



TO: IABIN Executive Council

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

Re: Progress Report – August 2002 to February 2003

IABIN Milestones

- www.iabin.net established and fully functional.
- IABIN establishes Biodiversity in the Americas portal in the [Development Gateway](#). The Gateway is an interactive portal for information and knowledge sharing on sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- Phase I reports of the seven subregional specialists and the regional coordinator, completed and able to be viewed on www.iabin.net
- Approval given by the IEC to establish the IABIN Foundation as a 501.c.3 Corp.
- Draft completed and presented to the IEC of an Access to Information and Intellectual Property regulation for IABIN.
- Draft Project Concept Document and Logframe completed for submission to the World Bank
- 33 out of 34 countries have designated IABIN Focal Points, and 27 have officially endorsed the project.

IABIN activities are being carried out in two phases: (1) the information gathering and assessment phase and (2) the development of IABIN implementation plan phase. Phase I has been completed and Phase II is currently under execution. 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 and Tobago
- **Florence Sergile** – Subregion 5 – Caribbean less Trinidad and 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

The first phase of the IABIN project preparation process ended successfully with the delivery of a regional report presenting a comprehensive view of the users and providers of biodiversity information in the hemisphere. The report summarizes the information-gathering phase of the seven consultancies carried out during Phase I, presenting information on the quantity and quality of biodiversity information databases through all the Americas, appraised by the subregional specialists.

Three different approaches were used to carry out the information gathering process, which consisted of workshops, in person interviews, and electronic surveys:

- Visit of the Sub Regional specialist to each country in the subregion, using available logistic support from local OAS offices, IABIN focal points, and in some cases, CHM focal points.
- Subcontracting of national consultants to promote and organize the workshops, conduct surveys, and integrate results.
- Establishing collaboration with national institutions with significant influence to carryout these activities.

The surveys indicated that IABIN should serve as a communication bridge between all interested parties (governments, NGO's, universities, research institutions and general public) that will provide the necessary information on standards, minimal connectivity and infrastructure requirements, software and capacity building.

The workshop discussions concluded that:

- A major obstacle for the integration of biodiversity information is incompatibility due to the lack of standards for semantics, content and technical design.
- IABIN must be an all-inclusive process to succeed, coordinating its efforts with the global initiatives CHM and GBIF. IABIN must also make collaborative agreements with initiatives of Sub regional importance.
- The concept of IABIN has been received by the hemisphere with enthusiasm, however, there was a general consensus within the preliminary partnership discussions that IABIN's specific role needs to be clearly defined before specific participation and co-financing strategies can be forged.

- Due to lessons learned in South America, for IABIN to be successful in establishing partnerships with key players in the region, it will need to clearly demonstrate its “niche” role in the biodiversity information network community.

As a result of Phase I, the concept of Thematic Networks (TNs) is under discussion and review as one mechanism for implementing IABIN. These are defined as networks that contain data and information on a specific theme or topic, either centralized or distributed depending on efficiency, existing infrastructure, and sustainability issues. The selected TNs should be interconnected, allowing the user to access information in any of the networks and to view it in an integrated manner. Under discussion are the following TNs: specimens, species, and ecosystems.

Using the information already compiled during Phase I, some providers of biodiversity information were identified for the different TNs. Discussions are underway with these institutions to assess if they will become subregional partners of IABIN. If so, these partners would assist in the definition of architecture, standards, and protocols for the data; identifying and integrating into the TN other subregional institutions, NGOs, and universities; and establishing quality control guidelines and monitoring, among other issues.

Relationships have been established with other key stakeholders, gaining valuable information and generating possibilities for future partnerships for the development of IABIN. During Phase II, consultants will concentrate on obtaining memorandums of understanding, letters of intent, and parallel and co-financing commitments from institutions and data providers. The Regional Coordinator will prepare the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) that will be presented to GEF, confirming the project’s strong institutional support and its sustainability. The thirty-three IABIN National Focal Points, the OAS Directors, and the OAS Permanent Missions have been instrumental in assisting the sub regional coordinators in their analysis of the users and providers of biodiversity information.

The World Bank is completing the Project Concept Document (PCD) and the preparation of the PIP is underway. Also, the OAS team is preparing the Manual of Operations and the Financial Chapter to include in the PIP.

The IABIN website www.iabin.net is now available in English and Spanish. It contains updated information gathered during Phase I. Also, to further promote and disseminate biodiversity information issues in the Americas, a partnership with the [Development Gateway Portal](#) was established. This portal provides simple user interfaces for sharing knowledge, discussing issues, accessing projects and statistical databases, and registering and profiling users.

A draft document written by the Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (FIDA) establishing the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy has been circulated to the IABIN Executive Council (IEC) and can be viewed on www.iabin.net. The draft document is based on the regulation of CONABIO-REMIB of Mexico.

Work has begun to establish the IABIN Foundation as a 501.c.3 corporation. Its role will be fundraising to carry out activities parallel to IABIN’s objectives.

In relation to the execution of the US\$650,000 granted by GEF, to date IABIN has spent 44% and committed 42% for future expenditures, leaving a balance equivalent to 14% 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 - February 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	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$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	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 1	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 2	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$24,000
Subregion 3	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 4	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 5	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 6	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0
Subregion 7	\$24,000	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$0

Other Components

	Budget	Commitments	Actuals	Funds Available
Website/Brochure	\$50,000	\$23,100	\$12,850	\$14,050
Third Council Meeting	\$80,000	\$60,000	\$0	\$20,000
PAD Development	\$71,000	\$32,000	\$4,000	\$35,000
Project Management	\$65,000	\$35,000	\$30,000	\$0

Total Project	\$650,000	\$274,100	\$282,850	\$93,050
Funds Execution		42.2%	43.5%	14.3%