TO: IABIN Executive Committee and IABIN Council

> **IABIN Executive Committee**:
>   Gladys Cotter. – (Chairperson) United States of America
>   Karin Molt. – (Vice-Chair) Chile
>   Ana Aber. – Uruguay
>   Daven Joseph – Antigua and Barbuda
>   María Esther Bondanza. – Argentina
>   Francisco González Salas – Costa Rica
>   Antonio Matamoros – Ecuador
>   María Luisa del Río Mispireta – Peru
>   Christoph Haeuser – Global Biodiversity Information Facility

FROM: GS/OAS and the IABIN Secretariat – City of Knowledge, Panama
Building IABIN

RE: 2nd Semester Report – Period July 01 – December 31, 2005
General Secretariat Organization of American States (GS/OAS), acting as Executing Agency of the World Bank implemented GEF assisted project "Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network" (IABIN) Project LCR-6L-Building IABIN, P077187 - TF 053526, and IABIN Secretariat.

1. <u>IABIN Milestones by Component.</u>

- The Project Implementation Plan (PIP) outlines a $35 million project. IABIN was awarded $6 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) towards this plan. The Project Implementation Plan (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

- Country Endorsements and Focal Points. Thirty-four out of 34 countries have designated IABIN Focal Points. Thirty out of 32 recipient countries have endorsed the GEF "Building IABIN" project. (Missing are Bolivia and SVG.)

- The World Bank (WB) conducted a Supervision Mission August 30 – September 2, 2005. The IABIN Project, as it ends 14 months (December 2005), is making slow progress on a number of fronts in the difficult challenge of mounting a hemispheric information network: (i) the Secretariat is fully staffed and functioning, (ii) a Council meeting (bringing together 29 countries) was held in April 2005. However, procurement of the large contracts (4 Thematic Networks,TNs, and the Catalogue) was frozen for four to six months due to change in WB

procurement requirements. Disbursements for the first 14 months are only about a third of what was indicated in the procurement plan. As of December 2005, no TN is actually underway with the exception of the Invasives TN which was already functional before the IABIN Project was launched. Efforts to establish functional relationships with the various non-core cofinanciers of the project seem to have met little success primarily due to the fact that until the Coordinating Institutions (CIs) are functional the Countries see little advancement.

- Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) between the IEC and the CIs, and the Coordinating Institution Transfer Agreement (formerly known as Grant Co-Executing Agreement) between OAS and the CIs were adopted in order to foster a more collegial relationship between IEC, CIs, OAS and Secretariat for the development of the TNs.

- ToRs for the Pollinators TN were revised and a new call for Expression of Interest was published in early December in IABINfriends, posted in the IABIN website, and sent to OAS for posting in additional website and other media. EoIs are expected no later than 23 January 2006

- The second year work plan for the IABIN-DGF project was prepared and submitted to the WB in September 2005. This was approved in October 2005, thereby, allowing access to a total of US$412.000 from WB with a co-finance of US$267.825 from participant institutions. It raises the support from the WB–DGF initiative to the IABIN Connectivity Program to US$812..000.

- Version 1 of the portal for the IABIN-DGF project for the Connectivity Program is fully operational (http://servir.nsstc.nasa.gov/wms/index.html). This portal contents a version 1 of the geo-integrator. This tool will allow the integration of biological and geospatial data.

- A grant proposal was submitted to NASA to expand IABIN Geospatial Network to South America. This proposal was backed by letters of support from South American Ministries of Environment, South American National Geographic Institutes and PAIGH.

- Memoranda of Collaboration (MoC) between IABIN, OBIS, PAIGH, and CCAD to promote network development and collaboration with strategic partners were signed.

- The Secretariat has been active in establishing good working relationships with all network members. It has kept fully informed IABIN Council and Executive Committee (IEC) members of project execution and network activities, and has followed their directives. It has played a key role in carrying out negotiations with chosen CIs and has acted as a facilitator and technical guiding force to develop the TNs. This technical leadership was particularly helpful during the process to shape out the work plan of the different TNs and to produce technically sound Terms of Reference (TORs) for the development of the IABIN Catalogue Service and Pollinators TN, as well as during the evaluation process of proposal submitted for choosing CIs.

- It is expected that the technical leadership role of the Secretariat and its involvement in the development of the IABIN portal will continue to increase as the CIs are up and running forecast for March-July 2006.

- The IABIN network webpage (portal) is undergoing a revision and updating process. A preliminary test version, following WB recommendations, is being developed (http://new.iabin.net). Access to it has been provided to the Organization of American States (OAS), IEC, and WB for comments.

- IABIN webpage. www.iabin.net is operational in Spanish and English and is receiving an average of 5,370 actual visits per month, and an average of over 60,000 hits per month. The old website is kept maintained with updated information for each TN.

