

Report of the Second IABIN Council Meeting

**Miami, Florida, USA
January 14-15, 2002**

The Second Meeting of the Council of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) was convened in Miami, Florida, USA, on January 14 and 15, 2002. Fifty-eight participants from 22 countries attended the Council meeting, which was hosted by the U.S. Geological Survey (Chair of the Council) and the Organization of American States (the Diplomatic Host). Attendees included IABIN Focal Points or their representatives, and participants from inter-governmental, non-governmental and academic organizations. (Participants are listed in Appendix 1.) The Council gratefully acknowledges the financial support for the meeting provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, the World Bank and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The objectives for the meeting included: strengthening IABIN through personal interaction, increasing collaborations among participants, reviewing inter-sessional work, and reaching concurrence on future activities for the short- and mid-term. Gladys Cotter, Chair, stated that she would seek Council consensus for all decisions, in keeping with the collaborative nature of the IABIN.

The meeting agenda is included in Appendix 2. Background papers, presentations, negotiated texts and other documents supporting or resulting from the Second IABIN Council Meeting are available on the U.S. IABIN web site, www.iabin-us.org. The meeting is best summarized in a series of key issues, described below. The Chair thanked the participants, the meeting planners and the IABIN Planning Team for a successful meeting.

KEY ISSUES

· **Modification to the IABIN Rules of Procedure.** The 1st IABIN Council Meeting was held in December 1999. However, IABIN has not had the funding to convene Council meetings annually. Therefore, it was decided that the Rules of Procedure concerning the terms of office of the Council Chair, Vice-Chair and IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) members should be changed from a term of 3 years to a term of 3 Council meetings. In accordance with that procedural change, it was agreed that the IEC members elected for 3 years at the 1st Council Meeting (the United States, Jamaica and Brazil), will serve through the 4th Council Meeting. Those IEC members elected for 2 years at the 1st Council Meeting (Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico) will serve through the 3rd Council Meeting. Those elected at the 1st Council Meeting for one year were considered to have completed their term as of the end of the 2nd Council Meeting. (See Appendix 3 for the sections of the Rules of Procedure modified per this Council decision.)

The Council agreed that the uncertainty concerning the time period between the convening of Council meetings was sufficiently significant and enduring to warrant changing the Rules of Procedure. However, the Council also agreed that this should not be considered a precedent; the Rules of Procedure should not be modified to solve short-term or insignificant problems.

- **Election of new IEC Members.** Antigua and Barbuda, Peru, and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) were elected to the IEC, replacing the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and the North American Biodiversity Information Network (NABIN), who completed their service with the thanks of the Council. The newly elected IEC members will serve through the 5th Council meeting.
- **IABIN Membership in GBIF.** IABIN joined the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) as an Associate Member in May, 2001. With the concurrence of the IEC, Gladys Cotter, Chair of the IABIN Council, signed the GBIF Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of IABIN. The GBIF MOU commits IABIN to developing a node through which biodiversity information will be shared with other GBIF members and through which GBIF resources will be available to IABIN participants. As an Associate Member, IABIN has no vote and makes no financial contribution to GBIF. Christoph Häuser, Chair of the Governing Board of GBIF, presented an overview of GBIF to the Council and explained the GBIF history, vision, approach and accomplishments to date.
- **Memorandum of Cooperation with the Clearing-house Mechanism.** At the request of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the IABIN Planning Team drafted a Memorandum of Cooperation between IABIN and the CBD Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM) in order to formalize a collaboration between the two initiatives. The proposed draft MOC was presented to the Council for consideration, and the text was amended according to the suggestions made by Council participants.

While meeting participants agreed that IABIN generally supports the CBD objectives of access to genetic resources benefit sharing, the Council concurred that the MOU should address only those areas of collaboration that are mutual goals of IABIN and CHM (such as the exchange of biodiversity information and scientific and technical collaborations).

The Council agreed that the CHM should be offered a seat on the Council, and that they should be invited to participate as an observer on the IEC.

A few additional comments were received by the Planning Team immediately following the Council meeting. The final draft MOC, incorporating the comments received at and following the Council meeting, is found in Appendix 4.

- **IABIN Long-Term Financial Sustainability.** Miguel Pellerano and Fernando Frydman reported on their preliminary findings from a study to address viable long-term financial sustainability strategies for IABIN. The final report of the study will be completed in March 2002 and will be circulated to Council participants for comment and appropriate action.
- **Updates on Projects and Initiatives.** Jorge Soberón presented an update on the North American Biodiversity Information Network (NABIN) and the Red Mundial de Información sobre Biodiversidad (REMIB). Barbara Bauldock presented an overview of the European Collections Database, which is available on the U.S. IABIN web site <www.iabin-us.org>, and Andrea Grosse briefed participants on the IABIN Invasives Information Network Project (I3N). I3N participants met for a workshop on January 16, 2002, at the same venue as the Council meeting. Dave Vieglais gave an update on *The Species Analyst* modeling tool and a manual that will describe how to use *The Species Analyst* and how to prepare data so that *The Species Analyst* can access it.

