Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)
Rules of Procedure

INTRODUCTION:

The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) Rules of Procedure (RoP) were formally adopted at the First IABIN Council Meeting held in Miami, Florida, USA, December 13-14, 1999. During the Second IABIN Council Meeting in Miami, Florida, USA, Jan 14-15, 2002 some additions and clarifications were made to the RoP. At the Fourth IABIN Council Meeting, Panama City, Panama, April 6-8, 2005, additional clarifications to the RoP were approved (shown in Annex 2). More recently, during the Fifth IABIN Council Meeting, Punta del Este, Uruguay, May 9-11, 2007, some modifications and additions to the IABIN RoP were adopted, including Annex 4 and 5.

The following version of the IABIN RoP is an updated version based on all modification thus far approved and sanctioned at the Fifth IABIN Council Meeting.

CONTENT:

IABIN GOVERNANCE - RULES OF PROCEDURE

CONSIDERING

That civil society, governments, businesses, and future generations need correct and useful information on biodiversity;

That Initiative 31 of the Plan of Action from the Santa Cruz (Bolivia) Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development (1996) calls for the development of "an Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, primarily through the Internet, that will promote compatible means of collection, communication, and exchange of information relevant to decision-making and education on biodiversity conservation…";

That the Organization of American States, Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (OAS/CIDS) at its October 15, 1999, meeting endorsed a recommendation to empower an IABIN Membership Council; and

That the Participating Parties, being national members and other invited parties, wish to take part in the establishment and operation of an Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (designated hereafter as IABIN);

WE, THEREFORE, AGREE

That the following will be the Rules of Procedure for the Operation of IABIN.

Article I. OBJECTIVES

A. Description of IABIN

The objectives of IABIN are defined in Initiative 31 of the Santa Cruz Plan of Action. IABIN, as a biodiversity information network, has two facets: it is a forum in which countries of the Americas can come together to facilitate the development and sharing of biodiversity information, and it is an Internet-based resource with infrastructure and content.

IABIN promotes broad participation from all sectors of society, including government, academia, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Participation can be by institution, organization, or individual. Participants include (among others) original data providers, data and information processors, network infrastructure developers, and end users of data and information products and services, as well as those who participate directly in any of the IABIN governance bodies (Council, Technical Working Groups, committees, etc.).

IABIN promotes a sharing process which includes identifying data requirements, facilitating data identification and access, coordinating multinational participation in projects, and building capacity as a prerequisite to accomplish network goals. IABIN encourages interoperability among the biodiversity information initiatives of its participants through collaborative partnerships and adoption of common technical standards and protocols

IABIN participates in developing strategies for biodiversity information management in collaboration with other global and regional initiatives to fulfill its mandate to protect, enhance, and utilize biodiversity information most effectively

IABIN promotes open access to biodiversity data and information while acknowledging and respecting the rights of the original data owners and/or providers.

The IABIN vision is that it will be a self-sustaining distributed network which provides open access to high quality, relevant information on biodiversity in the Americas, providing that information in a timely manner to users throughout the public and private sector in the Americas and to other interested parties worldwide.

B. Scope of Activities

Through there participation in the IABIN Work Program, IABIN Participants will undertake some or all of the following types of activities:

1. Improve the accessibility, completeness and interoperability of biodiversity databases, and promote standards for data exchange and shared vocabularies;
2. Develop a digital library of biodiversity information;
3. Develop partnerships with existing organizations and initiatives, such as the Clearing-House Mechanism, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Man and the Biosphere Network, Species 2000, the North American Biodiversity Information Network, the Integrated Taxonomic Information System, and similar initiatives;
4. Develop partnerships with institutions and organizations that provide primary information, such as museums, herbaria, microbial culture collections, etc.
5. Develop, implement, and promote model curricula for biodiversity informatics training for stakeholders (e.g., researchers, protected area managers, data managers and technicians, and policy and decision makers) in the use and sharing of biodiversity information;
6. Coordinate IABIN member activities with the activities of others in order to avoid duplication and to benefit from existing resources and expertise;
7. Develop network policies concerning data quality control, access to data and information, metadata, and proper acknowledgement of the original sources of data and information; and
8. Identify sources of funding to support biodiversity information network development.

Article II. GOVERNANCE

There are several bodies that comprise IABIN. These can be divided into 1) policy-making/supervisory and 2) supporting.