- Secretariat prepared a Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology document to help establish procedures to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the project as established in Annex 1 Project Design Summary of the Project Implementation Plan (PIP).
- Annual Work Plans (WP) for the first year of the Protected Areas, Species and Specimens Thematic Networks were developed and included into the IABIN Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2006.
- Secretariat developed a methodological guide for TN technical development (a matrix) entitled "Overview of IABIN Thematic Networks Development Based on an Information Systems Approach which makes it easier for the potential CIs to understand the IABIN project. This guide has been sent to the CIs and included in the ToR for the Pollinators TN.

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. 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. Thirty out of 32 recipient countries have endorsed the GEF "Building IABIN" project. (Missing are Bolivia and SVG.)

The overall project will:
(i) Develop 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) 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) Provide 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
- ToRs for Catalog Service were developed and published in July 2005, both by e-mail (IABINfriends) and in IABIN webpage.
- Potential bidder's questions and request for additional information were answered and letters of Expression of Interest (EoIs) were reviewed and a short list developed in October 2005. This along with TORs and the Request for Proposal (RfPs) was sent to WB for its no-objection as a package. After a process of revision and edition of the RfPs to address WB comments, OAS has resubmitted the package for no-objection by WB. At the end this year, however, we

have not received a no-objection. This has halted the process for over two month and it is expected that by the end of February of 2006 some advance will take place that will allow us to ask short listed firms to send their formal proposals.

3.2. Thematic Networks (TNs)

3.2.1. General comments:

- The Secretariat developed a methodological guide for TN technical development (a matrix) entitled "Overview of IABIN Thematic Networks Development Based on an Information Systems Approach," which makes it easier for the potential CIs to understand the IABIN project. This was distributed and worked with all chosen CI in order to prepare their WP and the out line of their respective TN development.
- The WB and the OAS agreed on a new mechanism to establish how the GEF project resources would be transferred from the OAS to the CIs for the implementation of the different TNs. This accord necessitated an amendment to the original IABIN-GEF Grant Agreement between the World Bank and the OAS.
- The new mechanism establishes that the official process to choose and designate a CI falls under the competence of the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) on behalf of the network. In keeping with this new mechanism, a formal agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) will be signed between the CIs and the IEC. This is a formal way to designate a CI and to lay down the collaborative nature of our relationship as it relates to the establishment of the TNs. Once a CI is chosen and the MoC is signed, then, an agreement termed "Coordinating Institution (CI) Transfer Agreement" would have to be signed between the CI of a given TN and the OAS, in order to authorize the execution and financing of the technical proposal submitted by a CI and approved by the IABIN Selection Committee to develop the TN activities as outlined in the PIP.
- Formal MoC and Coordinating Transfer Agreement documents were produced by the Secretariat, the IEC, and OAS. These are in the process of being ratified by the legal departments of both WB and OAS.
- An IABIN 2006 Annual Operation Work Plan and (AOP) and a General Procurement Plan (GPP) were prepared and submitted to the WB by the OAS and the Secretariat, incorporating CIs and Secretariat WPs and Annual Budgets.

3.2.2. Review of Thematic Networks

3.2.2.1 Protected Areas TN

- The IABIN Protected Areas TN terms of reference were advertised and the technical selection committee reviewed the quality of the consortium of the one EoI received and found it to meet the minimum criteria. The consortium headed by Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza of Brazil was invited to submit a full proposal that was received May 23, 2005. Boticario was extremely slow to address comments of the evaluation committee causing the proposal not to be ready until November 2005 (having originally been forecast to be completed June 10, 2005). No sooner was the proposal ready when the Bank required a new

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amended Grant Agreement that called for CI Transfer Agreements that has caused delays into next year.

- Project "Amazon-Andes Protected Areas Metadata Database" funded by IABIN, The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and OAS delivered the following outputs: (i) Information on protected area management of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana and (ii) Tools and mechanisms to gather, publish, and update the data on line fully developed and operational.

  As part of the project mentioned above, a workshop was held in Panama June 22-25, 2005 between the protected areas managers of the Amazon. During the workshop, an online database was designed with a suite of basic variables that describe the status of the protected areas. Key stakeholders from each tropical Andean country involved in the protected areas system were identified and invited.

  The contacts in the protected areas offices from the various countries provided data in a collaborative spirit, which motivated the GBMF to finance and granted to the OAS a three-year second phase (2006-2008) within the framework of the IABIN.

3.2.2.2. Species and Specimen TNs

- Species-specimens (joined into one proposal by INBio consortium) contracting under QBS processes were halted by the Bank in November 2005. Under the mechanism agreed upon by OAS and WB, a MoC and CI Transfer Agreement were negotiated. Once the WB gives no-objection to the Coordinating Institution Transfer Agreement document this will be signed by OAS and INBio, thus, allowing use of financial resources for execution of technical activities to develop this TN.

3.2.2.3. Ecosystems TN

- Negotiations with the Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe (CATHALAC) as prospective CI for the Ecosystems TN continued during the last quarter of 2005. However, this negotiation has become stagnated after requesting CATHALAC a fuller proposal with co-financing letters and an outline of consortia members' roles in the development of the TN. As a result, it has become increasingly obvious that this negotiation may not be concluded before the new agreement between the OAS and WB enters into effect and, as a consequence, there is a risk it may have to be cancelled and the selection process to be declared null due to non-responsiveness of the market.

