February 15, 2007

TO: The World Bank, the IABIN Executive Committee and IABIN Council

IABIN Executive Committee:
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FROM: GS/OAS and the IABIN Secretariat

RE: **Fourth Semester Report** – Period: July 01 – December 31, 2006
Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network" (IABIN)

1. IABIN Project Milestones by Component

- Regarding the **Catalog Service**, it was agreed, at the IEC meeting in June, 2006, to divide the ToRs into three distinct functions and to start a new selection process for three different consultants during the third quarter of 2006. The ToRs to develop the IABIN Catalog Service (IABIN Biobot) were developed but, after comments from the World Bank, it was decided to conduct a technical meeting between NBII (charged with overseeing development of the Catalog) and the IABIN Secretariat. This meeting took place Nov 28-30.   As a result, the scope of the IABIN Catalog was refined and new ToRs were produced and advertised in December 2006. By February, 2007, a pool of applicants will be short listed to choose the consultant that will develop the IABIN Catalog under the supervision of NBII.

- The **Species and Specimens Thematic Network** (SSTN) held the first meeting of its Thematic Working Group (TWG) in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 28 August – 1 September, 2006 to discuss "use cases", establish standards, and plan the development of the their portal. They have prepared a design for the network portal and data entry tools.

- The **Pollinators Thematic Network** (PTN) held the first meeting of its Thematic Working Group in Indaiatuba, Brazil, on 11-15 December, 2006 to discuss structure and standards for the development of this TN.

- The IABIN **Invasive Species Thematic Network** (I3N) held the second meeting of its Thematic Working Group in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 22-23 November, 2006.

- Two IABIN **Data Providers Meetings** were carried out in Ecuador (August), and Costa Rica (November). There was a Data Providers Meeting scheduled to take place on 9 October, 2006 in Peru, but the Peruvian Focal Point cancelled. This meeting will take place in 2007.

- The first **Request for Proposals for Specimens** was published on October 12. Fifteen proposals were received by the deadline.
- The second **Request for Proposals for Invasive Species** (I3N) was published on October 8. Five proposals were received by the deadline.
- The IABIN Secretariat participated in the **GBIF13 meeting** that took place in Iquitos, Peru on 2-6 October, 2006. In addition to being part of the IABIN delegation to GBIF, the Secretariat met with the IEC Chair and Vice Chair for a debriefing and follow-up on some issues discussed at the IEC meeting last June. They also met with the FPs from Colombia and with the CONABIO representative to organize their participation in the workshop held in Colombia in December, 2006. The IEC Chair and IABIN Secretariat met with the GBIF Executive Director to discuss closer collaboration between the two organizations. It was decided to hold a technical meeting between the two IABIN and GBIF Secretariats to advance specific plans for areas of collaboration and joint executions of activities.
- The IABIN Secretariat Director met on 13-15 December, 2006, with the Executive Director and staff of **GBIF in Copenhagen** to review the work plans for both organizations and highlight areas for joint activities. As a result, a document of possible areas for collaboration was produced which is being consulted in order to set up definitive collaborative arrangement between these two initiatives
- The IABIN Secretariat developed jointly with the Institute von Humboldt, CYTED, and GBIF, the 4-day workshop **"Iberian-American Workshop for the exchange of Biodiversity Information**", from 3-6 December, 2006.   Here the Thematic Networks 2007 work plans were reviewed and commented upon, a prioritization exercise for decision support tools was conducted, and a review of current advances on decision support tools was presented
- The governments of Bolivia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines sent **GEF Project endorsement letters** to the OAS.
- The first **IABIN Newsletter** was published, in English and Spanish, in September, 2006. A new IABIN Fact Sheet was developed in both English and Spanish.
- A **listserve** for the Focal Points was established to ensure timely communications between all stakeholders.
- IABIN webpage. **www.iabin.net** is operational in Spanish and English and is receiving an average of 6,800 visits per month, and an average of over 108, 106 hits per month. The old website is kept maintained with updated information for each TN.
- The IABIN Secretariat participated in a teleconference on 23 Oct, 2006 with members of EROS Data Center, Andean Development Corporation (CAF), IPGH, and others, to discuss the development of the **GeoSur Project**. This project will expand the IABIN GeoSpatial Network to South America.
- The **Project Operational Manual** was finalized and approved by World Bank on January 31, 2007 and posted on www.iabin.net.
- The IABIN Secretariat developed an **updated monitoring and evaluation strategy** for the IABIN GEF project.   This new strategy incorporates a detailed methodology for how monitoring and baseline data will be collected, interpreted, and analyzed. The fourth draft of this document is under review and comment by focal points and coordinating institutions with a deadline to receive comments to the IABIN secretariat by 15 February 2007.

2. **Summary of the "Building IABIN" Project**.

The PIP outlines a $35 million project. IABIN requested and was awarded $6 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) towards this plan. The legal agreement was signed between the WB and the General Secretariat of the OAS (GS/OAS) on July 15, 2004, and was amended on February 10, 2006 and June 26, 2006. The PIP outlines agreements with the primary biodiversity informatics institutions throughout the Americas based on biodiversity data sharing priorities of these institutions and mandates of the first three IABIN Council Meetings. Co-financing of $28.9 million has been identified from 76 regional or national institutions and programs.

Thirty-four out of 34 countries have designated IABIN Focal Points. All 34 recipient countries have endorsed the GEF "Building IABIN" project.

> *The overall project is*:
> (i) Developing an Internet-based, decentralized managed network to provide access to scientifically credible biodiversity information currently existing in individual institutions and agencies in the Americas,
> (ii) Providing the tools necessary to draw knowledge from that wealth of resources, which in turn will support sound decision-making concerning the conservation of biodiversity, and
> (iii) Providing a mechanism in the Americas to exchange information relevant to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, thus promoting and facilitating technical and scientific cooperation to help fulfill the mandate of the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. Component 1. Interoperability and Access to Data

3.1. IABIN Catalogue Service

The no-objection of the WB to the RfPs package for the development of the IABIN Catalogue Service procurement process was received in March 2006. Formal proposals from short listed institutions were requested and two were received. None of the proposals addressed all the requirements and additional questions were submitted to the institution with the highest score. The answers received still did not address the issues to the Evaluation Committee's satisfaction. The Bank eventually recommended in June 2006 that the process be cancelled because the proposals had been insufficiently competitive. During the IEC meeting, it was agreed that the work required in the ToRs was too much for just one institution and that it would make sense to divide the work into three or four components and carry out an evaluation and selection process for each. The IEC instructed the Secretariat to consult with the Information Technology Working Group (ITWG) and ask for their recommendation as to how to proceed. After consultation, it was recommended to the IEC that the ToRs should be divided and a new selection process be conducted during the 3rd quarter of 2006. The IEC endorsed the recommendation made by the ITWG. The Secretariat and NBII (the lead institution for the Catalog) developed the requested ToRs and these were sent to the World Bank for its No-objection. The World Bank, however, was not satisfied that the ToRs addressed all the issues, so no No-objection was issued. As a result, the Secretariat and NBII agreed that there was need for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the best way to develop the Catalog. This meeting took place on 228-30 November, 2006 in Panama.

The following were the agreements reached at this meeting:

Catalog

IABIN will continue using Biobot as the IABIN search and integration tool. This tool will have the following functionalities:

- Search IABN TN sites + "main"
- Return results in 3 languages
- Execute query through expanding search: In year 1 through the thesaurus and in year 2 through Species name. The search will be available in three languages
- Return results for:
    - Data
    - Website
    - Maps
    - Publications
    - Experts
    - Journals
    - Imagines/Photos
- Search by:
    - Ecosystem
    - Invasive Species
    - Pollinators
    - Protected Areas
    - Species
    - Specimens
    - Combinations of all
- TNs have to expose Data to IABIN BioBot through one of the following methods:
    - Tapir -→ Harvest
    - XMLS → Harvest
    - Web-service -→ Harvest
- The results will be downloadable for further post processing
- Customizable "code" for delivering IABIN Biobot results on Focal Points, Countries and TNs websites
- Statistics in IABIN Biobot use
- Integrated species common names lookups with TNs
- Advanced Search Interface, that allows users to search term for:
    - Common species names in 3 languages, via existing web services from IT IS, species2000, etc.
    - Common phrase

Thesaurus

IABIN will use the NBII Thesaurus software. This software is already finished and it will allow IABIN to hand out terms into three IABIN languages. Also the Thesaurus will be fully integrated with IABIN BioBot. Since, IABIN will not develop any new software for this purpose, the existing thesaurus will be complemented with new terms and the existing content that will be translated into Spanish and Portuguese. ToRs will be developed for this purpose.

Controlled Vocabularies.

It is necessary to create an IABIN controlled vocabulary. This controlled vocabulary will be controlled by the IABIN Secretariat but the implementation is the responsibility of each TN. The procedure for the creation of each vocabulary will be as follows:

1- If the TN needs a vocabulary, they have to send the list (in English/Portuguese/Spanish) to the Secretariat
2- The Secretariat will send the list to the other TNs and focal points for their comments. They will have to send their comments back to the Secretariat within 15 days.
3- The Secretariat will compile all the comments and will send them to the TN that requested the vocabulary.
4- The TN will send the final version to the Secretariat, and this version must be adopted by all other TNs

Metadata

IABIN will use the NBII Metadata tool. This tool is built in Dublin Core and will be the core system for the IABIN Biobot tool. The centralization of the metadata is necessary for performance reasons. The NBII Metadata tool will harvest any metadata hosted in other institutions through web services. In addition, because there are many metadata tools out there, IABIN will not create any new tool for this purpose. Each TN could use the NBII metadata tool or implement their own, but it has to be available to be harvested by IABIN.

IABIN will create ToRs for a consultancy to keep the metadata available in the three IABIN languages. Also, training will be provided by NBII to the CIs that needs it, in order to maintain their metadata in this system.

UDDI (Universal Description, Discovery and Integration)

IABIN will use NBII registry. This registry is built in Dublin Core. Training will be provided by NBII with IABIN GEF funds to one person from each TN on how to use this registry (add, delete, update and registry records). This registry will allow IABIN to registry the following information:

- WMS services
- IABIN data providers web-services
- Webpages

Experts Database

Each TN will responsible for developing their own experts database. It was agreed that IABIN will use the schema developed by I3N, as a Core Schema, but each TNs could add new fields if they deem them necessary.

3.2. Thematic Networks (TNs)

3.2.1. General comments:

All TNs (Species and Specimens, Protected Areas, Ecosystems, Invasive Species, and Pollinators) now have a CI selected by the IEC (Table 1).

Table. 1. Status of each CI.

