TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Director of the IABIN Secretariat

Executive Director of the IABIN Secretariat
Project Title: Building IABIN
Qualification: M.Sc. Botany, Zoology, Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources, Biological Informatics, Biotechnology, or related field
Preference: Biological Informatics Experience
Job requirement: Biological Informatics Network Implementation

The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) was officially mandated at the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development in December 1996. To date, IABIN implementation has progressed in two areas: (i) the initiation of specific projects to address biodiversity issues, network standards, and tools; and (ii) the development of a consultative process to encourage the participation of individuals and institutions from public and private sectors in the countries of the Americas. Discussions within the community have resulted in the definition of a vision for IABIN, the selection and implementation of a governance structure, the initiation of pilot projects in thematic areas, and consensus on basic network standards. Reports on legal, technical, and institutional issues affecting information sharing have been completed. A 5-year implementation project will begin in late 2004. See the IABIN web site at http://www.iabin.net for detailed information (See IABIN Project Implementation Plan http://www.iabin.net/defaulteng.html (English) and IABIN Plan de Implementacion http://www.iabin.net/ (Spanish).

IABIN is governed by the IABIN Council, comprising official Focal Points from the countries of the Americas plus representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and initiatives addressing biodiversity informatics issues. The IABIN Council is represented intersessionally by the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC), a group of eight members elected from among the official IABIN Focal Points plus one elected representative from an inter- or non-governmental organization.

IABIN will have a distributed Internet-based architecture, supported by a small Secretariat that will provide institutional coordination and some network services. The IABIN Secretariat is envisioned as a facilitator, not a controller, of the network. It will serve the collective interest, including stimulation of bilateral and multilateral efforts of its network members. The details of an IABIN architecture, including technical specifications and a configuration management plan, will be developed within the context of this managed network model with the objective of maximizing interoperability between and among network components. The IABIN Secretariat will:

- support technical standards development process;
- coordinate catalogs and directories (centralized or distributed);
- coordinate the IABIN Thematic networks in collaboration with the Coordinating Institutions;
- manage communications including listservs, web sites, etc.;
- support the efforts of the other independent nodes;
- administer the central coordination office;
- organize and support arrangements for business and technical meetings of the IABIN Council and other IABIN; and
- fundraise.

The Secretariat will ensure interoperability not only within IABIN, but also with other regional and global efforts, especially the CBD-CHM and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), with which IABIN has signed memoranda of understanding.

In addition, IABIN will be coordinated with many regional frameworks and initiatives, such as:

- The Mesoamerican Environmental Information System (SIAM);
- BIOnet, CARInet and ANDINOnet;
- The networks coordinated by CONABIO (Mexico), INBio (Costa Rica), Humboldt (Colombia), CRIA (Brazil), the U.S. National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII), and NATURESERVE, among others.

The Secretariat, to be established at the City of Knowledge (Ciudad de Saber) in Panama, will have functions and responsibilities as the coordinating organization of the IABIN Network and also a role in coordinating many aspects of the GEF project, "Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network," a five-year effort to implement IABIN. In the short term, the IABIN Secretariat will focus on executing the GEF Project, as that project is the major instrument currently available for channeling financial support to the network. In the future however, as other funding sources replace a reliance on GEF funds, the more general coordinating role of the Secretariat will assume greater importance. The Secretariat will be physically located in the City of Knowledge (CoK) in Panama City, the host organization. Project funds will be managed by the Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS/USDE), the Project's Executing Agency, which will contract project-funded Secretariat staff and disburse other funds as needed for Secretariat functions.

The IABIN Secretariat Director will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the GEF project, and will be in charge of running the IABIN network, tracking cofinancing, and quality control of the Coordinating Institutions (CIs) and matching-grant recipients (under Component 2), reporting to the GS/OAS and to the IABIN Council. The other two professionals to be hired are the Data Content Manager (see component 2 of the PIP) and the Thematic Networks Coordinator (see Component 1 of the PIP). The scope of duties of the Content Manager includes increasing the biodiversity information and data content available through IABIN by developing and nurturing partnerships with data and information providers, other biodiversity network initiatives, and users. The scope of duties of the Thematic Networks Coordinator includes providing technical guidance to participants and coordinating informatics technologies required to link network resources.

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The IABIN Secretariat Director will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the GEF project and will be in charge of running the IABIN network, tracking cofinancing, overseeing the efforts of the Coordinating Institutions (CIs) and grant recipients, and reporting to the GS/OAS and to the IABIN Council. The other two professionals to be hired are the Data Content Manager (see component 2 of the PIP) and the Thematic Networks Coordinator (see Component 1 of the PIP). The scope of duties of the Content Manager includes increasing the biodiversity information and data content available through IABIN by developing and nurturing partnerships with data and information providers, other biodiversity network initiatives, and users. The scope of duties of the Thematic Networks Coordinator includes providing technical guidance to participants and coordinating informatics technologies required to link network resources.

In collaboration with the GS/OAS, and the IABIN Focal Points, the Secretariat will assist with tracking and substantiating co-financing from coordinating institutions and from institutions receiving grants through contractual agreements. The appropriate guidelines will be developed by the Secretariat, IABIN Executive Committee, and GS/OAS before project implementation to set benchmark values for various types of co-financing such as personnel, physical infrastructure, and connectivity. semi-annually.