3.2.2.4. Invasive Species TN

I3N was the first IABIN Thematic Network to be established, and continues to be the trailblazer for the other TNs. I3N is an Internet-based resource with common infrastructures and content. It also is an institutional and human network where the countries of the Americas can come together to facilitate development and sharing of invasive alien species (IAS) information.

I3N consists of web-accessible, national catalogs and databases of invasive species data and metadata. Tools at the disposal of the network include a cataloging and data output tool known as the I3N IAS

Database template; a listserv; and an extensive bilingual I3N website that contains, among others, a repository for data submitted by those participants not able to serve their own, tools download instructions page, a search engine, instructions on creating Extensible Markup Language (XML) and on serving data on the internet, fact sheets, contact information, sample XML output, direct access to products created by collaborators, and official I3N documents Additional tools and services will be added over the course of the Global Environment Fund (GEF) Project.

Major accomplishments during the second semester of 2005 include:
- The cataloging and data output tool known as the I3N IAS Database template was completed and tested, as was the associated XML output function.
- Two I3N Tools Representatives were identified and began distributing the tools.
- A training module was tested in an international scientific conference and the resulting 3-day workshop module was implemented in two countries. Lessons learned are ready to be incorporated into future workshops.
- 2 new countries joined I3N: Colombia and Uruguay.
- The capacity of an existing I3N participant, Dominican Republic, was strengthened.
- A content building grant RFP was developed and published in early 2006.
- A concept paper regarding the roles and relationships between I3N stakeholders was drafted in 2005, to be reviewed by key stakeholders in 2006.
- A contract was let for developing I3N materials and a toolkit, as well as a logo.
- A contract was let for identifying capacity building needs and developing a capacity building plan.
- The central I3N website was updated with key information.
- I3N posters and the fact sheet were created and updated.
- The I3N community was kept informed via the website and the i3nlist.
- The i3nlist, search engine and website were maintained.
- The 2006 work plan was drafted and will be reviewed by key stakeholders in early 2006.
- I3N was publicized in various international meetings.
- A training workshop on invasive alien species (IAS) and I3N database tools took place in Santo Domingo from November 22-24, 2005. The first part of the workshop, covering concepts, theory of biological invasions and case studies, was held at the Clarion Hotel. The second part of the workshop, dedicated to practical use of the database tool, took place at INTEC – The Technological Institute, in one of their computer laboratories holding 20 computers. It has produced its AWP, included within the overall project AOP.

3.2.2.5. Pollinators TN

- The Pollinators proposal firms missed the deadline for submission. As a result the Pollinators EoIs and RfP are currently being re-advertised. For this, new ToRs for the Pollinators TN were prepared by the Secretariat and the IEC and a new call for EoIs was published in early December in IABINfriends, posted in the IABIN website, and sent to OAS for posting in additional website and other media. EoIs are expected no later than 23 January 2006.

In summary:

- We are waiting for the formal no-objection of the WB to the RfPs package for the development of the IABIN Catalogue Service procurement process. No-objection is expected by the end of February of 2005, thereby, allowing us to request formal proposals from short listed institution no more than one month later.

- To date, two institutions were selected as Coordinating Institutions (CIs):
  a. Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio) for the Species and Specimen Thematic Network
  b. Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza for the Protected Area Thematic Network.

  These institutions will sign a MoC with the IEC in order to be formally designated as CIs and to lay down the collaborative nature of the relation between the parties for the establishment of their respective TN. In addition the chosen CIs will sign a Coordinating Institution Transfer Agreement with the GS/OAS in order to authorize the execution and financing of the TNs with the IABIN-GEF project resources.

- There is the possibility that the procurement process to choose the CI of the Ecosystems TN will have to be re-opened under the new mechanism to be adopted by WB and OAS.

4. Component 2: Data Content Creation

In general, this component deals with matching grants and training that will began with an RfPs for Matching Grants in year 2. 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.

- To date meetings with potential data providers for IABIN were held in Belize and Nicaragua in August, 2005, Venezuela in November, 2005, and in both Argentina and Uruguay in December 14 to 23, 2005 and an I3N data-digitizing workshop was held in Montevideo.
- The Invasive Species TN CI in collaboration with the Secretariat prepared a draft RfPs to initiate the Data Content Building Grants for this TN. They were submitted to the Thematic Working Group (TWG) for comments. The edited and final version of this RfPs will be posted, through the IABIN website (www.iabin.net), IABINfriends, and other websites early in January 2006. These grants are indented to promote digitalization of high-quality invasive, alien species (IAS) information and data.
- The process initiated with the Invasive Species TN for data content creation will be replicated in the other TNs with the collaboration of their respective CIs. It is expected that, once the species & specimen and the protected areas TNs are up and running, we could be advertising new data content grants for each one of them by the second quarter of 2006.