Thematic Network/ Catalogue Service	Objective	Coordinating Institution	Status	Signed MOC/ CI Transfer Agreement
Invasive Species	Encourage the creation and standardization of national and sub-national databases on invasive species, promote their interoperability, create value-added products, and expanded this network to all IABIN member countries	United States Geological Survey (US) with funds managed by GS/OAS	PAD	Under Discussion/ Not applicable
Species and Specimens	Define and implement the architecture, tools, standards and protocols to access specimen and species information located in institutions throughout the region by using distributed access standards	Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (Costa Rica)	19-Sep-05	23-Feb-06/24-Feb-06
Protected Areas	Promote more effective sharing of information on protected areas within and between the countries of the region, building on and contributing to existing global experience in this area through close collaboration with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre	Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza (Brazil)	6-Oct-05	3-Mar-06/9-Mar-06
Ecosystems	Implement an electronic and institutional network dedicated to regional ecosystem information that supports the decision making process. Ultimately, tools developed by the Network should allow the user to consult specimen, species and ecosystems databases in an integrated manner (in coordination with other Thematic Networks).	Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (Panama) with funds managed by GS/OAS	25-May-06	21-Aug06/ Not applicable
Pollinators	Develop an electronic Global Species Database (GSD) of Pollinators as a linking element to facilitate the integration of biological, ecological and agricultural information, in an efficient retrieval system	Coevolution Institute (US)	25-May-06	17-Jul-06/ 23-Aug-2006
Catalogue Service	Provide a mechanism to locate, evaluate, and access biological data and information from a distributed network of cooperating data and information sources from across the Americas through an Internet-based search service. Allow Internet users to search through an assortment of standardized descriptions (metadata) of different information products (such as databases, maps, websites, other information systems, etc.)	US Geological Survey (US) with funds managed by GS/OAS	TORs advertised December 2006 – closing date Feb 1, 2007	Pending/ Not applicable

	to identify those that meet their particular requirements		

As evidenced by the meeting of IT experts from the CIs, exciting developments are in store for interoperability between the TNs. Although GBIF is taking a lead globally on standards for specimens, it would seem that IABIN is positioning itself to be the global leader on standards for species, ecosystems, and protected areas and how they are inter-operable.

3.2.2. Review of Thematic Networks

3.2.2.1 Protected Areas TN

The Protected Areas Thematic Network (PATN) started operations with its first meeting, held on March 27th, in Curitiba, Brazil. Fundação O Boticário de Proteção a Natureza, the Coordinating Institution, organized the meeting in parallel with the COP-8/MOP-3, in order to achieve the following important landmarks:
- Define, together with our consortium members representatives, the polices, rules and governance of the PATN Consortium;
- Establish formally the Protected Area Thematic Working Group (PATWG), accomplishing our first planned activity
- Discuss and approve activities, indicators and outputs
- Discuss aspects of Parallel Financing (Matching Fund)
- Define a milestone: COP9 (2008)

In 2006, the PATN carried out the development of the "Business Process Mapping" for the PATN Web Portal of PATN. Several aspects related to the building of the website were defined, such as the content and functionalities, general policies, hosting and platform options. After that, the CI opened a bid for companies to present a technical implementation plan and budget. The CI then proceeded with the selection of the company and after the "no objection" from the World Bank, signed the contract.

Several technical documents which are planned to be produced, fundamental to the action plan for the implementation of the Protected Areas Thematic Network were drafted and will be finished in 2007.

The PATN CI participated at the Technical and Executive IABIN Meeting (Washington, D.C., June) where important aspects of the network implementation were discussed.

The Andes-Amazon Protected Areas Database progress was reviewed and the IEC requested a short description of the project for their review that was submitted in October 2006.

The PACI organized a Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Meeting, in Cambridge -- 14-15 June 2006, with the participation of our key consortium members. The meeting was part of ongoing discussion about management effectiveness, with results and conclusions that will impact significantly the implementation of the Protected Areas Thematic Network.

Finally three sets of TORs were developed to be implemented in early 2007:

1. Identify available Protected Area Management Effectiveness data, Methods and Results in Latin America and Caribbean to Support the Protected Areas Thematic Network
2. Identify available databases and data sources about Protected Areas in IABIN Sub-Regions to Support the Protected Areas Thematic Network
3. Identification and Prioritization of Technical and Biodiversity Information of needs and gaps on Protected Areas in Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) to Support the Protected Areas (PAs) Thematic Network

3.2.2.2. Species and Specimen TN (S&S TN)

In the last semester of 2006, the S&S TN carried out planning, development, training and outreach activities.

Planning activities were of two types: administrative and technical. Administrative activities included internal meetings of the CI to coordinate administrative support, and externally to coordinate with the different actors to fine tune implementation procedures, reporting and communication.

The most important activity in technical planning was the organization of the SSTN TWG meeting. This meeting included specialists in specimens and species. Focal points, IEC members, representative of the other IABIN TNs, representatives from other bioinformatics initiatives (e.g. GBIF, ENBI), academics (UNESCO), members of the IABIN Secretariat and members of the SSTN Consortium were invited. Technical documents were discussed and updated at this meeting:
1. Analysis of users requirements
2. Analysis of the portal for integrated access to specimens and species data
3. Analysis of the data digitizing tool for specimens and species
4. Use Policies for the S&S TN
5. Request for Proposals for Digitizing Specimens Data

The development of the first prototype of the S&S TN portal was also discussed. A very important result of the meeting was the review and adoption of the Plinian Core, a standard developed jointly by the nodes GBIF-Spain and GBIF-Costa Rica, which is intended to become the standard to share species information, in the same way that Darwin Core has been the standard for specimen information. Finally, taking into consideration the recommendations of the IT TWG, the graphic design of the S&S TN portal was improved.

A member of SSTN was selected as a member of the I3N Thematic Working Group and participated in the Second I3N TWG meeting in November, 2006, thus ensuring the interoperability between these two TNs. In addition, members of the S&S TN Coordinating Institution (CI) participated in the "Iberian-American Workshop for the exchange of Biodiversity Information", on 3-6 December, 2006, co-organized by the IABIN Secretariat.

3.2.2.3. Ecosystems TN

The consortium led by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) was selected as the Coordinating Institution in early June, 2006. The Memorandum of Collaboration was signed by STRI and the IEC, in order for STRI to be officially designated as the CI of the Ecosystems TN. The disbursement of funds for this network will be executed directly through GS/OAS rather than through a transfer agreement to the CI.

The following activities were carried out during 2006:
- The Project Coordinator was contracted by the OAS.
- The Project Coordinator traveled to Panama City, to work with STRI and IABIN personnel from July 30 to August 16, 2006 .
- A detailed implementation plan for a year was submitted, starting in August 2006;
- Terms of reference were prepared and advertised for two positions: A GIS Analyst and an Ecosystem Expert. Applications for these two positions were received and evaluated. The candidates that came first and second in both positions rejected the offer. We are interviewing the candidates that came in third.
- A procurement plan was prepared through December 2007 and submitted to the OAS.
- The Project Coordinator traveled to Costa Rica (August 28-Sept 2, 2006) to participate in the Species and Specimen Workshop at INBio.
- A GEOSS meeting took place in Asunción, Paraguay to adopt a global ecosystem (terrestrial, freshwater and coastal-marine) classification system. This was a very important event for the ETN given that the ETN will leverage of these developments.
- After the GEOSS meeting, a meeting of the ETN Project Coordinator with staff from TNC, STRI and NatureServe took place October 17-18 in Washington D.C. at NatureServe offices with the following objectives:
  1) Consider the adoption of the GEOSS classification structure for the ETN.
  2) How the adoption of the GEOSS classification system will impact the overall architecture and functionality of the ETN.
  3) Plans for the Ecosystem Expert Meeting that will take place in Panama City in March, 2007
  4) Develop an activity plan up to December, 2007
  5) The GEOSS Classifications structure was adopted for the ETN. See Table 2 below.
  6) The overall architecture and functionality of the ETN was reviewed and modified. New diagram of the ETN Portal functionality was agreed.
  7) It was agreed that the Expert Committee meeting will take place in March, 2007 in Panama City, Panama.

Table 2. GEOSS classification structure.

GEOSS Classification System

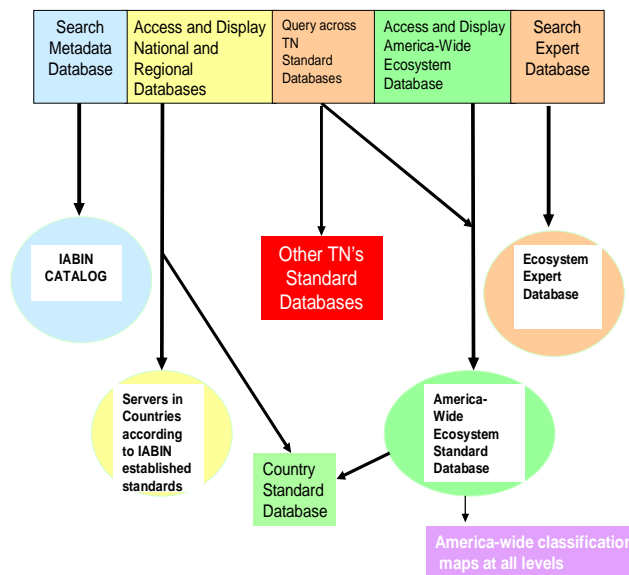| Level#	Theme	Terrestrial (geoecosystem)	Terrestrial (bioecosystem)	Freshwater	Marine
1	Macro-Bioclimate	Polar, Temperate, Tropical	Polar, Temperate, Tropical plus major vegetation structure (treed, shrub/ herbaceous, sparse)	Polar, Temperate, Tropical	Polar, Temperate, Tropical
2	Meso-Bioclimate/ Biogeographic	global biomes (e.g., wet vs. humid vs.. dry: polar, boreal/austral, …	global biomes + relevant leaf phenology combinations + phytogeography	global biomes + zoogeographic basins (WWF)	marine regions defined by SST, sea surface elevation, mixed layer depth; biogeography
3	Geochemical	index of plant-available soil moisture; specialized substrates	index of plant-available soil moisture; specialized substrates	Ecological Drainage Units: climate/physiography/substrate porosity	Nearshore FW, Coastal marine, Neritic, Oceanic
4	Biophysical Structure	Total Biomass Vegetation Structure Landscape Juxtaposition	Total Biomass Vegetation Structure Landscape Juxtaposition	Surface water character determining biotic structure (e.g., lakes, rivers, streams)	e.g., Estuary, FW plume; Reef; Biomass estimate by water column layer
5	Biotic Composition	Gradient from urban to mixed agriculture/ disturbed secondary vegetation	Gradient from secondary vegetation to primary vegetation/undisturbed land cover	Macrohabitats; Fish/invert communities	Coastal Macrohabitats; Plankton communities

- A draft of a data questionnaire has been put together. This task will be completed during the first part of the second quarter of 2007.

