

**Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)
Executive Committee (IEC)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RfP)
for the Selection of a Coordinating Institution (CI) for the IABIN
Ecosystems Thematic Network (IABIN Ecosystems TN)**

1. IABIN Background and Overview

Responding to the importance in the Americas of protection of biodiversity (the Americas houses 8 of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots¹), the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) was officially mandated at the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in December 1996. IABIN is an Internet-based forum for technical and scientific cooperation that seeks to promote greater coordination among Western Hemisphere countries in the collection, sharing, and use of biodiversity information relevant to decision-making and education.

The objective of IABIN is to promote sustainable development and the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Americas through better access to and management of biological information. While IABIN is envisioned as a distributed system of data providers in which the data are maintained and controlled by the provider, coordinated access to the integrated resources of the network is a key component of IABIN.

IABIN is governed by the IABIN Council, comprising official Focal Points from the countries of the Americas and representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and initiatives addressing biodiversity informatics issues. The IABIN Council is represented inter-sessionally by the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC), comprised of the IABIN Council Chair and Vice-Chair, 6 members elected from among the official IABIN Focal Points and one elected representative from an inter- or non-governmental organization.

Since IABIN's inception in 1996, 34 countries have designated official IABIN Focal Points. Four IABIN Council meetings have been held with the IABIN Focal Points and a broad representation from the international, NGO, and private sector communities.

The IABIN Secretariat manages day-to-day activities of IABIN. The IEC has chosen the City of Knowledge in Panama City, an NGO, as the Host organization for the IABIN Secretariat.

The Project Implementation Plan (PIP) found on <http://www.iabin.net> outlines a US\$35 million plan. A five year Global Environment Facility (GEF) Grant of US\$6.0 million for the "Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)" Project is executed by the General Secretariat of the OAS (GS/OAS) and implemented by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). Co-financing for the GEF project in the amount of approximately US\$28.9 million, thus totaling close to US\$35 million, has been identified from 76 regional or national institutions and programs.

¹ Myers N, Mittermeier RA, Mittermeier CG, da Fonseca GAB, Kent J. 2000. Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities. *Nature* 403 (6772): 853-858 (Feb 24).

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,
- (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.

2. Services Required

IABIN requires the Selection of a Coordinating Institution (CI) for the IABIN Ecosystems Thematic Network (IABIN ETN). The IABIN ETN should bridge current local, national, sub-regional, and regional efforts to promote the generation, validation, distribution, and use of timely available, accurate, and scientifically sound ecosystems information to support a well-grounded decision-making process for ecosystems management and sustainable development. The ETN should make recommendations on what research and monitoring are needed to provide improved ecosystems information, and on any conservation or restoration steps that can be taken to slow or reverse or to avoid future decline of ecosystems through the Western Hemisphere. In addition, the ETN and its CI will need to address a number of challenges in achieving the goal related to ecosystem information as follows:

- Lack of widely accepted standards for ecosystem classification inhibits comparison of information from one region to another.
- Ecosystem information exists at multiple scales and resolutions
- Inadequate geo-referencing of specimen and observation data to develop understanding of relationships between ecosystems and species distributions
- Relatively little existing support for international collaboration on ecosystem data standards.
- Few existing tools that support analysis and interpretation of ecosystem data for decision-making.

Tools developed by the ETN should allow the users to consult ecosystem's databases in an integrated manner and in coordination with other IABIN TNs to improve information accessibility on this subject area.

A CI is envisioned as a facilitator, a manager, and an intermediary in the formation of a broad based group of institutions, organizations, and individuals at the local, national, sub-regional, and regional level that will interact to generate, exchange, and use the ecosystems information needed for ecosystems management, based on their interest in this area and the efforts they had or are currently undertaking to address common ecosystem management goals. At this point, therefore, an institution or consortium of institutions is sought out to play a coordinating and facilitating role to lead and promote a collaborative effort through out the Western Hemisphere that will create the ETN bringing to it stability and sustainability. A CI may be located in North America, Central America, South America or the Caribbean. It is expected that the CI of the ETN will work collaboratively with a network of other major

organizations in order to implement the TN, therefore no exclusivity is promoted through the current selection process.