POLICY MAKING/SUPERVISORY BODIES

A. National Focal Points

The foundation of national participation in IABIN is to be through a focal point structure. National Focal Points are formally designated by governments through the appropriate diplomatic channels to the OAS. (Governments are encouraged to coordinate their IABIN and CHM focal point appointments as far as possible). Each Focal Point shall provide the name of an alternate who can act in the absence of the Focal Point.

The roles of the Focal Points are to:

1. Serve as national liaison on all IABIN issues;
2. Establish national consultation mechanisms as appropriate to stimulate national and sub national level involvement in IABIN activities;
3. Encourage the participation of national sources of original data such as museums, herbaria including the possible formation of national information networks;

4. Represent their governments' perspectives on technical issues;
5. Seek funding opportunities for the development of biodiversity information and IABIN;
6. Identify new project ideas and priorities for their countries;
7. Remain informed of IABIN activities within their countries and act as a clearinghouse for such information;
8. Promote collaborations between IABIN and other national and transnational initiatives, as appropriate; and
9. Act as a primary communications link for the network, keeping participating organizations informed concerning IABIN interests and activities.

B. The IABIN Council

IABIN will operate through a membership council called the IABIN Council.

B-1. Membership in the IABIN Council

Membership in the IABIN Council differs from technical participation in IABIN through the Working Groups and projects. Membership on the Council comprises:

1. Officially designated National Focal Points;
2. Representatives from approved organizations, centers, institutions or initiatives of hemispheric or international scope which meet established criteria; and
3. A representative of the Diplomatic host organization.
4. The size of the Council will, for practical purposes, not exceed 50 members.

The term Member will be used only to describe the members of the Council, which are the country-designated Focal Points and other invited organizations. It could be further divided into Voting Member (Focal Point) and Associate Member (international institution).

B.2. Voting Rights

Each Focal Point shall have voice and vote in the Council. Only Focal Points, who represent the countries, have vote in the IABIN Council. This criterion applies also to the IEC.

Any organization, center, institution or initiative of international scope accepted to IABIN Council will have voice but no vote in the IABIN Council (and will be called an Associate Member).

Admission to the IABIN Council of organizations, centers, institutions, etc. will be decided by consensus of the voting members.

Whenever possible all decision should be reached by consensus. Voting should be a last resort in the event that consensus can not be reached.

B-3. Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is policy focused. It has the authority to make decisions and take action on behalf of IABIN. The main functions of the Council are:

1. Provide the vision and strategic direction for IABIN;
2. Develop policy for IABIN;
3. Make any necessary recommendations for coordination or action to the Secretariat;
4. Provide oversight of IABIN projects and progress;
5. Approve members to the Executive Committee;
6. Approve non-focal point membership to the Council;
7. Annually review the activities of the other IABIN governance bodies (Executive Committee, Council Committees, Technical Working Groups, etc.) to ensure the activities conform to IABIN objectives and address the needs of members; and
8. Approve annually a Budget and Program of Work for IABIN.

B-4. Officers of the Council

The Council will have a Chair and a Vice Chair.

The Chair shall preside over the Council and is responsible for the overall direction of IABIN and the proper implementation of these Rules of Procedure.

The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair as requested and shall act for the Chair in his/her absence at Council meetings.

Officers are elected for *a* term of three regular IABIN Council Meetings by a 2/3 vote of the voting Council members.

B-5. Committees of the Council

The Council Chair may establish standing or ad hoc committees to support the work of the Council.

B-6. Council Meetings

The Council should meet at least once every other year and more frequently if needed at the discretion of the Chair, or by request of 6 members and approval by the Executive Committee. A minimum of 60 days' notice shall be given for Council meetings.

Minutes of each Council meeting shall be taken by a rapporteur appointed by the Chair for that meeting.

C. IABIN Executive Committee

In order to guide effectively the operations of IABIN and to execute the policy decisions of the Council, a smaller governance body is needed. This body will be called the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC).