- A teleconference with Roger Sayre and Andrea Grosse, representing the GEOSS program took place on October 20. In this teleconference Roger and Andrea were informed of discussions and decisions made during the ETN meeting at NatureServe. Discussions took place concerning the implications our schedule had for the GEOSS program and vice-versa, and it was agreed that:

  a. The classification structure being developed by GEOSS is very important to the development of the ETN.
  b. GEOSS and the ETN need to coordinate activities with respect to the development of the Classification system;
  c. The GEOSS classification system will be presented at the Experts Meeting that the ETN will sponsor in March, 2007 in Panama, with support from the GEOSS staff.
  d. The recommendations of the Expert Committee will be presented to the IEC for final approval of an Ecosystem classification system for the ETN.
  e. Representatives from GEOSS will participate in the next meeting in Washington scheduled for December 11 and 12.

- The ETN is about a month behind in the following activities in Component 1: 1 (identify lead institutions in each country), 2 (develop questionnaire for data providers), 3 (identify data providers), 14 (develop a list of expert keywords), and 16 (begin the design an implementation

of an indicator system). The main reason for being behind is that it has been difficult to hire the Ecosystem Expert. To make up some of this time, the consortium members will be asked to provide a list of institutions with ecosystem data. On the other hand, ETN is ahead in other tasks concerning choosing the Classification Systems and making preparations for the March 2007 Experts Meeting.

- An outline of ETN portal architecture (Fig.1) was developed and will be reviewed during the March 2007 meeting.

Figure 1. Proposed ETN Portal Architecture

ETN Portal Functionality

3.2.2.4. Invasive Species TN

- New Central I3N Web Site was launched. The beta version of the new I3N Web site, which complies with new IABIN guidelines for Thematic Networks, is now online at i3n.iabin.net. It will be translated into other IABIN languages when the beta phase is completed.

- The I3N Website interface, which draws from the I3N Database structure and enables remote data entry, is ready for use by countries.   I3N-Argentina and I3N-Paraguay have already begun using this new interface. The template can be reviewed at http://www.inbiar.paradigma.com.ar/.

- Training workshops or classes were offered in Bahamas, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Venezuela, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and USA in 2006.

- The I3N Technical Working Group (TWG) convened in November and agreed on a work plan for 2007. Activities will focus on capacity building and tool development. This year, the TWG meeting also included the Costa Rican IABIN Focal Point (Francisco Gonzalez), an at-large IABIN observer (Ernesto Brugnoli), and a member of the Species-Specimen Thematic Network (William Ulate).

- The I3N fact sheet is now available in Portuguese, English, and Spanish. It can be downloaded from http://i3n.iabin.net/fact_sheet.html.

- The I3N-USA team, lead by Annie Simpson, has drafted a 5-year strategic plan and has begun reaching out to American Indian tribes. I3N-USA adapted the I3N workshop and presented it at the National Tribal Invasive Species Conference in November 2006.

- Costa Rica has joined I3N. Activities are being led by the IABIN Focal Point, Francisco Gonzalez, and a special committee representing several national institutions. The I3N training workshop in November was very successful, with participation from all important sectors, including health, agriculture and environment.

3.2.2.5. Pollinators TN

The Secretariat and the GS/OAS/DSD have worked with the Co-Evolution Institute to draft and sign the MOC and the CI Transfer Agreement, respectively. The MOC has been signed between the Co-Evolution Institute and the IEC (August 23, 2006). As this point, the Co-Evolution Institute has carried out a number of activities to implement the Pollinators TN (PTN) as follows:

- The PTN team were able to make progress on one primary goal – to identify and establish informal partnerships with existing networks, and people and networks within Central America and South America.

- PTN closely coordinated this project with GBIF and FAO, who are jointly developing a Global Pollinator Information Management System. We met with principal staff to coordinate activities and attended the Species and Specimens Thematic (SSTN) Technical Advisory Group. We also established Terms of Reference for our technical advisory group.

- The first meeting of the PTN TWG took place on December 12-15, 2006 in Indaiatuba, Brazil.

- The PTN team has met 11 times via phone conference call, and this keeps their core team well informed.

4. Component 2: Data Content Creation

In general, this component deals with matching grants and training that began with an RfPs for Data Digitizing Grants in late 2005. A concerted effort has been undertaken by the Secretariat to meet with potential data providers in order to inform details of network development, particularly as it relates to the TNs, standards and protocols adopted by IABIN, and the data content building grants.

Data Providers

A meeting with potential data providers for IABIN was held in Ecuador in August, 2006, which was attended by 28 representatives from different organizations. Another meeting with potential data providers was held in Costa Rica in November, 2006, attended by 30 people from different organizations. A data providers meeting in Peru, scheduled for October 10, 2006, was cancelled by the Peruvian Focal Point. The Peruvian FP requested that the meeting be held in 2007.
The objectives of the meetings with potential data providers are:
- To inform the potential data providers about the progress in the implementation of the IABIN project
- Present the IABIN Basic Standards and Protocols and the newly agreed upon Specimen protocols
- Obtain information on the data each data provider could share through IABIN
- Discuss the ways in which national organizations can participate in IABIN
- Present the IABIN data-digitizing matching grants from Component 2 of the IABIN GEF Project
- Present the IABIN Connectivity Program
- Strengthen the role of the Focal Point in his/her country
- Provide a space for the data providers to express their concerns, discuss challenges.

4.1. Data digitizing grants

- The second RfP for data digitizing grants under I3N were posted, through the IABIN website (www.iabin.net), IABINfriends, and other websites early in October 2006. These grants are intended to promote digitalization of high-quality invasive, alien species (IAS) information and data. Five proposals were received by the deadline and will be reviewed in early January 2007.

- The first RfP for data digitizing grants for specimens under SSTN were posted, through the IABIN website (www.iabin.net), IABINfriends, and other websites early in October 2006. These grants are indented to promote digitalization of high-quality species information and data. Fifteen proposals were received by the deadline and will be reviewed in early January 2007.

- The I3N Lead in Argentina is adapting I3N-Argentina data to the new I3N web interface and will be adding 500 records of invasive species locations.

- The I3N Lead in Brazil will be adding 300 freshwater species to the I3N-Brazil Database.

- The I3N Lead in the Dominican Republic, published an article listing the benefits of I3N activities to the country: http://www.IABIN-us.org/projects/i3n/i3n_products_after_pilot/products_dominicanrep.html.

- After completing a successful training workshop, the I3N Lead in Jamaica and his team are focusing on entering new data into the I3N Database.

- The "InBUy" (Uruguayan Database on Biological Invasions) initiative was launched in November. This initiative is funded through an I3N content grant and is supported by the University of the Republic (Faculty of Sciences), the Environment Directorate (DINAMA) and the INCOFISH Project. The I3N Co-Leads, Ernesto Brugnoli and Pablo Muniz, have been making a special effort to contact and strengthen partnerships with other national institutions. The I3N-Uruguay team recently published a scientific article that contains a reference to I3N: Especies acuáticas exóticas en

Uruguay: situación, problemática y manejo.

As previously mentioned five grants were awarded in early 2006 to digitize I3N data, and the projects will be finished in 2007, which are:

- Argentina – Fundación Universidad Nacional del Sur. Consolidation of the Argentinean database on Biological Invasions

- Jamaica - Institute of Jamaica. Implement, update and maintain an I3N IAS Database in Jamaica

- Paraguay - Asociación Guyra Paraguay. Building Capacity for the Paraguayan Invasive Network

- Uruguay - Universidad de la República Oriental del Uruguay (UDELAR) through its Facultad de Ciencias. Implement, update and maintain an I3N IAS Database in Uruguay

- Colombia - Instituto de Investigaciones de recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt. Implement, update and maintain an I3N IAS Database in Colombia

5. Component 3: Tools for Decision-making

Following a decision by the IEC at its meeting of June 2006, the IABIN Secretariat carried out a fact finding first phase at the Ibero-American Interoperability workshop held in Bogota, Colombia in December 2006, to discern what decision-making tools are available and what the countries' needs are in terms of value-added tools. The workshop participants prepared a list and description of tools to be submitted to countries (FPs) so they set up a priority list of tools to be financed by IABIN. This list will be submitted to the CIs of the Thematic Networks to get feedback. Finally, the Secretariat will develop draft ToRs and evaluation criteria for a request for proposals (RfP) to initiate the process to select and fund consultancy services to produce value-added tools prioritized as needed.

Together with the Alexander von Humboldt Institute, the CYTED Network for the Conservation and Digitizing of Biological Collections, GBIF, the Biodiversity Information System of Colombia, and the Argentinean Museum of Natural History, the IABIN Secretariat planned and facilitated a workshop in Bogota, Colombia. The objective of this workshop was to (i) generate concrete actions for the exchange of biodiversity data at the level of species and specimens among the actors related to these themes in the Iberian-American region, and (ii) to define IT products that could be developed to assist decision making and foster the development of visualization and modeling tools by partners in the Americas.

During the workshop, work stations were created around five well-defined themes: computer science for interoperability; information exchange with regards to species and specimens; quality of data; the development of information products for decision-making in conservation; and, advance in modeling for conservation. These were themes that have been highlighted in the diverse meetings and assemblies to which the workshop developers have taken part in the last two years, and that have been established as specific needs for the development of the subject in the region. In addition, an advance in the development of parameters to include in future calls for granting "seed support" to digitize species data within the SSTN was addressed.

The workshop intended to facilitate the participation of representatives of the Americas that have the necessary technical experience, in about the development of possible information products for decision-making that IABIN will be developing in2007.

The workshop main objective was to propitiate definite actions for the exchange of data about biodiversity in the way of species and specimens between individuals related with these subjects in Iberia-America; taking advantage of the willingness to work jointly from different ongoing initiatives at a local level and the diverse information networks present in the region.

Specific objectives:
➢ Taking advantage of the confluence of initiatives in information management both national and regional, to approach the subjects related to the interoperability of the architectures, technologies, and tools used in the development of the information resources available in Iberia-America.
➢ Input in the definite conformation of the Plinian Core (standard in development process by the Spanish GBIF Node, INBio and the IABIN SSTN) as a standard for information exchange at a species level. To define procedures and mechanisms for the exchange of information of this level in the national and regional networks that interact in Iberia-America and the rest of the world.
➢ To train the biological collections and other entities that manage information about biodiversity that are involved in the CYTED network, in the documentation tools for metadata and for the purging of data, fulfilling the goals established by the network, and as a basis to propitiate the exchange of data and information in the region.
➢ Define areas of common, regional interest and general requirements for the development of strategic information products and services for users in the regional and global segments that may be sponsored by IABIN.
➢ Get to know the tools and applications for modeling and visualizing developed by partners in the region; for instance, National Commission of the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity – CONABIO from Mexico, that base themselves on information from different levels of biological organization.
➢ Determine the needs of the users of biodiversity information systems in the Americas that may be addressed in the different segments (sub-national, national, regional and global) in which they are taking place.
➢ Establish joint work agendas from the conclusions that may be reached in the discussion sessions and agreements.

