CALL FOR SUPPORT

Secure the future of **BHL** Biodiversity Heritage Library

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) – the world's largest open-access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives – is seeking partnership opportunities to support its operational functions and technical infrastructure. This Call for Support follows the [Smithsonian Institution's decision](#) to conclude its long-standing role as BHL's host on 1 January 2026.

JOIN US: LEAD THE FUTURE OF BHL

We invite expressions of interest from institutions and stakeholders to host one or more of BHL's operational and technical roles and services. Our goal is to ensure continuity, resilience and growth for this essential global biodiversity infrastructure.

Hosting a BHL role or service is a powerful way to contribute to global science, champion open access to knowledge, and preserve the world's biodiversity heritage. As a host, your institution will take on a pivotal leadership role, and this significant responsibility brings substantial rewards: long-term prestige, strengthened global networks, and the opportunity to advance your mission by positioning your organization at the forefront of a global biodiversity infrastructure.

We encourage our partners, collaborators, and user communities to share this call widely to help us reach stakeholders with the capacity and commitment to support BHL's next chapter.

We welcome conversations with institutions interested in:

- Hosting one or more BHL staff roles or services (short- or long- term)
- Providing in-kind support (e.g. infrastructure, staff time, digital capacity)
- Collaborating on funding proposals or shared initiatives
- Financially supporting BHL through our new fiscal sponsor

By participating in BHL's future, your institution will join a global movement to preserve and democratize biodiversity knowledge – building on centuries of scientific legacy and ensuring open access for generations to come.

Expressions of interest requested by 31 August 2025 with rolling consideration thereafter.

To express interest or start a conversation, please contact:
Kelli Trei, BHL Transition Director
TransitionDirector@biodiversitylibrary.org

FLEXIBLE HOSTING OPTIONS

While we would welcome a single organization assuming all hosting responsibilities, we also embrace a distributed approach. BHL has always functioned as a collaborative consortium, with modular, well-defined roles led by experienced staff.

Distributed hosting allows different institutions to host a core function, along with its associated staff member(s). This model is scalable, inclusive, and adaptable to institutions of varying sizes and capacities.

BHL is finalizing a Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement to provide nonprofit financial and administrative infrastructure (including contracting and HR). However, this sponsorship does not include funding for staff salaries or technical hosting. Once in place, the fiscal sponsor will be able to manage centralized hiring and contracting on behalf of host institutions and receive grants and donations to support specific roles or services.

To ensure the continuity of BHL's core services, we are seeking institutional partners to host the roles and services outlined below.

We invite institutions to consider one or more of the following approaches:

1. **Hire an existing BHL Staff Member** (see Appendix)
   Provide salary and institutional support
2. **Incorporate BHL functions into existing teams or create new roles**
   Support BHL operations through internal resources or new positions
3. **Adopt a hybrid model**
   Integrate remote employment of BHL Staff into existing teams
4. **Host a BHL role or service for a fixed-term**
   Host a BHL role or service for a defined period
5. **Financially support BHL roles or services**
   Contribute full or partial support through our fiscal sponsor

CORE ROLES AND SERVICES OPEN FOR HOSTING

BHL invites institutions to host one or more of its core functions. Each represents a critical component of the BHL ecosystem and an opportunity to shape the future of open biodiversity infrastructure. Hosting Institutions may support entire functions or specific roles or may serve as a hub for coordinated activities or shared services.

BHL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Provides central coordination of the BHL consortium and global operations

BHL GLOBAL DIRECTOR

- Provide strategic and operational leadership in coordination with consortium partners
- Cultivates relationships with global biodiversity and informatics stakeholders
- Manages donor and partner relations and leads budget planning and reporting
- Serves as liaison with senior leadership at national and global biodiversity organizations (e.g. GBIF, Global Names Architecture, Catalogue of Life)

BHL PROGRAM MANAGER

- Oversees global operations, strategic planning, and program administration
- Manages financial planning, contracts, and grant reporting
- Coordinates engagement with BHL Members and stakeholders
- Leads project implementation and alignment across the consortium

BHL DATA MANAGEMENT

Maintains and advances BHL's data infrastructure and workflows

BHL DATA MANAGER

- Manages workflows that support BHL's data pipelines and access
- Ensures data interoperability and integration with global platforms
- Leads metadata enhancement and data quality workflows
- Collaborates with global bioinformatics communities to expand data reach