5. Component 3: Tools for Decision-making

- Solicitation of proposal to develop valued-added tools was scheduled for the first year of the project; however, as efforts were centered in contracting CIs for TNs, this activity has been deferred for the second year of the project. Some possible value-added tools, however, were identified (e.g., connectivity analysis and biological corridors modeling, protected areas biodiversity assessment, invasive species potential distribution and colonization in pristine ecosystems modeling; Integrated Earth Observations for Sustainable Development showing how geospatial data can be used to analyze environmental changes over several periods of time, and how this could be visualized with different tools to be presented to decision makers, including animations) through the IABIN Connectivity Program DGF project and through participation in specialized fora. The Secretariat has been charged with contacting possible partners to develop the above mentioned applications and to consult with Focal Points to establish a priority list of tools to be developed

- Connectivity Program: Under this program, which is part of IABIN third component, an IABIN-DGF project is being developed with WB financial resources. This project is run directly by the City of Knowledge (CoK), which has hired a technical director. Its goal is the integration of Biological and Geospatial Data. This help to facilitate interoperability between biological information in the Americas (being achieved under IABIN) and different sets of non-biological information in order to promote the emergence of cross-thematic value-added applications in the areas of agriculture, disaster reduction, forestry, and rural development. This project is implemented in collaboration with USGS EROS Data Center, The Nature Conservancy, the University of Michigan, and the SERVIR Project led by NASA and Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe (CATHALAC). With this collaboration, IABIN is taking advantage of the work, data and infrastructure that already exist. Also, IABIN is taking planning and fundraising steps to extend this program to South America. Some of the most relevant achievements during the second semester of 2005 are:
  a. A Version 1 of the portal for the IABIN-DGF project for the Connectivity Program is fully operational (http://servir.nsstc.nasa.gov/wms/index.html). This portal contents a version 1 of the geo-integrator. This tool will allow the integration of biological and geospatial data.
  b. A donation from ESRI was given to Land Information Center (LIC) in Belize through IABIN-DGF Project. With this donation the IABIN-DGF project will install a geoserver at LIC facilities. This activity will be carry put under the second year of the project.
  c. The second year work plan for the IABIN-DGF project was prepared and submitted to the WB in September 2005. This was approved in October 2005, thereby, allowing access to a total of US$412.000 from WB with co-financing of US$267.825 from participant institutions. In total the support from the WB–DGF initiative to the IABIN Connectivity Program is of US$812.00.
  d. The final report for the first phase of the IABIN-DGF project was submitted and approved by the WB, in September 2005.

Additional activities carried out during the second semester of 2005 by Secretariat staff under this sub-component include:

- Meeting in Honduras with CCAD/CT-SIAM to clarify roles in the implementation of the IABIN-DGF project.
- Coordination with E. van Praag (EROS), D. Irwin (NASA) and V. Abreu (CoK) regarding preparation of IABIN-DGF Implementation Plan and MoC to be signed between IEC and the Mesoamerican Environment Ministries, which were later incorporated into the MoC between IABIN and the CCAD.
- Continued coordination of information flow to new Belizean Focal Point and LIC regarding IABIN activities, the Connectivity/DGF project and the 30 m SRTM derivatives.
- Submitted information to partners and Focal Points regarding a pre-proposal to expand the connectivity program (Geospatial network) to South America.
- Requested information and letters of support from South American Focal Points for preparation of proposal to be submitted to NASA.
- Development and review of various graphics for the NASA proposal to expand the connectivity program and Geospatial Network to South America
- Translation of letters of support for the expansion of the Geospatial Network to South America.
- Participation at the FAO's workshop in Costa Rica and explored opportunities for collaboration between FAO and IABIN in the implementation of the FAO's Land Cover System in the Americas.

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 fully staffed with the Secretariat Director, Data Content Manager, and Thematic Networks Coordinator hired through an international search. Iván Valdespino, Director (Panama), Rita Besana, Data Content Manager, (Mexico) and Boris Ramirez (Colombia) have been contracted on one year GS/OAS contracts. Performance reviews were completed on December 2005 and contract renewals were effectuated. The Secretariat completed the following tasks not noted above:

6.1.1. Planning, Coordination and Reporting

- Preparation of the Secretariat's Annual Work Plan and collaboration in preparation and review of project AOP and GPP.
- Monthly phone conferences were carried out with G. Cotter, Chair of the IEC, her staff and R. Huber of OAS for planning and coordination, as well as for monitoring of project progress.
- Frequent communication has been maintained with Focal Points and Council members in general.
- Monthly, quarterly, and semester reports were prepared by Secretariat with the collaboration of OAS and IEC. Semester and quarterly reports both in English and translated into Spanish by Secretariat were distributed to IEC members and posted in IABIN website.
- Documents on IABIN Roles and Responsibilities and on IABIN Legal Status were

developed by Secretariat and submitted for consideration by OAS and IEC.