The IABIN Secretariat was in charge of developing and facilitating two sessions: Modeling Tools and Information Products workshop for regional decision making. The IABIN Secretariat also participated in the Computer Scientist Meeting and in the session on the Plinian Core.

Modeling tools

This section was conceived as a space in which participants would learn about some modeling and visualization tools that have been developed by actors in the region utilizing information about biodiversity that is part of the content in already existent information about biodiversity. Some of the actors presenting their capabilities in modeling and visualizing were CONABIO, TNC, CIAT and Instituto von Humboldt.

Some of the results from this session were:
➢ Participants got to know the capabilities of regional organizations in modeling and visualization tool development that are capable of using biodiversity data and information

compiled in the systems of environmental NGOs or in governmental organizations of the region to guide decision-making,

- ➢ Recommendations about the application and promotion of tools developed by regional associates and promotion of a "South-South" cooperation for training and use of existing tools.
- ➢ Recommendations about future actions that allow modeling and visualization tool development at the regional level.
- ➢ Recommendations about training and capacity building needed in the use of modeling and visualization tools.

Some of the results from this session were:
- ➢ Agreements for the exchange of information between national, regional and global initiatives
- ➢ Identification of tools of interest to be exchanged and shared between initiatives.
- ➢ Aspects where capacity building is needed in the region
- ➢ Joint agenda for the following 12 months
- ➢ Concrete requests from other regional and global initiatives, based on country's and region's needs.

Information Products for Regional Decision –making

A participatory consultation to define the regional needs regarding possible tools, information products or services that may support decision-making process in the region, based on the information that is being put to order by different initiatives. The session allowed for the identification of needs in several countries in the Americas regarding tools that support decision-making for conservation utilizing data provided by the different information networks.

Some of the results:
- ➢ Preliminary list of regional needs about decision-making tools
- ➢ Inventory of existing tools on a regional, sub-regional or national level that may be adapted to the previously identified needs.
- ➢ Diagnosis and recommendation about thematic priorities and specific products for decision-making that may be financed by IABIN

Plinian Core Standard

This session was dedicated to the revision of the proposed standard for the exchange of context information and the data in the species and specimens level.   IABIN will contribute to the further development of the Plinian Core standard by working on its validation and promoting its adoption by using it in the SSTN and by developing a portal and data entry tool that will incorporate it.

Computer Scientists Meeting

In this session, operational and methodological aspects were discussed with regards to the possibilities of exchanging information content within the different initiatives that are present in the region (technologies, applications, protocols, etc.). This implied the revision, in broad terms at least, of architecture and technological approaches that are being implemented in the development of diverse national and regional initiatives. The intention was to identify possible articulation points in terms of protocol and web services as software applications exchange. There were several workstations:

➢ Globalized vision of architecture
➢ Tools and architecture used for documenting context information and data at the level of species and specimens
➢ Standards and protocols for context information exchange about species and specimens data; (Darwin core, Plinian core, Biological registers (RRBB), TAPIR, metadata, other)
➢ Integration of heterogeneous data systemized on multiple context information tools and data at the level of species and specimen.
➢ Data representation language (RDF, XML)
➢ Ontologies and systematic
➢ Standards and protocols for geospatial information exchange and integration with data at species and specimens level (WMS, WFS, among others).

In addition to the Joint Iberian-American Workshop, the IABIN Secretariat also organized sessions with IABIN Focal Points participating in the workshop as well as representatives from the different IABIN TNs. During these sessions, the workplans of the TNs were presented and discussed by the FPs, CIs and Secretariat. This was the first time that a participatory exercise to develop the IABIN GEF Project Annual Work Plan took place.

Based on comments made by FPs and other IABIN representatives during this meeting, CI's will include in their work plan matrix the budget for each specific activity. The indicators already decided upon will incorporate new ones to attend to the Annex 1 project Indicators (as modified by the latest World Bank comments) INBio will update their plan to conform to these suggestions.

Another output obtained from this meeting was an endorsement of the Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology with the World Bank's latest comments and suggestions with inputs from the FPs.

6. Component 4: Sustainability of IABIN

6.1. IABIN Secretariat.

The IABIN Secretariat is hosted in Panama at the City of Knowledge. The IABIN Secretariat is staffed with the Secretariat Director, Data Content Manager, and Thematic Networks Coordinator.   Iván Valdespino, Director (Panama), Rita Besana, Data Content Manager, (Mexico) and Boris Ramirez (Colombia) have been contracted on one year GS/OAS contracts. Jeannette Marie Gálvez Bunting, Administrative Assistant, was hired using City of Knowledge funds as stipulated in the IABIN/City of Knowledge Agreement. The Secretariat completed the following tasks not noted above:

6.1.1. Planning, Coordination and Reporting

- Monthly phone conferences cunducted with G. Cotter, Chair of the IEC, her staff GS/OAS for planning, coordination, and monitoring of project progress.
- Frequent communication maintained with Focal Points and Council members in general.
- Quarterly and semester reports completed by the GS/OAS-IABIN Secretariat with the collaboration of the IEC. 2005 Second Semester and 2006 quarterly reports both in English were translated into Spanish and distributed to IEC members and posted in IABIN website.
- IT and IEC Meetings completed in June 2006. A summary report on the decision made

during the IEC meeting is here included (Annex 1).

6.1.2. Co-financing

- Secretariat collaborated with SG/OAS by contacting partner organizations and CIs and encouraging them to submit co-financing information (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Core Parallel Financing.

CORE PARALLEL FINANCING
Period: Jul - Dec 06

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Total
GEF Financing	$157,308	$50,266	$0	$71,827	$22,261	$301,662
Parallel Financing						
SSTN -- INBio	$165,571					$165,571
ETN - STRI	$12,000					$12,000
ISTN -- USGS/I3N	$196,750	$89,550		$33,750		$320,050
PTN -- CoEvolution Institute *	$75,518					$75,518
Institute of Jamaica		$7,497				$7,497
Asociación Guyra Paraguay		$38,295				$38,295
Universidad de la República - Facultad de Ciencias		$3,197				$3,197
Fundación Universidad Nacional del Sur (FUNS)		$7,038				$7,038
USGS/NBII	$166,350	$28,950	$45,000	$57,226		$297,526
City of Knowledge				$22,915		$22,915
GS/OAS					$88,773	$88,773
Total assured parallel financing	$616,189	$174,527	$45,000	$113,891	$88,773	$1,038,380
Total assured parallel financing	**$773,497**	**$224,793**	**$45,000**	**$185,718**	**$111,034**	**$1,340,042**

* August to October 2006

Table 4. Non-Core Parallel Financing.

NON - CORE PARALLEL FINANCING
Period: July - December 06

Institution Name	Ecosystems	Protected Areas	Total
World Institute for Conservation & Environment (WICE) *		$19,300	$19,300
World Wildlife Fund *		$218,900	$218,900
The Nature Conservancy *		$21,500	$21,500
UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre *		$81,830	$81,830
Museo Argentino De Ciencias Naturales	4,344		$4,344
The Nature Conservancy	10,000	$520,582	$530,582
NatureServe	15,000		$15,000
Total assured parallel financing	**29,344.00**	**$862,112**	**$891,456**

* Contribution from 2005

6.2. Partnership and Communications

6.2.1. The IABIN Project Implementation Plan calls for close collaboration between IABIN Secretariat and GBIF Secretariat in order to avoid duplication of efforts, share resources as appropriate and agree on the use of basic standards and protocols. The IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) requested that the IABIN Secretariat staff attend the GBIF 13 meeting in Iquitos, Peru in 2006 with the following objectives (1) to be part of the IABIN Delegation to GBIF, (2) to network with other GBIF participants, particularly those who also participate in IABIN, and strengthen relationships, (3) and to cultivate a close working relationship with the GBIF Secretariat and identify concrete areas of collaboration:

Collaboration with GBIF in the Amazon

The Secretariat requested a meeting with the GBIF staff organizing the proto campaign for the Amazon Basin Biodiversity Information Facility (ABBIF) in order to explore synergies and to establish mechanisms to complement our efforts on biological collection data digitization and use of standards in order to make these initiatives compatibles and interoperable. It was agreed that there is need for a closer collaboration of GBIF and IABIN in ABBIF in order not to duplicate efforts in the Amazon area. For example, if GBIF is going to invest in developing the infrastructure to access and share specimen information in the Amazon Basin countries, then perhaps IABIN could then re-distribute the funds it was going to use for those countries in the Specimens TN to other countries, or even to other TNs. In addition, in this meeting it was agreed that there were three key principles that will guide the collaboration between IABIN and ABBIF (which also applies to the general case of IABIN-GBIF collaboration). We agreed that these simple principles could be an appropriate platform to guide current and future collaborations.

Principles:

1. Each information management network, be it local, national or regional, should be able to maintain its <u>identity</u> while it participates in larger scope networks. For example, the Central American and Caribbean Herbaria Network is fully participating in IABIN's SSTN, but maintains its identity and particular policies. Both, IABIN and the herbaria network have and will continue to benefit from this collaboration. Similarly, an initiative such as ABBIF and IABIN, particularly, the SSTN, should establish similar collaborations.

2. ABBIF and IABIN agree to <u>share data and information</u> through the use of compatible standards, protocols, tools and communication mechanisms both at the technical and the political level. It is desirable to establish coordination at all stages of the development of a network, namely, proposal, execution and consolidation (long term) stages. We used the phrase "touch base" to refer to this coordination and it was understood that, even at the proposal stage, most funding agencies typically and appropriately ask questions such as "how does this initiative relate and establish synergies with similar ones?" This early stage would be an opportunity to "touch base" and coordinate with related initiatives, which would result in stronger proposals.

3. We agree to establish concrete technical and political coordination between ABBIF and IABIN, specifically through the SSTN. At the technical level, Erick Mata (for IABIN) and Vanderlei Canhos (for GBIF) will be the official liaisons; at the political level, GBIF Secretariat to IABIN Secretariat coordination will be established (Iván - Jim, Gladys – David, or their representatives). In this respect, we would like to inform that two concrete, tangible and potentially high impact

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actions have been carried out at the technical level: 1. the SSTN will be a beta tester of GBIF's customizable portal and will further develop it to include species level information and a Spanish language interface; this will obviously be of mutual benefit; 2. Vanderlei Canhos and Erick Mata have agreed on having a technical person from CRIA participate in the SSTN Technical Advisory Committee. This will allow us to make sure that "principles 1 and 2" will be easier to achieve.