BHL COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Stewards the ongoing development and integrity of BHL's digital collection

BHL COLLECTIONS MANAGER

- Manages the growth and discoverability of BHL content
- Manages content integration and guidelines, and content provider relations
- Supports the day-to-day operations of BHL staff at partner institutions worldwide
- Coordinates permission for in-copyright materials and monitors copyright compliance

BHL TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT

BHL's technical infrastructure hosting and staff to manage systems architecture, software platforms, and preservation systems

HOST BHL'S INFRASTRUCTURE

BHL is seeking a new institutional partner to assume hosting of its technical infrastructure. This assumes responsibility for core hardware and systems operations. Our goal is to ensure uninterrupted access for users and partners while continuing to improve the platform through enhancements, such as cloud options and virtualization. Hosting BHL's infrastructure presents a unique opportunity for a partner to demonstrate institutional leadership in global open science and to provide technical stewardship of a critical global research infrastructure.

BHL CORE INFRASTRUCTURE DETAILS

While BHL connects to various services and systems, the core infrastructure is provided by seven servers (Windows and Linux) hosted at the Smithsonian data center. The physical servers were purchased primarily with BHL funds between 2021 and 2023, and remain under warranty through 2027. They are:

- Two load-balanced Windows Web Servers (currently virtual)
- One Windows Application Server (currently virtual)
- Two high-availability SQL Server databases (Dell PowerEdge)
- One Linux-based Elasticsearch server (Dell PowerEdge)
- One server for the Macaw metadata tool (Dell PowerEdge)

BHL TECHNICAL MANAGER

- Serves as Project Manager for the Technical Team
- Overseas IT infrastructure and server environments, and system reliability
- Maintains and develops essential tools (e.g. Macaw) and services
- Leads digital preservation efforts and infrastructure transitions

BHL LEAD DEVELOPER | SYSTEMS ARCHITECT

- Leads development across BHL's digital platforms and services
- Implements new features and systems enhancements
- Manages server administration and troubleshooting
- Contributes to long-term technical planning and platform evolution

BHL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

Drives global visibility, outreach, and stakeholder engagement

BHL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

- Leads internal and external communication strategy
- Develops promotional content, campaigns, and stakeholder updates
- Raises global awareness of BHL's impact and mission
- Stewards community engagement and manages user feedback

BHL INSTITUTIONAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL HUBS

Unlike the functional roles described above, BHL Hubs are generalist operations that support local, regional, or national BHL activities. These Hubs focus on digitization, outreach, community engagement, and local contributor support. They serve as collaborative coordination centers, bringing together multiple institutions in a geographic or institutional context, and may lead BHL-related projects within their domain.

Example: BHL Australia receives its core salary and equipment support from the Atlas of Living Australia and occasionally secures additional funding through grants and donations. Its digitization operation, based in Melbourne, is hosted by Museums Victoria, which provides physical space and administrative support. What began with a single organization in 2010 has grown into a national consortium of 62 contributing organizations, including museums, herbaria, universities, state libraries, government agencies, royal societies, and field naturalist clubs. BHL Australia also leads BHL's global work on article discoverability and persistent identifiers.

Hubs play a vital role in sustaining BHL's distributed network, strengthening regional capacity, and expanding access to biodiversity literature across diverse regions, languages and ecosystems. Feel free to consider a hub model in your proposal.

APPENDIX: BHL STAFF

BHL's existing staff bring unparalleled expertise and institutional knowledge. These staff members can continue seamlessly in their roles under new institutional hosts. As all staff currently work remotely; they do not require physical office space or relocation support.

Any institution hosting a BHL service would benefit significantly from the leadership and experience of its associated staff member. Current BHL Staff include:

- **BHL Program Manager**
  Oversees global operations, program strategy and partner engagement
- **BHL Collections Manager**
  Manages digital collections, contributor relations, and metadata quality
- **BHL Data Manager**
  Ensures data integrity, interoperability and access across global platforms
- **BHL Lead Developer**
  Leads software development, technical architecture, and platform enhancements
- **BHL Technical Coordinator**
  Manages IT infrastructure, server maintenance, and digital preservation