In general, the CI is responsible for organizing the development of the TN, including making recommendations to the IABIN Council on standards and protocols. The latter require the endorsement of the IABIN Council. The CI will also be responsible for the coordination of other activities, such as the development of tools for accessing data, entering data in the network, and training, which may be carried out by the CI or by other groups. Finally, the CI is responsible to assure, with the support and facilitation of the IABIN Secretariat, interoperability among all IABIN TNs. The following are expected tasks to be carried out by the Ecosystem Thematic Network CI:

1. Develop a prioritized, annotated list of user types and their requirements
2. Evaluate ecosystem information system in the context of ongoing regional projects, and made recommendations for improvements to the information system, including promotion of interoperability
3. Develop metadata standards for ecosystem data approved by the IABIN Council and adopted
4. Develop tools (data digitizing tools) for entering ecosystem data sets implemented by IABIN participants
5. Establish policies for the use of information accepted and documented
6. Develop online system for cross-referencing different ecosystem classifications.
7. Create and implement prototype tools for integrated searches of ecosystems, species and specimen information.
8. Develop and conduct training program for web administrators or system developers on the use of the data digitizing tool.
9. Create a processes to ensure sustainability of the ecosystem information system

In addition to the services required for the selection of a CI for the IABIN ETN, organizations are strongly encouraged to consult the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) found on <http://www.iabin.net>, where information on the general project and the relationship of the IABIN ETN to other IABIN Thematic Networks and other IABIN components is provided.

3. General Objective

The objective of this Thematic Network is to 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).

3.1 Specific Objectives

1. Develop the technical infrastructure (hardware, software, capacity building) to create and implement a distributed ETN to disseminate ecosystems information not currently available, or presently managed within incompatible systems.
2. Propose, evaluate and begin implementing, after approval by the IABIN Council, standards and protocols needed to guide the development and sharing of ecosystems information, as well as to provide access to it, which is distributed among different institutions of the region. Standards should consider associated information such as

natural history, indicators, distribution, and management. This should also take into account pre-existing standards that may be applicable to the ETN, rather than creating new duplicative standards.

3. Establish a hemispheric system for cross-referencing different ecosystem classifications.
4. Integrate ecosystem information with specimen, species, pollinators, invasive species, and protected areas information from other IABIN TNs.
5. Integrate the IABIN ETN with national, sub-regional, regional and global ecosystems initiatives.
6. Enhance the usefulness of ecosystem information for decision makers in government and civil society.
7. Establish participatory mechanisms to work with IABIN Focal Points and local, national, and regional partners in the implementation of the IABIN ETN.
8. Maintain the ecosystem information TN, including the development of a sustainability strategy plan.

The following criteria were established by the IABIN Council for the prioritization of potential Thematic Networks:

- Theme is of interest to countries (demand driven) as determined by the consultations carried out during the PDF phase
- Valid regional or sub regional data exist
- Infrastructure exists or is planned
- Theme is a priority for global and regional programs
- Theme is a priority of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2nd IABIN Council meeting
- Network leverages other funds

Using the above information and criteria, the following six Thematic Networks (TNs) have been identified as a priority for IABIN:

- Specimen Network
- Species Network
- Ecosystems Network
- Invasive Species Network
- Pollinators Network
- Protected Areas

Each TN will be coordinated by an institution, which will be selected by the Executing Agency in consultation with the IEC on a competitive basis and supported by a Technical Committee of Experts constituted by specialists from across the region, chosen by the Secretariat. The Coordinating Institution (CI) is responsible for organizing the development of the TN, including making recommendations to the IABIN Council on standards and protocols. The latter require the endorsement of the IABIN Council. The CI may also be responsible for the coordination of other activities, such as the development of tools for accessing data, entering data in the network, and training, which may be carried out by the CI or by other groups. Where appropriate, CIs could be consortia of organizations to ensure a good representation of all geographic areas of the Americas. Finally, the CI is responsible to coordinate with the other TNs to assure that, where feasible, all data is interoperable.

Proposal Design. A clearly developed methodology that discusses technical aspects required to comply with tasks and to achieve deliverables for the development of the TN's must be included within the proposal.