- The Secretariat proposed to hold the IEC Meeting in 2006 in Santa Cruz (Bolivia) around the Ministerial Summit that will take place in August of that year in order to be able to highlight, in the Ministerial Summit, the progress of IABIN which was created in a similar meeting 10 years before.

6.1.2. Co-financing

- Communications with BirdLife Americas regarding their participation in IABIN. No co-financing form from this organization has been received yet.
- Reception of co-financing information from the ICE at UCDavis, the Herbario National de Bolivia, and the Colección Boliviana de Fauna.
- Follow up with Bolivia Focal Point regarding the Bolivian co-financing institutions.
- Follow up with BioNET regarding their co-financing report. The report will be provided by AndinoNET and CariNET. At the end of the year, however, no report has been received.
- Meeting with Steve Paton of Smithsonian Institute to talk about their co-financing. No report has been received at the end of the year.

6.1.3. Data Providers

- Meeting with Karl Kaufman of Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) to talk about IABIN standards. Met also with Steve Paton of STRI to coordinate participation of this institution in IABIN activities.
- Communications with Focal Points from Belize, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile and with Jesus Ramos in Venezuela regarding arrangements for Data Providers Meetings in their countries. This resulted in:
  a. Meeting with staff of the National Biodiversity Office of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) and 8 potential Data Providers from NGOs in Venezuela to inform them of network advances, mechanisms for participation in IABIN, designation of CIs and co-financing forms.
  b. Meeting with personnel from the Venezuelan National Herbarium in order to invite them to participate in the IABIN Species and Specimens TNs.
  c. Meeting with 25 potential Data Providers in Argentina hosted by the Argentinean Focal Point at the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Buenos Aires.
  d. Meeting with 28 potential Data Providers in Uruguay hosted by the Uruguayan Focal point and the National University in Montevideo.
- Communications with the Manager of the National Forestry Inventory at CONAFOR in Mexico, as a potential data provider to IABIN together with the INEGI (National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics). Once the CI for the Ecosystems TN is ready the contact between these organizations will take place.

6.2. Partnership and Communications

- IABIN webpage. www.iabin.net is operational in Spanish and English and is receiving an average of 5,887 actual visits per month, and an average of 61212 hits per month. The old website (portal) is kept maintained using the MAMBO program with updated information for each TN. In addition, the Amazon Protected Areas website has been integrated within IABIN website
- The IABIN network webpage (portal) is undergoing a revision and updating process. A preliminary test version, following WB recommendations, is being developed (http://new.iabin.net). Access to it has been provided to the Organization of American States (OAS), IEC, and WB for comments. In order for this new portal to be fully operational programming and graphic design support is needed. This specialized consultancy support has been requested. Some programming support will be made available from the IABIN-DGF project to help with the portal. The graphic designer was requested through the Secretariat's budget for next year (see decision below).
- After translation by Secretariat, Minutes of the 4th Council meeting were made available to IABIN Council members both in English and Spanish.
- MoCs with CCAD, PAIGH and OBIS to promote network development and collaboration with strategic partners were signed. The MoC with CCAD will be the framework document to achieve collaboration with seven Mesoamerican countries participating in the DGF project in order to achieve sustainability of the geoservers installed in each of those countries.
- Coordination for and participation in the ARK 2010 Programme workshop carried out in Costa Rica to prepare a "pilot project for using computational tools to develop indicators for montane forest biodiversity in Mexico.
- Preparation of abstract and presentation about IABIN given at the III Ibero-American Sustainable Development Conference held in Panama City
- Presentation about IABIN given at the Cartography Commission of PAIGH and participation in their XX Conference, where a MoC was signed between that organization and IABIN.
- Development of an IABIN poster to be presented at the Ecological Society of America's Conference in Merida, Mexico in January 2006.
- Established communication the Red Latino Americana de Botanica and the Latin American Botanical Congress regarding collaboration between our initiatives following up initial contacts made by Y. Batista and A. Grosse. An initial proposal was made to carry out an IABIN workshop at the IX Latin American Botanical Congress to be held in Dominican Republic in 2006.
- Meeting with John Pickering of Discovery of Life to talk about possible collaboration between this organization and IABIN.
- Assistance to OAS Panama with organization of Open House event at City of Knowledge
- Communications with BirdLife Interantional about IABIN participation in a project to develop a CHM for wetlands in the Caribbean. Proposal was sent.
- Reviewed and coordinated with Y. Batista Concept Note for the IABIN Caribbean Workshop to be held in 2006.
- Met with Rosario Madríz of the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), to encourage designation of their IABIN National Focal Point
- Prepared abstract for IABIN participation through D. Graham of WB in Montreal's SBSTTA

