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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Seventh meeting

Kuala Lumpur, 9-20 and 27 February 2004

Item 20.2 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT OF THE JOINT LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

INTRODUCTION

A. *Background*

1. In its decision VI/18, the Conference of the Parties urged the Executive Secretary to convene additional capacity-building workshops at the national, subregional and regional levels referred to in decision V/14 for clearing-house mechanism activities and training in support of national capacities to implement the Convention. Furthermore, the clearing-house mechanism, having successfully completed its information-exchange phase, is now able to focus on the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation, with an emphasis on capacity-building initiatives.
2. The Santa Cruz Summit of the Americas meeting of Heads of State, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 7 to 8 December 1996, established the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) to provide the networking information infrastructure (such as formats, protocols and standards) and biodiversity-information content required by the countries of the Americas to improve education and decision-making, particularly for issues at the interface of human development and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
3. Within its programme of work, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network seeks to provide the capacity to address critical issues at a regional level such as invasive alien species, migratory birds, amphibian declines, and the spread of diseases, among others.
4. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary and the IABIN Executive Council have organized the present meeting to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to efforts by the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation,

* UNEP/CBD/COP/7/1 and Corr.1.

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particularly in collaboration with established international thematic focal points and other relevant international initiatives and organizations

5. The organization of the meeting also responds to the recommendation of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism, made at its meetings of 11 March 2001, 11 November 2001, 10 April 2002 and 9 March 2003, that the Executive Secretary should focus on the use of the clearing-house mechanism to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach.

6. The meeting further supports recommendations made during the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), particularly recommendation VI/4, paragraph 22, which called for the clearing-house mechanisms to be used to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation.

B. Attendance

7. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the Latin America and Caribbean region, participants in the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, and those countries in the Americas that are members of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, were invited to nominate experts qualified in the fields of management of clearing-house mechanism issues, information-sharing systems, biodiversity-information networks and database-management, and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, and/or the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. Nominations were requested from the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network respectively on 9 July 2003. In response to that invitation, participants from the following countries were nominated by their respective focal points and attended the meeting: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Venezuela and Uruguay.

8. Representatives of the following governmental, bilateral donor and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the meeting as observers and/or resource persons:

(a) *Intergovernmental organizations active in information-exchange and technical and scientific cooperation issues:* Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of UNEP, Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), Organization of American States (OAS), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP -WCMC), World Bank/Global Environment Facility.

(b) *Governmental organizations:* Instituto del Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo Sustentable del Estado de Sonora, Mexico (IMADES), National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) (USA), Smithsonian Institution, United States Department of Energy Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

(c) *Non-governmental organizations:* AndinoNet, BioNet International, BirdLife International, Centro de Referência em Informação Ambiental (CRIA), ECOSUR (Mexico), Instituto de Ecología (Mexico), InBio (Costa Rica), Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network (IBIN), NatureServe, Oak Ridge National Laboratories, Pronatura Noroeste Mar de Cortes, Tulalip Tribes.

(d) *Industry:* Information International Associates, Nippon Koei Uk Co Ltd.

9. The full list of participants is contained in annex II to the present report.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

10. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 August 2003 by Dr. Jorge Soberón, on behalf of the Honourable Victor Lichtinger, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico. Dr. Sobéron thanked participants for their support of the meeting and stressed the need for a common vision throughout the region. He highlighted the need for greater harmonization among the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other similar organizations and initiatives. In closing, he wished participants a successful meeting.

11. Mr. Marcos Silva, Programme Officer, clearing-house mechanism of the Convention Secretariat, on behalf of Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, welcomed the participants to the meeting. After an introduction to the new phase of the clearing-house mechanism, he presented a brief summary on new initiatives to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation within the context of decisions of the Conference of the Parties. He then invited countries to use the meeting to identify their priority needs regarding capacities to participate in potential joint initiatives under the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. Mr. Silva concluded by expressing his gratitude to the Government of Belgium and the Global Environment Facility for providing financial support for the meeting.

12. Ms Gladys Cotter, Chair of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Council, welcomed participants to the meeting and expressed the need for a harmonized vision between the Inter-American Biodiversity Network and the clearing-house mechanism and other similar initiatives. She expressed her hope for a viable programme of work among different organizations and initiatives and stressed the need for optimization of resources.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Election of officers

13. At the 1st session of the meeting, on 12 August 2003, Dr. Jorge Sobéron of Mexico and Ms Gladys Cotter representing the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Council were elected to serve as co-Chairs and Dr. Linus Spencer Thomas of Grenada to serve as Rapporteur.

