

## Notes taken on verbal comments made during the Joint CHM-IABIN Meeting, Cancun

Notes IABIN-CHM Meeting

Tuesday, August 13, 2003

**Opening:** Gladys, Marcos

Greeting from the representative from Mexico (Jorge Soberon)

**Marcos :** Move to item 2

**Cuba:** Nominated Jorge Soberon

**Ecuador** seconds the nomination of Jorge Soberon

Soberon accepts the nomination.

**Marcos:** Nomination for Rapporteur

**Mexico:** Dr. Linus Spencer Thomas of Grenada

**Dominica:** Seconds the nomination of Thomas

Thomas accept the nomination.

**Soberon** asks for changes to the agenda. Recommends adoption of agenda as presentation.

**Ecuador:** Yesterday, held informal meeting. Asks Marcos to report if there were any suggestions for changes

**Marcos:** Concerns of the GRULAC can be accommodated under Item 3 without changes to the agenda. These additions will be reflected in the minutes.

**Colombia:** Need to be clear in the hierarchy of the two meetings; how they will be held. Would like to see how IABIN can strengthen the goals of the [CBD] agreement. Would like Marcos to comment on how this would happen.

**Marcos:** Would like the meeting to articulate how IABIN and CHM can strengthen Focal Points and how to raise capacities to meet responsibilities of CHM. Will emphasize this in the presentation

**Jorge:** Marcos' comments are clear; we can proceed with the meeting. Recognizes Marcos to give the CHM presentation.

[Marcos' presentation]

**Jorge:** Thanks. Recognizes comments

**Huber:** How are the people assigned within each country to the different initiatives (CHM, IABIN, GBIF, BioNet LOOPS, NatureServe CDCs)?

**Marcos:** Secretariat cannot make recommendations to countries on how countries appoint these people.

**Colombia:** Important that the countries implementing the agreement understand how they work together. We are working on different objectives; can address the objectives without losing the national strategies. That way we can determine which initiatives to participate in.

**Canada:** Problem as Canada sees it: CHM Focal Point is clear. With IABIN, it is not clear what the role of the Focal Point is vis-à-vis the subregional coordinator. Canada has very little contact with subregional coordinator.

**Jorge:** Will have time to discuss after the IABIN presentation. Specific comments for Marcos now; general comments for after IABIN presentation.

**Cotter:** Move to agenda item 3 on agenda. Report on IABIN activities from several speakers. Introduced Douglas Graham, World Bank, to report on **GEF** process and where IABIN is going with that.

**Graham:** We are preparing a **proposal** for a project to be financed by the **GEF** through the World Bank. In preparation phase. After me, more presentations on detail of project presentation to date.

Preparatory funds: \$650,000 for prep of **proposal** to be considered at a later date by **GEF**. **GEF** approved funds in Feb 2002. Have been working 10 months in project prep.

Funds being administered by OAS; OAS has been administering project prep. Have had 1 year consultation to determine requirements and priorities., Still have 5-6 months of work. This meeting key to help tell OAS if on track or not on prep of **proposal**. Purpose of meeting is to redirect project.

Draft of Implementation of Project; hope you take a look at it. Over next days, you will have opportunity to comment on **PIP**.

In preparatory phase (but later also project phase), funds from **GEF**. Prep funds administered by OAS, at request of IABIN Council. IABIN Exec Cmte supervises activities of OAS in prep of **proposal**.

Critical stages: Consideration of **GEF** on eligibility of project itself; **GEF** says yes, can prepare *proposal*. Next, PDF *proposal* funded. At same time, since it will be a WB project, needs to follow WB procedures as well. Prepared Project Concept Document for approval within WB; have done that and gotten WB approval to proceed., Then prepare *PIP*. This is the document given to you for review. We are at this stage.

Future stages: Next important document: project appraisal document (PAD). Important because it gives a detailed description of the project; describes implementation of project. PAD gives more of justification of project and why WB should invest in this project. PAD is send to **GEF** for approval of **GEF** Secretariat (**GEF** =financial arm of CBD). This is why important to meeting here with CHM.

*PIP* send to WB and to **GEF** Secretariat. We are inventing a little bit every day; no precedent for multi-country project within WB. We are establishing what has to be done in every stage. Milestone dates: Nov 2003 complete PAD based on *PIP*. Negotiations Jan 2004; approval (optimistically) in March 2004.

Role of World Bank in IABIN process: WB is development org to help alleviate poverty. Have had interest for many years to promote IABIN because our projects have strong environmental components; information is lost because no mechanisms to capture and use data for development necessities in general. Promoting Development Gateway that has resources in many development areas. Window open in Dev Gateway to support IABIN to support biodiversity in the Americas.

WB #1 financier of biodiversity programs around the world. Two objectives: To allow countries to have better access to knowledge to support their own development. To improve administration of environmental biological data. What we do in Latin America could be model to be extended to other projects in other area of the world where there are no initiatives similar to IABIN with the same level of development.

Open for contact from anyone. Others from WB: Keiko Ashida and Yaba Batista from Puerto Rico (just started with us).

**Cotter**: Recognizes Erick Van Praag to talk about accomplishments to date.

**Erick Van Praag**: Speaking on behalf of the subregional specialists. Introduced other subregional specialists. What we discovered.

Given huge geog coverage, OAS decided to divide the area into subregions (shown on slide). Divided into 2 phases. Started Aug 2002. Finishing with this meeting.

First Phase Aug-Dec 2002: (Brazil started in Dec due to bureaucratic delays), Make survey of information, types of biodiversity information already existing; on the web? How can it be disseminated? Etc. Study had not previously been made to this extent. Discovered there is rather scanty information on Internet (except from US, Brazil, other highly developed countries). Taking first steps; when to countries where no information on biodiversity is available on web.

What are data? What are institutions? What standards and protocols in use?

Second Phase: Defining types of projects IABIN can tackle (called Project Networks); what is integration with CHM.

Collected information throughout Americas. Signed agreements with institutions. Established virtual network of people to work with IABIN. Defined what would be standards and protocols. Defined architecture for network (to be presented by Alberto Oriza).

Contacted 220- institutions; many through surveys, telephone conversations, internet search. Results: few biodiversity networks resulted. Main ones are NBII, REMIB, SIAM, CONABIO, Humboldt, CRIA, INBio. Outside of these large networks, little information systematized that can be easily accessed.

70 institutions in Americas have already established preliminary agreements with IABIN, ranging from light agreements to more formal agreements. Co-financing of \$12.1 million will be used to established IABIN.

Lots of interest, but lots of information dispersed. No standards. Difficult to access.

Interest to join IABIN with a national network. Clear case in Central America.

Projects established have to respond to a real need; not just a scientific effort but responsive to development efforts of participating countries.

Remember small countries especially; need to strike balance so that IABIN resources and support can reach these countries.

IABIN needs to be open and transparent system; available on the web.

Difficulties: In general in Latin America (not so much in N. Am), little culture in sharing information. This may be the largest obstacle for IABIN. Important to balance between developed and developing, at whatever stage they are,

Important that IABIN has information that can be used for development decision making, not just a scientific effort. Need to have information reach decision-makers. Many countries confused about what IABIN, CHM and other initiatives are doing. Financial sustainability is also important.

Slide of institutions submitting letters of intent or letters of commitment, with amount of financing they can contribute to IABIN process. Many institutions are regional or international (ex. BirdLife).

IABIN Results by Subregions (will review quickly) —

[\[get Erick's slides here\]](#)

Very summarized presentations of findings. Biggest impact: Great support required by institutions to participate. Institutions eager to participate in IABIN, but need support from IABIN to participate.

## Open discussion

**Brazil:** Concerning the Region 2 report: comments on items 5-8. Items 5-8 show summary of national progress. Recommend actualization: Report needs to be actualized Doesn't show the biodiversity online. When preparing national report, didn't do research on internet; only governmental and non-governmental agencies. Suggest review of item 5; suggest needs to include workshops by biomes. Workshops have recommendations about specific biodiversity actions. Need review of needs of country. Item 8 needs to include ecological networks She would like to participate in this review.

**Canada:** As Focal Point, not aware that the study was underway. Not consulted by subregional specialist in Region 7. By asking institutions directly to participate in IABIN via OAS subregional specialist negates role of Focal Point. Canada was not figured in the report.

**Mexico:** Nothing on Mexico's participation, CONABIO's contribution. Should not be contacting institutions directly; should be through Focal Point. Need more content, less abstract content.

**Colombia:** I have a question more fundamental: Resources of biodiversity strategic for present and future development of country. Supports Mexico; needs to define demand. What do we need in the countries? Where are we going to generate capacity? This is a war for monies. The objectives of the project are destroyed in fighting for the money and not for the objectives of the project. Many of the countries have recognized that most of the developed countries are investing in biodiversity informatics; that's not because it is a fashion but because informatics has the potential of adding value. Recognizing the access to biodiversity information and sharing the benefits. CHM goes beyond the information theme. Need to talk clearly about genetic resources, biotechnology. Otherwise, we are not talking about the benefits available from biodiversity. It is crucial to specify in the Implementation plan that we are all participants and all need to benefit.

**Ecuador:** For years have recognized information sharing as part of CHM and now we are seeing that in IABIN. As countries, need to see strong integration. We will have difficulties sharing information even within countries; expected that difficulties will be multiplied when talking about sharing among countries. Where are we going to take the information? What are we going to use the information for? As countries, need to integrate the best structure of our databases and information. We are megadiversity countries; we have a lot of information, dispersed information. Need to optimize info. Also need to recognize weaknesses in country; money being invested in informatics, but need to see technological weaknesses and find ways to fortify them. We also have a strength; all countries have manifested the desire to integrate into IABIN. Can address lack of technical capabilities through IABIN.

