TO: IABIN Executive Committee
Gladys Cotter – United States of America
Daven Joseph – Antigua and Barbuda
Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias – Brazil
Fernando Gast – Colombia
Marina Hernández – Dominican Republic
Blanca Aragon – Guatemala
Elaine Fisher – Jamaica
Jorge Soberon – México
Christoph Haeuser, Global Biodiversity Information Facility

From: General Secretariat of the Organization of American States
Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment
IABIN GEF PDF B - Executing Agency

Re: Progress Report – February 2003 to July 2003

IABIN Milestones

> ➤ Phase 2 reports of the seven subregional specialists and the regional coordinator, almost completed. Once completed they may be viewed on www.iabin.net .

> ➤ DRAFT IABIN Project Implementation Plan (PIP) entitled: *Building The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network* circulated to IABIN Council and IABINfriends.

> ➤ World Bank Project Concept Document process completed.

> ➤ www.iabin.net fully functional in Spanish and English and expanded with Biodiversity Informatics Matrix.

> ➤ IABIN further develops Biodiversity in the Americas portal in the Development Gateway.

> ➤ The B-matrix, a digital library-based on biodiversity informatic service, is posted on www.iabin.net. It is a comprehensive compilation of links providing internet-compiled information about biodiversity in the Americas.

> ➤ IABIN Access to Information and Intellectual Property regulation completed.

> ➤ Approval given by the IEC to establish the IABIN Foundation as a 501.c.3 Corp.

> ➤ 34 out of 34 countries have designated IABIN Focal Points

> ➤ Joint Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network-Clearing-house Mechanism Meeting on Building Partnerships through Effective Networking organized to be held August 12-14, 2003, in Cancun, Mexico.

> ➤ Fundraising proposals were submitted to (i) OAS FEMCIDI for a total of 1.2 million over 4 years, (ii) the OAS Capital Reserve Fund for 300k and the (iii) World Bank Development Marketplace for 300k.

> ➤ PDF B Disbursements. 91% of the funds are committed, leaving a balance equivalent to 9% of the total funds.

Subregional Reports. IABIN GEF project preparation activities have been carried out in two phases: (1) the information gathering and assessment phase and (2) the development of IABIN implementation plan phase. To facilitate the process, seven consultants were hired--each responsible for a subregion of the hemisphere-- to fulfill similar objectives under the guidance of a Regional Coordinator located in Mexico, Mr. Alberto Oriza. They are:

- **Antonio W. Salas** – Subregion 1/Andes – Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia
- **Vanderlei Perez Canhos** – Subregion 2 – Brazil
- **Alberto Yanosky** – Subregion 3/Southern Cone – Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay
- **Eric van Praag** – Subregion 4 – Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, and Trinidad Tobago
- **Florence Sergile** – Subregion 5 – Caribbean less Trinidad Tobago
- **Vincent Abreu** – Subregion 6/ Central America – Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama
- **Darrell V.B. McClarty** – Sub-region 7/ North America – Canada, United States, and Mexico

Draft PIP. The PIP (Project Implementation Plan) has been completed. The PIP lays the groundwork for IABIN to promote sustainable development and the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Americas through better management of biological information and better decision-making.

The PIP proposal lays out a $5 million GEF project proposal broken down as $4 million for direct IABIN activities and $1 million to be placed in the IABIN Foundation, a 501c3 Corporation, on a matching grant basis. Through a demand-driven, cost-sharing project design methodology, agreements with the primary biodiversity informatics institutions throughout the Americas Hemisphere were forged based on priorities of these institutions and mandates of the IABIN Council established at the two previous Council Meetings. Co-financing of $12.1 million and parallel financing of $3.9 million have been identified from roughly 70 regional or national institutions. These monies will be used to:

(i)   develop an Internet-based, managed decentralized network to provide access to scientifically credible biodiversity information currently existing in individual institutions and agencies in the Americas,

(ii)   provide 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)   develop 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 fulfill the mandate of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Day-to-day activities of IABIN will be managed by the IABIN Hub. The IABIN Hub staff will comprise three individuals: an Executive Secretary, a Content Manager, and a Technical Specialist. While IABIN is envisioned as a distributed system of data providers in

which the data is maintained and controlled by the provider, a single point of access to the integrated resources of the network is a key component of IABIN.