C-1. Responsibilities of the IABIN Executive Committee

The responsibilities of the IABIN Executive Committee include:

1. Execute the decisions of the Council;
2. Make operational policy decisions and commit network resources to facilitate projects;
3. Establish procedures for conducting the operational business of IABIN;
4. Approve the establishment and mandates for technical working groups and appoint chairs as necessary;
5. Determine minimum requirements for the Secretariat and have responsibility for its selection, direction, and continuing oversight;
6. Approve the selection of the Secretariat Executive Director and monitor his/her performance;
7. With support from the Secretariat, recommend an annual work program and budget to the Council;
8. Provide an annual report to the Council containing the progress and accomplishments of IABIN for the previous year; and
9. Approve an annual financial statement for submission to the Council containing current balances and covering the activities of the previous year.

C-2. IEC Membership

The Executive Committee will consist of eight voting members and up to four non-voting members, including:

- The Council Chair;
- The Council Vice-Chair; and
- Six country members
- Inclusion of up to two non-governmental representatives elected at large according to the following criteria

  - Governmental geographical representation; and

  - Interest and commitment.

The NGO representatives will have voice but not vote.

An OAS representative and the Executive Director of the IABIN Secretariat, shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee, ex officio, with voice but no vote.

The Chair of the IABIN Council shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee.

Members of the Executive Committee shall serve for a term of three regular IABIN Council Meetings, staggered on a rotational basis with some members changing at each regular Council Meeting. Annex 3 shows the historical membership in the IEC.

C-3. Selection of Members

The Chair of the Council shall appoint an ad hoc nominations committee, consisting of at least three members, which shall suggest nominees for seats on the Executive Committee. These nominees shall be voted upon at the IABIN Council meeting. Selection shall be made by majority of those voting.

C-4. Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee should be in regular contact among its members and meet physically on a regular basis, at least every other year, on the years when there is no Council Meeting. It is recommended that the IEC meets quarterly electronically or by teleconference, or by request of 6 members.

SUPPORTING BODIES

D. Intergovernmental Convener (Diplomatic host)

IABIN will operate under the umbrella of a diplomatic host organization. The specific responsibilities for the host are to:

Invite governments to appoint national IABIN Focal Points (encouraging countries to promote close coordination between the IABIN and the Clearing-House Mechanism Focal Points) and maintain the official list of focal points;

1. With the Chair of the IABIN Council, convene meetings of the Council and other intergovernmental discussions as needed;
2. Keep member states informed of the advances in implementing IABIN goals at the highest political level to ensure continued support for recommendations emanating from IABIN;
3. Support fund-raising activities; and
4. Participate in IABIN Council meetings as a Member with voice but no vote, and in the Executive Committee as a Member ex officio with voice but no vote.

The Organization of American States (OAS), in fulfilling its mandate to follow up on the Plan of Action of the Santa Cruz Summit, shall be the IABIN Diplomatic Host.

E. Technical Working Groups

In order to accomplish the technical work of IABIN, Technical Working Groups (TWG) will be established as needed and for specific tasks and of specific duration. Any IABIN participant can propose a TWG to the Executive Committee that will have the authority to recognize it and ask the Secretariat to assist in supporting its formation. The Technical Working Group Chair will be selected by the Executive Committee based on technical competence and need not be associated with an IABIN participant organization. In this way, broad expert participation can be encouraged. Similarly, the composition of the TWG will also be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

The people participating in a TWG will be termed Technical Contributor.

F. Network Secretariat

In order for IABIN to operate effectively and transparently, it must have a support staff dedicated to the development of IABIN. This staff will form the Secretariat for IABIN. The staff should be multilingual.

F-1. Functions and Responsibilities

The functions of the Secretariat include:

1. Support for the Council, Executive Committee, and Technical Working Groups;
2. Promote cooperation among the network's partners (e.g., meetings, workshops, newsletters);
3. Facilitate understanding of and commitment to the network's goals (e.g., issues being addressed, users to be served). Facilitate preparation of strategic plans for information production (e.g., information needs analysis, information product design, objectives and targets for the network's partners);
4. Facilitate implementation of strategic plans agreed to by the Council;
5. Facilitate access to data (e.g., through custodianship, data access agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, metadata, and standards);
6. Facilitate the development of the network (e.g., access capacity, identify areas for restructuring or investment, seek support);
7. Market the network's products and services;
8. Coordinate support group activities;
9. Organize meetings and workshops for the network's partners;
10. Expedite network projects;