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- Participation in Geospatial and land analysis workshop in Costa Rica organized by FAO
- Participation in the CCAD Donors Conference meeting in Nicaragua, where the MoC between IABIN and the CCAD was signed
- Participated in the Lessons Learned Exercise of the Regional Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Project (PCCBM) being implemented by the Central American Environment Commission (CCAD).
- Coordination with K.Ashida, WB, D. Graham´s registration for Montreal's SBSTTA XI Poster Session on IABIN & GTI and IABIN/CBD and prepared a draft abstract for comments. The WB participation in this meeting was later on cancelled by W. Graham.
- Coordinated preparation of draft MoC between IABIN and PAIGH with Y.Batista and J. Klever, Santiago Borrero & Rodrígo Barriga (PAIGH officials)
- Coordination with K. Molt, Chilean FP for a data providers meeting in Chile and the elaboration of a possible MoC with ILPES
- Meet with John Latham, Coordinator of GLCN and GTOS programs from FAO for a possible collaboration between FAO and IABIN.
- The Secretariat received, read, and process an average of 1,729 emails and has sent an average 1,275 emails

6.3. Fund Raising

- Preparation of grant proposal submitted to NASA to expand IABIN Geospatial Network to South America; Solicited and obtained letters of supports to aforesaid proposal from South American Ministries of Environment (with the collaboration of IABIN FP) and South American National Geographic Institutes and PAIGH
- Fundraising. Development Grant Facility of the World Bank approves project on "Developing Connectivity between Biological and Geospatial Data in Central America and the Caribbean" for $ 800,000 over 2 years. During this semester, the work plan for the second year including a budget of US$412.000 with a co-financing of US$ 267.825 from partner organizations was submitted and approved by WB
- The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation awarded the Office for Sustainable Development and Environment of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OSDE/GS/OAS) two grants for a total of US$634k towards the IABIN Protected Areas Thematic Network.

6.4. Additional Activities:

6.4.1. Poster and brochures
- A new IABIN poster was developed. Work is underway to update IABIN brochure and poster.

6.4.2. Specialized Consultancies
- Programmer: Decision taken to start hiring process in January 2006.
- Secretary: Decision taken to start hiring process in February 2006. Resources complementary to those of CoK were secured from the IABIN-DGF project.

7. Component 5: Project Administration

- Overall the project is advancing slower than foreseen (33% of actual forecasted disbursements) in the PIP and the General Procurement Plan.
- Core Co-financing is robust (OAS, CoK, USGS/NBII/ Moore Foundation and GBF) and better than indicated in PAD. Non-core co-financing has been weak because the TNs will be initiated when the CIs have been contracted.
- A new GPP and AOP for the period Jan 1, 2006-December 31, 2006 was submitted to the Bank on November 30, 2005 for review.
- Secretariat Travel Plan was elaborated reflecting vision of Secretariat´s role and activities for next 12 months.
- The disburse of financial resources from the GEF Trust Fund Grant to the Coordinating institution will be made through CI Transfer Funds according to the schedule provided in the CI Transfer Agreement, expected deliverables and reports accepted by GS/OAS/DSD according to Annual Operating Plan, ToRs, MOC, and technical proposal
- New monthly report format for Secretariat has been developed.
- Monthly conference calls between Chair/OAS/Secretariat were initiated to resolve reporting requirements and procurement advancements among other issues.
- Secretariat prepared a Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology document to help establish procedures to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the project as established in Annex 1 of the Project Design Summary of the Project Implementation Plan (PIP).   An update on monitoring and evaluation of project activities can be found in Annex 4.

8. Achievement of Project Objectives

- Progress on activities continue although with delays in relation to the overall project schedule:
  a. One of the main delays has been caused by the lengthy negotiations between OAS and the World Bank regarding the way to approach the relationship between OAS/IEC and the Coordinating Institutions for the Thematic Networks. At the end of the year the go-ahead from the World Bank was given to use a new Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) between the IEC and the CIs, and a CI Transfer Agreement between OAS and the CIs in collaboration with the IEC, for the development of the network instead of being contracting as a consultant. Consequently, an amendment of the GEF Trust Fund Agreement has been made, which cause a further delay on the project since the CI Transfer Agreements can not been signed prior the approval of the Trust Fund Agreement. In order to reduce delays on No Objections from World Bank, OAS sends to the Team Leader a summary of those NO requests which are pending.
  b. The negotiations with the CIs to define their AWP, refine their budget and review the MoC and Transfer Agreement took longer than expected. In order to expedite the process, it has been established a close communication directly between IABIN Secretariat, OAS and the CI financial contact in order to prepare the AWP.
  c. In addition, the negotiations with the consortium led by CATHALAC, as prospective CI for the Ecosystems TN, were stagnant due to lack of response to requests by IABIN

Selection Committee, which included the letters of commitment from each one of the members of the consortium as well as a definition of their roles in network development. Despite several opportunities given to CATHALAC to submit the information requested no documentation requested was provided.

d. A Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology for the project has been established. This will benefit from feed back from WB, OAS, IEC, Focal Points, and CIs. This will be used to monitor and evaluation of project activities as planned in the PIP. It would be useful to have the feed back from the WB so that a formal monitoring process begins in addition to the efforts already undertaken (see Annex 4).

e. The Secretariat has concentrated on:
- Carry out negotiations and build harmonious relations with each Coordinating Institution
- Develop its role as facilitator in the process of developing the TNs.
- Build alliances with other key players.
- Build alliances with potential data providers
- Develop its technical leadership

9. Financial Report.

A report on the Project Financial Status is included in Annex 1, including disbursement progress from July 01 2005 to December 31, 2005. The disbursement was 79% for the period, where the budget allocated for the Coordinating Institutions was reduced to three years (in prior semester report Oct04-June 05 the budget was allocated to five years). Core Parallel Co-financing tables are found in Annex 2.