The IABIN Portal, on the web at www.iabin.net, is becoming a gateway to biodiversity information in the Americas as well as a mechanism for facilitating interconnection of different institutions and agencies concerned with biodiversity conservation. The Portal provides simple user interfaces for sharing knowledge, discussing issues, accessing projects and statistical databases, and registering and profiling users. IABIN is also developing a catalog of biodiversity data and information resources that allows users to identify and locate content available through the network: biodiversity datasets, publications, museum collections, value-added information (such as hotspots, ecoregions, invasive species), and other biodiversity related databases.

Throughout 2003, the PDF Project subregional specialists have been working with potential PNCs (Project Network Coordinators) to plan the implementation of each PN (Project Network). This work includes documenting implementation requirements and activities, developing memoranda of understanding between IABIN and the institutions leading the development of the network (cost sharing agreement), and obtaining letters of intent from the data providing institutions. The proposals contain: justification, objective, products, participants, overall costs, and duration. The Project Networks currently being proposed are:
- Basic biodiversity infrastructure projects that include Biological Collections and Ecosystems and Natural Protected Areas
- Cross-cutting projects that include Invasive Species, Pollinators, and Other Added Value Projects.

Proposed financing of these PNs is a total of $2.1 million of GEF and $12.5 million of cost sharing from IABIN partner institutions.

The PIP proposal lays out the details for project administration and financial management. For monitoring and evaluation, a series of quantitative performance indicators are established to benchmark project progress. The project will finance 3 IABIN Council meetings in year 1, 3, and 5 that will review project milestones and permit flexible changes to project design and implementation.

World Bank PCD. The World Bank has completed the Project Concept Document (PCD) and had the PCD review meeting. Permission was granted by the Bank to proceed with preparation of the Project Appraisal Document. The PAD will be reviewed by the Bank in early September in time to send it to the GEF.

IABIN.net The IABIN website www.iabin.net is now available in English and Spanish. There the PIP can be accessed and the final phase II subregional specialists will be available as they are completed.

Development Gateway. Development of the "Biodiversity of the Americas" content on the Development Gateway Portal has expanded with over 70 documents and webpages being shared by dozens of contributors. It is particularly useful for gray unpublished literature where authors want to get feedback from a multi-disciplinary audience. This portal provides simple

user interfaces for sharing knowledge, discussing issues, accessing projects and statistical databases, and registering and profiling users.

Biodiversity informatics Matrix with Databases of the Americas (B-Matrix) The B-matrix, a digital library-based on biodiversity informatic service, is a comprehensive compilation of links providing internet-compiled information about biodiversity in the Americas. It contains pertinent current information on terrestrial, inland, and marine ecosystems and related themes. The B-matrix design helps biodiversity informatics users locate taxonomical, biological, ecological, spatial, and environment information.
Each of these categories offers the following components in order to help the user:
Thematic area: Describes theme related to the web page.
Source: Indicates web page origin.
Web site: Proper address or URL taken from respective source.
Access and Surfing: Convenient access and surfing (evaluated in a high-connection)
Search / Query metadata: An overall or detailed search fields and documentation about each element in the database.
URL: Uniform Resource Locator
http: Hyper Text Transport Protocol
ftp: File Transfer Protocol

Biodiversity Information features of the B-matrix: The websites are organized and categorized archives, providing free access to specific records, that include:
- Biological records and collections: Information from museums displaying systematic and taxonomic classification metadata. The metadata at the level of collections include record number, taxon, collector or watcher, institution, bibliography, location (lat-long) and capture date.
- Ecological, environmental and geographical records: Dynamic records showing a specimen's distribution with geo-referenced data collected at the museums level.
- Biological, environmental and geographical records: Descriptions of biological, spatial information, and geo-referenced data by adding information of human-related use.
- Genetics records and collections: Clusters of data with information on DNA and RNA from lab species with typed in nucleotides' sequences.
- Biologic and Geographic Records
- Biological Information to use in an educative manner: Database about biodiversity on an interactive and didactic basis -- useful in terms of resources for education (i.e. Arkive).
- Geographic and environmental records: Geography associated with sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.
- Records in Microbiology and Collections: Polypeptide sequences, nucleotides of renowned species including also Protoctista, Monera and Upper fungus.