11. Provide editorial and office support for preparation of key documents (e.g., strategic plans, project proposals, marketing literature);
12. Brief the network's partners on new opportunities, plans and progress (e.g., newsletters, e-mail);
13. Handle inquiries about the network's activities, referring to individual partners as appropriate;
14. Maintain copies of the network's products and services for distribution to users;
15. Manage data on the status and availability of the network's capacity;
16. Provide network and user support, including help desk;
17. Manage central information services, including WWW site;
18. Prepare a draft Work Program and a Budget for Council not later than two months before the beginning of each year; and
19. Prepare a technically substantive report on the Program of Work each year, including financial accounts, tasks achieved, tasks not achieved, and any appropriate explanations.
20. The Executive Director and other staff of the Secretariat (in its capacity as such) should attend meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies in an advisory capacity with no voting rights.
21. Within the framework of the Work Program and Budget and consistent with provisions of these Procedures or with decisions of the Executive Committee, the Secretariat may enter into contracts or perform other legal acts that are required to support IABIN.

F-2. Selection

The *Secretariat* staff will be selected by the Executive Committee and approved by the Council using established criteria. A contract will be made with each Secretariat staff that outlines roles and responsibilities which are consistent with these Rules of Procedure.

G. Secretariat Host

The Secretariat Host will provide a physical location for the IABIN Secretariat. See Annex 5 for Terms of Reference (ToRs) associated with this task.

Article III. USE OF THE IABIN NAME

Because IABIN will be implemented within a highly distributed and loosely knit framework, it is important to understand when activities, products, or actions can be attributed to "IABIN."

Any activities carried out under the auspices of any of the IABIN governing bodies or subsidiary bodies (including Committees and Technical Working Groups or officials acting in an official capacity) that promotes the objectives of IABIN can use the IABIN name and any associated symbols.

Any project that will use the name of IABIN in order to obtain funds for a project must coordinate with the IABIN Secretariat and the IEC to ensure that the project follows IABIN`s mission and provides for the sustainability of the Network. There must be a written agreement to this end.

Article IV. FINANCES

A. Individual Financial Obligations

Each Participating Country shall bear the costs it incurs in carrying out its national IABIN biodiversity information-related activities; including the costs of convening meetings, formulating or transmitting reports and of reimbursing its employees for travel and other per diem expenses unless other funding is made available for this purpose by donor organizations.

B. Common Financial Obligations

To the extent that there are common, non-earmarked funds in an IABIN Treasury, these funds will be allocated annually in an IABIN budget. It will be the responsibility of the IABIN Council to approve an overall budget and for the Secretariat to execute the budget and administer these funds under the review and guidance of the IABIN Executive Committee. Specific guidelines for expenditures of funds will be developed as required by the Executive Committee.

C. Role of IABIN

Since the network will be built through the efforts of all its partners, IABIN itself is not organized to be a financing mechanism for projects. Rather, it is a facilitating mechanism or framework through which sponsoring organizations and IABIN participants can more effectively communicate and develop activities of mutual interest and in support of the overall IABIN objectives. In this regard, it can aid its members, other participants and its projects in finding support for IABIN-related activities.

Article V. ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

A. Admission of New Members

Any government of the OAS can appoint an IABIN Focal Point who will then automatically become a member of the IABIN Council if the country agrees to adhere to these Rules of Procedure. By invitation of the Council after following application procedures determined by the Council, any other institution or agency may become an IABIN *Associate* Member if they sign a cooperation agreement and agree to commit to these Rules of Procedure.

B. Withdrawal

Any IABIN Member or Associate Member may withdraw from membership by giving written Notice of Withdrawal through the appropriate diplomatic channels to the Chair of the Council with a copy to the Secretariat Executive Director.

Article VI. CHANGING RULES OF PROCEDURE

Changes to these Rules of Procedure can be made by consensus at a formally convened Council meeting or, if necessary, by mail ballot with a 2/3 majority of those voting.

Annex 1

Criteria for Membership of Non-Governmental, International and Regional Organizations in the IABIN Council (approved at the 2nd IABIN Council Meeting in Miami, 1999)

Annex 1 of IABIN's Rules of Procedure

From its earliest formulation, IABIN was to build upon such initiatives as the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), the Man in the Biosphere Network (MABNet) Americas, and the Biodiversity Conservation Information System (BCIS). Through close cooperation with ongoing CHM activities, IABIN has been discussed as a model for a regional implementation of the CHM. IABIN is represented on the CHM Informal Advisory Committee, and the CHM Secretariat is invited to IABIN discussions. The Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has on many occasions endorsed regional activities for the CHM, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved funding for IABIN developments. Ongoing discussions have also taken place with MABNet and BCIS, with the later being commissioned to provide its expertise on the IABIN governance study.