Data Management. It is envisioned that the IABIN webpage/portal managed at the IABIN Secretariat in Panama will have some databases, such as content related to the IABIN network. Over time, based on agreements with the Coordinating Institutions (CI's) of the Thematic Networks, some content may be highlighted or potentially even "co-hosted" by the Secretariat. However, the IABIN website will be the "uniform locator" to all IABIN content, information, and data regardless of where it is held. This may be accomplished by just linking and/or hosting some unique or summary information related to the Thematic Network. The Secretariat has the responsibility to develop an "integrated, user cohesive" site for IABIN. While the Thematic Network has the specific content and specific technologies development task; the IABIN Secretariat is the one responsible to develop the standards (both technical and "policy" related) that IABIN requires to function as a "network of networks".

The Proposal should address the following issues:

Infrastructure Requirements – Hosting, Security, Archival, and Help Desk Support required from CI for Thematic Network. These infrastructure requirements will help ensure that IABIN data and information are available to all appropriate consumers, are properly maintained, and can be accessed in an instantaneous manner.

- *IABIN Thematic Network Data Structure Standard:* It is the responsibility of the CI, in coordination with the Thematic Working Group, to establish, adopt and promote a unique IABIN Data Structure Standard for the TN for information exchange in accordance with the IABIN basic standards and protocols.
- *IABIN Thematic Network Hosting:* It is expected that the CI for the Thematic Network has the technical capabilities (e.g., database and interphase development, server infrastructure, connectivity, help desk assistance, and system administration and update, among others,) to develop and maintain a Website (interphase) for the TN, which should be capable to integrate data providers databases and to be compatible with the IABIN Gateway and other Thematic Networks websites (e.g., compatible databases, interoperability) using IABIN basic standards and protocols.
- *IABIN Partner Data Hosting:* The ability to Host data and information for IABIN partners who currently do not have the capability is a requirement of the IABIN CI for the Thematic Network. To insure that all IABIN partners' data and information is available through the IABIN network, the IABIN CI for the Thematic Network may also have to host various IABIN country data holdings on an interim basis and provide the tools and procedures to maintain and digitalize this data.
- *Security Processes and Procedures:* Due to the importance of IABIN data and information, high vulnerability of information on the Internet, and IABIN's goal of providing access to data and information 24x7, proper security policies, practices, and tools need to be implemented within the IABIN network and, specifically by the CI for the Thematic Network in coordination with the

Secretariat and other Thematic Networks. These requirements ensure that the proper use, availability, and protection of IABIN information exist into the foreseeable future.

- *Archival and Mirroring of Data:* As the IABIN network evolves over the next several years, archiving of IABIN metadata, any hosted information, and other IABIN documents will be a requirement of the IABIN CI for the Thematic Network. The IABIN CI for the Thematic Network is to also mirror selected IABIN partner data holdings to improve connectivity and access to information.
- *High-Speed Network Access and Bandwidth:* The CI of the IABIN Thematic Network is required to provide at a minimum T1 to T3 connectivity to its servers. This is important due to the fact that as users access IABIN information throughout the distributed network, bottlenecks and slow response times do not occur at the central IABIN gateway or at the Thematic Network website level.
- *Help Desk and User Support:* The ability to provide technical help desk support when upgrades and/or downtime are required is a requirement of the IABIN CI Thematic Network.
- *Ensuring Thematic Network long-term sustainability:* The CI should develop a structured Thematic Network sustainability plan (that later will be coordinated with the Secretariat) in order to ensure human, technical and financial resources for the long-term sustainability of the initiative. This plan should also include provisions by which at the end or during the execution of the official contract phase, if the CI can no longer ensure the continued hosting and maintenance of the website and data, that the data will be transferred in their entirety and at no cost to IABIN.

The process for choosing the Coordinating Institution is as follows:

1. The Secretariat with IABIN Executive Committee input prepares detailed terms of reference (TORs) for the activities of a CI.
2. The work is contracted out by the Executing Agency in accordance with World Bank procurement procedures. These procedures define the kinds of competitive procurement procedures to be followed, as a function of the size and type of the contract.
3. A Technical Selection Committee convened by the Executing Agency, and acceptable to the Secretariat and the IEC, will evaluate detailed proposals.
4. The procurement process and final selection of a CI is subject to World Bank no-objection, as defined in the legal agreement.

Proposals to take on the role of the CI will require co-financing, and should specify mechanisms for the long-term maintenance of the TNs.