**Peru:** Support an idea of Colombia. information is still valuable even if information is not digitized. Good web site or good portal is not necessary for exchange of information. We should have information that is not digitized taken to places where it is needed in ways that are not digital. We have problems giving feedback to people who generate the information. We gather biodiversity information from communities. This information is also gathered in the markets where these resources are commercialized. Once we have this info, we use technological means to process it. Radio Selva sends this information back to those who generate so that they can know how it is being used, what it costs, etc. The project should have feedback within it. information should not be focused only on digitized.

**Nicaragua:** Supports Colombia and Peru. The last presentation concerned me; the information flows one way but not the other way. Responses from "interested" parties: interested in sharing? Interested in info? Etc. Around this we organize flow back but does not use the same channels. Money goes to those who share somebody else's information. In case of ministry, they have no information to share. Scientists cannot exist without publishing. They publish on paper; not digitized, but that doesn't mean that data doesn't exist. Also, on last presentation, it was said we are not talking about scientific data but "useful" information. Dangerous to bring into databases the conclusions but not the data supporting those conclusions. Important that the data going into databases are the real field data, then processed but whichever system (doesn't matter), and then in the networks of commercialization, the sharing of

the data, the economic benefits goes back to the people who produce the data. Many times they don't get the benefit of the distribution of the information.

**Chair/Soberon:** Remind that what we are trying to discuss are synergies.

**Brazil:** Conclusion from our government: Brazilian government has a position of caution regarding the closer integration of IABIN and CHM. Consider the position of Brazil as a megadiverse country. Brazil participating in many initiatives. Our delegation have following considerations: Priority to fortify CHM and Brazil participation in it. Have better communication with other networks and share information. Only Focal Points of the nation should be able to feed their information systems. That genetic resources can be reached only with prior approval and distribution of benefits. Brazil is organization information on our biodiversity; data not available but for strategic regions up to now. Brazil has good CHM site. Still don't have a national biodiversity information network. As far a cross-cutting themes: include social aspect such as bioagriculture and traditional knowledge. Looking for projects with synergy with our neighbors; outreach to 13 countries to discuss common agenda.

**Chair/Soberon:** Could Brazil provide a copy of its formal statement?

**Brazil:** Yes

**Mexico:** Sharing information is definitely beneficial, even if it is certain institutions or countries. Opportunity to strengthen the CHM to establish a synergy, even with differences in the levels of information.

**Ecuador:** Re synergy between CHM and IABIN: This topic needs to be developed further. Strengthening CHM 8(j), other resources, benefits sharing are not topics that can be overlooked. Ecuador has signed CBD and IABIN so supports need to find that synergy. All countries need to support the development of these synergies. This morning, CHM coordinator spoke of difficulty of each government saying how synergy can be obtained. In Ecuador, CHM and IABIN are being developed in same governmental office, promoting that synergy. Need to open dialog with all sectors, especially educators, museums, plant and botanical gardens. Ecuador's recommendation: Work toward synergies between CHM and IABIN.

**Canada:** To create these synergies between CHM and IABIN, it is critical that the idea be brought down to the lowest level of institutions. CHM is at IABIN table, but IABIN is not at the COP table. If you speak to a Party not part of IABIN, they are probably not aware of IABIN.

**Argentina:** Argentina is organized through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate at national level; work with Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Science and Technology; connected to Ministry of Education. Illustrates how countries manage this in different ways. Necessary to support these international initiatives in CHM, IABIN, GBIF, etc., because they result in general in direct benefits to scientists in country. However, to benefit decision-making, need to understand how to do this. How are these in place, how will we manage access to info, providing information for what? to whom? Regarding the Implementation Plan, need to know who are going to be the beneficiaries of this project (specifically)? Must be very clear in what are needs and how benefits are going to be transferred to the last links of the chain and not stranded in the ministries. Also, not all information is digitized. Emphasis of IABIN should not be to digitize information. We should make information on information status available on the web. Not necessary for all data to be on the web; not possible with funds available. Finally, congratulate CHM and IABIN for meeting together and drafting a common agenda.

**Haiti:** Understand the necessity to bring back the information to the people in the field. You say that IABIN is mostly interested in exchanging information via the Internet. Most important thing we can do is bring information back to the people.

**Chile:** Advantageous to strength both initiatives. See them absolutely as complementary. IABIN has brought up the need for exchanging information first at national level and then presently need for information exchange at regional and continental levels. Study important to allow us to identify the individual actors. Important to define issues to be considered by this meeting, such as a joint action plan for coordination. We can understand CHM as a framework for biodiversity, and we need to establish clearly the coordination areas. Also need to strengthen networks within countries and super regional networks. Regarding dispersion of information: Not well communicated within countries. We have the ability to disperse information. Problem of digital gaps has been mentioned; in Chile we have made strides but the issue of the digital gap is still important Need to know what mechanisms should be developed.

**ANDINONET:** ANDINONET trying to get Andean countries to share; within countries sometimes don't have time to address. Who are final users of information depends on countries. Government has information to distribute first. Needs technology to distribute that information.

**Grenada:** Issue of capacity building and other social issues germane to our countries (small island developing states). In Grenada, human capacity limited. CHM and IABIN in the Ministry of Planning. Difficult due to lack of human capacity. To not have synergies makes problem worse. Need to define the types of synergies between the two initiatives need study to explore the possible synergies.

**Costa Rica:** Has allowed integrated view of management of information. Focal Point should be facilitator/coordinator, not a person to capture information. We have been working to establish a Central American network (also inviting Mexico). We want to reach out to IABIN because we have the common need to manage information and we have biological wealth. Council of Environmental Ministers established CHM as a commodity for the Mesoamerican Council. Tomorrow pm we are making a brief presentation of our Central American initiative.

**Uruguay:** CHM has been an important portal for biodiversity. What is of paramount importance is looking for a method to establish a synergy to support all activities for the Convention. Researchers are informed of CHM and IABIN, so they know there is a network for the dispersion of information. Getting a lot of questions about the results of various activities; should focus on dispersion. Focus on workshops; use IABIN as tool. Need more human resources to support not only coordination but dispersion.

**El Salvador:** CHM and IABIN FP in the ministry of the environment. Consultation at local and national level; El Salvador has made progress on where FPs are at local level. Have 7 modules handling different topics of information through Ministry. Have strategy to support systems underway.

**Paraguay:** CHM and IABIN FP in Ministry of Environment. Support actions that have been taken. Need to consider the roles of CHM and IABIN so that the project may be focused on how IABIN can strengthen CHM through the project. However, project lacks proper feedback. When work was done at national and regional level, we had no report of what came out of each country or each region. IABIN needs to be inclusive in its actions.

**Costa Rica:** Regarding synergies among institutions and networks, I see clearly that there are great possibilities. However, still differences in the roles technologies should play. Synergies come in mutual recognition of strengths and weaknesses. That work is not yet completed. Regarding digitizing info: We would be making a mistake to focus exclusively on digitizing information. Dispersion of information doesn't need to be only digital, but being in digital format makes reuse of information later easier. Basic topic of the role of digital information should be well defined. GBIF has strong focus on digitizing information, but not wrong even given the problem of the digital gap.

**IBIN:** We think it is very important to get the outlines of the objectives, roles and responsibilities for articulating this particular network. Unclear about how this is going to be managed. [Introduced his organization: IBIN recognized as expert network by CBD.] Indigenous peoples are interested in knowing how that are going to interact with IABIN; through the national Focal Points? No indigenous people have been contacted by the subregional specialists, Focal Points, or working groups. How are we going to work through the process of engaging indigenous peoples? IA BIN is sponsoring the indigenous peoples portion of the Development Gateway; don't know how this was decided or how it came about. No discussion with indigenous peoples. Recently, two cases of concern: MoBot conference on indigenous knowledge; initially no indigenous people were invited. Indigenous people are discussing distributed models for their information. Need to start addressing the IABIN policy on indigenous peoples information.

**NatureServe:** Throughout LAC, much poverty and this influences policy, etc., for sustainable development. Management of information is part of the solution. Not total solution, but small contribution is a key factor for decision makers in levels from high in government down to indigenous levels. Support IBIN comments. Existing systems not well known but efficient at the level of indigenous knowledge constitute systems supporting decision making at proper levels. Support principles that can influence environmental policy and can contribute to proper environmental decisions. IABIN is a key component for meeting the guidelines of the CBD. Where technologies exist, let's go ahead. Report can be improved; should have had some feedback for credibility and trust.

**Chair/Soberon:** Ask reps from GBIF to give presentations.

**Marcos:** Contact group of Colombia, Argentina, Grenada, Mexico, IABIN, and any others meet at 9:30 p.m. tonight in the restaurant to review recommendations drafted by Marcos to reflect what was discussed just now.

[GBIF presentation: Christoph Haeuser]

[GBIF presentation: Hannu Saarenmaa]

Discussion on differences between CHM, GBIF, IABIN and BIONet.

**Marcos:** Keep in mind how these various activities can strengthen our national focal points.

**Huber:** Not just GBIF, CHM and IABIN that can be confusing. He wrote quick guide to biodiversity informatics. Each initiative has carved out a niche. Differences are:

GBIF is global; IABIN is Americas

GBIF interested in standards and protocols for species and specimen data; IABIN is broader

GBIF has 8 nodes in hemisphere; IABIN has 34 focal points

GBIF has countries paying annual dues, so they have a financial sustainability that is the envy of many; IABIN's financial sustainability is in question.

These are some of the immediate differences. We hope GBIF would look at IABIN as its implementing arm in the Americas, for digitization, etc.

**Dominican Republic:** We need to agree to concept at first; otherwise we will have different opinions and will not be able to reach final goal.

**Colombia:** Need to be clear on conceptual development. Have CHM as conceptual framework; responsibilities to be met apart from available resources. Need to check synergies, define goals that are transparent and inclusive. Not necessary to discuss the projects of any one initiative but to discuss the concepts available to all.

**IBIN:** Are their standards for a number of registries? Need to develop these agreements. The model presented is an open model. Access and use rights are set at the database level. Next steps is to address security level; some databases have multiple levels of access. Need to address multiple levels of policy to address these multiple levels of access. Difficult for indigenous people to buy in; need to make sure their data are protected.