IABIN has also developed some special technical relationships with the North American Biodiversity Information Network (NABIN) through pilot project funding from the World Bank. This project involves computer scientists from five IABIN member countries who were trained on the Species Analyst, the infrastructure system for NABIN.

At the Technical Workshop for the Establishment of IABIN, held in Brasilia in April 1999, a working group focused on how to identify and build relationships with key cooperators in the IABIN implementation process. One way is to include representatives of appropriate non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and sub-regional, regional and global initiatives (referred to as "*partners*") which deal with biodiversity information on the IABIN Council.

The following table presents criteria for selecting which of these cooperating institutions and organizations should be invited to become members of the IABIN Council. These criteria reflect the discussions in Brasilia and at the First IABIN Council Meeting, held in Miami, Florida, in December 1999. While these criteria are rather general at this point, as specific objectives develop, they can be modified to promote the most productive inter-organizational relationships.

Criteria for IABIN Council Membership	Importance	Examples
Willingness to accept IABIN Rules of Procedure	Hi	All

and sign an agreement with IABIN		
Organization named in the Santa Cruz Initiative 31	Hi	MABNet, IUCN/BCIS, CBD/CHM
Must have participation from at least 3 countries	Hi	All
Initiatives that help create the IABIN infrastructure (national, regional, international)	Hi	NABIN, SIAM
Initiatives that provide relevant content, including original data providers such as museum consortia, etc.	Hi	Species 2000, ITIS, TNC, CGIAR, MAC NATHIST/ICOM
Advance IABIN objectives	Hi	All
Advance cooperator objectives	Hi	All
Provide open access to information	Hi	All
Models and initiatives to assist with the specific issues that arise during the development of the network	Med	CIEL
Provide metadata in the public domain	Low	IBIN

Suggested steps for developing cooperation include:

1. Develop liaison relationship in the form of a named person;
2. Draft a written agreement(s) with **partner**;
3. Develop communication mechanisms to share information;
4. Nominate the **Partner** for participation in IABIN Council.

Annex 2

Categories of IABIN Participation
Approved at the 4th IABIN Council Meeting in Panama, April, 2005.

IABIN documents use the following terms:

- Focal Point
- Member
- Cooperator
- Participant
- Node
- Data and information processors, network infrastructure developers.
- Technical Member
- Hub
- Co-financing Institutions
- The IABIN Executive Committee
- Council Member vs. Council Meeting Attendee
- Consensus vs. voting
- Organizations that provide financial support
- IABIN Friends

The ad hoc group recommended adding the term IABIN friend to refer to any individual interested in IABIN who subscribes to the listserve IABINfriends.

PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES: THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Member

The term member is used to refer to Council members. These include the National Focal Points (NFPs). In addition to National Focal Points other bodies are also part of the Council (see original paper for more information).

Agreement:

- The term Member will be used only to describe the members of the Council, which are the country-designated Focal Points and other invited organizations. It could be further divided into Voting Member (Focal Point) and Associate Member (international institution).
- Any organization, center, institution or initiative of international scope accepted to IABIN Council will have voice but no vote in the IABIN Council (and will be called an Associate Member).

COOPERATOR, PARTICIPANT, NODE, DATA AND INFORMATION PROCESSOR AND NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPER

Agreement:

Integrate the terms Cooperator, Participant, Node, Data and Information Processors, and Network Infrastructure Developers into the term Partners and use this term consistently. A Partner may become a Council Member following the IABIN Rules of Procedure and criteria to become a member.

Technical Member

The term **technical member** describes the individuals who make up the Technical Working Groups who, according to IABIN Rules of Procedure, do not need to belong to any organization associated with IABIN:

Agreement:

- Replace the term "Technical Member" with "Technical Contributor".
- Modify the phrase in the Rules of Procedure"...and need not be associated with an IABIN member. Delete "member", and add "partner or friend".

HUB

The term Hub is used throughout IABIN documents, including the GEF Project Implementation Plan, as a synonym to the term Secretariat, and this is confusing.