IPR. The Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (FIDA) completed the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy that can be viewed on www.iabin.net in both English and Spanish. The draft document is based on the regulation of CONABIO-REMIB of Mexico.

IABIN Foundation. A preliminary list of volunteers for the IABIN Foundation Board will be discussed at the Cancun meeting (see below) and IABIN Focal Points are asked to

recommend other candidates. The IABIN Foundation will be established as a 501.c.3 corporation. Its role will be fundraising to carry out activities parallel to IABIN's objectives.

34 IABIN Focal Points. As of July, 2003 all 34 member States of the OAS established official IABIN Focal Points through the proper diplomatic channels. This entails that the National Liaison Agency to the OAS through the Permanent OAS Mission nominate an appropriate position within a Government agency or NGO.

Joint CHM IABIN Meeting. The Joint Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network-Clearing-house Mechanism Meeting on Building Partnerships through Effective Networking will occur August 12-14, 2003, in Cancun, Mexico. The meeting represents the Third IABIN Council Meeting. It will attempt to harmonize the vision of complementary biodiversity information networking initiatives, ensuring that the objectives of each are met in the harmonized vision; facilitate scientific and technical collaboration among the participants; and build capacity through a training experience. Approximately 100 participants are expected to attend. The meeting is jointly sponsored by IABIN and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Clearinghouse Mechanism (CBD/CHM). Monies from the CBD/CHM as well as contributions by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility will match IABIN funds supplied by the GEF PDF grant.

Fundraising. Fundraising proposals were submitted to (i) OAS FEMCIDI for a total of $1.2 million over 4 years, (ii) the OAS Capital Reserve Fund for $300k and the (iii) World Bank Development Marketplace for $300k. In the case of the (i) the proposal will be re-submitted in 2004 after securing the necessary Government support. Proposals (ii) and (iii) are pending approval.

PDF B Disbursements. In relation to the execution of the US$650,000 granted by GEF, to date IABIN has spent 64% and committed 27% for future expenditures, leaving a balance equivalent to 9% of the total funds. Following is an expenditure report by activity detailing budget, commitments, actual expenditures, and funds available.

Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network
GEF PDF Block B Grant
August 2002 - July 2003

PHASE I Consultancies

	Budget	Commitments	Actuals	Funds Available
Regional	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 1	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 2	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 3	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 4	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 5	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 6	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 7	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0

PHASE II Consultancies

	Budget	Commitments	Actuals	Funds Available
Regional	$24,000	$6,000	$18,000	$0
Subregion 1	$24,000	$6,000	$18,000	$0
Subregion 2	$24,000	$16,000	$8,000	$0
Subregion 3	$24,000	$6,000	$18,000	$0
Subregion 4	$24,000	$6,000	$18,000	$0
Subregion 5	$24,000	$6,000	$18,000	$0
Subregion 6	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0
Subregion 7	$24,000	$0	$24,000	$0

Other Components

	Budget	Commitments	Actuals	Funds Available
Website/Brochure	$50,000	$17,000	$20,859	$12,141
Third Council Meeting	$80,000	$69,000	$0	$11,000
PAD Development	$71,000	$22,000	$15,000	$34,000
Project Management	$65,000	$23,730	$41,270	$0

	Budget	Commitments	Actuals	Funds Available
Total Project	$650,000	$177,730	$415,129	$57,141
Funds Execution		27.3%	63.9%	8.8%