Other concrete collaborations with GBIF

Another important purpose of attending the GBIF13 meeting was for the IABIN Secretariat to ensure a stronger, more concrete collaboration with GBIF. In order to achieve this, the IABIN Secretariat, together with the IEC Chair, called for a meeting with the Executive Director and the Chair of the Governing Board of GBIF to discuss the following:

1. GBIF ´s development of the ABBIF that contains Specimen information.
2. Need to collaborate more closely between IABIN and GBIF in order not to duplicate efforts

The IABIN Secretariat updated the GBIF Secretariat on the recent developments in the network. IABIN stated its commitment to collaborate with GBIF and highlighted IABIN/GBIF synergies by (i) adopting the standards GBIF has developed for Specimens, (ii) by being part of GBIF's Governing Board (through Bonnie Carroll), (iii) in its Outreach Committee (through Ivan Valdespino) and (iv) in its Nodes Committee (through Rita Besana as an observer). IABIN Secretariat also mentioned the efforts that IABIN is carrying out through the SSTN to develop standards for Species. INBio (Coordinating Institution for SSTN) is working with GBIF Spain, both as GBIF Costa Rica and as IABIN SSTN Coordinating Institution (CI), in the development of the Plinian Core that will be the standard for species.

Jim Edwards agreed that it was beneficial to work together, not only in ABBIF but also in other areas, and made several practical suggestions about how to implement this, to which IABIN agreed:

o GBIF will put IABIN in its Steering Committee
o IABIN will put Jim Edwards and the whole GBIF Secretariat staff in its list to receive the IABIN Newsletter
o GBIF will make sure IABIN Secretariat is in the ABBIF mailing list
o At this meeting, both Secretariats will share their respective work plans to find areas of collaboration.
o There will be periodic discussions and updates between Jim Edwards and Ivan Valdespino (monthly teleconferences)
o A valuable area of potential collaboration would be in the Capacity Enhancement Plan for Developing Countries (CEPDEC). GBIF has identified Nicaragua as a potential place to work. For now, GBIF has no planned activities in Nicaragua. However, when the time comes, will coordinate with IABIN.
o GBIF will interface with IABIN whenever an Americas country is identified as part of the CEPDEC activities.
o GBIF and IABIN will also collaborate on Pollinators. Mike Ruggiero (who is part of both GBIF and IABIN efforts in this area) is charged with preparing a one-page summary on this.
o Both organizations will develop one PowerPoint slide about how they work together and will include it in all their presentations

- o IABIN Secretariat will identify other GBIF prototype campaigns where we may want to be involved.
- o GBIF is happy to call on donors or to participate in joint fundraising efforts.
- o Agreed to submit something together to the EU F7 genomics and biodiversity program next February

Meeting with GBIF in Denmark

As a result of the meeting between David Penman, Jim Edwards of GBIF and Gladys Cotter, I. Valdespino, R. Besana, and Boris Ramírez of IABIN at the GBIF-13 meeting in October 2006, it was identified the need to carry out a working session between the Secretariats of the two initiatives to:

- Identify areas of common interest within both initiatives' work programs where establishment of synergies could be achieved in a concrete manner
- Establish more direct and fluid communication channels between the two Secretariats
- Promote interoperability among the IABIN SSTN and the GBIF specimen platform.
- Coordinate development of other initiatives on pollinators, invasive species

As a result, it was recommended by Gladys Cotter, IABIN Executive Committee Chairperson that I. Valdespino would meet with Jim Edwards of GBIF to address the matters outlined above.

The meeting was held on Dec 14 and 15, 2006. During the two day session, I. Valdespino met initially with Jim Edwards, GBIF Executive Secretary, to address general aspects of the envisioned collaborative relationship among the two initiatives based on the areas previously identified. This meeting was followed up by individual meetings with GBIF technical staff in order to explore areas of collaboration based on our work programs.

During the working session, a general interest of finding common areas of actions by the two initiatives was expressed. It was also mentioned that this would be a good and tangible way to show data providers, users, partners, and funding agencies the complementarities between the two initiatives. This also will demonstrate both initiatives' commitment to maximize their financial resources, not duplicate efforts, and deliver useful, value-added products to users.

As a result of the technical meeting and of the final session, the indicative topics below were identified possible collaboration between GBIF and IABIN. These need to be reviewed by our constituencies in order to come out with a mutually agreed upon plan.

1. Species and Specimens

Species
- Adoption of GBIF Portal – IABIN as Beta Tester – IABIN to develop Spanish interface (translation of the end-user interface and possibly of the tutorial)
- Donald Hobern, lead Portal Developer to get in touch with William Ulate of InBio and Boris to coordinate testing of the Portal, adding IABIN identified specificity
- Development of the species standard (Plinian Core, IABIN SSTN – GBIF Spanish / Costa Rica Nodes). Encourage country base initiative to become widely validated and recognized by TDWG.
- IABIN could focus its efforts and resources on species

Specimens

- Potentially GBIF and IABIN can work together to increase data content. GBIF works on this through partnership with consortia of institutions and by means of its seed money competition. IABIN will participate in e-conferences with the GBIF Secretariat to coordinate these seed money competitions.
- Develop appropriate UDDI registry to identify source of information, either GBIF or IABIN
- Joint support for data content creation and data quality validation (e.g., development of tools for cleaning up data)
- IABIN will provide specimens' data to GBIF and vice versa. This will help repatriation of Latin-American countries information through IABIN and GBIF, enabling countries to customize national portals based on the portal developed by GBIF and tested through IABIN. Source identification will be a priority.
- Allow for incorporation of additional type of data and its integration to specimen based info (e.g., protected areas, pollinators, ecosystems, geo-spatial)

2. IABIN and GBIF will collaborate to promote Latin –American countries' participation in both GBIF, and IABIN to avoid duplication in outreach activities.

3. Collaborate on capacity building; train the trainers approach (e.g., metadata, TAPIR, other tools and applications; develop joint training in the Americas for: TAPIR, geo-referencing; modeling; standards. TAPIR is a wrapper tool that will be used by some IABIN TN's (Species & Specimens, I3N and Pollinators).

- GBIF Node Manager to come up with a work plan including training areas for joint execution
- Promote participation of IABIN Thematic Network Coordinator in the next TAPIR workshop or a joint training program for the Americas. Donald Hobern expressed interest in the latter. USDA has also expressed interest in doing a similar training in the Americas

4. Joint development of value-added tools that make use of data served through both initiatives

5. Development of the Pollinators Initiative

- GBIF & IABIN will work to establish joint architecture. GBIF will bring to this process knowledgeable people, standards & protocols
- IABIN can work on decision-making tools. In this area GBIF may play a role through Demonstration Projects
- GBIF & IABIN can work together to develop Pollinators Species List Inventories & Taxonomic related components. This could be country specific and done through jointly sponsored Data Content Building / Seed Grants. This can be achieved with an active participation of IABIN at ECAT / DIGIT e-conference where priority areas are determined. IABIN will promote the pollinators initiative in these meetings.
- GBIF & IABIN Secretariats to request from Larry / David to work with Mike Ruggiero to: a) establish roles for GBIF and IABIN, b) define technical aspects of both initiatives and the way they will collaborate, c) develop the structure. This should be done as a proposed strategy.

6. Collaboration on the ABBIF Initiative

- CRIA has been added to the IABIN Species and Specimen TN working group as ABBIF representative. INBio as CI of the SSTN will be involved in IT aspects with ABBIF
- It is to the best interest of all parties for the ABBIF initiative to be interoperable with regional (IABIN) and global (GBIF) initiatives in order to ensure data exchange and use.

- Depending upon financial resources identified and secured by GBIF for this initiative IABIN will consider the level of SSTN investments in that region, including for example allocating resources for other activities or regions in need of resources. IABIN will also explore joint activities to be held in the Amazon region

7. Collaborate on Invasive Species
- Develop IAS checklist
- Promote interoperability
- Joint development of tool kit for data providers

8. Work on joint proposals. This will be accomplished through:
- Working in current or proposing new GBIF Campaigns (e.g., Pollinators)
- Work to submit joint proposals to develop bioinformatics capacities at subregional levels (e.g., Caribbean region, Andean region [jointly with Andino.net and in the framework of the Global Mountain Ecosystems Initiative)

9. Actively exchange lesson learned and strengthened our technical and executive relationship
- Participation on Nodes Meeting
- Direct contact between technical personnel from both initiatives
- Direct contact between Secretariat heads
- Participation in both initiatives meetings
- Participation in ECAT and DIGIT e-conferences

10. GBIF would like to see if IABIN is interested in promoting the Open Access to Biodiversity Data Statement put forward by their governing board.

A summarized version of these indicative topics has been produced and organized by GBIF according to three major elements in their GBIF Work Programme for 2007/8. This has been submitted for comments to the heads of delegation in the Americas.

6.2.2. GEOSS Meeting

The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) was approached by the DIVERSITAS Secretariat to participate in the "Defining user needs for a global observation system for biodiversity" workshop they organized jointly with GBIF. The goals of this meeting were to address Task BI-06-02 and BI-06-03 of GEOSS, focusing on the larger goal to work towards an integrated Global Biodiversity Observation System. Special emphasis was put on the necessity to avoid the historical mistake to allow that solely data providers (i.e. mainly scientists) define the strategy, content and structure of a Biodiversity Observation System.

In contrast, the focus was placed on defining *the needs and requirements of the biodiversity information users sector, in the presence of data providers.*

As a result of this meeting it was decided to produce:

- A short meeting report summarizing the discussion, and outlining decisions and next steps, as an internal document for the group and as a report to GEO.

Action: DIVERSITAS.

- A longer report which would serve as draft 0 of a System Concept or science/implementation plan "towards a global biodiversity observing system". A writing team was appointed by the group to produce this document. This would be the central collaborative document, as it would describe the user requirements and what GEOSS-Biodiversity is, and will do.

Action: Norbert Jürgens (NJ), Anne Larigauderie (AL), Doug Muchoney, Walter Berendsohn, Wendy Strahm, Woody Turner/Gary Geller. Meredith Lane and Peter Hall offered editorial help as the document develops.

It was pointed out that this System Concept document would be an evolving document, and that the developing process would be iterative. It was agreed that the writing team should first produce a concept, get the group to agree, and then plan the development of its implementation.

- The meeting noted that it would be necessary to appoint some working groups to develop particular points. GBIF would, for example, be interested in leading a group on the use of specimen data as part of a Global Biodiversity Observation System and IABIN expressed interest in collaborating in this task, while DIVERSITAS would be interested in leading a group on scaling issues, plot-type observatories and their technical protocols and interoperability. GTOS would be interested in conducting a survey of existing observations systems.

