

## Press Release

### The Seventh Council Meeting of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) takes places in Washington D.C.

September 30, 2011



The three day meeting brought together focal points from over 16 OAS member states, civil society organizations and experts in areas related to bioinformatics, conservation and sustainable development including NatureServe, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the National Institute for Biodiversity of Costa Rica (INBio), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Pollinator Partnership and the Conservation Biology Institute to work together on the vision for the period 2012-2015.

The meeting served as a capstone to the broader IABIN program and examined the progress, challenges, lessons learned and current status of the network under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project "Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network" implemented by the World Bank and executed by the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS to be completed in September 2011. Participants reviewed the value added tools for decision making and the data content developed under this hemispheric network. IABIN Council Members and Coordinating Institutions strategized on how to best utilize and plan future development of the tools and products under this network which has awarded over 120 seed funds grants to over 100 museums, universities, herbaria, government research institutes and civil society organizations to digitize biodiversity data following internationally accepted standards.

Presentations on other relevant applications of environmental data to advance planning and decision-making were given by Erick Mata, Executive Director of the Encyclopedia of Life, and José Vicente Rodríguez, Scientific Director of Conservation International Colombia. During the meeting, Brigitte Baptiste, Director of the Alexander Von Humboldt Research Institute and Focal Point of Colombia was elected as Chair of the IABIN Executive Committee and Karin Molt,

## **Press Release**

representative of the Ministry of the Environment and Focal Point of Chile was elected as Vice-Chair.

IABIN is a forum to foster technical collaboration and coordination among countries of the Americas in the collection, sharing, and use of biodiversity information relevant to decision-making on natural resources management and conservation, and education to promote sustainable development in the region. Mandated at the Santa Cruz Summit of the Americas meeting of Heads of State in 1996, IABIN was created with the objective of providing a networking information infrastructure (such as standards and protocols) and biodiversity information content for the countries of the Americas to improve decision-making, particularly for issues at the interface of human development and biodiversity conservation.

In order to fund the building of IABIN, GS/OAS and the World Bank acting as an Implementing Agency of the GEF approved the GEF Trust Fund Grant Agreement effective in 2004 in an amount of US\$6 million. Following seven years of diligent cooperation and implementation, the final products which showcased the five thematic networks and their integration by the IABIN Data Integration and Analysis Gateway were presented today, finalizing Phase I of the Building IABIN Project.