An Institution will be selected under procedures described in this RFP, in accordance with the policies of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States. An evaluation committee will be formed that will review the proposals utilizing the following Criteria, sub-criteria, and point system:

	<u>Points</u>
(i) Specific experience of the Consultants relevant to the assignment: Total points for criterion (i):	[10]
(ii) Adequacy of the proposed methodology and work plan in responding to the Terms of Reference:	
a) Technical approach and methodology	[30]
b) Work plan	[20]
c) Organization and staffing	[10]
Total points for criterion (ii):	[60]
(iii) Key professional staff qualifications and competence for the assignment:	
a) Team Leader	[10]
b) biodiversity informatics specialist	[10]
c) IT standards and protocols specialist	[10]
Total points for criterion (iii):	[30]

The number of points to be assigned to each of the above positions or disciplines shall be determined considering the following three subcriteria and relevant percentage weights:

1) General qualifications	[20%]
2) Adequacy for the assignment	[60%]
3) Experience in region and language	[20%]
Total weight:	100%

Structure of the Thematic Network:

A Thematic Network Coordinator of the IABIN Secretariat will oversee the implementation of the Thematic Networks. The TNs to be established are described in Sections 3.1.2 through 3.1.7 in the PIP that may be found on www.iabin.net.

Overall, throughout the six thematic networks, the CIs have a special role in the coordination and promotion of key technical aspects of IABIN such as the development of functioning networks, metadata schema, and development of thematic information resources.

Operational/leadership functions of CIs under Interoperability and Access to Data Component:

- Supervise the operation of the basic network infrastructure: Thematic Networks
- Develop the basic infrastructure necessary to operate the TNs
- Operate and maintain the TNs
- Seek agreements on the use of standards and protocols to ensure compatibility of other CIs and diverse data sources within the region
- Develop and adapt tools for data content creation
- Development of training packages

Operational/leadership functions of CIs under Data Content Creation Component:

- Quality control and validation of information
- Carry out or coordinate training
- Digitization of biodiversity data
- Determine data content creation priorities
- Data Hosting

The IABIN Secretariat will manage day-to-day activities of IABIN. The IEC has chosen the City of Knowledge in Panama City, an NGO, as the Host organization for the IABIN Secretariat.

The RFPs (Request For Proposals) and terms of reference, as they become available, for these thematic networks may be found at www.iabin.net. Organizations interested in applying for the Coordinating Institution (CI) of the different position should send Proposals and or questions (preferably by email) to:

Iván Valdespino

*Director IABIN Secretariat
Ciudad del Saber
Clayton, República de Panamá
Dr. Iván Valdespino [ivaldespino@cbmap.org]
www.iabin.net*

Richard M. Huber

*Principal Environmental Specialist
Sustainable Development and Environment
Organization of American States
1889 F. St., N.W., Suite 695
Washington, D.C. 20006*

T: +202-458-3227
F: +202-458-3560
<RHuber@oas.org>

Scope of Work for the IABIN Ecosystems Thematic Network

Justification and Background

The ecosystem is the fundamental unit of resource management. Ecosystem maps are integrated planning tools that provide a record of the location and distribution of ecosystems within a management area. They create a framework for developing various site-specific uses.

Objective of the IABIN Ecosystems Thematic Network

The objective of this Thematic Network is to 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).

Objectives:

1. Enhance the usefulness of ecosystem information for decision makers in government and civil society.
2. Recommend standards for IABIN Council approval for providing access to information on ecosystems that is distributed among multiple institutions.
3. Establish a hemispheric system for cross-referencing different ecosystem classifications.
4. Integrate ecosystem information with specimen and species information from other IABIN thematic networks.
5. Maintain the ecosystem information Thematic Network.

Key Issues:

The following issues represent the main challenges to IABIN in achieving the goal related to ecosystem information:

- Lack of widely accepted standards for ecosystem classification inhibits comparison of information from one region to another.
- Ecosystem information exists at multiple scales and resolutions.
- Inadequate geo-referencing of specimen and observation data to develop understanding of relationships between ecosystems and species distributions.
- Relatively little existing support for international collaboration on ecosystem data standards.
- Few existing tools that support analysis and interpretation of ecosystem data for decision-making.

Required Co financing. Institutions wishing to be considered for the Ecosystems Thematic Network Coordinating Institution (Ecosystems TN CI) should review the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) found on www.iabin.net to familiarize themselves with IABIN's institutional arrangements, co financing requirements, and reporting.