**GBIF:** In its first incarnation, GBIF will deal only with information that can be made openly and freely available. In the future, these concerns will become more important. In the meantime, if someone wants access to sensitive data, can randomize the time or place.

### Oriza presentation

Like to summarize a few points we have discussed. In general information on the project is available on the internet page, including regional and subregional reports. [www.iaibin.net](http://www.iaibin.net). Presentation will cover the results of the project. Thanks subregional personnel. Help us improve this.

Clarify and define institutional support: The implementing agency is WB, executing agency is OAS but needs to be ratified by IEC, the operational part of IABIN.

Definition of IABIN as a network: the people, not just hardware and software but "humanware." All who have a desire to participate are the network. We know amount of money we are looking for. Need to complement these efforts with our own efforts to make this happen, i.e., other sources of in

Establish hub

Interoperability

Content

Communication and cooperation

Administration

Hub: IABIN has been operating to this date with support from OAS and the Chair in a voluntary way. First step is to provide a minimum infrastructure so that IABIN has a presence. Hub, a meeting point for the information. Hub is 3 people, Executive Secretary, Administrator and Technical Specialist. Location to be selected by IABIN Council. Hub will support Council, give feedback to Focal Points. Implements plan of use of networks, follow up on activities, be contact for suppliers and users of information, not just in the region but from anywhere. Produce and distribute information on IABIN's advances. Web site will be a point of entry to the biodiversity information of the region, a portal. In the *PIP* is a description of the portal.

Catalog: Single point access to resources of the region. Currently, thanks to support of WB, we have meeting point called "Development Gateway" which is access to biodiversity information.

Interoperability: The facility to integrate data and contents from different locations. Distributed network requires this; without being able to call data from different locations, don't have network. Initiatives have made considerable progress in defining standards. Standards and protocols are dynamic; must learn to work with them and grow with them. Have agreements and commitments to work with them, develop in language of participants.

Information Access: IABIN is facilitator to regional development to the extent participants wants to take it. Range from single, old equipment to regional networks like SIAM. *Proposal* to develop information access is through Project Networks. Through institutions that have the capability to develop a selected theme. IABIN Portal is way to access these Project Networks.

Project Networks: Who participates? Project Coordinator, who leads and is in continuous interaction with IABIN. The group of institutions with a desire to participate in the Project Network. All institutions that want to participate in the network through data providing.

Steps for implementation for Project Network: Guarantee interoperability and develop network. If information is available but is not used, would make no sense to form network. Important to link information to users.



Tried to define which main institutions would like to participate in which networks, and how. Based on letters of agreement, we arrive at these 4 themes: biological collections, ecological protected areas, invasive species, and pollinators. These are not exhaustive. However, we have letters of commitment in these areas. Now need to define what will be covered, and how. This is more efficient, talking about a common area, than addressing the whole of biodiversity. In each thematic area, there will be the development of interoperability and then the network. Documented support from institutions is not finalized; still have many letters of understanding with which we still need to work.

Portal: Evaluate the available resources and incorporate them. Requirements of Portal: multilingual, mapping interface, dynamic content, etc., like any other Portal.

Strategies for sustainability: Hub seek funds, sale of value-added services, IABIN Foundation.

**Jack Hill:** Having been working with agencies to establish a bioinformatics foundation. Will be started Sep 1, 2003, will be funded Jan 1, 2004. Industry, NGOs committing 15 years of funding to the bioinformatics foundation. Backing is bioinformatics funders that have raised money over the past years. Goal: Raise support for the CHM, GBIF, IABIN, ITIS and other initiatives. Activities: Workshops, definition of requirements, creation of education and outreach materials, taxonomist support, meetings with key leaders and funders. Financial sustainability important to get and keep new members. Written into new Foundation is to start with IABIN, consider matching funds with the IABIN Foundation and help IABIN reach sustainability. Encourage thinking on how the biodiversity foundation and the IABIN foundation can be integrated.

**Oriza:** OAS has managed the *GEF* funds for the PDF grant. Basically the same funds flow that has been done. Evaluation factors in *PIP*.

**Soberon:** Opens floor for 1-hour discussion of *PIP* presentation.

**Jamaica:** highlights need for stake holders, IABIN Focal Point and various stakeholders like CHM. Not clear how we are going to proceed We have identified where we want to go but have not identified specific institutions and Focal points. Need to narrow down to specifics.

**Mexico:** Necessary element to be defined: type of data, who is to provide, type of quality control, who updates. Need to be clear as to what data IABIN will provide. Search engine looks like a type of Google; we have a document that may not be sufficient. If IABIN is going to provide data from GBIF, need to know how.

**Cotter:** IABIN as implementing arm of GBIF for the Americas: has been discussed in small groups but has not been brought to GBIF as a *proposal*.

**Huber:** I can answer some questions. Need someone to answer catalog questions.

**Cotter:** Approach—gather questions and work out

**Canada:** Wants to get *PIP* in front of GBIF to get them to buy into IABIN. Would be a boost to IABIN to have GBIF membership review and comment. Wants IABIN to get GBIF to recognize IABIN and have GBIF endorse IABIN.

**Cotter:** Christoph is on IEC; *PIP* is being coordinated with GBIF through IEC. Need to take the responsibility to talk to our people in country.

**Haeuser:** Governing Board would probably not entertain this; short timeline.

Silva: Diffusion of information is not necessarily reaching the right people. Perhaps this could be a recommendation coming out of this meeting.

**Chile:** Can Focal Points talk with technical contacts in their countries? Beyond the opinion of their focal point? Would give more legitimacy to project.

**Huber:** Relative to Jamaica's question about process: We hired 7 subregional specialists. They did a user and provider survey to document demands. Then developed a cost-sharing agreement based on surveys. Received 70 cost-sharing agreements. This documented cofinancing (redirected to IABIN compatibility) of about \$12 million and parallel (used for IABIN work) about \$4 million. *GEF* wanted 4-to-1 cofinancing. We got it. We are thrilled that this has worked out as it has. Relative to *PIP* in front of GBIF membership: We have IABINfriends listserv. They should have received the English and Spanish version. All of GBIF Node Managers should be on IABINfriends. Progress report has been sent out as well. This information is on the web as well. Relative to response: 8 working days is generally acceptable to be prepared for a meeting, to vet it through your government. All comments are welcome and will be incorporated into the next version of the *PIP*. Mentions 70 institutions now; hopefully that will double.

**Cotter:** After this meeting, please circulate the *PIP* within your countries and get us feedback as soon as you can

**Peru:** This document should have been talked about products that we can compare one with another. Has been presented in terms of strategies, not in terms of products. The only products talked about are the catalog and the

portal. Other products defined would allow us to sell this idea to others—politicians, advisors, policy-makers. Going through austere times; need help to sell this project over others. Sustainability requires institutionalization of information systems in country. Time for countries to take it as their own; to do that must sell to decision-makers and educators. Remember IABIN original mandate of decision-making and education. To sell this, we must have education information. Certain points are left loose in this document. Need to recognize standards and protocols. When looking at the Hub, only 3 people; won't be able to do it with 3 people. Peru Amazonian has 7 people. Many requirements for the hub. Need to reevaluate what we should do with these 3 people. Perhaps IABIN needs to develop inter-American task force to help develop these tools. Last, should include repatriation of data.

**Bahamas:** Training needs to be offered to IABIN participants; needs clarified: IABIN Focal Points, CHM Focal Points, designated folks within country?

**Huber:** Way IABIN training is being designed is different from GBIF and DIGIR. In Project Network, take Invasive Species. Lead is USGS. USGS will develop a *proposal* to pull together the 20 institutions interested in invasive species. All of these groups have submitted cost-sharing agreements to work in PN called Invasive Species. USGS will work with them to put together a *proposal* to do the following things for the following amount of money. Through parallel and cofinancing, the IABIN funds will be leveraged by the contributions of the participating agencies. \$300K of IABIN funds results in a \$1.2 million capacity-building programs across 20 institutions.

**Argentina:** Support Peru re need to have factual results for the project included, to sell, not just to politicians but to institutions who need to commit. Need to work more on the results that will reach institutions willing to participate and support the network. Also, saw that this Council must agree on who will be Executing Agency. We noted that the Executing Agency gets \$400K. What are the other options for an Executing Agency? This question is directed to the WB. Could the Hub be the Executing Agency, which would allow more flexibility of funding for Hub? Also, there is a difference in numbers for funding of projects 2.1 million versus 1.3 million

**Graham:** Need to distinguish between two things. We need to chose an executing agency for the project; on the other hand, need to select a Hub for IABIN. For Executing Agency: If we are successful, we get the funds. An agency other than the Bank needs to be the Executing agency, handle the funds, make the contracts, etc. Can be any organization. It is something to be decided. It is the decision of the IABIN Council to chose any agency for this responsibilities. This agency must know the Bank rules of acquisitions, disbursements, funds management. Not easy. OAS has advantage because they are executing 10 *GEF*/WB projects. But if you decide to select another organization, it can be considered. It would be necessary to make an evaluation of its capacities and it must have the support of all of the countries of the regions. Re the Hub: Once we select an Executing Agency, it could be the Hub in terms of where the people are located and could be physical host of portal, or it could be anywhere else. Executing agency could be OAS in Washington or another agency in another country.

**Oriza:** The concrete results have to be produced by the institutions in the structure. Example, invasive species. I have to support concrete *proposal* on how much is going to flow to that PN. We create the projects, but the fine detail of how it will work has not yet been defined.

**Colombia:** Definitely the budget theme is critical for this project. Budget, in general terms when addressing all the challenges, is very small. Therefore very important to maximize results that will be produced. Figure 2 shows dimension of funding. [\[see Annie's notes for additional comments\]](#)

**IBIN:** See Annie's notes. How will we dispose of property generated with funds from multiple countries? From indigenous point of view, indigenous people are concerned about the distribution of funds. There are a number of indigenous peoples networks world wide, none of which are run by indigenous people. If funding is biased toward bioinformatics per se, we see that as a way to prevent indigenous peoples to voice their own concerns. Indigenous peoples want more of their own voice to present their concerns.