Action: GBIF, DIVERSITAS, GTOS

Meeting with other organizations:

With IUCN

In October 25th, the Secretariat Director met with IUCN personnel (Bill Jackson, Director, Global Program; David Sheppard, Head, Program on Protected Areas; James Ragle, SIS Manager, Species Programme; Pedro Rosabal, Senior Program Officer, Program on Protected Areas, and Silvio Olivieri, Senior Technical Advisor for Conservation Information). The objective of the meeting was to discuss IUCN participation, as consortium member, in the PATN and the possibility of expanding their role to be more proactive technical partners in it, as well as their possible participation in the Species & Specimen TN and I3N.

With Enrique Lahman, Senior Coordinator, Global Program, we discussed the possibility of having IABIN involved in the organization of the Latin American Protected Areas Congress. It was proposed that O Boticario and the rest of the members of the Protected Areas TN show our developments in terms of PA information technologies and tools, possibly, even having a session on this at the upcoming IUCN regional Protected Areas meeting in Bariloche, Argentina, in October 2007. In addition, IUCN may ask IABIN to help them organize a session to outline the Biodiversity Conservation Agenda of the region.

GS/OAS Washington met with members of IUCN and IUCN Sur, Robert Hofstede and Robert Hajost and John Waugh in November 2006 about the upcoming IUCN meeting in Bariloche -- Sept 30-6 October, 2007. Activities are underway to organize interested groups to develop a presentation on "Data management for Protected Areas" in expectation of Bariloche, Argentina, Symposium in

October 2007. Several presentation were made at GS/OAS Washington that addressed *Advancements in the political and technical considerations in improving databases, metadata, tracking tools, geoportals, and with hemispheric networks to create a user-friendly, decentralized system for storing, managing and reporting on trends in coverage for all biophysical and socio-economic aspects of PA's and biological corridors.* The presentations from a diverse group that included many of the below mentioned partners and tools explored:

1.   advancements in the political and technical considerations in improving the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)
2.   and reference to other database systems (e.g. Andes Amazon PA database, GBIF, REMIB, INBio, Humboldt, IABIN databases on PAs, Invasives, pollinators, ecosystems, Global Species Address Book, etc.)
3.   and metadata cataloguers (e.g,. Biobot, ATTA, Humboldt's system)
4.   and value added tools (e.g. GEOSS, GITAN, Conservation Geoportal project, Proteus, Servir, etc)
5.   and improving coverage with hemispheric networks of players e.g. RAMSAR CREHO, IABIN, WHMSI, BioNet, CATHALAC
6.   and ways to evaluate progress -- e.g. Biodiversity 2010, targets, scorecards and evaluation tools --
7.   all with the view to further develop a user-friendly, decentralized system for storing, managing and reporting on trends in coverage for all biophysical and socio-economic aspects of PA's and biological corridors.

Once the analysis is completed by June 2007, a paper will be presented on "what's tools are out there". The objective is to complete a strategy on how IABIN and others can better collaborate with all these efforts with the goal towards achieving and measuring progress towards biodiversity 2010 targets -- conforming to best practice techniques and providing a platform that allows for the easy integration of other conservation datasets and user opinion. Details may be found at:
http://www.iabin.net/english/meetings-workshops/meetings/iabin_experts3.shtml

6.2.3. MolConnet

The goal of the MolConnect initiative is the establishment of a communication and information platform at the interface between functional genomics research and biodiversity and ecosystems research for the subsequent development of joint project initiatives. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to create a link between European and Latin American researchers.

In order to implement the goal mentioned a MolConnect Workshop "Bridging Genomics and Biodiversity" was held in Bogotá, Colombia, September 2006 to facilitate the fact finding and partnering process. The aim of this workshop was to bring together researchers from the fields of Molecular Biology/Genomics and Biodiversity and Ecosystems research, and develop new project ideas and activities at the interface. The results of the workshop will be included in a database available via homepage comprising information on the scientific areas, partners, institutions and other information valuable for the community. This information is also intended as a way to highlight the research needs of Latin America in the areas reviewed to be considered for interaction between European and Latin American researchers in the future, especially for the upcoming European Union FP7. IABIN gave a talk on IABIN entitled "*Cyberinfrastructure: Biodiversity Information Systems*".

The workshop working groups developed concept notes on possible projects to be jointly developed by European and Latin American researchers. IABIN participation was centered on preparing a concept note with other countries for the "Creation of Cyberinfrastructure and a Biodiversity

Information System" in Latin America. This concept note was submitted to organizers for them to refer to the European Union science planning team. The idea is also to promote the interest of European scientist and organizations to prepare a draft proposal to be submitted during the 2007 first call for proposals.

We also participated with colleagues in the region to promote the BarCossing initiative. During the discussion headed by Dr. Santiago Madriñán of the Universidad de los Andes de Colombia a draft, project concept note was developed. This initiative will have to also follow the same path as the one previously mentioned.

During this meeting, IABIN also met with Ximena Franco, Julia Benavides, and Angela Suárez of the von Humboldt Institute to analyze network activities in Colombia and possible efforts to of strengthen our collaboration with said organization. As a result of this meeting we decided to propose the development of an Ibero-American workshop for the promotion of biodiversity information exchange with emphasis in biological collections. The workshop was scheduled and carried out in Dec 3-6.   The results of this workshop are presented under Component 3 above.

6.2.4. 5th Council Meeting

The Secretariat initiated the procurement process for selecting the site for the 5th IABIN Council Meeting. Following the IEC request in its last meeting that the next Council Meeting be held in a Southern Cone country, the Secretariat requested the Focal Points from those countries to submit a proposal. The Focal Point in Uruguay responded and the FPs from the other countries agreed to support the Uruguayan proposal.

6.2.5. Other Partnership and Communications

- The Memorandums of Understanding, Memorandums of Collaboration and Agreements signed by the OAS and the IEC have been posted in the IABIN Webpage.
- The Secretariat received, read, and process a monthly average of 1335 emails and sent an average 1203 emails
- Collaboration and Technical Support to the City of Knowledge in the establishment of the Network of Knowledge with FAO. The Network of Knowledge is part of the CIDES, International Center for Sustainable Development.

6.3. Fund Raising

- The technical team of the Geo-spatial network and the Secretariat are currently carrying out efforts jointly with IPGH and EROS to secure additional funding from the Andean Development Corporation (CAF for its Spanish acronym) for the expansion of this network to South America.
- Two concept note proposals, one for Ecosystem & Disease Forecasting and the other for IABIN Guidelines for Project Managers for the Management of Biological Information, for 50 and 40K, respectively, were submitted to the World Bank Norwegian Trust Fund (TFESSD, www.worldbank.org/tfessd). We are awaiting the TFESSD program to inform us if these preproposals were approved to submit a full proposal for funding. This information will probably be made available to us by January 2007.
- Additionally, through NBII some US15,000 were donated to complement the IABIN GEF project funds, as mandated for the third year of the project, to pay for 20% of the Secretariat Director

salary (as required in the GEF Project), and $10,000 to support training for the IABIN Data Content Manager and Thematic Network Coordinator.

- We have received complementary funds from Diversitas and MolConnect and other sources to partially pay for Secretariat staff attendance to meetings.

7. Component 5: Project Administration

- Secretariat Travel Plan has been kept updated reflecting vision of Secretariat's role and activities for next 12 months.
- The PIP and Operational Manual have been updated and may be found on www.iabin.net.
- The Annual Operating Plan and General Procurement Plan were submitted to the Bank for review.

8. Achievement of Project Objectives

The World Bank (WB), during the first Evaluation Mission of the IABIN GEF Project (Jan 2005), requested that the Executing Agency (SG/OAS) with the collaboration of the Secretariat and other key participants develop a updated Annex 1 (See PAD and PIP) that would become the updated monitoring and evaluation strategy for the IABIN GEF project.   This new strategy incorporates a detailed methodology for how monitoring and baseline data will be collected, interpreted, and analyzed. The fourth draft of this document is under review and comment by focal points and coordinating institutions with a deadline to receive comments to the IABIN secretariat by 15 February, 2007.
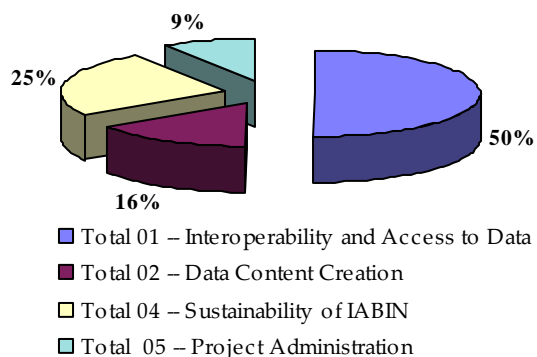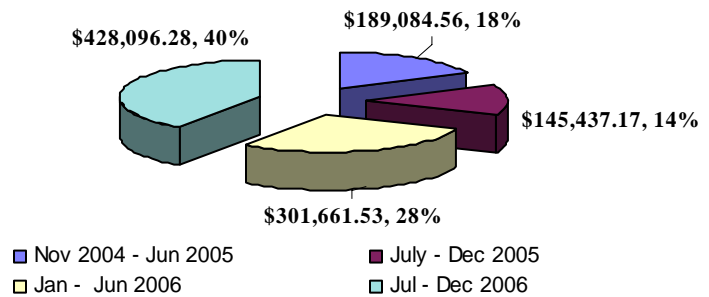
At the Fourth IABIN Council Meeting, a presentation on Monitoring and Evaluation using Annex 1 of the PIP was given by the Executing Agency with the collaboration of the Secretariat and a Working Group was created to review indicators. Some suggestions to change indicators were provided and submitted to the plenary with the recommendation that further work needed to be carried out in order to develop the methodology requested by the World Bank. It was suggested that a permanent working group be established to work on the methodology.

Subsequently by the beginning of August of 2005, the Executing Agency requested that the IABIN Secretariat prepare the methodology to measure indicators. A first draft of a methodology was developed and presented to the World Bank at the Second Evaluation Mission (Aug 2005). The Bank said it was a good first step in the right direction and it was agreed that the Secretariat will continue to work on the methodology.

In November, 2006, after reviewing the second draft, the World Bank recommended to leave only 10 indicators in order to facilitate the process. The Secretariat made the changes suggested by the World Bank. The next step was to share this third draft of the methodology for comments and suggestions with the IEC members and CI representatives that participate in the ad hoc meeting in Bogota, Colombia, in order to validate it, define roles and responsibilities and establish a schedule to collect baseline data and begin the M&E process. At this meeting, the indicators were reviewed and some changes were made. They are now ready for comments by Focal Points and CIs.

