate genetic analysis for rare disease

Dr Marina DiStefano,
The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

Cont'd

Conference: Day 1

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

Time	Session (Venue: Atlantic 1)
09:00–09:45	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Welcome from Hosts & ISB: Lyndon Zass, Victoria Nembaware (5 min)</p> <p>High School Student Engagement Showcase (5mins)</p> <p>High School Student Engagement Showcase (5mins)</p> <p>Dean Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Faculty of Health Sciences , University of Cape Town, Faculty of Health Sciences (10 min)</p> <p>ISB Representative - Victoria Nugnes, Peter Uetz (10 min)</p> <p>Tribute Amos Bairoch - Frederique Lisacek (10 min)</p>
09:45 –10:30	<p>Keynote 1: Networks and Networking</p> <p>Prof. Ruth Lovering (University College London, UK) — 2026 Exceptional Contribution to Biocuration Award</p> <p>Chair: Dr Peter Uetz</p>
10:30 – 11:30	<p>Tea Break & Poster Session (Atlantic Foyer)</p>
11:30 – 13:00	<p>Session 1: Methods and Techniques for Biocuration</p> <p>Co-Chairs: Prof Nicola Mulder</p> <p>Rapporteur: Tshinakaho Malesa, Rym el Fessi</p>

Conference: Day 1

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

11:30 – 11:50

The AI-Augmented Curator: Ambition, Risk and the Future of Biological Databases

Dr Alex Bateman (European Bioinformatics Institute, UK)

11:50 – 12:00

The eLwazi (DSI) Platform: AI-Assisted Data Harmonization and Metadata Curation for Multi-Site Health Research in Africa

Mr Mugume Twinamatsiko Atwine (African Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics, Uganda)

12:00 – 12:10

Classifying African and Non-African Genetic Studies in PubMed is NLP Techniques

Dr Anisah Ghoorah (University of Mauritius, Mauritius)

12:10 – 12:20

Refining Bioassay Metadata in ChEMBL: Standardized Curation Templates, NLP Pipelines, and Enhanced Assay Classification

Dr Barbara Zdrzil (European Bioinformatics Institute, UK)

12:20 – 12:30

TrANCES-PRS Dock: A Curated and Containerized Resource of Multi-Ancestry Polygenic Risk Scoring Tools for Reproducible Benchmarking

Ms Blessing Oselu (Covenant University, Nigeria)

12:30 – 12:50

Panel Discussion

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch (Au Bleu)

Conference: Day 1
Wednesday, 22 April 2026

14:00 – 15:00 **Session 2: Methods and Techniques for Biocuration**
Co-Chairs: Prof Lynn Schriml

Rapporteur: Sindi Lukhele, Nouha Miled

14:00 – 14:10

Identification of curatable papers through an AI pipeline in COSMIC

Dr Rachel Lyne (Wellcome Sanger Institute, UK)

14:10 – 14:20

Building an African Pangenome Reference Graph

Prof Yasmina Fakim (Mauritius)

14:20 – 14:30

Knowing is not enough; we must apply: the case for rigorous microRNA annotation standards

Prof Bastian Fromm (The Arctic University Museum of Norway, Norway)

14:30 – 14:40

Synthetic Data Augmentation for African Genomic Research: A Transversal Approach for Enhancing Beta-Globin Gene Diversity in Precision Medicine

Mr Kwetchi Takam Ezekiel (University of Geneva, Switzerland)

14:40 – 15:00

Panel Discussion

15:00 – 16:00

Tea Break & Poster Session (Atlantic 2)

16:00 – 17:30

Session 3: Global Diversity in Biocuration

Co-Chairs: **Ms Munadia Ansarie**

Rapporteur: Verena Ras, Marwa Khediri

Conference: Day 1

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

16:00 – 16:20

The African Population Ontology (AfPO): Building a Framework for representing African Populations

Dr Melek Chaouch (Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia)

16:20 – 16:30

Lessons Learned from Developing Contextual Metadata Standards for African Health Data: Insights from Neonatal Sepsis and Cholera.