Proposed CIs must bring significant co financing resources to implement the TN. These technical and financial resources will be presented with each proposal that will also be evaluated on methodology, quality of key staff proposed, and relevant experience for the assignment. The contracted CI would agree to provide detailed quarterly co-financing

information according to cost guidelines established by the Secretariat. The co-financing information should be documented and should be open to potential audits. **Minimum co-financing for a CI must be at least 2:1, thus double the amount of the IABIN contribution. Proposals should include a detailed activities and financing plan for both the IABIN contribution and CI contribution. Activities may be further enhanced by the Matching Grant arm of IABIN. (See PIP and Annex 2 of this TORs.)**

Implementation

Ecosystems Thematic Network Timeframe

Activity	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
	1. Host workshop to analyze and prioritize ecosystem information requirements from representative user groups.					
2. Assemble a Technical Advisory Group to evaluate and adopt standards for ecosystem metadata and tools for cataloging ecosystem data sets.						
3. Establish expert teams to create an ecosystem reference standard to allow cross-referencing with other TNs of existing data at different scales allowing queries and searches.						
4. Achieve consensus on information use policies						
5. Develop Web services and user interfaces for integrated searches of ecosystem, species and specimen information						
6. Operate and maintain the ecosystem information system (license updates, consultation improvements)						
7. Evaluate selected regional projects to validate the usefulness of the ecosystem information system for decision making processes						
8. Coordinate communications with Network participants regarding advances and changes in protocols and tools						
9. Create and maintain an ecosystems expert database and directory						

These activities will be organized by a Coordinating Institution and the Technical Committee of Experts.

Products

1. A prioritized, annotated list of user types and their requirements
2. Evaluation of ecosystem information system in the context of ongoing regional projects, and recommendations for improvements to the information system
3. Metadata standards for ecosystem data approved by the IABIN Council and adopted
4. Tools for entering ecosystem data sets implemented by IABIN participants
5. Policies for the use of information accepted and documented
6. Online system for cross-referencing different ecosystem classifications.
7. Prototype tools for integrated searches of ecosystems, species and specimen information implemented

8. Training program for web administrators.
9. Processes in place to ensure sustainability of the ecosystem information system
10. On-line help system to report and explain advances and changes in protocols and tools
11. Ecosystems expert database and directory

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

Monitoring and evaluation of the overall project will be the responsibility of the OAS acting as Executing Agency, with the assistance of the IABIN Secretariat, the Coordinating Institutions, the World Bank, and other participants as appropriate. Relative to monitoring of co-financing, the Executing Agency, in conjunction with the Secretariat, will produce a yearly statement of changes in fund balance of the project, certified by the Treasurer of the executing agency, attesting to the accuracy and completeness of contributions by the Bank and disbursements by the executing agency, and further certification that the in-kind contribution amounts are consistent with the methodology agreed upon between the Bank and the executing agency. These yearly statements will be based in part by information, co financing data, and performance indicators supplied by the Coordinating Institutions.

The Coordinating Institution will furnish to the OAS and the IABIN Secretariat with Quarterly Technical Reports and Semester Reports (semi-annual progress) not later than 20 days after the end of the first calendar semester after the Contract start date. All Reports are due in Spanish and English (and preferably, but not obligatorily, in Portuguese also) that integrate the results of the monitoring and evaluation of the Contract activities performed, the progress achieved, and setting out the measures recommended to ensure the efficient carrying out of the Contract and the achievement of the objectives thereof during the following six-month period. These reports will document project progress to the IABIN Council and IABINfriends. All key IABIN documents and reports will be posted on www.iabin.net and distributed to the IABIN Council.

In summary the required reports are detailed in the Coordinating Institution Transfer Agreement (attached as Section 4) and will include:

Quarterly Technical Report (component-specific)

Semiannual Progress (Semester) Reports

Annual Operating Plan of the Coordinating Institution (AOP-CI)

Financial Monitoring Reports

Financial Audits

Final Report

4. Deadline for Submittal of Proposal

The IEC has requested that the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) manage the process of soliciting expressions of interest and managing the selection process, which however will remain under the authority of the IEC. The GS/OAS is the designated diplomatic host of IABIN and also manages an ongoing World Bank/GEF Project

in support of IABIN, under which it is expected that future funding will be available to support the ETN (in the form of a transfer of funds to the chosen CI).