The IABIN Secretariat Director should have a working knowledge of all aspects of Secretariat activities, which will include:

Operational/leadership functions under Interoperability and Access to Data:
- Supervise the operation of the basic network infrastructure: IABIN Catalog Service and Thematic Networks
- Facilitate the development of the network (e.g., assess capacity, identify areas for restructuring or investment, seek support)
- Manage data on the status and availability of the network's capacity
- Provide network and user support, possibly including a help desk
- Seek agreements on the use of standards and protocols to ensure compatibility of diverse data sources within the region
- Implement policies for the use of information (Intellectual property rights and code of ethics on access and data sharing)
- Monitor the needs of the user community
- Develop a biodiversity informatics directory in conjunction with CHM, academic institutions and other partners that documents each institution's functionality, interoperability, and content
- Create the Expert Committees for the Catalog Services and Thematic Networks
- Track and substantiate core and non-core co financing of coordinating institutions and from institutions receiving grants through contractual agreements.

Operational/leadership functions under Data Content Creation:
- Quality control and validation of information
- Digitization of biodiversity data
- Determine data content creation priorities
- Host data
- Track and substantiate core and non-core co financing of coordinating institutions and from institutions receiving grants through contractual agreements

Operational/leadership functions under Information Products for Decision Makers:
- Identify the specific needs for value-added information products
- Provide visualization and data integration tools to improve the usability of data in the decision making process

Operational/leadership functions under Sustainability of IABIN:
- Seek sources of funding for the operation of the Secretariat and other activities (e.g., IABIN Council meetings)
- Help coordinate the IABIN Foundation
- Support the IABIN Council, Executive Committee, ad hoc working groups, and particularly National Focal Points
- Promote cooperation amongst the network's partners through meetings, workshops, newsletters, etc.

- Facilitate understanding of and commitment to the network's goals (e.g., issues being addressed, users to be served)
- Preparation of strategic plans for product development and services
- Liaise to Development Gateway
- Target indigenous peoples as a group requiring improved information access
- Implement of strategic plans (e.g., through formation of multi-partner teams)
- Facilitate access to data (e.g., through custodianship, data access agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, implementation of standards)
- Brief the network's partners on new opportunities, plans and progress (e.g. newsletters, email)
- Handle inquiries about the network's activities, referring to individual partners as appropriate
- Maintain copies of the network's products and services for distribution to users
- Consolidate IABIN partners throughout the Hemisphere and coordinate with other regional biodiversity networks, GBIF and CHM
- Maintain the IABIN Gateway

Operational/leadership functions under Administration:
- Develop TORs for consultants and requests for proposals
- Coordinate evaluation of proposals and consultants
- Report to donors
- Prepare quarterly inputs for IEC review
- Monitor and evaluate project effectiveness
- Track core and non core co-financing

Deliverables -- Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

The IABIN Secretariat Director will submit quarterly reports in Spanish and English that document project progress to the IABIN Council and the OAS. These reports will draw on assessments, reviews, minutes of meetings, planning and programming documents, study reports, and other documentation prepared concerning the project. All key IABIN documents and all semester reports will be posted on www.iabin.net and distributed to the IABIN Council and OAS.

Candidate Qualifications

Candidates must have informatics networking experience at the international level. They must be able to demonstrate a passion for, and understanding of, conservation and development issues, an impressive track record in an international organization, clear evidence of delivery of conservation successes and powerful leadership qualities. This critical post will manage several consultants and multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral issues. Applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Masters degree in M.Sc. Botany, Zoology, Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources, Biological Informatics, Biotechnology, or related field, and 7-10 years related experience or equivalent combination.
- Excellent verbal and written skills in English and Spanish with working knowledge in Portuguese. Knowledge of French helpful.
- Supervisory experience, including ability to set objectives and manage performance.
- Proven organizational and analytical skills
- Ability to manipulate, analyze and interpret data.
- Familiarity with state of the art information technologies.
- Experience in developing information systems.

- Experience in fundraising, developing support, successful grant- and proposal-writing.
- Knowledge of biodiversity informatics initiatives in the hemisphere.

Coordination and Reporting

For the duration of the GEF Project, the consultant will report to Richard M. Huber at the GS/OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment and the IABIN Executive Committee. The consultant will be responsible to the Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment of the OAS for these Terms of Reference, and will also be responsible to the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) for policies impacting IABIN outside the scope of the GEF project.

Remuneration and Payment Schedule

The contract is a 5-year contract, in one-year increments. The contract is expected to be extended yearly. Remuneration for first one-year increment will be determined based on employment and salary history. Contract renewals will be based on satisfactory performance and annual performance evaluation that will be reviewed by the IEC or its designates. Remuneration will be provided in twelve monthly payments, paid upon submission and approval of the deliverables as required during that month as established in the Project Implementation Plan. Housing and moving expenses will be reimbursed on a lump sum basis.

NOTE: The Secretariat is expected to continue indefinitely, but will depend on the ability of IABIN to become financially sustainable during this 5-year period. The Director will be expected to contribute to achieving that sustainability. GEF funds to cover contract remuneration for the IABIN Secretariat Executive Director will be available on a declining basis (see chart below); the incumbent will be responsible for raising a portion of the funds to cover contract costs after the first 2 years.

Contract Year	Percent of Contract Costs covered by GEF Funding	Percent of Contract Costs requiring fundraising from additional sources
Year 1	100%	0
Year 2	100%	0
Year 3	80%	20%
Year 4	60%	40%
Year 5	40%	60%

Salary will be covered on a declining basis. The incumbent will be responsible for raising a portion of the funds for her/his salary after the first 2 years. The consultant will receive a lump sum payment for moving expenses if applicable. Affordable housing is offered at Ciudad de Saber in Panama.

During July 2004, the position of Director of the IABIN Secretariat, to be based at the City of Knowledge in Panama, will be advertised. The terms of reference for this position may be found at www.iabin.net. Interested individuals interested in applying for the position should send a resume (curricula vitae) (preferably by email) by August 2, 2004 to:

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