**Huber:** Re intellectual property: We defer to CHM re access to benefits sharing and property rights. We are watching carefully the results coming from higher level meetings. What we have done in IABIN re IPR is to draft an agreement based on CONABIO/REMIB IPR policy. In order to use the system, we hired the Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (FIDA) to craft a IPR draft policy for IABIN based on CONABIO's agreement. Policy is on the net in both English and Spanish and has been circulated. We will double our efforts to incorporate indigenous issues.

**Peru:** Re IPR, information managed by IABIN had to agree [\[see Annie's notes\]](#)

**Soberon:** We retained a law firm about the data we access. If complicated, there is a simple solution: If there are problems with IPR, don't upload them to the web. At CONABIO we do not include any indigenous data. Everything has a solution, check with a lawyer who can tell you how data can be protected.

Colombia: Need to have in IABIN's framework agreements on how data is to be handled to provide ways to manage information.



**INVASIVE SPECIES**

**Soberon:** First subject — invasive species, particularly within the context of GISP and I3N. Have a series of products that are useful: catalogs, etc. Message for CHM nodes is that IABIN work is synergistic and useful. CHM Nodes should make reference to the work that IABIN has done. Can be used as model for other initiatives.

**Ecuador:** I3N Pilot Project is just tip of iceberg. Very complex problem. Shared problem; serious problem. Time to stand together to share information. Consequences disastrous. At yesterday's meeting, heard about countries participating in this project. Great interest to participate. Not yet much info. Should develop more along the lines of the I3N project.

**Soberon:** Would like suggestions for specific, concrete activities.

**Mexico:** Immediate action would be to have spatial data about the occurrence of a species to allow us to give concrete advice to decision-makers, farmers.

**Argentina:** Believe I3N was preliminary project, but in new IABIN stage need to have a second iteration. Agree with Mexico to include spatial data. Basic data included, but need to transform into management tool.

**Paraguay:** A second stage should make a systemization of the negative experiences of invasives on the economic base. Together with case studies— controls, responses in different countries. Important to make systemization of experiences both positive and negative.

**Uruguay:** Need at least small activity in the countries that could not participate in the first phase.

**Jamaica:** Come to agreement about how to exchange information, such as XML. Jamaica has reports on Internet. Would like spatial information available on invasive species; on the presence or absence of species, habitats, especially habitats in other countries. What might be expected in Jamaica.

**El Salvador:** Only beginning to discover dimension of problem of invasive species. Project needs to continue to bolster institutional capabilities. Only just starting to coordinate. Should go into second phase. Would be interested in unifying efforts with neighboring countries.

**Venezuela:** Interested in participating in the I3N project to exchange information within agencies requiring information as well as about countries in the region. Mexico's experience with georeferenced information is interesting and would be worth following.

**Dominican Republic:** Largest group was invertebrates, especially insects. In my country, very few invertebrates. Need to work in groups that are less represented.

**United States:** Need to expand the cataloging tool so that more countries would be collecting the information in a standardized way to facilitate exchange. Also need to set up mechanisms to connect the distributed networks, whether through NBII search, DiGIR technology or Species Analyst.

**Colombia:** In implementation of mechanisms, support the comments of Argentina and U.S. The mechanism is within CHM. Keep in perspective that we are working with synergies. Keep in perspective the synergy; then we can quickly locate the needs and priorities. Implementation phase needs concrete actions. Next step is to determine what is going to cost and who is going to finance it.

**Silva:** Parties will decide priorities. We need to articulate needs. Purpose of this meeting is to strengthen national CHM and its mission to support scientific and technical exchange.

**United States:** None of the presentations talk about the rate of growth of invasives nor the cost to the economy. Have to be able to do this.

**Nicaragua:** In a project like IABIN, need to give image of what project can do. Difficult to get financing if we don't demonstrate what it can offer practically. Have an image project for the public, like the hurricane center: have series of species with map of how it is invading at continental level. Also, put together pool of talent. Have portal to report each invasive, with projections of outside contributions. Could be done with small budget.

**ITIS:** In write-up, one thing missing: Need support to taxonomic identification keys. Add item "Support taxonomic information aids and taxonomic aids on invasive alien species." Second, this is good regional model (GISP would support this).

**GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE**

**GBIF:** Representing GBIF and also German GTI Focal Point. Regarding handout, needs reference to decision VI/8. Might be useful to include that reference, if handouts are included in report of meeting. VI/8 asked all parties to nominate GTI Focal Points. Proposed that you ensure your country nominates GTI Focal Points. Second, propose that IABIN consider taking lead for action item 2 of approved GTI program of work: Regional taxonomic needs assessment and setting of priorities. Finally, propose adding BIONet and its relevant activities as an example of existing initiatives. Asks CHM to address if GTI Program Officer is in Secretariat.

**Silva:** Re GTI Invasive Species Officer. No decision yet; should be on board in the next few months.

**NatureServe:** Interesting to establish portal for specialists on invasive species or all taxonomic items to serve as a reference. Do this through survey led by IABIN to create database of invasive species and other taxonomic initiatives. Would facilitate knowledge of specialists dedicated to these special themes.

**Silva:** Convention does have roster of experts and tries to keep roster up to date. Have finished the analyzer of national reports on invasive species. Soon will be able to do data mining on this reports.

**BIONet:** Action items and report of recent meetings on GTI will be released by BIONet and the Convention. Urge IABIN to work with committed GTI implementers and to become one of the implementers. Some countries have made GTI Focal Point same person as BIONet coordinator.

**Mexico:** Each focal point needs to establish contacts with taxonomic community. Have specific products in IABIN projects. This is an activity that requires resources; developing catalog is hard. Generating these catalogs is core. Require that we dedicate resources to make these catalogs.

**CRIA:** Suggest to IABIN two things: Use Flora Tropica as the Flora of the Americas checklist; accounts for more than 30% of plants in the world. Lot of expertise in the region. Also, Global Strategy for Plant Observation has 16 strategies. IABIN should take into consideration these other initiatives. Also, consider checklist of pollinating bees.

**Colombia:** Projects like Flora Neotropica don't have funding.

**U.S.:** At the meeting held in Malaysia, was intent to include invasive species as part of GTI.

**GBIF:** Activity 15 of GTI calls for action on invasives. Call for funding for capacity building in taxonomy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH**

**Silva:** We are not talking about ecosystems; we are talking about strengthening the Focal Points; how we can make an agenda in support of this thematic area. Not discussing the problems of the ecosystems but how the Focal Points are the strongest way to help governments implement the agreements.

**Mexico:** Had recent meeting on the ecosystem approach. There is multiplicity of forms to do things sustainably. Need to identify those practices that exist.

**Brazil:** Focus of recent meetings was done by corridors around protected areas, using the ecosystem approach. Take actions with small farmers and plantations. Take advantage of agrobiodiversity. Incentive for small farmers to plant trees and agroforestry services. Technology transfer and exchange of information important to support this. Make degraded areas a specific priority program.

**Chile:** Need a series of information layers about the regions in the area.

**Ecuador:** Stress importance that should be given to ecosystem approach, biologic corridors, transborder areas. Suggest that strengthening of Focal Points be used as approach to stress these approaches.

**Mexico:** With georeferenced information, can determine locale of resources to repair degraded habitat. Important to share biological corridor experiences with others.

**World Bank:** Question of classification of ecosystems is one area where IABIN can make contribution. Just as important as standardization at species level. This is one area in which IABIN should invest considerable resources. Hard to get agreement on ecosystem classifications. All ecosystems are artificial; only real data underlying is good field data. World Bank uses UNESCO system, but underlying data can be used by others to develop another ecosystem classification. Need to standardize the field data classification.

**Haiti:** Supports Brazil's comments on agroforestry. Valuable for biodiversity. Emphasis should be put on this theme.

**Costa Rica:** Supports World Bank intervention. Extraordinary opportunity to integrate species and specimen data at ecosystems level. Recommend paying attention to process and quality of field work but also orient them to visualize field data.

**Colombia:** Need to join existing ecosystem maps in a single visualization. Individual countries have ecosystem maps; need to integrate on same scale to visualize to evaluate risk of invasive species as a means to integrate different themes.

**IBIN:** Add ecoregions to the recommendation about using CHMs to identify national and regional priority areas, biological corridors, and transborder areas. Take measure to involve indigenous and local communities.

**BIONet:** C BD and CHM Focal Points have little capacity in helping their countries implement ecosystem approach. Suggest that IABIN partners specifically enable decision-support systems, particularly those that result in visualization at landscape scale.

\_\_\_\_: We are preparing assessment. NatureServe is developing study in the Caribbean with maps. These should be useful to your work.

**Silva:** Please review recommendations developed last night and handed out., You may make comments on these tomorrow.

## **PROTECTED AREAS**

...: Harmonize regional activities on protected area

...: Assist in the development of criteria and classification system for protected areas and make this information available

**IBIN:** Assist indigenous peoples to identify sacred sites.

**Ecuador:** Protected areas should be kept in a unique, integrated system within each country. Fortify the Focal Points who identify the risks and share this at the regional level. To do this, use tools we have such as GIS. Take these resolutions to the meeting in Durban in September. What will be the participation of the CHM in the Durban meeting? Can we take the resolutions to Durban?

**Silva:** Don't know who the CBD Secretariat representative to Durban meeting will be. Don't know that CHM is participating in the meeting. Will express your concerns to the Secretariat.

**Peru:** Need opportunities for training at country level. There could be an exchange of tools. Establish a center for exchange of special information.

**Mexico:** Results concerning this on CONABIO web page.

**U.S. EROS Data Center:** Are organizing a workshop (next Nov) on geospatial technologies. Opportunity to explore collaborations between IABIN and the countries that want to explore these technologies; how workshop could initiative integrate specimen data geospatially.