2.2. Adoption of agenda

14. The Joint Meeting adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda circulated in advance of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/LAC.Reg/1/1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of officers;
 - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
 - 2.3. Organization of work.

3. Promoting synergies among clearing-house mechanism national focal points, Inter-American Biodiversity Network focal points, Global Biodiversity Information Facility nodes, BioNet LOOPs and NatureServe conservation data centres among others.
4. Potential joint initiatives between the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and programmes in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention:
 - (a) Invasive alien species;
 - (b) Global taxonomy initiative and taxonomic authorities;
 - (c) Ecosystem approach;
 - (d) Protected areas
 - (e) Pollinators
5. Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the potential joint initiatives:
 - (a) Setting of priorities
 - (b) Harmonization of initiatives and activities;
 - (c) Potential roles and responsibilities;
 - (d) Planned activities;
 - (e) Strategies for the establishment of joint initiatives by clearing-house mechanism, Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives;
 - (f) Strategies for sustainable funding for joint initiatives implemented by the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives;
 - (g) Standards, formats and protocols to be used for the implementation of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network;
 - (h) Modifications to IABIN Project Implementation Plan.
6. Conclusions and recommendations.
7. Adoption of the report.
8. Closure of the meeting.

2.3. Organization of work

15. At its 1st session, on 12 August 2003, the Joint Latin America and Caribbean Regional Meeting on the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network approved

the proposed programme of work as contained in annex II to the annotations to the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/CHM/LAC.Reg/1/1/Add.1)

ITEM 3. PROMOTING SYNERGIES AMONG CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS, INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY NETWORK NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS, GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY NODES AND NATURE RESERVE CONSERVATION DATA CENTRES AMONG OTHERS.

Presentations

16. Under agenda item 3, Mr. Silva gave a presentation on activities of the clearing-house mechanism stressing their relevancy to decisions arising from the fifth and sixth Conference of the Parties. In particular, Mr. Silva described new initiatives undertaken by the clearing-house mechanism in support of technical and scientific collaboration, particularly in support of the programme areas and cross-cutting areas of the Convention. His description of activities focused on invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and Article 8(j), traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. He also discussed these activities within the context of the establishment of international thematic focal points pursuant to item (c) in annex II to decision V/14 and decisions from the sixth Conference of the Parties. Mr. Silva then introduced work by the clearing-house mechanism to promote the use of common formats, protocols and standards, based on a document from the informal meeting on formats, protocols and standards for improved exchange of biodiversity information, held in Montreal on 19-20 February 2003. He concluded by stressing the clearing-house mechanism's strong new focus on technical and scientific collaboration. Finally, he emphasized that the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation is the primary goal of the clearing-house mechanism, and that participants should reflect on how to more effectively implement joint initiatives with other organizations and initiatives, under this broad mandate.

17. The co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited participants to the joint meeting to make comments on the above presentation.

18. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by the participants from Colombia, Canada and the Organization of American States.

19. Participants noted in particular the new focus of the clearing-house mechanism in support of Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention and welcomed its efforts to initiate joint initiatives with the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and other initiatives.

20. The co-Chair, Ms Cotter, then introduced issues related to the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network.

21. Following her introduction, two presentations, by the World Bank and by the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network respectively, were made on this topic.

22. Mr. Douglas Graham representing the World Bank, gave a presentation on funding by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. He discussed the development of the project through a Project Development Facility (PDF) and the role of the Organization of American States as the executing agency. The institutional structure of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network was discussed, as well as the respective roles of the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank and the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Council. The important stages in the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network project, especially those of relevancy to the clearing-house

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mechanism, were highlighted and explained. He also highlighted the support offered by the World Bank for the development and implementation of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. He reiterated that the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network in collaboration with the clearing-house mechanism could serve as a model in the development of regional networks.

23. Mr. Eric Van Praag, representing the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, gave a review of the programme of work of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network subregional specialists. He described the seven different regions in the Western Hemisphere composing the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. He also highlighted the plan of work encompassing phases I and II of the project. More specifically, the sub-regional specialists compiled a list of biodiversity related data throughout the Americas. In addition, information was gathered on the protocols used throughout the Americas to exchange biodiversity-related information. A review of the level of technical development of each region was presented including each respective regions needs and existing resources.