Annex 1. Project Financial Status

Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)

P077187 - TF 053526 -- OAS Executing Agency for GEF IABIN

Statement of Sources and Uses of Funds by Category

Period between July to December 2005 - FMR # 3

In US$ dollars

Cash	Acumulative Nov04-April05	Total Accumulative	Total Expenditures Acumulatives (Committed+ obligated)	Total Expenditures/Total Project Budget	Period of the Project PAD	GEF Funds Available
Total Incoming / Financing	$ 934,521.73					
Subtotal Funds del IBRD	$ 934,521.73					
Cash Advance # 1 (Oct04)	$ 600,000.00					
Aplication # 2 (Nov 04-Apr 05)	$ 142,748.78					
Aplication # 3 (June - July 05)	$ 46,335.78	$ 934,521.73	$ 360,127.57	6.00%	$ 6,000,000.00	$ 5,639,872.43
Aplication # 4 (Jul - Dec 05) * pending to be sent to the World Bank	$ 145,437.17					
Aplication # 5	$ -					
Aplication # 6	$ -					
Aplication # 7	$ -					
Other Funds	$ -					
Difference in the Exchange Rate	N/A					

Use of Funds by IABIN Categories	Actual Semester Nov04-June05	Actual Acumulated Nov04-Dec05	Estimated Semester Jul-Dec 05	Estimated Acumulated Nov04-Dec05	Variation Actual Semester actual/estimated	Variation Total Accumulated actual/estimated	Programmed July05-Dec05	PAD
Goods other than under IABIN Subprojects	$ 3,033.89	$ 3,179.57	$ 5,000.00	$ 10,000.00	60.68%	31.80%	$ 2,500.00	$ 30,000.00
Consultants' Services other than under IABIN Subprojects	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 27,000.00	9.09%	7.41%	$ 162,000.00	$ 1,148,000.00
Non-consultant Technical Services	$ 13,483.04	$ 74,808.00	$ 59,940.00	$ 114,880.00	22.49%	65.12%	$ 66,815.00	$ 648,400.00
Goods &/or Consultants' services under IABIN Subprojects	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	$ 505,150.00	$ 2,430,000.00
Training	$ 11,500.00	$ 11,500.00	$ 17,500.00	$ 35,000.00	65.71%	32.86%	$ 25,000.00	$ 570,000.00
Operating Costs	$ 115,420.24	$ 243,034.16	$ 104,144.00	$ 239,051.00	110.83%	101.67%	$ 138,131.00	$ 1,173,600.00
Subtotal of funds	$ 145,437.17	$ 334,521.73	$ 208,584.00	$ 425,931.00	69.73%	78.54%	$ 899,596.00	$ 6,000,000.00

Total Obligations of the Period through February 13, 2006	$ 25,605.84	Percentage of execution considering real executed (without commitments)	78.54%
		Percentage of execution considering expenditures and commitments	84.55%

Balance of Funds available (accumulated incoming - accumulated uses - commitments of the period)	$ 574,394.16

COMPONENTS/SUBCOMPONENTS/ACTIVITIES	Actual Semester Jul-Dec05
IABIN Secretariat	
1 Secretariat office	$3,034
TOTAL 01 -- GDS OTHER THAN IABIN SUBPROJ	$3,034
Invasive Species Thematic Network	
1 Develop data entry tools and training materials	$2,000
TOTAL 02 -- CS OTHER THAN IABIN SUBPROJ	$2,000
Invasive Species Thematic Network	
4 Meetings of the Technical Working Groups	$1,046
5 Outreach Meetings and Events	$0
IABIN Secretariat	
2 Secretariat travel	$10,649
Partnerships and Communications	
2 IABIN Council Meetings	$363
5 Outreach Meetings and Events	$1,425
TOTAL 03 -- NON-CONSULTANT TECHNICAL SERVICES	$13,483
Invasive Species Content Program	
4 Training sessions on the use of data creation tools	$11,500
TOTAL 05 -- TRAINING	$11,500
Thematic Networks Coordinator	$24,000
Data Content Manager	$24,000
3 Director	$33,000
4 Operating Expenses	$1,441
Office Supplies	$241
Repatriation Cost	$1,200
Recurrent Costs	
6511 Operating Expenses	$18,178
6512 Consulting	$14,741
6513 Travel	$60
TOTAL 06 -- OPER. COST	$115,420
Grand Total	$145,437