RfPs must be received by **Monday, April 17, 2006** and should be addressed to Mr. Iván Valdespino, IABIN Secretariat Director (ivaldespino@iabin.net) and copied to Mr. Richard Huber, Principal Environmental Specialist at the OAS (rhuber@oas.org).

5. Selection Criteria for the RfP

Interested parties should submit a full proposal to become the CI for the ETN. In the RfP a potential CI should outline its interest and expertise in being the CI (as per requirements indicated in the PIP), its ability to bring together other institutions (signed letters or commitments requested at this time), and its capacity to bring to the table at least 2:1 of co-financing.

RfPs should include information on:

1. The organization's experience and competence relevant to the assignment.
2. Relevant technical experience of the institution or organization and its staff for becoming the CI for the ETN.
3. General academic qualifications of institution or organization's staff.
4. Capacity to develop tasks in the different IABIN sub-regions (sub-regional representation).
5. Knowledge and capacity to manage activities in IABIN's official languages.
6. Capacity and commitment to engage IABIN National Focal Points and local and national organizations, which are IABIN's partners, in the planning process and development of the ETN.
7. Proved capacity to establish collaboration with similar organizations based on the potential to complement each other and leverage additional resources.
8. Availability of co-financing (at least 2:1).

These criteria will allow the Technical Selection Committee, formed by members of the IEC (IABIN Executive Committee), IABIN Secretariat, and the GS/OAS, to choose the most appropriate institution with the most appropriate qualifications and references.

6. Cost Sharing Requirement

1. A **2:1 co-financing** is required from the CI for the establishment of the ETN.

7. Process for Choosing the Coordinating Institution (CI)

1. The IABIN Secretariat, with the IABIN Executive Committee (IEC) input, prepares a request for Expression of Interest (EoIs) from organizations (firms, NGOs, academic institutions) interested in becoming the CI of the IABIN ETN (Completed).
2. A Technical Selection Committee formed with members of the IEC, IABIN Secretariat, and the GS/OAS evaluates the EoIs and establishes a short list of those firms that possess the most relevant qualifications. (Completed).

3. A Request for Proposals (RfP) for the Selection of the CI and establishment of the ETN, including Terms of Reference (TORs), detailing the activities of the IABIN ETN is sent to the short-listed firms. (In process)
4. Institutions requested to submit a detailed proposal will be given a one month period to do so.
5. Proposals are evaluated by the Technical Selection Committee and a firm is selected for becoming the IABIN ETN Coordinating Institution.
6. A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) is signed between the newly selected CI and the IEC.
7. Concurrently with Step 5, the newly selected CI and the GS/OAS² begin negotiations on a Coordinating Institution (CI) Transfer Agreement to be signed between the CI and the GS/OAS, for the execution of the “Building IABIN” GEF Projects funds allocated for the IABIN PTN³. Under this agreement, the CI would become a partner with the OAS in the execution of the project and thus would be subject to the provisions of the GEF Trust Fund Grant Agreement that has been signed between the OAS and the World Bank for the “Building the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Project”.
8. A co-executing Transfer Agreement is signed between the CI and the GS/OAS as the Executing Agency. The co-executing Transfer Agreement will stipulate the work and products that the CI will be expected to deliver, the cofinancing that it will provide (at least a 2:1 match to the amount of the transfer of funds), and the financial arrangements of the Transfer.
9. Prior to signature, the CI Transfer Agreement is subject to World Bank no-objection, as defined in the GEF Trust Fund Grant Agreement.
10. Upon successful negotiations, the CI and OAS sign the CI Transfer Agreement.

8. Note

1. Government-owned enterprises may participate only if they can establish that they (i) are legally and financially autonomous and (ii) operate under commercial law.

9. Publication Date

March 17, 2006

Questions regarding this request for RfP may be directed to the contacts below no later than four (4) days before deadline for submittal of RfP.

Iván A. Valdespino
Director IABIN Secretariat
P.O. Box 0843-02390
Panama, Panama
 T: (507) 317-1994

² The Organization of American States is the Executing Agency for the World Bank/GEF “Building IABIN” GEF Project.