Discussion

24. During his introduction of issues for discussion under item 3, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, highlighted the relevant topics, based on documents from the fifth and sixth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), relevant meetings of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network programme of work. He proposed that the joint meeting should discuss and propose ways and means to ensure collaboration and sharing expertise among the different mechanisms and initiatives. He also invited participants to describe the level of development of national clearing-house mechanisms, Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network focal points, Global Biodiversity Information Facility nodes, and the existing structures to facilitate cooperation and promote joint initiatives and exchange of expertise with a view to strengthen national capacities.

25. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by the participants from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Haïti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, AndinoNet, Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network, and NatureServe.

26. There was general agreement regarding the need for the Latin America and Caribbean region to increase capacity with regard to new information technologies. Factors identified affecting full and effective participation by national clearing-house mechanisms, nodes, conservation data centers and Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network participants in the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention included lack of technical expertise, lack of access to new information technologies and lack of sustainability. There was also agreement that regional integration of information resources should be encouraged. Participants agreed on the need to strengthen capacities of national clearing-house mechanisms and facilitate cooperation with other similar initiatives and projects, particularly those that are regional and international in scope.

27. There was also general agreement regarding the importance of assessing the progress of implementing joint initiatives, at both the national and the regional levels and of the overriding need to strengthen capacities of national clearing-house mechanisms to ensure effective and equitable participation in the programme areas of the Convention and in joint initiatives. The meeting further noted the need to:

(a) Better ascertain technical capacity, particularly with regard to issues associated with the development and sustainability of infrastructure so as to ensure the sustainability of joint projects;

- (b) Increase awareness and visibility of respective mechanisms and initiatives among national policy makers and its stakeholders;
- (c) Exchange experiences and promote improvement of regional cooperation;
- (d) Articulate and define the respective roles and responsibilities of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and other initiatives;
- (e) Ensure development, operation and interoperability among national clearing-house mechanisms, Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, Global Biodiversity Information Facility nodes, NatureServe conservation data centers (CDCs) and BioNet LOOPs (Locally Organised and Operated Partnerships), and synthesize lessons learned from successful national clearing-house mechanisms and Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network focal points.

28. There was strong agreement that a Latin America and Caribbean regional clearing-house mechanism and Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Hub could facilitate greatly sharing of expertise and synergizing new initiatives, particularly with regard to the facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation within the context of programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention. There was general agreement technical and scientific collaboration should be the primary role of such collaboration.

29. Following the above discussion, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to give a presentation on the goals, organization and possibilities for synergies with the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international and regional initiatives.

30. Dr. Christoph Haeuser discussed the objectives of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and described its structure and projects. He also highlighted the role of its working groups, and the responsibilities and actions of the participant nodes. With respect to participant nodes, he described their role as a data provider and their efforts to implement data standards and software. As well, participant nodes should create and establish new data. Mr. Hannu Saarenmaa described the architecture and protocols recommended by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility for the exchange of information. He also described the organization of seven regional training workshops for data providers and custodians.

31. At the 2nd session of the meeting, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited questions from participants with respect to the presentation from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility.

32. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by the participants from Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network and Organization of American States,

33. Participants agreed on the need for the clearing-house mechanism, Global Biodiversity Information Facility and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network to optimize resources and to harmonize activities, with a view to assist Parties to overcome the taxonomic impediment and implementation of the Global Taxonomic Initiative. It was stressed that regional initiatives should harmonize as much as possible information exchange architectures.

34. Following discussion on the above presentation, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited Mr. Alberto Oriza-Barrio to give a presentation on the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Project Implementation Plan.

36. The presentation by Mr. Oriza-Barrio discussed the main points of the draft Project Implementation Plan submitted to the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network focal points. In his presentation, the following items were discussed: establishment of a Hub to carry out the work of Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network; interoperability; implementation of an Internet-based portal; access to and use of biodiversity information through the development of project networks; fundraising by the Hub and creation of a foundation for financial sustainability; and the proposal for the administration of the project by the Organization of American States as Executing Agency.

35. Following the presentation, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited participants to comment on the above presentations.

36. Comments were made from the representatives from Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, the Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network, Organization of American States.