Dr Dominique Anderson (South African National Bioinformatics Institute, University of the Western Cape)

16:30 – 15:40

Developing Clinical Phenotype Data Collection Standards for Research in Africa

Mrs Katherine Johnston (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

16:40 – 17:00

Panel Discussion

19:00

Welcome Cocktail (Venue: Atlantic 1)

Conference: Day 2
Thursday, 23 April 2026

Time	Session (Venue: Atlantic 1)
09:00 – 10:30	Session 4: Capacity Building & Infrastructure Development in Biocuration & Emerging Regions Co-Chairs: Dr Fouzia Radouani Rapporteur: Sindi Lukhele, Nouha Miled
09:00 – 09:20	Harnessing Africa's Population Cohorts: The APCC Contribution to Capacity Building, Training, and Infrastructure Development Dr Kobus Herbst (Africa Health Research Institute, South Africa)
09:20 – 09:30	From local to global: benefit and risk of using cloud resources Prof Masanori Arita (National Institute of Genetics, Japan)
09:30 – 09:40	Enhancing Immunological Data Quality and Interoperability: The Biocuration Strategy of NF-DI4Immuno Dr Sebastian Böhm (Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, Germany)
09:40 – 09:50	The African Bioinformatics Institute: A Pan-African Initiative for Bioinformatics Innovation Prof Nicola Mulder (University of Cape Town, South Africa)
09:50 – 10:10	Panel Discussion
10:10 – 11:00	Tea Break (Atlantic 2)

Conference: Day 2
Thursday, 23 April 2026

**Session 5: Career Landscape in Biocuration -
Challenges & Opportunities (Panel)**

Co-Chairs: TBA

Panelists:

11:00 – 12:00

1. **Dr Nicola Mulder (University of Cape Town, South Africa)**
2. **Dr Peter Uetz (Virginia Commonwealth University, USA)**
3. **Dr Marina DiStefano (The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, USA)**
4. **Mr Gabriel Agulhas (Western Cape Education Department, South Africa)**
5. **Dr Mónica Muñoz Torres (University of Colorado Anschutz, USA)**

Rapporteur: Tony Li, Tendayi Mutangadari

12: 00 –12:45

Keynote 2: Data curation across Africa's infectious disease landscape

Prof Alan Christoffels (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)

Chair: **Dr Fouzia Radouani**

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch (Au Bleu)

Conference: Day 2
Thursday, 23 April 2026

14:00 – 15:30	Session 6: Databases, Knowledgebases and Knowledge Graphs Co-Chairs: Dr Peter Uetz Rapporteur: Chandre Oosterwyk-Liu, Tanian Natus-Isaacs
14:00 – 14:20	BioVerse: Indigenous Indian Bio-resources as a Platform for Global Synergy Dr Nivedita Yadav (Indian Biological Data Centre, India)
14:20 – 14:30	Semantic analysis of the GlyCosmos Glycoscience Portal integrating glycoscience knowledge Prof Kiyoko Aoki-Kinoshita (Soka University, Japan)
14:30 – 14:40	The African Genomics Medicine Portal (AGMP): A Web Portal dedicated to African-ancestry genomics information Dr Marwa Khedhiri (Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia)
14:40 – 14:50	Exploring disease drivers in the Human Disease Ontology Knowledgebase Prof Lynn Schriml (University of Maryland School of Medicine, USA)
14:50 – 15:10	Panel Discussion
15:10 – 15:30	Inqaba Biotec
15:30 – 16:30	Tea Break & Poster Session (Atlantic 2)

Conference: Day 2

Thursday, 23 April 2026

16:30 – 18:00	Session 7: Databases, Knowledgebases and Knowledge Graphs Co-Chairs: Dr Victoria Nugnes Rapporteur: Verena Ras, Marwa Khediri
16:30 – 16:40	AGVD curation: Quality control and annotation of African Genomic Variation Datasets Mr Ayton Meintjes (University of Cape Town, South Africa)
16:40 – 16:50	Plant Reactome Knowledgebase: 2026 Updates and Future Direction Dr Sushma Naithani (Oregon State University, USA)
16:60 – 17:00	SABIO-RK at 20 Years: A Modernized Resource for Curated Biochemical Reaction Kinetics Dr Maja Rey (Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies, Germany)
17:00 – 17:10	Development of the TogoMCP Server to Facilitate Access to RDF Portal Dr Yasunori Yamamoto (Research Organization of Information and Systems, Japan)
17:10 – 17:30	Panel Discussion
19:00	Conference Dinner (Venue: Gold's Restaurant)