Agreement:

- Adopt the term Secretariat and use it consistently, deleting the term Hub.

CO-FINANCING INSTITUTIONS

Agreement:.

- The term Co-financing Institutions would only be used under the framework of the GEF Project to refer to those organizations and institutions that have pledged in-kind and/or monetary contributions to IABIN under the GEF Project.

COUNCIL MEMBER vs. COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDEE, THE IECE, CONSENSUS vs. VOTING

Agreement:

- Only Focal Points, who represent the countries, have vote in the IABIN Council. This criterion applies also to the IEC.

- Admission to the IABIN Council of organizations, centers, institutions, etc. will be decided by consensus of the voting members.

- Whenever possible all decision should be reached by consensus. Voting should be a last resort in the event that consensus can not be reached.

- The voting process as stated in the Rules of Procedure is maintained.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Agreement:

- All institution, organizations, governments or individuals that contribute financially or in-kind support would be named Donor

Panama, 6 April, 2005

Annex 3. Membership in the IABIN Executive Committee

Name	Office	Country	Start of appointment	End of appointment
Current Members				
Gladys Cotter	Chairperson	United States	2005 (4th IABIN Council Meeting)	5th through 7th IABIN Council Meeting
Karin Molt	Vice Chair	Chile	2005 (4th IABIN Council Meeting)	5th through 7th IABIN Council Meeting
Ana Aber	Member	Uruguay	2005 (4th IABIN Council Meeting)	5th through 7th IABIN Council Meeting
María E. Bondanza (past) Victoria Lichtschein (current)	Member	Argentina	2003 (3rd IABIN Council Meeting)	4th through 6th IABIN Council Meeting
Francisco González Salas	Member	Costa Rica	2003 (3rd IABIN Council Meeting)	4th through 6th IABIN Council Meeting
Antonio Matamoros	Member	Ecuador	2003 (3rd IABIN Council Meeting)	4th through 6th IABIN Council Meeting
Darío Luque	Member	Panama	2007 (5th IABIN Council Meeting	6th through 8th IABIN Council Meeting
Dionne Newell	Member	Jamaica	2007 (5th IABIN Council Meeting	6th through 8th IABIN Council Meeting
Beatriz Torrez	Member	Global Biodiversity Information Facility	2007 (5th IABIN Council Meeting	6th through 8th IABIN Council Meeting
Maarten Kappelle	Member	The Nature Conservancy	2007 (5th IABIN Council Meeting	6th through 8th IABIN Council Meeting
OAS Representative	Ex-officio	OAS	N/A	N/A
IABIN Secretariat	Ex-officio	IABIN	N/A	N/A
Past Members				
Maria Luisa del Río Mispireta	Member	Peru	1999 (2nd IABIN Council Meeting)	3rd through 5th IABIN Council Meeting
Daven Joseph	Member	Antigua and Barbuda	1999 (2nd IABIN Council Meeting)	3rd through 5th IABIN Council Meeting
Christoph Haeuser	Member	Global Biodiversity Information Facility	1999 (2nd IABIN Council Meeting)	3rd through 5th IABIN Council Meeting

Annex 4 –IABIN Operational Procedures (as adopted through formal consultation by deadline of June 11, 2007 as a follow up of the Fifth IABIN Council Meeting)

This annex has been developed to address some operational and managerial aspects of IABIN as a Network that have not yet been included in the Rules of Procedure of IABIN. These operational procedures are directed for the long-term operational guidance of the Network and their adoption should not interfere with the operational procedures of projects currently being implemented. It is anticipated that future projects undertaken will use these operational procedures to form the basis for the development of their operational guidelines.

I. Communications

IABIN is a hemispheric network comprised of countries where different languages are spoken. While it strives at communicating in all these languages for practical purposes, it has adopted English and Spanish as its working languages.

Based on practice and available resources the following procedures should apply:

1. The following IABIN documents should be both in English and Spanish as funds allow for translation:

   - IABIN Annual Work Program, including budget and Secretariat Travel Plan
   - IABIN Annual Reports
   - E-mail communications to the Council, IEC and IABINfriends
   - IABIN Newsletter
   - When Terms of Reference (ToRs) request the services of a professional who should be fluent in either Spanish or English, the ToRs can be written only in that language. If funds are available for translations, the ToRs could be translated into the other language if appropriate. The announcement that will accompany the ToRs, however, should be in both English and Spanish so that the recipients can identify who else may be interested in participating and can re-send the message to those people.