ITEM 4. DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES BETWEEN THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMMES IN SUPPORT OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION ACROSS THE PROGRAMME AND CROSS-CUTTING AREAS OF THE CONVENTION.

37. Agenda item 4 was considered at the 3rd session of the meeting, on 13 August 2003. The following items were discussed:

- (a) Invasive alien species;
- (b) Global taxonomy initiative and taxonomic authorities;
- (c) Ecosystem approach;
- (d) Protected areas;
- (e) Pollinators.

38. Following an introduction of the item 4 by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited participants to open discussion.

39. Under item 4, element (a), comments were made by representatives from Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and the Global Invasive Species Programme.

40. Comments related to item 4, element (b) were made by the representatives from Colombia, Mexico, BioNet International, Centro de Referência em Informação Ambiental, Global Biodiversity Information Facility, NatureServe.

41. Under item 4, element (c), comments were made by representatives from Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Haïti and the Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network.

42. Following the ensuing discussion, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, then invited participants to the meeting to discuss item 4, element (d). Comments were made by representatives from Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, the United States of America, Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of UNEP, and the Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network, NatureServe.

43. Under item 4, element (e), comments were made by representatives from Brazil, Ecuador, Jamaica, Nicaragua, United States of America, AndinoNet, Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network and the World Bank.

44. There was agreement that collaborative initiatives must be established with a view to strengthen activities of national clearing-house mechanisms. Participants also expressed the view that better integration of regional resources is required for national clearing-house mechanisms to more effectively assist Parties in implementing the Convention. There was also agreement that partnerships with regional and international initiatives strengthening national clearing-house mechanisms should aim at implementing Convention-related activities at the national, sub-regional and regional level.

45. Participants strongly endorsed work by the clearing-house mechanism in support of the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, particularly with regard to invasive alien species and the Global Taxonomy Initiative. The development of a CBD Controlled Vocabulary was noted and its use as metadata encouraged. The view was expressed that the clearing-house mechanism should act as the regional coordinator, linking different initiatives to work together toward common objectives.

46. Finally, there was strong endorsement that all activities should explicitly support decisions made by the Conference of the Parties and assist Parties to more effectively implement the Convention.

**ITEM 5. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS
RELATED TO THE POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES**

47. Agenda item 5 was considered at the 3rd session of the meeting, on 13 August 2003. The co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, proposed that discussion under this agenda item during this session should cover elements (a)-(e):

- (a) Setting of priorities;
- (b) Harmonization of initiatives and activities;
- (c) Potential roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Planned activities;
- (e) Strategies for the establishment of joint initiatives by clearing-house mechanism, Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives.

48. Following the above introduction, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited participants to make comments on the above elements.

49. Comments were made by participants from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, AndinoNet, and the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of UNEP.

50. There was general agreement on the need to prioritize actions and develop inventories of national and regional resources. There was also general agreement for the need of horizontal cooperation in the region with regard to strengthening activities by national clearing-house mechanisms. Participants also stressed the need to develop criteria to evaluate accomplishments of national clearing-house mechanisms and endorsed the view that all Parties should develop clearing-house mechanism national focal points, pursuant to paragraph 15 of decision III/4 and paragraph 1 of decision VI/18. Participants discussed the

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need to develop websites in support of national clearing-houses, especially within the context of information exchange.

51. Before introducing the next elements for discussion, the co-Chair, Dr. Soberón, invited the representative from NatureServe, Ms Mary Klein, to make a presentation on the role of NatureServe as an international thematic focal point under the clearing-house mechanism pursuant to annex II (c) of decision V/14. She stressed the work of NatureServe in the region and described its accomplishments and projects in support of the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention. She invited meeting participants to discuss with NatureServe potential projects and initiatives.

52. Discussion continued on agenda item 5 at the 4th session of the meeting on 13 August 2003. The co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited discussion on the following elements:

(a) Strategies for sustainable funding for joint initiatives implemented by the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives and selection of an Inter-American Biodiversity Information Hub;

(b) Standards, formats and protocols to be used for the implementation of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the strengthening of national clearing-house mechanisms;

(c) Modifications to IABIN Project Implementation Plan.

90. Comments under item 5, element f, were made by Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Organization of American States, Smithsonian Institution, and the World Bank.

91. Participants suggested that national clearing-house mechanisms should discuss the possibility of developing a PDF proposal to the Global Environment Facility to establish a regional clearing-house mechanism, and to ensure sustainability of initiatives and projects proposed during the meeting.