³ The RFP will also include information on the requirements for the execution of the “Building IABIN” GEF Projects funds allocated for the IABIN ETN. The CI Transfer Agreement to be signed between the CI and the GS/OAS will govern the use of such resources. The overall 3 year budget for GEF IABIN funds for the IABIN ETN is US\$250,000 with a co-financing requirement of at least US\$500,000. Direct investments of GEF project funds (providing training, paying for travel, etc.) is limited to countries that meet all of the following criteria: i) OAS-eligible Countries; i) GEF-eligible (e.g. Countries that have sent in the letter endorsing the GEF IABIN Project). Firms from Countries that have not endorsed the GEF project may complete RfPs.

F: (507) 317-1992
ivaldespino@iabin.net
<http://www.iabin.net>

Richard M. Huber
Principal Environmental Specialist
Sustainable Development and Environment
Organization of American States
1889 F. St., N.W., Suite 695
Washington, D.C. 20006
T+202-458-3227
F+202-458-3560
RHuber@oas.org

Annex 1 - TRACKING OF COUNTERPART FUNDING

Proposed Coordinating Institutions must bring significant co financing resources to implement the TN. These technical and financial resources will be presented with each proposal that will also be evaluated on methodology, quality of key staff proposed, and relevant experience for the assignment. The contracted CI would agree to provide detailed quarterly co-financing information according to cost guidelines established by the Secretariat. The co-financing information should be documented and should be open to potential audits. Minimum co-financing for a CI must be at least 2:1, thus double the amount of the IABIN contribution. Proposals should include a detailed activities and financing plan for both the IABIN contribution and CI contribution. Activities may be further enhanced by the Matching Grant arm of IABIN.

The following methodology has been designed to facilitate tracking co-financing.

A) Questionnaire posted in the Project's Website

Coordinating Institutions will have access to an Internet based questionnaire that will be posted in the Project's website, with simple questions that will walk the user through all the possible co financing categories for each project component. Coordinating Institutions will also be required to track counterpart financing of their institution and other partner organizations and institutions that benefit from capacity building.

Most answers will be available as a drop-down list that can be selected with a click of the mouse, and others will be blank spaces to be filled with information. Users will submit the form via the Internet directly to OAS and/or IABIN Secretariat (answers will arrive in a simple format via e-mail), where a person will review and input into an Access Database designed specifically to track cofinancing for the Project.

Below is a basic design of the questions and the screens that would appear as the user provides the relevant information. Drop-down list of answers will correspond to fields in the access database, which also follows the OAS chart of accounts. Reports will answer queries about cofinancing by component, country, institution, and category.

PAPER DESIGN OF VIRTUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Lines indicate a new screen.

Initial Screen:

- Statement thanking user for the information that he/she is about to provide
- Statement with instructions: (example: please provide information about the activities and expenses that your institution has funded as part of your co-financing commitment to the network. (exclude all funds provided by the project)

Country (drop-down list of 34 countries)

Institution (drop down list of 75 institutions)

Please select name of your institution – if not included select 'other' and add name in blank text box.

Component (select one of the four project components) (Note: at the end user will be able to return to this screen to provide information for additional components or to end session)

Example: User selects component 1 – Interoperability and Access to Data.

Type of Co-financing (drop-down list)

Personnel Costs (drop-down list for each one; see chart of accounts)

Travel

Documents

Equipment & Supplies

Building & Maintenance

External Service Contracts

Other Costs

D) Design of Access Database

Database will consist of the following four tables with relationships among all, so that it will be possible to generate reports in response to queries by country, component, institution or expenditure category.

Table 1 – Project Components

Cost Center 1	Interoperability and Access to Data
Cost Center 2	Data Content Creation
Cost Center 3	Tools for D-Making
Cost Center 4	Sustainability of IABIN
Cost Center 5	Project Administration

Table 2 – Expenditure Categories

50100	PERSONNEL COSTS
50400	TRAVEL
50500	DOCUMENTS
50600	EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES
50700	BUILDING & MAINTENANCE
50800	EXTERNAL SERVICE CONTRACTS
50900	OTHER COSTS

Table 3 – Countries

01	Antigua and Barbuda
02	Argentina
03	Bahamas
04	Barbados
05	Belize
06	Bolivia
07	Brazil
08	
09	Chile
10	Colombia
11	Costa Rica
12	
13	Dominica
14	Dominican Republic
15	Ecuador
16	El Salvador
17	Grenada
18	Guatemala
19	Guyana
20	Haiti
21	Honduras
22	Jamaica
23	Mexico