2. IABIN Council Meetings and IEC meetings should be conducted both in English and Spanish.

II. Country Participation in Thematic Networks meetings

1. Workshops organized by the Coordinating Institutions (CIs) of the IABIN Thematic Networks (TNs) should include, at least, one person in representation

of the countries that are not part of that CI. This person will be recommended by the Focal Points (FPs) using technical criteria and selected by the CI and the IABIN Secretariat. The Secretariat will facilitate this process which will be as follows:

A. The CI will develop a framework announcement (which will be modified with the specifications of the event and dates according to the Thematic Network), and this will be used in all cases. This should be prepared and announced at least two months before the event.

B. In order for a person to be considered, as the announcement establishes, the person interested in participating in the workshop should send a letter to the Focal Point in his/her country, along with his/her Curriculum Vitae, requesting to be proposed by the FP. Similarly, the person to be proposed must fulfill the technical qualifications required for participation in the workshop. The announcement requires that the evidence of the person's technical proficiency be demonstrated both in the letter and through his/her CV. Applicants will have three weeks to send their application to the Focal Point.

C. The Focal Point, once all national applications have been received, and if these fulfill the technical requirements, will send them with his/her recommendations to the responsible person in the CI in question (this information will be in the announcement), with a copy to the Thematic Networks Coordinator. The Focal Point will have one week to conduct this process.

D. Once all applications have been received, the CI and the Secretariat (through the people mentioned above) will evaluate them on the basis of the technical requirements established in the announcement and will select the person who most closely fulfills the requirements to be financed to represent the countries. This process should be conducted within the following week of the deadline for receiving recommendations from the Focal Points.

E. Once the selection has been made, both the person selected and the Focal Point of that country will be informed and the travel and logistic arrangements commenced. The CI is the responsible party to make the travel and logistic arrangements.

F. All the applicants and their Focal Points will be informed of the selection.

G. The person selected should submit a report (no more than 5 pages), to be distributed to all Focal Points, in his or her native language with a summary in the other IABIN working language.

III. Allocation of IABIN Funds According to Priorities

1. When there are non-earmarked funds available for meetings, the funds will be earmarked according to the following priority:
   A. IABIN Council Meetings
   B. IABIN Executive Council Meetings (on the years there is no Council Meeting)

     C. Sub-regional meetings
     D. Bi-national meetings

     E. Country level meetings

Funds should be allocated according to previously identified meetings in the Annual Work Plan. In the case of Bi-national and Country level meetings, funds will be distributed in an equitable manner according to available resources. Any requests as to changes should be submitted to and approved by the IEC.

IV. IABIN representation in international bodies and other biodiversity initiatives

1. IABIN representation in the official delegations to international bodies and other biodiversity initiatives should be made of Focal Points, members of the IEC or the Secretariat.

2. The official IABIN participation in technical meetings should be made of people from the technical bodies of the network (Secretariat, CI, and Thematic Working Groups) and/or Focal Points as thematically appropriate.

V. IABIN Annual Work Plan

1. As established in Article III, Sections C.1.7 and F.1.18, an Annual Work Plan should be elaborated by the IEC with the support of the Secretariat and submitted to the Council for approval. This plan should include an IABIN Secretariat Travel Plan. This Annual Work Plan should be reviewed and approved by the Council.

VI. Fundraising and Funds Administration

IABIN fundraising efforts should be conducted taking into account a broad array of possible funding sources and based on IABIN Vision (see Reference Document No.4: IABIN Vision, Outlook, Challenges, and Opportunities submitted for discussion at the IABIN Fifth Council Meeting). This may include donations from individuals, companies, or foundations, which may or may not require a project proposal to be prepared or a contract for funds that can be obtained by IABIN providing some services either as response to direct requests or by entering into joint ventures with companies or other organisms.

It is anticipated that within the projects submitted for funding activities, resources will be included to promote the development of the IABIN network, including those that facilitate country participation in the Network, and for the funding of the IABIN Secretariat in its role of coordination of the Network and services to users.

IABIN projects will be those that comply with provision made in Article III of the IABIN Rules of Procedure.