92. Following the comments, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, also requested that Mr. Richard Huber, representing the Organization of American States, give a presentation on the role of the Organization of American States as the Executing Agency for the Global Environment Facility PDF grant.

93. Mr. Richard Huber spoke on the Organization of American States as the executing agency for the implementation of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Project Implementation Plan. He highlighted the Organization of American States experience in Global Environment Facility project implementation and described resources available for this project. He concluded by describing the administrative infrastructure available in support of the project.

94. Following the above presentation, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited organizations to give presentations on their capacities to serve as the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Hub. Two presentations were made by institutions interested in hosting the Hub: The Organization of American States and a presentation by a partnership of the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia," the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) and Information International Associates (IIa).

95. Representing the Organization of American States, Mr. Huber made a presentation on a proposal for the location of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Hub, and its administration. He described the benefits of establishing a rotating Hub and discussed the offer by the Resident Mission of the Organization of American States in Uruguay to host the Hub for a period of three years. He concluded by discussing the potential participation of the Uruguayan clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network focal point in the activities of the Hub.

96. The partnership between the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia,” the National Biological Information Infrastructure and Information International Associates offered its proposal for the hosting of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Hub. Issues pertaining to support and administration were presented. Speakers representing the different partners described their respective roles and responsibilities.
97. Comments on the above presentations were made by Colombia, Ecuador, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela.
98. The co-Chair, Ms Cotter, then invited discussion on the draft document “Proposal solicitation, review and selection process for the Host Organization for the IABIN Secretariat.”
99. Comments on the above document were made by Chile, Haïti, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of UNEP.
100. At the fifth session of the meeting on 14 August 2003, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, requested nominations for three positions in the Inter-American Biodiversity Network Executive Council.
101. Peru submitted nominations for Costa Rica, Ecuador and Argentina. The nominations were seconded by Mexico and Colombia. Participants to the meeting approved the nominations and welcomed the new members to the Inter-American Biodiversity Network Executive Council.
102. Agenda item 4 (g) was considered at the sixth session of the meeting on 14 August 2003. In her introduction to this topic of discussion, Ms Cotter invited Mr. Mike Frame, representing the National Biological Information Infrastructure to present standards, formats and protocols recommended by the clearing-house mechanism and used in the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network.
103. In his presentation, Mr. Frame described the proposed architecture of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and its use of standard protocols, including XML and web services. He stressed that the clearing-house mechanism Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity-related Information, held in Montreal from 19 to 20 February 2002 offered guidance in the choice and application of these protocols. Mr. Frame suggested that a working group be established to encompass stakeholders, including representatives from the clearing-house mechanism, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and other sub-regional, regional and international initiatives and organizations to further develop the use of these protocols.
104. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by representatives from Argentina, Colombia, Peru the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network and the Smithsonian Institution.
105. Participants agreed that standards and protocols described are sufficiently flexible for broad cooperation and implementation of interoperable systems. The view was also expressed that these protocols should complement work by the clearing-house mechanism and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility toward a fully interoperable system. As well, formats, protocols and standards should support implementation of paragraph 5 of decision VI/18.
106. Following the above discussion, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited Mr. Juan Bello from Colombia to give a presentation on information exchange systems. He discussed existing standards and protocols and their use in the standardization of biological information. He also described the use of metadata standards on biological databases. He concluded by describing issues associated with taxonomic control and authorities and the development of a taxonomic catalogue.

107. On completion of the above presentation, comments were made by participants from Argentina, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Venezuela, Organization of American States, and the World Bank.

108. Participants strongly endorsed adherence to and use of standard protocols to promote the exchange of information and facilitate interoperability among disparate systems.

109. At the end of the fifth session of the meeting on 14 August 2003, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited participants to form a contact group to discuss informally and in greater detail the technical issues associated with formats, protocols and standards in the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and to discuss interoperability with national clearing-house mechanisms.

110. At the sixth session of the meeting on 14 August 20-03, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited Mr. Mike Frame, to present results of the discussion.

111. Mr. Frame presented views expressed with regard to use of protocols and the need to adhere to these protocols to facilitate interoperability. He also summarized the view that a technical group with representation from all organizations and initiatives should be established to further develop these issues.