**NatureServe:**

## **POLLINATORS**

...: Programs should be developed in light of international initiatives on pollinators (i.e., FAO)

**Jamaica:** As part of I3N, include real figures on impact on economy to encourage students to be taxonomists.

**Nicaragua:** Process of forming taxonomists is random. Nobody will pay for them. Need to translate into Spanish what is available in Portuguese in Brazil. Entomologists need keys to identify the pollinators in their countries. Catalogs exist. Instead of making a list for each country, put in IABIN Portal for all neotropics. Each country would only add what they have.

**Ecuador:** Supports Nicaragua. Training of taxonomists will take a long time. Need to get information in electronic format and maintained by the network where all participants are informed.

**U.S. Smithsonian:** Has project in Mesoamerica to digitize Biologia Centroamericana. Have digital file of 67 volumes, all re-keyed and marked up in XML. Beginning of project to link baseline in Central America to work going on now. Look forward to new partners.

**BIONet:** Getting taxonomy from as many sources as possible, with dollar figures attached were possible.

**IBIN:** Assist indigenous and local communities in identifying pollinators and their plants to evaluate their significance.

## **DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY**

**Soberon:** Intervention about the Development Gateway

**Graham:** Development Gateway portal on development topics. information from many organizations, at [www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org). This portal has 400,000 registered users. About 200,000 different development projects that can be searched. Biodiversity in the Americas is being established as a window in the Development Gateway; soon to be "findable" on the Gateway (now being developed). Functions offered: forums for discussion,

meeting agendas, document storage, etc. Interface is multilingual. This meeting is being featured on the home page of the Development Gateway. We will post message on IABINfriends with more information. Register as users on the gateway for the Biodiversity in the Americas. Useful additional tool to the IABIN Portal.

## **HARMONIZING ACTIVITIES**

**Silva:** Item 5 is important. Give concrete steps for harmonizing activities. What are synergies and differences. What are our priorities? What are the most important steps that national Focal Points should do? What are the most important sources of funds to explore?

**Cotter (vice Soberon):** Open floor for discussion

**Colombia:** Setting priorities is important because resources are scarce. Have opportunities in the implementation procedures that countries are not taking advantage of. Topics discussed this morning are important to strengthen CHM to show neighbors what each of our countries are doing.

**Ecuador:** One of main goals of meeting is to strengthen synergy between CHM and IABIN. Has been stated, but must be made clear in order to strengthen capacity of institutions within country. This joining with IABIN must be a priority for the rest of the countries. Capacity building must be done in a joint way between CHM and IABIN. Also need to strengthen at the regional level; important to take advantage of these products already defined by Colombia, Brazil and others. Take advantage of their experiences. CHM should make formal invitation to countries to share their experiences, tools, etc. with other Focal Points. Protocols and standards need to be defined to facilitate how IABIN and CHM will work together. Take a resolution on strategies for implementing mechanisms/recommendations from this meeting. Need indicators or benchmarks so that we know how much of the resolutions have been fulfilled or implemented by the next IABIN Council Meeting.

**ANDINONet:** We need to see concrete actions on taxonomy. We need to encourage our countries to address this. If we fail to do this at the national level, very difficult to do at international level. If we do not have that infrastructure, collections will disappear. Need to fund taxonomy. Have to convince them of that.

**Silva:** While we agree taxonomy is important, the question is, what are the concrete steps at the national level and regional level that we can do to overcome the taxonomic impediment?

**Brazil:** Supports Colombia's position in trying to better organize body of information. Most important synergy is that among countries through bilateral cooperation. How can small producers receive a return on these technologies? Therefore we support a strong mechanism for exchange of information.

**Chile:** Need cooperation among the countries of the region. This is linked with capacity building in areas where information systems are only beginning to be developed. Holland offering support to develop CHM in Chile.

**Nicaragua:** At first IABIN meeting in Nicaragua, we talked about installing hardware; not sufficient funds for the IABIN Secretariat to make that network a reality. Important to set forth topics sufficiently precise and sufficiently small that they can be undertaken in a short period of time. With long-term initiatives, initiative may fail because funds run out before first results are in. Need something to show for what we are doing.

**Peru:** Has to be an evaluation of progress of the national CHMs to see the state of the art of the Focal Points. What are their plans to integrate the mechanisms. Strengthening supplies of information and information managers at national and internal level. They need to see mutual benefit; otherwise, no exchange of information. Dispersion of information and feedback need to work hand in hand, through the same channels and same media. Now, no proper feedback.

**Colombia:** On web page, it says 34 countries signed the agreement. 33 have Focal Points; 23 have web page. Web page is quick, efficient way of dispersing information. If we are discussing dispersion of information, we need to have web page first.

**BIONet:** Take web program of existing BIO LOOPS and see where there is synergies with IABIN, opportunities for joint fund-raising, etc.

**Antonio Salas (Subregional specialist for IABIN):** IABIN developed help for development of CHM. Consultants offered free service of consulting, even implementation of CHM web sites. I can talk of 3 cases where implementation of web pages of countries that didn't have CHM were not feasible. We were going to provide labor for preparation of pages, including translation. Some other problems with implementing CHM web page. Suggest that all countries here initiate their CHM web pages.

**Caribbean UNEP:** ETI from Netherlands is trying to develop a project of biodiversity in the Caribbean. Will forward information on that project.

**Grenada:** Endorses offer of consultants. Little capacity in small island states to develop CHM web sites due to lack of capacity — human, financial, etc. Should take advantage of offer.

**Mexico:** Document lessons learned to share experiences with countries that are just starting.

**Costa Rica:** Endorse South-South cooperation. In working regionally, one of the topics is IABIN, one in GBIF, one is CHM. In countries, don't know what these initiatives are, much less how they differ. Can use this opportunity to promote South-South cooperation.,

## NOTICE OF CONTACT GROUP

**Silva:** This afternoon, Silva will draft report and ask contact group to meet again tonight at 9 p.m. in the restaurant. Make sure all of the comments have been incorporated. This afternoon we will see presentations on the IABIN Hub and *PIP*. Keep in mind the discussions on how to strengthen CHM focal points within the context of these discussions.

## NATURESERVE PRESENTATION

**Soberon:** Recognizes NatureServe for a presentation.

**Mary Klein:** Role of NatureServe as a thematic focal point in CHM and its participation in IABIN. [Mary's presentation]

**Q (Colombia):** What is institutional capacity, # of people, resources?

**A:** Central NatureServe has 90 people and a budget of about \$10 million. The membership network has about 800 employees and an aggregate budget of \$45 million. Have initiative called "ARRIBA" to strengthen relationships with LAC.

**Q (Mexico):** What is main thematic area?

**A:** Focus on endangered species and threatened ecosystems. We want to have links between our network and others, like CONABIO REMIB.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

**Mexico:** In order to strengthen the Focal Points of the CHM, we develop regional pilot project to connect focal points in the region in order to demonstrate the interoperability, like REMIB

**Jamaica:** Taxonomy is not taught as a discipline in and of itself at Univ. of West Indies. Professors there interested in a project at regional level to address training in taxonomic skills, curriculum of 2-3 years. As first step, need to address taxonomic priorities. CHM could assist in this.

**Grenada:** Endorses Mexico's regional pilot; should also have subregional pilots.

**Colombia:** Idea of health and biodiversity important to every country; could be treating this theme in the same way as invasives. Would like to make this theme a priority.

**Peru:** Another subject to be considered is biotrade or biobusiness. Involves a lot of resources.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF IABIN

**Cotter:** Agenda topics to be covered this afternoon:

- Coordination with GBIF
- Funding level
- Executing agency
  - OAS overhead
- Hub Presentations
- Process for selecting the Hub
- Continue discussion

## COORDINATION WITH GBIF

**Cotter:** Sent email saying IABIN *PIP* exists, please circulate to membership, and comment back to IABIN (Huber and Cotter) by September 20, 2003.

## FUNDING LEVEL

**Cotter:** What we are trying to accomplish is huge: many projects, many countries. We will have a large return on investment. Based on these facts, many countries have said we should advise the World Bank about our concerns regarding the funding level. Comments?

**Costa Rica:** Propose that the funds in the *PIP* be changed to elevate to at least \$10 million. Funds are currently insufficient for so many things. Propose that *PIP* be changed to \$10 million.

**Colombia:** Would like to suggest that, since one of the recognized deficiencies is the Focal Points in the countries, include in the *PIP* the resources to strengthen the CHM Focal Points. Based on one person coordinating information-gathering and another as web master, the basic capacity for 30 countries we would have cost about million/year for 5 years. This tells us that we should increase funds. Need to have clear objectives and clear results. Should be a priority within the IABIN project.

**Mexico:** Budget should be drastically revised. Need to specify clearly what the products are; then we can calculate the costs better. In terms of informatics costs, we have reported that the lack of data is main point. Data costs. Computerized specimen costs \$1 to \$4 per specimen. Otherwise we are building a platform that will remain empty. A Landsat image costs \$400; need 120 images to cover Mexico. How many more to cover the region? Value added is gigantic. We must justify in an irrefutable way this value added. Not reflected like that in *PIP*. Mexico agrees we need to increase the budget.

**Peru:** Focusing only on the Hub, the budget is too conservative. Budget for implementation is too conservative. Projects should be made for cost of updating process. Revise budget based on projections for project. I won't give a figure, but believe current budget should be increased.

**Argentina:** Agree with increasing the budget and discuss among ourselves the best way for using the funds.

**Chile:** In implementation plan, emphasis on transfer and exchange of info, on interoperability. No item reflects how much the generation of information costs.

**Ecuador:** Would like to agree with theme to increase the budget.

**Cotter:** Sound like consensus on two issues: (1) Need to put more work into *PIP* to reflect requirements, products, needs of various countries. (2) Need to increase the amount of funding requested; at least \$10 million. Asks Douglas Graham to go back and look into how we can increase the amount we are asking for; for now, target \$10 million as the request. We will give you more definite budget figures later. Will you take this action?