9. Financial Status.

The project has disbursed funds greater than in prior semesters. The disbursement in the fourth semester was US$428,096.28, which represents 40% of the total of US$$1,064,279.54 since November 2004 (Fig.2)

$428,096.28, 40% $189,084.56, 18% $145,437.17, 14% $301,661.53, 28%

- Nov 2004 - Jun 2005
- July - Dec 2005
- Jan - Jun 2006
- Jul - Dec 2006

9% 25% 16% 50%

- Total 01 – Interoperability and Access to Data
- Total 02 – Data Content Creation
- Total 04 – Sustainability of IABIN
- Total 05 – Project Administration

The allocation of disbursed funds by IABIN component, illustrate that 50% is under Component 1: Interoperability and Access to Data (Fig.3).

The five Coordinating Institutions (INBio, STRI, USGS, Boticario, and Coevolution Institute) received funds to executed activities (Table 5).

Table 5. Disbursement of Funds to Thematic Networks

Thematic Network	Budget	Disbursed	% of disbursed
Specimens and Species	400,000.00	171,850.00	43%
Ecosystem	250,000.00	19,000.00	8%
Invasive Species	165,000.00	18,000.00	11%
Pollinators	180,000.00	39,500.00	22%
Protected Areas	230,000.00	84,700.00	37%
Grand Total	1,225,000.00	333,050.00	

Table 6. Project Expenditures (period July – December 2006)

Activity	Disbursed
(I-S) Secretariat Office	$938.47
(ETN) Network Infrastructure Development and Maintenance	$19,000.00
(PATN) Develop a list of PA data needs and gaps	$2,200.00
(C) Meetings of the Technical Working Groups	$193.38
(IAS) Meetings of the Technical Working Groups	$7,474.70
(IAS) Outreach meetings and events	$1,892.48
(I-S) Travel	$18,387.48
(P&C) IEC Technical Meeting	$3,523.35
(P&C) Communication tools, newsletters and brochures	$738.85
(P&C) Outreach meetings and events	$48,237.76
(SP&SM) CI Transfer Agreement	$74,200.00
(PTN) CI Transfer Agreement	$39,500.00
(PATN) CI Transfer Agreement	$46,750.00
(IAS) Support insitutional efforts	$10,285.00
(IAS) -Training sessions	$34,000.00
(I-S) Thematic Networks Coordinator	$24,000.00
(I-S) Data Content Manager	$24,000.00
(I-S) Operating Expenses	$177.24
(I-S) Director	$33,000.00
(OAS) Operating Expenses	$2,783.04
(OAS) Administration, procurement, accounting and auditing costs	$33,975.40
(OAS) Travel	$2,839.13
Total	**$428,096.28**

I-S = IABIN Secretariat | SP&SM = Species and Specimens TN | ETN = Ecosystem TN

I3N =Invasive Species TN | PTN = Pollinators TN | PATN = Protected Areas TN

P&C = Partnership & Communications | I-S = IABIN Secretariat

Table 7. Project Expenditures (period November 2004 – December 2006)

Activity	Disbursed
(I-S) Secretariat Office	$7,523.54
(ETN) Network Infrastructure Development and Maintenance	$19,000.00
(IAS) Develop data entry tools and training materials	$2,000.00
(PATN) Develop a list of PA data needs and gaps	$2,200.00
(C) Meetings of the Technical Working Groups	$193.38
(IAS) Meetings of the Technical Working Groups	$14,107.27
(IAS) Outreach meetings and events	$2,313.48
(I-S) Travel	$55,415.47
(P&C) IABIN - Council Meeting	$44,760.16
(P&C) IEC Technical Meeting	$19,090.73
(P&C) Communication tools, newsletters and brochures	$738.85
(P&C) Outreach meetings and events	$53,743.14
(SP&SM) CI Transfer Agreement	$171,850.00
(PTN) CI Transfer Agreement	$39,500.00
(PATN) CI Transfer Agreement	$82,500.00
(IAS) Support insitutional efforts	$29,111.00
(IAS) -Training sessions	$52,496.92
(I-S) Thematic Networks Coordinator	$92,000.00
(I-S) Data Content Manager	$92,000.00
(I-S) Operating Expenses	$12,011.25
(I-S) Director	$134,750.00
(OAS) Operating Expenses	$45,484.83
(OAS) Administration, procurement, accounting and auditing costs	$81,459.90
(OAS) Travel	$10,029.62
Grand Total	**$1,064,279.54**

I-S = IABIN Secretariat | SP&SM = Species and Specimens TN | ETN = Ecosystem TN

I3N =Invasive Species TN | PTN = Pollinators TN | PATN = Protected Areas TN

P&C = Partnership & Communications | I-S = IABIN Secretariat

Annex 1. **Decisions made during the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) Meeting**
 June 14 – 16, 2006, Washington, DC

Meeting Objectives:

- **Review advances on the implementation of IABIN since the last IABIN Council meeting and make recommendations as appropriate**
- **Familiarize the IEC members with the Coordinating Institutions of IABIN Thematic Networks (TNs)**
- **Review and Update information on the TNs development and the proposed mechanism to guarantee participation of the Focal Points (FPs), the country data providers, and other local and national partners in TNs development**
- **Become familiar and review the execution of the projects associated to IABIN and their role in promoting the network's initiatives and interests**
- **Carry out an overview on IABIN IT architecture and on proposed standards for the implementation of TNs**
- **Analyze and propose ideas for the implementation of Components 2 (Data Content Creation) Sub-component Data Content Building Grants and Component 3. Tools for Decision-Making (Value-added tools) and make recommendations**
- **Review actions to be taken in order to achieve the network's sustainability (donors conference, possible funding opportunities) and IABIN Legal Status**
- **Become familiar and evaluate progress on project administration and its financial execution**

Agreements and General Decisions

1. IABIN-GEF funds should be utilized equally between countries of the hemisphere according to what has been specified in the PIP for the project execution.
2. The IEC and the Secretariat together with the WB and the OAS must develop clear guidelines and a plan for the future orientation of IABIN including how to sustain it financially once the GEF funds end. A draft version of this plan will be ready by the end of March 2007; it will be discussed by the IEC members and strategic partners (or Council members) until the end of April 2007 and presented to the Council for review and approval during its Fifth Meeting.
3. The IEC agreed that there is a need to make the role of the Secretariat more visible.
4. The annual work plan of the IABIN-GEF project is to be sent to the IEC for approval.
5. FPs must be dissemination centers on information about the network, but they should be able to demonstrate to organizations interested in participating in IABIN how they will benefit from such participation. Therefore CI's should increase countries' participation in executing the activities of the TNs. The Secretariat should perfect its communication system to ensure that the documents and other communications for the FPs arrive timely enough to allow for analysis and comments on topics subject to discussion. In general, there will be a period of 1 to 2 weeks for the FPs to send their comments and changes to the documents submitted to their attention. In this sense, it was agreed that if no response was received from the FPs within the timeframe specified in each communication, it will be interpreted that they are in agreement with the documentation presented.

6. Consultation documents for FPs review and approval:

   a. Should be available in IABIN's Webpage, but available only to the FPs.
   b. They could be sent via email and, whenever necessary, send files separately in order not to clog the email servers.
   c. They may be sent through a listserv directed to the FPs that will be established by IABIN Secretariat.

   Documents such as Annual Work Plans and reports and others that require the attention of FPs can be included in the Webpage and sent to FPs through the listserv proposed for them.
7. The IEC suggested that the dissemination of IABIN information be given also through workshops, publications (e.g., a monthly bulletin) etc.
8. The IEC recommended that IABIN be represented at the GBIF meetings by Secretariat staff as much as possible. The IEC Chair said that the Secretariat participation in the October GBIF meeting in Peru is a priority for the IEC.
9. Summaries of the IT meeting and IEC/IABIN Supervision Meeting should be sent by the Secretariat to the full IABIN Council.
10. IEC asked the Secretariat, the OAS and the WB to give proportional attention to all IABIN regions and not to focus only on a few regions.
11. The IEC requested OAS and the Secretariat to recommend on how to involve the countries more, for example, how to include IABIN's presence at the coming Summit of the Americas.

Agreements and Decisions Reached at the Technical Sessions of the IEC Meeting

1. *Update on IABIN Thematic Networks Development*

   Expected Results:
   - The members of the IEC become familiar with the Coordinating Institutions (CI) and their plans for the development of their respective Thematic Networks (TNs)
   - Plans proposed by each CI for the participation of the Focal Points, the country data providers and other IABIN partners in the development of the TNs
   - Coordination between CIs and members of IEC and Focal Points initiated for the development of TNs

   1. The Coordinating Institutions (CIs) of the Thematic Networks (TNs) should have closer contact and should establish specific coordination mechanisms with all the organizations that make up their consortium and with the organizations and other IABIN partners interested in participate in their respective TNs.
   2. The CIs should look for and involve other organizations in the countries that could collaborate with the TNs development.
   3. CIs progress report and work plan should be sent to the Focal Points (FPs) at the same time they are submitted to the OAS and the Secretariat for their corresponding comments and recommendations. This mechanism will allow for FPs to be informed of the networks' activities.
   4. The IEC asked that, whenever possible, workshops and meetings be organized, instead of consultancies, where a more direct participation from the Countries is promoted.
   5. The Countries would prefer that, where and when possible, people from each country be used when a consultancy is needed to be carried out for the TNs.
   6. In the listserve for the FPs, Consultancies to be carried out by CI`s in implementing the TNs should be made known. This way, FPs can disseminate and advertise the Consultancies opportunities in their respective countries, in order to promote the participation of interested profesionals.
   7. FPs will appoint one technical person (representing countries that are not part of the CIs) to be part of the selection process for consultancies. The Secretariat will facilitate this process.
   8. Several IEC members suggested that, for the TNs development, it is important to involve organizations from the countries, to do as much as possible of the identified work needed, instead of hiring consultancy services. Likewise, these national organizations should be considered to participate in meetings and training workshops, in virtual meetings and teleconferences.
   9. Workshops to be carried out by CIs should include at least one person representing all countries not part of the CIs. This person to be selected under technical criteria by FPs. The Secretariat will facilitate this process.
   10. Workshops to be organized by CI's should include at least 3 hours of some sort of teleconferencing (web-conference, chat conference, skype, yahoo, etc.) with technical people from the countries not part of their consortium.
   11. The ICs should, as much as possible, organize and hold joint workshops and training events in order to increase the number of country participating in these activities.

12. Also, resources of Component 2 of the IABIN-GEF project must be used to promote wider country participation in strengthening and capacity building activities.
13. A request to the FPs was made from the CIs regarding their efforts to ask their governments to keep the people who are being trained through IABIN and their TNs, because in some countries people who have been trained are constantly changed, so the investment is lost.
14. Another request to the FPs, from the CIs, was that their governments should choose people to be trained under the criteria that those who get trained can themselves become trainers and multiply the dissemination of the knowledge acquired.
15. Several IEC members as well as the WB suggested that the Ecosystems Thematic Network (ETN) should not choose one ecosystem classification, but instead it should be able to handle the different classifications existing in the region.
16. The IEC would like representatives from as many countries as possible to participate in the PATN Regional Workshop, therefore the Secretariat was mandated to make sure the CI knows about this request so they can make the necessary arrangements to carry it on.