- 24 Nicaragua
- 25 Panama
- 26 Paraguay
- 27 Peru
- 28 St. Kitts and Nevis
- 29 Saint Lucia
St. Vincent and
- 30 Grenadines
- 31 Suriname
- 32 Trinidad and Tobago
- 33
- 34 Uruguay
- 35 Venezuela

Table 4 – Participating Institutions (will increase as necessary)

- 01 Asociación Boliviana para la Conservación – TROPICO (Bolivia)
- 02 Autoridad Nacional de Ambiente Panamá
- 03 BioNET International
- 04 Bird Life International
- 05 CaribHerp – Pennstate University (US-Caribbean)
- 06 CCAD
- 07 Centro de Estudios Conservacionistas (CECON), Universidad de San Carlos (Guatemala)
- 08 Centro de Malacología, Universidad Centroamericana de Managua (Nicaragua)
- 09 CIAT (Colombia)
- 10 Ciudad del Saber - Fundación (Panama)
- 11 Colección Boliviana de Fauna (Bolivia)
- 12 Commission For Environmental Cooperation
- 13 Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Flora y Fauna - Amigos de la Tierra (CODEFF) (Chile)
- 14 Conabio (Mexico)
- 15 Consortium for Caribbean (MCZ Harvard University) (US-Caribbean)
- 16 Convenio Andres Bello (CAB)
- 17 Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF) (Chile)
- 18 CRIA (Brazil)
- 19 Fundacion La Salle de Ciencias Naturales (FLASA) (Venezuela)
- 20 Fundación de Historia Natural Félix de Azara (Argentina)
Grupo de Conservación de Germoplasma ex situ de Raíces y Tuberosas Andinas (RTA's) Univ Ricardo
- 21 Palma
- 22 Escuela Politecnica Nacional del Ecuador
- 23 Fundacion Habitat
- 24 Guyra Paraguay
- 25 Herbario Nacional de Bolivia
- 26 Herbario Nacional de Ecuador
- 27 I3N (NBII) (USGS)
- 28 IABIN Focal Points of participating countries
- 29 IADIZA-CRICYT
- 30 INBio (Costa Rica)
- 31 Instituto Alexander von Humboldt (Colombia)
- 32 Instituto de Botánica Darwinion (Argentina)
- 33 Instituto Geográfico de Venezuela
- 34 MINAE Costa Rica
- 35 Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología de Venezuela
- 36 Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARENA) (Nicaragua)
- 37 Ministry of Environment Haiti
- 38 MIZA (Venezuela)
- 39 Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales (MACN) (Argentina)

- 40 Museo de la Plata -- Argentina
- 41 Museo de Zoología, Universidad de Costa Rica
- 42 Museo Entomológico de León (Nicaragua)
- 43 Museo Nacional de Costa Rica
- 44 Museo Nacional de Historia Natural (Chile)
- 45 National Biodiversity Network
- 46 NatureServe (Infonatura) (US)
- 47 NORAD
- 48 Organization of American States (OAS)
- 49 Secretariat Host
- 50 SERNA (Honduras)
- 51 Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (Chile)
- 52 Smithsonian Panamá
- 53 The Bahamas Environment, Science and Tech Commission (Ministry of health and env)
- 54 The Nature Conservancy
- 55 UNEP (GRID)
- 56 UNEP Caribbean CAR RCU
- 57 UNEP Mexico
- 58 Universidad Austral (Chile)
- 59 Universidad de Concepción (Chile)
- 60 Universidad de los Andes (CVULA)
- 61 Universidad de los Andes (ULABG) (Venezuela)
- 62 Universidad de Panamá
- 63 Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (Argentina)
- 64 Universidad Nacional del Nordeste - Fac. Ciencias (UNNE) - Colección herpetológica Corrientes
- 65 University of California, Davis (Information Center for the Environment)
- 66 University of Suriname
- 67 USGS/EROS Data Center
- 68 USGS/NBII
- 69 West Indian Whistling-Duck
- 70 Development Grant Facility (WB)
- 71 WB Colombia Disaster Management Project (WB)
- 72 WB Development Gateway
- 73 WB Env. SALs (Mexico, Brazil)
- 74 WB Honduras Disaster Vulnerability (support to SINIA)
- 75 WB Second Rural Municipality Project (support to SINIA)
- 76 WB/MBC/Dutch Trust Fund