**Graham:** \$4 and possibly \$5 million is in the *GEF* pipeline, subject to receipt of acceptable *proposal*. No other project has ever gone back to request an increase in funds once it was in the pipeline. However, strongly in agreement with the position expressed by the floor. In the year and a half of working on it, our understanding of what is required has changed. After a year and a half, enthusiasm has grown. Also, has been a tremendous response from institutions throughout the region; some 60+ institutions. Never dreamed of that response. These elements may justify going back and asking for a reconsideration of the budget. Will do this on your behalf. Some things needs to happen first: As part of this meeting minutes, need strong support of the countries and justification for additional funds. *GEF* is a country-driven organization. (2) Some measure of support from CHM would be helpful. Not necessarily talking about formal endorsement, but this project was of great interest to *GEF* a year and a half ago. At that time, no formal relationship between CHM and IABIN. IABIN falls 100% within the purposes for which CHM exists. *GEF* would have to be responsive of something coming out of their own organizations (CHM). (3) *GEF* Focal Points needs to be engaged. We have 34 endorsements of *GEF* Focal Points, but these endorsements were only for PDF grant. Now we need an **endorsement letter** from each *GEF* Focal Points in your countries. At the same time, *GEF* Focal Points need to say that increasing the IABIN budget is a priority of the countries. Needs to come from countries to *GEF*. If these elements come together, we will try to get the budget increased.

**Cotter:** We have 3 actions then: (1) We will put together some language to be included in the minutes of this meeting; participants can review this tomorrow. (2) We will talk to Marcos about **CHM endorsement**; will report back to group tomorrow. (3) *GEF* Focal Points will be asked to give a formal letter of support and to indicate that this project is a high priority and that increased funding would be supported as a priority.

**Haiti:** Level of fund is proportional to the team we are working for. Need to make the point that 34 countries are working together on major important subject. Don't focus only on *GEF*; look at AID and IDB, too.

**Nicaragua:** Will be difficult to get \$10 million. Good strategy is to use part of \$5 million to hire people to raise additional funds. Better than trying to increase the \$5 million to the \$10 million.

**U.S. Smithsonian:** Biologists don't know how to work the system. You are having difficulties going up to \$10 million when you need a billion. Suggest you ask as high as you can this first tranche. Can tie this to land degradation, desertification. Need biodiversity information to understand what is natural there. Please use opening Doug has given us. Suggest that we immediately ask U.S. NASA to freely give Landsat information to IABIN as an



announced deliverable at the Summit of the Americas. Propose that 50% of budget is allocated to digitization of information.

**Cotter:** Will add Summit of the Americas to tomorrow's agenda. Group will discuss need for digitization when we discuss *PIP*.

## EXECUTING AGENCY

**Cotter:** Executing Agency question raised yesterday. Asked World Bank criteria for an Executing Agency: Needs to be organization that can be certified by the WB regarding their contracting, accountability, etc. methodologies. Question about OAS overhead issue, then will open floor for suggestions of others who might do the job.

**Huber:** [Huber presentation]

**Mexico:** Good job laying out what needs to be done, but did not explain the costs of this to justify the \$400K. Mexico project charges only 2%. The Hub could be the Executing Agency and they could get another agency to do the administrative support. For example, the Mesoamerican project is \$15 million over 7 years. Money goes to Mexican bank (certified by WB, which is the implementing agency). Executing agency is CONABIO, which charges 0%.

**Cotter:** What we are discussing now is different models of approaching this. Richard's model had a financial component, an evaluation component and a monitoring component. Mexico's model is that the evaluation and monitoring component are done by Hub and financial component is done by another agency (a bank). Douglas, does monitoring and evaluation need to be done by other than the project?

**Graham:** There is a cost to evaluation. No need for an independent evaluation. Each project evaluates their own performance. Need to be clear about what we are talking about. With a component called "Administration," need to define one by one what this includes. *PIP* needs to include what are the functions, where are they covered, etc., Then decide which model works best.

**Cotter:** An action for the group to more clearly define administration and evaluate different options. Need to spend time tomorrow or offline to address this.

**Argentina:** If project was raised to \$10 million, would OAS charge \$1 million for the services?

**Huber:** Everything is negotiable. If this moved to \$10 million, we may keep it at \$400K because the work is relatively similar. Arrived at this figure as 10% of the original \$4 million. Could budget at \$50-60K per year for the 5 years instead of a percentage. Could probably keep it at \$400K

**Colombia:** Such a small amount of money, much is going to Hub, financial sustainability, and admin. More money is going to operations, rather than results. Should make bigger projects if the charge per project is the same.

**Costa Rica:** Very important whether it's the OAS or others. Need to accomplish our goals of sustainability. Looks like 3 people in Hub are not going to be enough. Now that we are talking 10% for Executing Agency, we should rethink the capabilities that we want. Model of CONABIO is healthier. Would prefer to strengthen a Hub than strengthening the OAS or an Executing Agency. After 4-5 years of the project, we need our own funds to continue the effort. We should pay more attention to Mexico's model.

**Uruguay:** Important for OAS to offer if they want to put this activity in a South American country. That way we open the coverage to 34-35 countries. Uruguay has a lot of positive experience with OAS MercoSur. More economical to be within the region (in this case in Uruguay) because I would lower the cost. Need to see how we can use this *proposal* with the CHM Focal Points to connect it to the activities of the CBD.

**Haiti:** Are there other options for Executing Agencies?

**Mexico:** Need to report what has happened in Colombia and Brazil,.

**Colombia:** I didn't want to go into details. Our costs are about 7% of project; includes operation of project itself. Executors need to follow rules of World Bank, which is not a trivial thing. Non-eligible expenses must be assumed by the institution, so risks to the institution are big. Need to prepare ourselves to handle funds properly. Would propose this as opportunity for increasing institutional capability. Financial costs are things that hurt us because they remove funds from research, but within procedure in Bank there are guarantees and have a feedback process. Risk of failure is reduced, but failure is the institutions.

**Cotter:** Should open the discussion to all interested and have IABIN evaluate the various potential executing agencies.

**Chile:** Have doubts in point 5, to guarantee sustainability we have \$1 million. Is this transfer of funds to the Foundation? No increase over time.

**Cotter:** These issues need further discussion and we will take that as an action.

**Chile:** Yesterday had a brief presentation on a foundation being created. Is this for IABIN?

**Cotter:** The presentation yesterday was about a biodiversity foundation, with which Jack Hill has been involved. It is different from the IABIN Foundation mentioned in the *PIP*.; We can consider how these two foundations can work together.

## HUB PRESENTATIONS

Bauldock: [Background; introduction of 6 potential hosts; time limit for presentations; gives floor to OAS, then to Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales]

[Huber presentation]

[Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales/NBII/IIA presentation ]

start 4:07 p.m. end 4:22 p.m.

## HUB SELECTION PROCESS

Klein: Because both NBII and OAS are interested in the Hub, I have prepared a strawman for a process for selection of the hub. A draft for discussion is included in the packet. It has 4 steps: (1) Development of the request for *proposals*: Recommend that a contractor be hired to prepared a development of the request for *proposals*

(2) Solicitation of full *proposals*: Recognizing that the time requesting letters of interest was short, should open to more institutions. This solicitation should be made by consultant writing *proposal*. Final solicitation should be reviewed by Vice-Chair of Council, Jamaica, because Chair has an interest.

(3) Review and evaluation of full *proposals*: IABIN Council should appoint a review and evaluation committee, made up of 5 institutions that have credibility within community and have no interest in bidding., This Committee would establish a means to rank and present the recommendations too the IEC.

(4) Final decision on selection of IABIN Hub: The IEC will receive the recommendations and make a final selection.

Floor is open.

**Grenada:** What about institutions that are not here?

**Klein:** Yes they would be considered. It is also recommended that *proposals* be solicited beyond those originally responding.

**Peru:** What is being discussed, process or presentations?

Klein: Process.

**Cotter:** Can discuss presentations if the group desires.

**Grenada:** What about the OAS hiring the consultant to draft the RFP?

**Klein:** To separate drafting from organization interested in being Hub.

**Graham:** Questions need to hire a consultant. Seems unnecessary. Just ask for *proposals*. Did not seem to be stage at which the *proposals* were sent back to Council; only evaluated by Committee of 5. Might be better to have Council in the loop, with their comments going back to Committee of 5.

**Mexico:** Serious problems with the responsibilities of Hub; some things are not here. Cannot make a call for *proposals* if we have not outlined the responsibilities. Criteria do not apply with these gaps still in. We heard two interesting *proposals*. However, we are going to rethink the project, asking for more money, etc. Without this decided, no way we can call for new *proposals* for Hub.

**Cotter:** Mary was to concentrate on the process for selecting. As you point out, the responsibilities of the Hub, as well as the Executing Agency, financial agency, etc., However, when the time comes to announce, and when we have the requirements ready, we need to have the process agreed to.

**Mexico:** In that case, we agree to the proposed process and select the selection Committee of 5. We don't need a consultant to do this; can do this internally.

**Venezuela:** Would like to confirm what Douglas said. How will the six apply if we reopen? Will these 6 have an opportunity to rewrite the *proposals*.

**Klein:** They will have an opportunity to rewrite and change if they want. I hear that we can write the RFP ourselves, and that requires a process to get that done.

**Colombia:** The Hub should look at the possibilities of generating capacity building. Encourages countries to take on the challenge of being Hub in order to increase institutional capabilities. Initiative shouldn't end where resources are finished. New opportunity to rethink how to do implementation and who is going to do this project.

**Peru:** What is expected life span of Hub? Can Executing Agency be the Hub? Shouldn't have conflict of interest. As criteria for Hub, says Hub needs to be connected to the financial management system of the OAS. If that is so, needs to be in criteria. Supports Mexico in pausing to consider new criteria for Hub. Have to distribute responsibilities between Hub and Focal Point.

**Jack Hill:** *PIP* due to *GEF* in November. Need to work really hard, really fast. A re-announcement will take a couple of months and we will miss the date.