112. Following his summary, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter requested participants in the contact group to provide the co-Chairs with terms of reference in the near future for such a technical group, so that it may be established and begin work in parallel with the further development of the Project Implementation Plan. Meeting participants endorsed the above proposal.

113. Following the above presentation, the co-Chair, Ms Cotter, invited discussion on item 4 element (h). With regard to this item, comments were requested on the Project Implementation Plan of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, including increased funding, timelines for the establishment of the Hub and the executing agency, agreement on the focus of the Project Implementation Plan and the products resulting from this project. Ms Cotter also requested representatives of national clearing-house mechanisms to express their views with regard to national needs and priorities.

114. Comments on the above were made by representatives from Argentina, Colombia, Haiti, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Organization of American States and the World Bank.

115. Participants expressed different views with regard to increasing funding prior to the finalization of the Project Implementation Plan. It was decided to shorten the timelines related to the development of the project to three years. It was also decided to request the World Bank to explore opportunities for increased funding. On completion of the three-year implementation period, it was recommended to review the progress of the project with a view to developing a proposal in support of a project larger in scope. Participants also agreed to contract a consultant to further develop the Project Implementation Plan. It was further agreed that the project would be submitted to the World Bank on 31 December 2003. Finally, participants were of the opinion that the Project Implementation Plan should explicitly state its actions to strengthen the capacities of national clearing-house mechanisms.

116. With regard to the focus of the Project Implementation Plan, the view was expressed that it should, in close collaboration with the clearing-house mechanism, encompass the issues of access to and dissemination of biological diversity information throughout the region, and, in light of this broad mandate, it should clearly identify its objectives and development. Discussion on development of products expressed the view that they should support work on the programme areas and cross-cutting issues discussed during this meeting, especially if they supported the Convention programme of work. The view also was expressed that digitization of collections should be a high priority. As well, it was stressed that products should reinforce synergies among clearing-house mechanisms and the Inter-

American Biodiversity Information Network while also reinforcing activities under the Convention's clearing-house mechanism.

117. On conclusion of the above meeting, Dr. Leonard Hirsch, representing the Smithsonian Institution gave a presentation on the upcoming Summit of the Americas and discussed the need to present issues related to the development of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and strengthening of national clearing-house mechanisms at that meeting.

ITEM 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

118. Agenda item 5 was considered at the 6th session of the meeting, on 14 August 2003. The item was introduced by the Chair, who invited the Rapporteur to present the recommendations. Following discussion, the Meeting adopted the recommendations, which are attached to the present report as annex I.

ITEM 6. OTHER RELEVANT ITEMS

119. Participants took up agenda item 6 at the 6th session of the meeting, on 14 April 2003. Experts were also invited to raise and discuss other matters related to the subject-matter of the meeting.

120. There were no other matters raised under the item.

ITEM 7. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

121. The present report was adopted at the sixth session of the meeting, on 14 August 2003, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/XXX), and taking into account amendments made by participants, on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be completed by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

122. The co-Chairs declared the Joint Latin America and Caribbean Regional Meeting on the Clearing-House Mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network: Building Partnerships Through Effective Networking closed at 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, 14 August 2003.

Annex I

CONCLUSIONS OF THE JOINT LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

I. Item 3: Promoting synergies among clearing-house mechanism national focal points, Inter-American Biodiversity Network national focal points, Global Biodiversity Information Facility nodes, and NatureServe conservation data centres among others.