Statement of Uses of by IABIN Components

COMPONENTS/SUBCOMPONENTS/ACTIVITIES	Actual		Estimated		Variation		Actual Accumulative/PAD	Programmed
	Actual Semester	Accumulative	Actual Semester	Accumulative Actual / Estimate	Actual / Estimate	Accumulative Actual / Estimate	%	
	Jul-Dec05	Nov04-Dec05	Jul-Dec05	Nov04-Dec.05	Jul-Dec05	Nov04-Dec05	%	Jan - Jun06
Total 01 -- Interoperability and Access to Data	27,046.20	$52,633	$31,000	$60,000	-$3,954	-$7,367	3.12%	$414,650
Total 02 -- Data Content Creation	35,500.00	$35,500	$56,500	$540,548	-$21,000	-$505,048	1.42%	$276,500
Total 03 -- Information Products for Decision Making	-	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	0.00%	$62,500
Total 04 -- Sustainability of IABIN	49,911.81	$151,296	$102,390	$208,137	-$52,478	-$56,841	16.54%	$92,515
Total 05 -- Project Administration	32,979.16	$75,093	$18,694	$59,794	$14,285	$15,299	18.77%	$53,431
Grand Total	145,437.17	$334,522	$208,584	$425,931	-$63,147	-$91,409	5.58%	$899,596

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Annex 2. Core Parallel Co-financing and GEF expenditures

CORE PARALLEL FINANCING						
Period: Oct 04 - June 05						
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Total
GEF FINANCING	25,586.37	20,000.00	-	101,383.92	42,114.27	189,084.56
PARALLEL FINANCING						
City of Knowledge				20,551.69		20,551.69
US Government	598,280.00	25,000.00	-	-	-	623,280.00
USGS/NBII	289,171.00	25,000.00				
USGS/I3N	309,109.00					
OAS	122,077.00					122,077.00
Gordon an Betty Moore Foundation	65,000.00					65,000.00
World Bank DGF			400,000.00			400,000.00
						1,230,908.69
Total assured parallel financing	810,943.37	45,000.00	400,000.00	121,935.61	42,114.27	1,419,993.25

NON - CORE PARALLEL FINANCING						
Period: Jul - Dec 05						
Institution Name	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Total
CONABIO			48,229.00			48,229
Herbario Nacional de Bolivia	4,500.00					4,500
University of California, Davis	30,000.00					30,000
Universidad de Concepción	10,000.00					10,000
Colección Boliviana de Fauna	8,938.00					8,938
Total assured parallel financing	53,438.00	-	48,229.00	-	-	101,667

Annex 3 - Performance Indicators measured during the period November 2004-June 2005.

LATIN AMERICA: Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)

Output from each Component:	Output Indicators:
Component 1: Interoperability and access to data 1.1 IABIN Catalog 1.2 Species Thematic Network 1.3 Specimens Thematic Network 1.4 Ecosystems Thematic Network 1.5 Invasive Thematic Network 1.6 Pollinators Thematic Network 1.7 Protected Areas Thematic Network	• IABIN BIOBot Catalog is further developed with metadata and user-base has expanded. TORs completed and submitted to the World Bank for no-objection. • Protected Areas Coordinating Institution (CI) Transfer Agreement to be signed in early 2006. • 4 TNs species-specimens, ecosystems, and pollinators will be completed by mid-2006. • Invasives TN (I3N) advances with technical working group meetings and training in the DR and Argentina and Uruguay and increase in database content. I3N website found at http://www.iabin-us.org/projects/i3n/i3n_project.html. • 8 protected areas managers trained as part of Amazon Parks initiative.
Component 2: Data content creation 2.1 Data content creation 2.2 Technical training	• IABIN Catalog has increased by 10% in 2005, and number of institutions contributing metadata will increase once the TN CIs have been established.
Component 3: Information tools for decision-making 3.1 Information tools for decision-makng	• The IABIN connectivity program is integrating the Biological data with geospatial data for Central American and the Caribbean. IABIN works in close collaboration with USGS EROS Data Ceneter, The Nature Conservancy, the University of Michigan, and the Servir Project lead by NASA and CATHALAC in the integration of both projects. This integration allows IABIN to access important geospatial data for the region. Program expanding into South America. • 1 course, 14 people trained under IABIN-DGF in geospacial technologies.
Component 4: Sustainability of IABIN 4.1 Project Coordination 4.2 Partnerships and Communications	• IABIN webpage. www.iabin.net moved to Panama and is fully operational in Spanish and English and is receiving an average of over 60,000 hits/month. • Collaborative agreements begun with CCAD, PAIGH, OBIS, and Moore Foundation. • 4th IABIN Council Meetings completed • Additional 634k funding secured from the Moore Foundation and 2nd installment of 400k approved by the DGF.
Component 5: Project administration 5.1 Project administration	• Amended GEF Grant Agreement, CI Transfer Agreements, and MOUs developed.