**Klein:** Tomorrow we will have further discussion on the internal development of the RFP.

## QUESTIONS FOR PRESENTERS

**Haiti:** Shouldn't put all eggs in one nest. In consortia presentation, have team from two countries. Good combination and should be a good Hub for IABIN.

**Uruguay:** When you talked about the countries, Uruguay is included as well. We would be included in the OAS *proposal* as well. Would be a way to lower costs. In Mercosur, we would complement.

**Peru:** Evaluation of *proposals* will be done by 5 people; with what mechanism will they get input from other countries? Need to have some mechanism by which the countries can respond to the 5 people.

**Cotter:** A step will be built into the process to allow this, so that everyone can voice their interest. When we redefine the requirements, we will need to review the process. We will add review by the Council to the process as it is outlined in Mary's *proposal*.

**Chile:** When there is a redefinition of roles and functions for the Hub, need to analyzing the 2 *proposals* presented today and to know the *proposals* that were not presented. Need to generate criteria for a committee to rank the *proposals*. Criteria will change.

**UNEP Caribbean:** Considered sending in a letter but constituencies are too different so we did not.

**Mexico:** How are we going to proceed?

**Cotter:** We have collected action items and a way to approach them. We'll report back tomorrow.

**Argentina:** Asks for show of hands who would be willing to take on the task of evaluation.

**Cotter:** Show of hands? [no hands] OK, we will ask that question again tomorrow.

---

IABIN-CHM Meeting, Day Three

Thursday, August 14, 2003

## REVIEW OF REPORT OF MEETING

IABIN actions on Meeting Report:

- Gladys as co-chair clarification
- Paragraph summarizing *PIP* for paragraph ~39 of final report
- OAS and Argentina provide lines for paragraph 54 on their presentations

## ELECTION OF IABIN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Cotter:** Election of IABIN Executive Committee members

**Peru:** On behalf of a number of countries propose Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Argentina.

**Mexico:** Second, move election by acclamation.

**Chile:** On behalf of Southern cone, propose Argentina.

**Colombia:** We supporting the *proposal* from Mexico, Costa Rica Ecuador and Argentina.

**Brazil:** Supports the nomination by Peru and also for the Argentina for the Secretariat of IABIN.

**Cotter:** Sounds like general consensus on IEC membership. Costa Rica, Ecuador and Argentina are welcomed as members of the IEC.

## AGENDA

**Cotter:** Agenda for the remainder of the IABIN topics.

- IABIN Standards and Protocols: Paper prepared by McLarty, presented by M. Frame. Then Colombia will make a presentation on their standards.
- Response to World Bank comments
- Timeline for *PIP*
  - Overall timeline
  - Draft timeline for Hub
  - Draft timeline for Executing Agency
- Continuation of discussion of *PIP*, specific projects, other inclusions, etc.
- Other items to be addressed by IABIN

If others have additions to agenda, see Chair during lunch break.

## STANDARDS AND PROTOCOLS FOR IABIN

**[Mike's presentation]** Paper is in your packet. Presentation summarized Darrell's paper.

Document is still high level; basically says use the standards that most have agreed to. Need to get down to the next level of detail. Frame proposing the establishment of a working group of country members, initiative members, to discuss standards for IABIN and work on detail.

**Cotter:** Does group agree with establishing Technical Working Group to address standards? If a good idea, over lunch break decide who.

**Argentina:** In principle, good idea is to adopt common standards. How can we work together in a common group before we know the type of data to be brought together in the network? We need to do this work in the context of the project included in the *PIP*.

**Colombia:** Answering Argentina, the proposed standards are general enough to cover the project. When we talk about standards we talk about wide mechanisms for information handling.

**Cotter:** That agrees with Mike Frame's comment on the fact that these are high level standards. When we get to specific data to be incorporated, need to develop specific standards.

**GBIF:** From GBIF point of view, document is very good and very compatible with what GBIF is trying to do. If IABIN works along these lines, GBIF is OK with it. Regarding different themes (invasive species, pollinators, etc.), additional standards needs to be developed.

**Argentina:** Are we discussing other standards that we would develop?

**Frame:** We need to discuss what other schemas need to be developed. For I3N, some specific standards exist; that model could be used.

**Peru:** I see Argentina's worry as valid. Need to go further than a framework that is purely technological. Need to take into account the content. Needs to be a work group to oversee all these issues; however, in activities we should include content analysis. Group needs to find synergies with other initiatives. How is it going to support national initiatives.

**Cotter:** Content analysis and cooperation with other initiatives added to activities of this working group.

**U.S. Smithsonian:** Establishment of group useful; however, suggest different set of activities. Group should look at specific GBIF, Species 200, ITIS, etc., standards and provide guidance and advice on how these standards should be applied, why they should be applied, etc. Also why specific data needs to be framed in a particular technical way. Also train web managers and database developers so that data comes in interoperably. May need a second committee to look at content analysis and to show how data can be used for decision-making, sustainable development, etc.

**Cotter:** Invite technical persons to get together during lunch to discuss how IABIN standards and the working group should proceed.

**Silva:** Many here participated in the CHM meeting on standards and protocols; that document has been considered.

**IBIN:** What is needed is the institutional data. Several kinds of information needs standardized. For example, how to we standardize organizational information. Project standard: Is a common exchange format for projects. Legal standards: When data comes together, falls under some regulatory framework. Nice to have regulatory framework to which to attach. Events standards: Harvest events off of each other's web site. Thinking along the line of developing standards for these institutional issues will be helpful.

**GBIF:** Apologizes that GBIF Training Workshop planned for Cancun could not take place. However, training workshop for GBIF Node Managers will take place in Costa Rica at INBio in October 2003. Open the invitation to interested IABIN participants. Also one in Ottawa on 25-26 September 2003.

### [Colombia presentation on standards]

**Erick Van Praag:** Biologic metadata should be incorporated into the structures that already exist. Many potential partnership0s.

**OAS:** Should we have words about Mercury. Good work is being done by NABIN. We might think about another technical working group to address the portal. The 6-8 key people should be brought together to address portal.

**Frame:** Goal to provide one stop shop for IABIN data. Mercury addresses this.

**Haiti:** Who uses the Humboldt information and for what?

**Humboldt:** This evening we are going to have a presentation. The Biodiversity Information System was developed to support national biodiversity issues. Have a strategic plan for the next 25 years; this is the framework for our system.

**World Bank:** Very interesting what Colombia has done in terms of development of standards and protocols; can't judge right or wrong. IABIN needs *proposal* on same level of detail as Colombia. The *proposal* before you today is not as detailed, but we have to start somewhere.

**Humboldt:** The document in the packet is clear that it refers to high level standards. We can come to important agreements. Need working group to follow up on these general standards. Need opportunity to review. Doable step by step. Start with general. More specific can be left for later adoption with a clear chronogram of work.

**Silva:** Have existing interoperable network of BCHs. Uses SOAP for that. DiGIR will be compatible with SOAP. Need to consider how to optimize resources to make systems interoperable.

**Mexico:** Need to share our expertise with countries that haven't implemented their CHM node yet.

**Colombia:** Need to think what we want the information for. Need to keep our neighbors in mind. To optimize benefits, need to do in parallel, not in phases. Need to bring together our developed capacities at the global or local level, both horizontal and vertical. We all do the same thing the same way

**Antonio Salas:** During presentation, we didn't hear that the results come from survey process to determine what is being done at institutions. This is the biggest consensus for the Americas. Also taking into account national strategies.

**Argentina:** How Colombia uses standards is good example; could be used as a model for IABIN.

**Cotter:** Will reconvene at 2:15 pm., and start with a report from the technical working group contact group.

**Silva:** Bring concerns, updates, revisions to meeting -report to Marcos in the last 15 minutes of lunch break.

**Frame:** Report of lunch contact group on Technical Working Group.

Group philosophies:

- Stable group
- Broader than just data interoperability
  - o Supports training
  - o Tool sharing
- Functions in parallel to the current *PIP* efforts
- Serve as potential advisory to IABIN to channel questions & issues to experts
- Looks to adopt existing standards
- Views standards as a suite that support the network
- Only establish standards in the areas that IABIN wants to share information – could be phased
  - o i.e., invasive species, pollinators, web pages, etc.

Potential tasks

- Scrutinize existing *PIP* architecture and standards sections
- IABIN should formally establish the TWG
  - o Clearly define the groups charter and scope
  - o Should be mentioned in the *PIP* with resources and general purpose for long-term sustainability
- Organize training on standards, interoperability at next IABIN meeting
- Establish pilot projects that demonstrate:
  - o Interoperability
  - o Data value]
  - o Support goals and objectives of IABIN thematic areas]
- Evaluate how IABIN can benefit, apply, integrate data readily coming available through GBIF network

**Huber:** Should also review portal issue.

**Cotter:** Through IEC, we will charter the group. Added one item to agenda: To reach agreement on the focus of the *PIP*. Next agenda item: Response to World Bank comments. To help Graham increase level of funding, need to get endorsement from CHM FPs. Two do this, we'll do 2 things: (1) IABIN Chair has requested time on the agenda of the next IAC meeting to solicit endorsement; (2) Recommendation concerning the increase of funding in *PIP* is included in report of this meeting. WB needs wording for mandate to be recorded in minutes of our meeting showing that we are asking World Bank to solicit increased funding. Wording is presented as draft.

**[Statement on GEF Funding Amount for IABIN—get from Bonnie]**

**Mexico:** Not in agreement with pre-budget. Before we send out a budget we are asking for more money. Don't have a final *PIP* or final budget.

**Cotter:** *GEF* already has target amount of funding and what this group is saying is that that target is insufficient

**Graham:** Yes, *GEF* has already approved estimated budget amount of \$4-5 million based on the PDF *proposal*. Yes, we don't have final *PIP* or final budget, but we do have enough components to indicate that the funds are insufficient. Of the 60-70 institutions expressing an interest in working with IABIN, we know for a certainty that only a small number will be able to participate with the current level of funding. Can start with current level, but not enough to respond to demand. Therefore it seemed worthwhile to request to funds.