Conference: Day 3
Friday, 24 April 2026

Time	Session (Venue: Atlantic 1)
09:00 - 10:30	Session 8: Data Standards and Ontologies Co-Chairs: Dr Melek Chaouch Rapporteur: Sindi Lukhele, Nouha Miled
09:00 - 09:20	Bridging the Gap: Foundational Criteria and Standards for AI-Ready Biomedical Data Dr Mónica Muñoz Torres (University of Colorado Anschutz, USA)
09:20 - 09:30	Spatial Transcriptomics: adopting a unified metadata standard and submission platform Mx Wei Kheng Teh (EMBL-EBI, UK)
09:30 - 09:40	Ordering the Disorder: IDPO Structures the knowledge on Intrinsically Disordered Proteins Dr M. Victoria Nugnes (University of Padova, Italy)
09:40 - 09:50	Prediction of intrinsic disorder function in the Critical Assessment of Protein Function Annotation Prof Damiano Piovesan (University of Padova, Italy)
09:50 - 10:10	Panel Discussion
10:10 - 11:00	Tea Break & Poster Session (Atlantic 2)

Conference: Day 3
Friday, 24 April 2026

11:00 – 11:45 **Plenary 3: The African Open Science Platform (AOSP) – Implementing African Open Science Vision**

Dr Tshiamo Motshegwa (African Open Science Platform, Botswana)

Chair: **Dr Victoria Nembaware**

11:50 – 13:00 **Session 9: Ethics, Data & Governance**

Co-Chairs: **Dr Victoria Nembaware**

Rapporteur: Tshinikaho Malesa, Rym el Fessi

11:50 – 12:00 **From Principles to Practice: ADBEx Tools for Equitable Data and Biospecimen Sharing**

Prof Nicki Tiffin (South African National Bioinformatics Institute, South Africa)

12:00 – 12:10 **Enabling Reproducible and Shareable Research with FAIRDOME-SEEK and FAIRDOMHub**

Dr Ulrike Wittig (Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies, Germany)

12:10 – 12:20 **Biodata infrastructure: towards global contribution and global benefit**

Dr Guy Cochrane (EMBL-EBI, United Kingdom)

Conference: Day 3
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12:20 - 12:30

From FAIR to Just, Sovereign and Inclusive Stewardship of African Health Research Data

Dr Nchangwi Munung (University of Cape Town, South Africa, South Africa)

12:30 - 12:50

Panel Discussion

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch (Au Bleu)

Session 10: Environmental, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience

14:00 - 15:00

Co-Chairs: **Dr Verena Ras**

Rapporteur: Chandre Oosterwyk-Liu, Tanian Natus-Isaacs

14:00 - 14:20

Curating the tiny regulators with big issues

Prof Saurabh Raghuvanshi (University of Delhi, India)

14:20 - 14:30

Curating species descriptions for 12,000 species of reptiles

Dr Peter Uetz (Virginia Commonwealth University, USA)

14:30 - 14:40

Linking Environmental Policy, Community Well-being, and Biocuration of Ecosystem Data

Dr Mir Mehrdad Mirsanjari (Malayer University, Iran)

14:40 - 15:00

Panel Discussion

15:00 - 15:30

Tea Break (Atlantic 2)

Session 11: Future of Biocuration and Expansion of Communities of Practice (Panel)

Co-Chairs: Dr Rolanda Julius (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Panelists:

15:30 – 16:30

1. **Mr Kwetchi Takam Ezekiel (University of Geneva, Switzerland)**
2. **Mr Temitope Kolawole (Redeemer's University, Nigeria)**
3. **Dr Dominique Anderson (South African National Bioinformatics Institute, University of the Western Cape, South Africa)**
4. **Dr Alex Bateman (European Bioinformatics Institute, UK)**
5. **Dr Tsaone Tamuhla (South African National Bioinformatics Institute, University of the Western Cape, South Africa)**

Rapporteur: Tony Li, Tendayi Mutangadari

Closing Ceremony

16:30 - 17:00

Announcement of 2027 Conference Venue, **Prof Masanori Arita, Victoria Nugnes, Peter Uetz** (10 min)

Fellowship Prize Giving (10 min), **Sindi Lukhele**

Closing Remarks (10 min), **Lyndon Zass, Victoria Nembaware**

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BOOKLET

