

TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Data Content Manager of the IABIN Secretariat

Data Content Manager of the IABIN Secretariat

Project Title: Building the Inter American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)

Qualification: Masters in Botany, Zoology, Biological or Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources Management, Biological Informatics, Biotechnology, or related field

Preference: Biological Informatics Experience

Job requirement: Increasing data content available through IABIN by developing partnerships with information providers, other biodiversity network initiatives, and users.

Background on IABIN. 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 Implementación <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.

Information on the IABIN Secretariat.

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 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 IABIN focal points in each country;
- administer the central coordination office;
- organize and support arrangements for business and technical meetings of the IABIN Council and other IABIN meetings; 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 sub-regional or national frameworks and initiatives, for example:

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

The Secretariat has been established at the City of Knowledge (Ciudad de Saber) in Panama, and has 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.

Funds for the GEF project are 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.

Objectives of IABIN Data Content Manager Consultancy. The Data Content Manager of the IABIN Secretariat will be part of a team made up of the IABIN Secretariat Director (see TORs on www.iabin.net), who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the GEF project, 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.

The incorporation of standards within IABIN needs to be accompanied by development of a formal Content Development Program. The IABIN Content Development Program will support multilingual training, and provide technical leadership to IABIN countries as they develop data for access within the IABIN network. While IABIN Catalog Services and Thematic Networks will create the network infrastructure to access data and information through the IABIN Catalog Services, the Data Content Creation Component will improve the availability of critical data and metadata. The Program includes:

- Carrying out training sessions on the use of data creation tools.
- Providing Grants to institutions with high quality data to support institutional efforts to make data available through the network.
- Data and metadata quality control.

Recipients of training and of grants will be chosen by an evaluation committee as agreed upon by the IABIN Executive Committee and the OAS through a competitive funding mechanism using some or all of the criteria below:

- Linkage to IABIN's thematic priorities
- Available co-financing

- Availability of qualified personnel and protocols
- Relevance to multiple countries
- Commitment to IABIN standards and protocols
- Impact of filling data gaps
- Relevance for conservation and sustainable use
- Commitment to public access
- Sub regional balance

Consultants, chosen competitively will carry out the training in coordination with the CIs for the Catalog and the Thematic Networks. The Data Content Manager will coordinate the data content activities across all the Thematic Networks and the Catalog system.

Deliverables -- Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

The Data Content Manager will submit to the IABIN Secretariat Director quarterly reports in Spanish and English that document progress in the data content management program specifically by thematic network and matching grant. This quarterly report will be merged into a larger report that is the responsibility of the IABIN Secretariat Director that will indicate overall 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 biodiversity informatics and technical coordination of data content management experience at the international level. Candidates should have experience in a multi-lingual international initiative involving complex relationships between countries, donors, NGOs, and the public. They must be able to demonstrate a passion for, and understanding of, conservation and development issues, an impressive track record in an international organization, and clear evidence of delivery of conservation successes. This critical post will manage several consultants and multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral issues. Applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Masters degree in Botany, Zoology, Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources, Biological Informatics, Biotechnology, or related field, and 5-7 years related experience or equivalent combination.
- Excellent verbal and written skills in Spanish and English with working knowledge in Portuguese. Knowledge of French helpful.
- Supervisory experience, including ability to set objectives and manage performance.
- Experience in inter-institutional collaboration, at both government and non-government levels, in an international setting
- Proven organizational and analytical skills
- Ability to manipulate, analyze and interpret data.
- Familiarity with state of the art information technologies, standards and protocols such as DIGir, XML, GIS, etc.
- 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 Consultancy, the consultant will report to Richard M. Huber at the GS/OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment and to 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. Some moving expenses will be reimbursed on a negotiated lump sum basis.

NOTE: Affordable housing is offered at Ciudad de Saber in Panama.

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), as well as a written expression of interest, by October 1, 2004 to:

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