Richard Huber provided an update on the progress of the OAS in response to a resolution supporting

IABIN that was passed by the Inter-American Committee on Sustainability Development (CIDS) in October 1999 [CIDI/CIDS/RES. 2 (II-O/99)]. A new resolution concerning IABIN was submitted at the CIDS III/Santa Cruz +5 meeting held in Washington February 11-12, 2002.

· **IABIN PDF Project.** The Proposal “Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)” was technically cleared by the GEF Council in November 2001, essentially approving IABIN to receive a Project Development Fund (PDF) Block B grant. \$650,000 was requested in the proposal, but GEF has not confirmed that IABIN will receive this amount. The World Bank is the Implementing Agency for the grant, and the OAS will be the Executing Agency. In fulfillment of that role, Richard Huber of the OAS presented a draft plan for the expenditure of those funds to reach the proposed outcome included in the proposal: preparation of a Project Approval Document, which will propose a \$4-5million project to the GEF for the implementation of IABIN. Submission of the PAD to GEF is planned for March 2003.

Mr. Huber proposed that, in order to maintain momentum until the GEF resources are liquid, two open-ended technical advisory groups be formed to develop Terms of Reference (TORs) for the various consultancies needed to complete the PAD. Those technical advisory groups would address (i) interoperability of the network and (ii) users and providers of data and information within IABIN. The Council discussed a tabled Project Plan at length, agreeing to the process of IEC direction and review of OAS activities as outlined in that Plan. No decisions were reached, however, concerning the detailed schedule in the Plan, nor how to proceed in the period before the award of the PDF grant.

Discussions of these outstanding items will continue after the Council Meeting. The IABIN Planning Team will facilitate discussions on these issues via the IABINfriends listserv. The IEC will act as needed on behalf of the entire Council.

· **Future IABIN Projects.** Council participants suggested additional themes for IABIN projects, updating the list originally developed at the 1st Council Meeting. The updated list will be posted on the U.S. IABIN web site. IABIN participants can notify the IABIN Planning Team about which themes are of interest to them, and the Team will post the names of countries or institutions to the web site.

· **IABIN Identity.** In response to the need for a consistent visual identify for IABIN, the Council addressed official translations of “Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network” into the languages of IABIN (Spanish, French, Portuguese and Dutch). The Council concurred that the acronym “IABIN” would be used regardless of the language of the extended name of the network. The following were adopted as the official names for the network (Note: The Dutch translation is subject to concurrence by the IABIN Focal Point from Suriname):

English: Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)

Español: Red Interamericana de Información sobre Biodiversidad (IABIN)

Français: Réseau interaméricain d’information sur la biodiversité (IABIN)

Português: Rede Interamericana de Informação sobre Biodiversidade (IABIN)

Nederlands: Interamerikaans Biodiversiteit Informatienetwerk (IABIN)

The Council concurred on having a contest for an IABIN logo. Entries (ideas, sketches, artwork, etc.) should be sent to the IABIN Planning Team no later than April 1, 2002. The IEC will select the top three ideas and forward them to the entire Council for a vote. The winning idea will be developed into a final design for an IABIN logo.

- **IABIN Web Site.** The International IABIN web site, www.iabin.org, has not been maintained for some time. The domain name is still registered to the Fundação André Tosello in Brazil. The Brazilian Ministry of the Environment, the World Bank and the Organization of American States will work together to resolve the problem and reestablish the international site. The IABIN Planning Team will continue to post all relevant IABIN documentation, including information appropriate to the international site, to the U.S. IABIN web site, www.iabin-us.org, until the international site is reestablished.

- **Next Steps.** The meeting was concluded with a review of the action items arising from the Council deliberations (see Appendix 5). The participants agreed to continue discussions, particularly about the IABIN PDF Project, via the IABINfriends listserv. It was agreed that the 3rd IABIN Council Meeting should be held early in 2003, most likely again in Miami, as that venue is convenient to all. The main agenda topic at that meeting will be the consideration and approval of the Project Approval Document prior to submission to the GEF for funding.

LIST OF [APPENDICES](#)

- Appendix 1: Participants List
- Appendix 2: Agenda
- Appendix 3: Revised Sections of the IABIN Rules of Procedure
- Appendix 4: Draft Memorandum of Cooperation between IABIN and the CHM
- Appendix 5: Action Items from the 2nd IABIN Council Meeting