2. IABIN Associated Projects

Expected Results:
- Updated information on the implementation of IABIN associated projects is provided to IEC
- Review of roles of these associated projects in development of IABIN
- IEC makes recommendation as to the best way IABIN associated projects can contribute to maximize network resources and impact
- Mechanisms of coordination among associated projects and TNs are proposed

1. The IEC members expressed their concern about the inclusion of the Andes-Amazon Protected Areas Metadata Database Project (AAPAD) in IABIN without having consulted them. Therefore, the IEC requested that the directors of this project send a proposal of the project to the IEC that define the scopes of competence of the project and the possible convergence points and synergies with IABIN in general and the Protected Areas Thematic Network in particular and evaluate how the available resources of both projects could be coordinated. This document should be received no later than September 29th, 2006.
2. The IEC requested that the Andes-Amazon Protected Areas Metadata Database Project sponsors with their own funds the participation of the Amazon countries in the Protected Areas Thematic Network Regional Workshop, so that IABIN-GEF funds could be used to finance the participation of representatives of other countries in IABIN.
3. The IEC requested that the responsibles of the IABIN-DGF project send a proposal (no more than 5 pages) to the IEC justifying the Geo-spatial project expansion to South America. This will assist the FPs in obtaining support in their countries. This document should be received no later than September 29th, 2006.
4. This aforementioned proposal will also be used by the Council to decide whether this project will become a TN or some other initiative.
5. The IEC requested the Secretariat to prepare a letter, after consultation with the IEC, directed towards all the South American governments that supported the proposal that

was sent to NASA for funding, where they are informed of the proposal retirement by this Agency, and ask NASA to explain why this decision was taken.

6. The IEC Chair asked the Secretariat Director to find out what kind of formal interaction should the IEC have with the government of Panama regarding the situation created by CATHALAC, causing the proposal withdrawal aforementioned, since an NGO should not undermine a regional initiative.

7. The IEC Chair will also pursue this topic directly with NASA and the State Department of the USA to find out what is the argument of the situation and where do we find ourselves in relation to it.

3. *Proposal for the Network Architecture according to the recommendations of the Information Technology (IT) Experts Meeting*

Expected results:
- IEC is updated on current ideas for IABIN architecture based on Information Technology (IT) Specialist meeting during June 11-13, 2006
- IEC provides comments and guidelines as required

1. The IEC approved the creation of the Information Technology Thematic Working Group (IT TWG) which was already considered to be formed as part of the activities of the Catalog in the Project Implementation Plan (PIP). Likewise, IEC approved the reallocation of project funds to make sure this group can meet and carry out their duties whenever necessary.

2. The IEC requested that technical people from the countries be invited to participate in this IT TWG, under the mechanisms discussed previously.

3. The Information Technology Thematic Working Group (IT TWG) can make recommendations on technical decisions that should be considered, but it is the IEC who makes those decisions. Because of this, the IT TWG will then make recommendations to the Evaluation Committee (IEC, Secretariat, OAS) as to how to proceed in case of the Catalog. Additionally, in any decision that would be made, the two organizations that sent their proposals for the previous acquisition process, will be automatically short-listed.

4. *Review and Approval of Specimens and Species Standards and Protected Areas Standards to be Used in the Content-Building Grant Process for these TNs*

Expected Results:
- IEC is updated on status of standards preparation for the Specimens and Species TN and Protected Areas TN
- IEC makes appropriate recommendations

1. It was proposed that GBIF standards and protocols will be used for specimens, while IABIN will develop these for species.

2. There is a potential that the standards developed by IABIN for species could, in turn, be adopted or used by GBIF.

3. The SSTN will have a technical meeting in August to discuss the standards that will be proposed for adoption for species and specimens.
4. In the case of the Protected Areas Thematic Network (PATN), it is just starting the process of analysis to determine which will be the standards to use. For the first quarter of 2007 they should have a definition about this, which is about the time when the first Call for Data Content Building Grants will be made for this TN.
5. GBIF stated that it makes available to IABIN all that it has developed in the area of standards, copyrights, data quality, etc. GBIF is also organizing a pro-bono lawyers group and encourages IABIN to send any ideas or concerns that it may have in order to integrate them in the priority themes that this legal group will address. Likewise, GBIF requested IABIN to become a Beta tester for the new portal that they have developed.

5. *Component 2 – Data Content Building Grants*

Expected Results:
- Process to implement Data Content Building Grants is explained to IEC
- Proposed calendar to carry out calls for proposals to build data content for TNs is reviewed with IEC
- IEC to make recommendations as appropriate

1. The IEC approved the IT TWG proposal that each TN must have decided its standards and protocols before the call for data digitizing proposals can be made to assign data content-building grants.
2. The IEC approved the following conditions under which data will be considered as "new data" for purposes of measuring the indicators in the GEF project:

   a. Data that have never been digitized before;
   b. Data that are digitized but not accessible in the internet;
   c. Data accessible in internet but that needs new fields in order to comply with IABIN standards

3. Regarding data quality, the IEC agreed that official data provided by the countries (which has been validated at national level by experts) be considered as high quality.
4. The IEC approved that each TN will develop a mechanism to monitor the quality of the data it serves.
5. During the IEC meeting, the following calendar was proposed for the CIs to carry out the process of calls for proposals to build data content for TNs:

   a. Invasives Species (I3N), second call, September 2006
   b. Specimens, first call, September 2006
   c. Species, first call, December 2006
   d. Protected Areas, first call, first quarter 2007

6. *Information Products for Decision Makers (Value-added tools – Component 3)*

   Expected Results:
   - A procedure is proposed to IEC for the implementation of this component
   - IEC confirms this component's objectives and philosophy
   - IEC is consulted as to the establishment of country priorities for the development of value-added tools
   - IEC makes recommendations as to the best way to implement this component

   1. The IEC members, in name of the countries, requested to have a direct involvement in identifying the themes to be addressed by Component 3 of the IABIN-GEF project. Likewise, they expressed their reservations about the unsolicited pre-proposals received and decided not to approve them.
   2. The IEC stressed strongly that the value-added tools for decision-making that Component 3 is in charge of developing should be linked to the data and applications that the TNs are developing. IEC stated that it is not a good idea to start developing value-added tools without knowing clearly what type of data and in what format will they be available through IABIN, because otherwise we may end up with decision-making tools that may not use any of the data generated by the countries for decision-making.
   3. As a conclusion to this discussion on the Component 3:

      a. The IEC approved the Secretariat's proposal regarding carrying out a consulting process with the countries to identify the kind of value-added tools that would be useful for the decision makers.
      b. The IEC approved to carry out an analysis of the decision making tools that are already in existence in the market.
      c. This process should make use of the technological advances to incorporate more actors and diminish the cost of the sub-regional workshops or other types of consultations to be carried out.
      d. IEC established that by the end of 2006 there must be from 2 to 4 decision making tools proposals.

7. *Endorsement of and Commitment to use the Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology elaborated by the Secretariat. Shared Monitoring Responsibilities to Measure Time Bound Quantitative Performance Indicators*

   Expected Results:
   - The Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) Methodology is explained to the IEC for their review
   - IEC makes recommendations to ME Methodology and to the roles and responsibilities to measure time bound quantitative performance indicators

   1. The Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) Methodology of the project will be consulted through email amgon the members of the ME Working Group and then with the IEC.

8. *Sustainability and outreach*
   — Outreach mechanisms and support mechanisms for Focal Points

   Expected Results:
   - Mechanisms to support Focal Points are discussed and established to support the Focal Points so they can carry out their responsibilities under the project execution (e.g., coordination of IABIN activities in countries, monitoring and evaluation, promotion of TNs development)

   — Fundraising
   - The Secretariat plan to carry out a Donors Conference is reviewed and commented by the IEC to strengthen it
   - Endorsement of this plan for a Donors Conference is given and resources are allocated to carry it out
   - The IEC gets updated information on possible project proposals to be considered by donors
   - Possible areas or alternatives in which IABIN could participate to raise funding are explored (e.g., participation as technical partner of consultancy companies in bidding processes)

   — Funds Administration
   - IEC discusses and analyzes possible ways to improve funds administration
   - IEC analyzes the topic of IABIN legal status

   1. The World Bank indicated that the GEF funds can be redistributed to address the needs identified during project execution by the Secretariat to comply with its technical requirements.
   2. The World Bank also indicated it would be a good idea to invite donors to the Council and IEC meetings in order to get them interested in funding IABIN's development.
   3. The Secretariat should come back with ideas to carry out a Donors Conference to present them to the IEC.
   4. For the donors conference we need to be very well prepared and not hurry but wait until we have some products to show.
   5. IEC gave the Secretariat the mandate to consolidate the TNs, the coordination with the countries as the first function of the Secretariat – fundraising is secondary to these, but should be addressed.
   6. The IEC chair directed the Secretariat to come up with a detailed approach for fundraising and present it to the IEC.
   7. It was proposed to hire the services of a legal expert to help define if, currently, IABIN has legal status and to submit this legal opinion with the "paper" developed by the Secretariat and presented by the IEC Chair in the next IABIN Council meeting in order to take a final decision on the need to establish legal status for IABIN.

9. *Project Administration*

Expected Results:
- IEC receives updated information on selection process carried out and new procedures established to select ICs of the TNs
- IEC receives updated information on new IABIN project addenda negotiated by OAS and World Bank
- IEC makes recommendations to improves procurement processes
- IEC receives updated information on the project financial execution
- IEC receives updated information on timeframe for project execution and delays on its implementation. Alternatives are explore to guarantee timely execution of the project, including a possible extension

10. Other matters

Expected Results:
- In general, it is expected that IEC supervises technical and financial IABIN project execution and that it makes recommendations to improve areas that may need attention
- It is expected that IEC makes specific recommendations to enhance network building.
- It is expected that IEC makes recommendations to dates and place of the next IABIN Council meeting.

1. Given that previous IABIN Council meetings have been in Miami, Cancun and Panama, the IEC members requested that the next meeting be in one of the Southern Cone countries to promote participation of all IABIN regions.
2. Likewise, the IEC established that the next Council meeting should be around July or August of 2007. For that, the Secretariat will work with the FPs in the three Southern Cone countries to obtain basic information that would allow establishing which of these South Cone countries would be most cost effective to carry out the meeting. The Secretariat will integrate all this information gathered and submit it for consultation and approval by IABIN Council.
3. The WB stressed that the objective of the Council Meetings is to make decisions so the IEC and the Secretariat should anticipate the necessary analysis and discussion that should happen when submitting proposals for Council consideration. The meeting of the CIs should take place either a few days before or after and in the same place as that of the Council.