VI.1. Building an IABIN Endowment

In order to make operational the rule above and as stated in the IABIN vision under Article I, Section A, that says that the Network will be self-sustaining and Article IV, Section B that talks about an IABIN Treasury, the following is recommended:

1. Any project that will use the name of IABIN in order to obtain funds for a project must coordinate with the IABIN Secretariat and the IEC to ensure that the project follows IABIN`s mission and provides for the sustainability of the Network. This could be done by contributing at least 10% of the budget to build the IABIN Treasury or Endowment. There must be a written agreement to this end.
2. The IABIN Endowment will be used to provide the financial resources to pay for the Secretariat staff and Network activities not specified in the projects or services provided by the Network from which funds are made available; that is, to cover all the coordination activities for the network.
3. The funds for the IABIN Endowment will be kept in an account open for this sole purpose, which will be managed according to the provisions set up in Section VI.2. Once a decision on IABIN legal status is reached and if it is decided that indeed it should be obtained, then, this IABIN account will be managed by the IEC or according to other disposition made by the Council.

VI.2. Management of Funds and IABIN Legal Status
Currently, IABIN does not have a legal status, which is frequently a requirement to enter into any agreement that will directly allow the network to receive funds. A decision has not been made on this respect, which is expected to be made by the IABIN Council following recommendations made by the IABIN Sustainability Committee appointed at the IABIN Fifth Council Meeting.

In the meanwhile, since there is need to conduct fundraising and manage the funds thus obtained, it is proposed that:

1. Taking into account that up to now the City of Knowledge (CoK) has in the past provided a venue to receive and manage IABIN-related funds (e.g., DGF-Project funded by the World Bank) and that this has proven an acceptable arrangement that can be continued until IABIN obtains a legal status, if it chooses to do so, a new account to provide for the sustainability of IABIN will be established at CoK. For this to continue there is a need to formalize the process and accordingly it is recommended that the current Agreement between City of Knowledge and the IEC to host the IABIN Secretariat be mutually reviewed to incorporate an annex to that effect.

This annex will include the following provisions:

i. At the request of the IEC, the CoK can sign agreements and contracts on behalf of IABIN to obtain grants or donations for IABIN or for invoices for IABIN to be compensated for services provided by the Network.

ii.   CoK will be required to have a separate bank account to deposit and manage said IABIN funds.

iii. These funds should follow the 10% recommendation to build up the IABIN endowment

iv.   CoK will only make payment or disburse funds from said account after receiving a written request of the Chairperson of the IEC. It is expected that the Chairperson obtains approval to each request by members of the IEC.

v.   CoK will prepare and submit semester and annual financial reports to the IEC on the management of said account.

vi.   CoK will be entitled to be compensated for the management of said account by IABIN.   This compensation will be set at a percentage (%, to be negotiated, ideally no more than 5%) of each grant, donation or invoice for services that IABIN receives through this arrangement.

vii. The annex will also detail the mechanism for opening of the account, withdrawal authority, eligible uses of funds, what happens to funds in case of closure of Secretariat or disagreement, etc.

Annex 5

Secretariat Host

The IABIN Secretariat host will make available to the Secretariat the following:

i. Office space,
ii. Telecommunications, computer infrastructure, high-speed, broadband internet connectivity, and server space,
iii. Access to specialized technical and administrative personnel, including information technology experts,
iv. Managerial and administrative supports are also expected from the candidate entity, and
v. Commitment to fundraising to assure future funding for the Secretariat[1].

The functions of the Secretariat Host include:

i. Upon request by the Council or the IEC manage on behalf of IABIN financial resources from different sources.
ii. Collaborate with the Council, the IEC and the IABIN Secretariat in conducting fundraising on behalf of IABIN to procure additional funding for IABIN.
iii. Upon request by the Council or the IEC, and as one of the ways to implement Section F-1-21 above, it may enter into contracts or perform other legal acts on behalf of IABIN that are required to promote its sustainability. This function will be conducted in coordination with the IEC and the IABIN Secretariat.
iv. As IABIN matures as a network and upon request by the Council or the IEC, it may be charged with hiring the Secretariat staff. This function will be conducted in coordination with the IEC.

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[1] Through a competitive process, in 2004 the IEC selected the City of Knowledge (CoK) in Panama City, an NGO, as the Host organization for the IABIN Secretariat.