**Mexico:** Don't think we should start from a pre-established based for the project. We do not have a good idea of the cost of what we want to do because what we want to do is not well defined in the *PIP*.

**Chair:** *GEF* has target for us. *PIP* needs to be focused. Over next two months we will strengthen *PIP*. However, given that, we know that 4-5 million is probably not enough. We were going to charge Douglas with preparing the way for asking for more money.

**Colombia:** Would like to support the position of Mexico. Important to know what we want to get out of the project. Currently not well defined. We are focusing on resources, not the subject. When we look at ratios of 4:1. We are used to working with unfair requirements. We need to know what we are going to do with the 1 we are going to get. We need to define the project better. If the objectives are not clear, all will have questions about participating. Procedures have to be clear. If we consolidate a strategic alliance with CHM to strengthen them, we can have more capabilities and more resources. Better than just asking for more resources. We need a solid and clear implementation plan for the project. Not as concerned with the amount of the project. We should say what we really need. What do we need to do to achieve the priorities.

**Chair:** You are saying do requirements first, then as for money. The other view is to do it in parallel.

**Colombia:** Would like to see a focus on what we need. If we are financing a strengthening of the CHM in the region, we know that will cost \$7 million. If we know what we are going to do, we can say with \$5 million we can do this and this and this. We can go to *GEF* and say we need \$15 million but here is what we can do with the \$5 million.

**Mexico:** Important to talk about real costs before asking for money. CONABIO has paid between \$1 and \$4 per specimen. If institutions do not have the structure, other institutions cannot get the same for the same price. Need to generate new data. Money you are asking for should go to development of primary resources. Cost of maintenance in tropical countries is very high (paper and specimens).

**Chair:** You are generally saying wait until we get more cost data.

**Argentina:** Need to follow correct steps, but at the same time need to follow procedures and steps of *GEF*. Reality that *GEF* has set \$4-5 million for next year. Over the next two months, need to deal with that reality. We know that we want to ask for more than \$5 million; World Bank should begin to ask for more. When *PIP* is finished, it will be demonstrated that the countries want to ask for \$10 million. However, Doug should start lobbying for additional funds. Perhaps the next few months is informal work on more funds; later when *PIP* is finished, can ask formally for more.

**Graham:** Logically, the current approach is illogical. Need to know costs before seeking funds. However, pragmatically we need to work with a target. Are we producing a \$5 million or a \$10 million *PIP*? We can't decide to make that decision in 5-6 months. Project design [as included in the *PIP*] needs to have target.

**Chair:** Group should meet during break to decide approach: \$5 million, \$10 million, no budget figure at this time.

**Mexico:** In agreement to talk with those who think we should take the project as it is, with some polish and perhaps with an increase in funding.

**Huber:** *GEF* assesses the importance of the project presented to them. Originally, not resounding support by *GEF* for this project. *PIP* is very well defined. Here is the budget of 8 pages. It is very specifically defined.

**Chair:** Timeline [see chart]



**Mexico:** Why is Dec 31 the final date?

**World Bank:** Last date by which a *PIP* can be received that would allow the Bank to produce the necessary documentation to seek approval from both *GEF* Council and WB Executive Board within the current fiscal year (end of June 2004). If not received in time, then the project slips to another fiscal year that is not advised and should be avoided.

**Colombia:** How do we know that what we discussed here in these three days will be incorporated into the *PIP* if update is done by consultants? Projects we want to develop we should do ourselves, not through consultants. If we don't do this ourselves, we may not be happy with result.

**Chair:** If people have time to do that, sign up for it. However, if people want consultant to do initial work and we review.

**Grenada:** Same comment as Colombia. Final document should come from concept, not OAS. Like the idea of cost analysis. Focus not on money we are going to spend but on the activities we are going to do.

**Mexico:** If project requires only slight modification and is in \$5-10 million range, no problem with consultants. However, if we are going for the full Monty for biodiversity informatics, we need more time. We will not be ready by December. We will not negotiate it; the Ministers will negotiate with the highest levels of the Bank. I think the same applies to other countries. We have to take the other decision first.

**Chair:** Need to consider the other timelines as well. Worked backwards from the December date to determine the steps for a Hub and for an Executing Agency. Tried to keep the steps parallel for easier comparison. Hub process is more a *proposal* evaluation process; Executing Agency is more an analysis of available organizations. How do we identify who is out that and against what criteria do we evaluate them? [\[see chart of Hub selection process timeline\]](#)

**FOCUS OF THE *PIP*** (20 minutes, until 10 minutes to 5 p.m.)

**Mexico:** Needs to be refocused and redrafted extensively. What we can achieve with ambitious project will allow us to have a system in this hemisphere with great power. The consultant for our region never went to see us; only send pre-drafted email. If we had opportunity to see this, we would have participated more. Mexico is willing to participate in a redrafting of the *PIP*. We will help negotiate for what we need. If it is better to keep things the way they are, we won't get mad about it, but it is worth everyone considering it.

**Nicaragua:** Two or three alternatives. \$5 million, \$10 million, \$300 million. Could use \$5 million to build a platform for a very large project; build small modules. I don't know what to tell them what decision was being taken at this meeting. I wasn't sure of the purpose of the project. People say project is to generate data from the field. What will be done with the \$5 million is to set up a secretariat of something and establish the rules of the game and install the platform.

**Haiti:** Accepting \$10 million, when we know we need more, indicates that we think this project is not important.

**Grenada:** Problem is that we are focused on the money. Need to focus on the activities. Have some necessary prioritized activities that fit the objectives. Use \$5 million toward the activities we agree need to be done.

**Jack Hill:** World Bank is willing to give your \$5 million; he is willing to go back and ask for \$10 million. Biological informatics is a hard sell. The \$5-10 million is a stepping stone and can be used to leverage for growth.

**Colombia:** The subject is not amount to ask for *GEF*. We know they have allocated \$5 million. If we don't get the remainder from *GEF*, can get the remainder from elsewhere. Need to be convinced that the project we are committing to is the project that we expect. We can start with the funds available, and then look for additional funds to finish the project. Perhaps *GEF* will provide other funds. Need to define project and cost it out. Do the best with the \$5 million.

**Chair:** Contact group discusses \$5 million or \$10 million. I would like to focus on the focus of the *PIP*. What do you want to see in terms of content and focus of *PIP*.

**Argentina:** We think that the 4 thematic areas (invasives, ecosystems, pollinators, protected areas) should be the initial focus. We may need to make a special effort on digitization particularly in these areas to show concrete results. Set up the project to have pure digitization section. The other components can produce products that can be demonstrated in our own countries. To be able to have a network on decision-making on invasive species, need to finish with data analysis. Focus should be on providing more content. Not clear what network of projects would be.

**Colombia:** 50% of project should be dedicated to data collection and digitization. Strengthen national nodes; later strengthen regional nodes and eventually the interaction between those regional nodes. Strengthen ties between countries at the subregional level: 20%. Another 20% to capacity building and outreach. Limit of other 10% for administration. Make a recommendation to have a hub, 5-6 regional hubs coordinating national nodes, and a strategy to structure the organization as well as the contents.

**Alberto Oriza:** (defense of what has been included in *PIP*) Idea is not to build the network in technology but build a network in human terms. Start with small steps.

**Jack Hill:** To keep up momentum, need to use existing data. By talking about generating new data, don't have resources for that.

**Chair:** Needs decision from contact group on:

1. Should Graham begin efforts to increase *GEF* grant from \$5 million to \$10 million?
2. Do we want to take advantage of the opportunity to use a consultant to do some of the work to consolidate comments relating to the *PIP* and developing another version of the *PIP* that we can then work with to improve to what we want. Alternative is that a consultant will not be involved and that we will do the work ourselves. If that alternative, want volunteers to do the work.
3. What are comments about the schedules?

**Nicaragua:** We could have one of our institutions hire the consultant. An institution (like Humboldt, CONABIO, etc.) perhaps we should pay the institution to do that.

**Chair:** Funding is available from PDF grant to pay for consultant. That funding is with OAS. If another organization does that work, that org would need to say they have money to fund that consultant.

**Mexico:** Group will meet to chose between two models. Fix what we have, or do a different thing. We need to decide this before the funding decision.

**Silva:** Copies of the report have been distributed. Need to adopt report before the closing of the meeting.

**Mexico:** Doug should go after a little more money and reduce project to 3 years. Consultant hired through OAS and would report to IEC.

**Colombia:** In 3 years we should have the capability to put forth a much bigger *proposal*.

**Costa Rica:** GBIF established an initial period of 3 years, and then evaluate results. Reducing the timeframe from 5 to 3 years would increase per year funding. Do work in refining real budget for the long-term project.

**Chair:** Summarized findings.

**World Bank:** Decision of 5 versus 3 years is an operational decision. Needs to be looked at by people who put budget together. Spending money takes time. Think we can get it spent in that timeframe. If *GEF* open to providing more funds, increases challenge of getting even more money spent in 3 years. Could discuss with *GEF* a tranced project: amount of money allocation to first tranche, say 3 years. If objectives are met by project and satisfactory execution of first tranche, could be liberation of second tranche. Better than going back for a second project. Doing that has extremely high procedural costs to WB and *GEF*.

**Chair:** Recognizes Smithsonian re Summit of the Americas.

**Hirsch:** Need 1-page summary to remind leaders that they called for IABIN. (1) We listened to them; (2) we did what they said to do; (3) what we need: political and economic support. By providing biodiversity information we support sustainable development. Feeds into *GEF* summary. Then need 2 pages of examples of using biodiversity data to solve problems. Finally, need Summit to reiterate its support and encourage nations to redouble their efforts.

**Chair:** USGS will work with Len to develop that statement. Please make your presentations available to Annie; we will post then to a web site. Timeline is approved. IEC please get engaged.

**Silva:** Update to meeting report. Report will be edited and will be presented at COP.