Objectives	Partners	Activities/actions	Time-frames	Capacity needs	Indicators
<p>National CHMs are strengthened and collaborating effectively in the region and with other international initiatives and organizations;</p> <p>Activities of the clearinghouse mechanism with IABIN, GBIF and other sub-regional, regional and international initiatives and organizations are harmonized, and mutually beneficial;</p> <p>Cooperation between the clearinghouse mechanism and other initiatives and organizations lead to optimization of resources and expertise;</p> <p>Participation is equitable among national CHMs;</p> <p>Viable products result from</p>	<p>Primary data providers;</p> <p>Indigenous and local communities</p> <p>CHM National Focal Points</p> <p>IABIN participants</p> <p>GBIF Nodes</p> <p>NatureServe CDCs</p> <p>BioNet LOOPS</p> <p>BirdLife International</p> <p>Global Invasive Species Programme</p> <p>UNEP-WCMC</p>	<p>Request the CHM to coordinate an informal group with representatives from major sub-regional, regional and international initiatives to harmonize activities, improve communication and discuss the sharing of resources and report to their constituencies;</p> <p>Organize training workshops and seminars</p> <p>Draft a joint report describing and articulating the synergies and differences between the CHM and other initiatives;</p> <p>Develop cooperative programmes to digitize collections;</p> <p>When linking datasets, ensure that it meet the needs of a wide range of users;</p> <p>When reaching out to community of users, ensure that their needs are known;</p>	<p>6 months</p> <p>1 year</p> <p>SBSTTA 10</p> <p>1 year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Effective coordination at the national sub-regional and regional levels among different mechanisms, networks and initiatives;</p> <p>Technical and scientific workshops, handbooks, guidelines and toolkits;</p> <p>Sub-regional and regional mechanisms to share resources and expertise (according to national needs)</p> <p>Adequate resources to ensure sustainability of projects and products</p>	<p>The CBD CHM is able to assist in the coordination of sub-regional, regional activities through an informal group which meets and communicates regularly (electronically/face-to-face) to discuss issues, share information and inform their constituencies</p> <p>Sub-regional and regional strategy to optimize initiatives among national CHMs;</p> <p>National, sub-regional and regional CHMs are mutually supportive;</p> <p>Well defined roles and responsibilities among the national CHMs and other initiatives and organizations;</p> <p>Mutually beneficial and supportive national, sub-regional and regional programmes;</p> <p>National CHMs are more effectively assisting Parties to fulfil obligations under the Convention;</p> <p>Indigenous and local communities are</p>

Objectives	Partners	Activities/actions	Time-frames	Capacity needs	Indicators
<p>increased synergies and collaboration</p> <p>Steady increase in repatriation of data to countries;</p> <p>Activities are supportive of 2010 goals.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration should be undertaken within the context of the objectives of the Convention and COP decisions and with national clearinghouse mechanisms needs</p>		<p>More effectively involve traditional and local communities in the development of joint programmes and in the elaboration of new networks having regard to ethical issues pertaining to traditional knowledge</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>		<p>involved in joint initiatives and in the development of new programmes;</p> <p>The data services respond to the needs of the community;</p> <p>A joint integrated directory of national, sub-regional and regional biodiversity information resources (institutions, datasets, experts) is made available;</p>
		<p>Integrate ongoing projects developing directories on biodiversity resources and ensure their interoperability;</p>	<p>1 year</p>		
		<p>Develop joint programmes addressing capacity-building needs;</p>	<p>1 year</p>		

II. Potential joint initiatives between the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and programmes in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention.

Objectives	Themes	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
<p>Joint activities strengthen national CHM initiatives in support of Art. 8(h) of the CBD, decisions V/8 and VI/23</p> <p>Activities among different initiatives and the clearing-house mechanism are harmonized and mutually supportive;</p> <p>National CHMs have capacity to assist Parties to manage invasive alien species</p>	Invasive alien species	Collaborate with projects such as IABIN's I3N pursuant to paragraph 22 of decision VI/23,;	Resources to establish Joint coordinating group;	Ongoing	The clearinghouse mechanism of the CBD and national CHMs are actively involved in the development of I3N and able to strengthen national capacities
		Make available spatial data, e.g. occurrence and distribution data;	Resources for the digitization of collections;	1 year	Different datasets of spatial data are available over the Internet and interoperable
		Expand cooperation to make data from projects such as I3N and the Global Invasive Species Information Network interoperable with spatial data using XML and other protocols;	Expertise and resources to link different datasets;	Ongoing	I3N and the GISP with the CHM have a programme to make spatial data interoperable through XML and agreed upon standards and protocols
		Review and systematize experiences of such joint projects of experiences and knowledge;	Technical knowledge to implement standard and protocols is made available;	1 year	Information on best case studies of joint initiatives are made available
		Increase sub-regional and regional cooperation among national CHMs to raise capacity with regard to IAS;		Ongoing	Sub-regional, regional programmes are developed and operational
		Improve on tools such as the I3N cataloguer to assist in implementation of activities;		1 Year	The I3N cataloguer is improved and more widely used
		Assist Parties to make available information on the rate of invasion and economic, environmental and cultural impacts of invasives alien species.		1 year	Information on the rate of invasion and environmental, economic and cultural impacts of invasive alien species is made available

Objectives	Themes	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
<p>Activities support COP decisions V/9 and VI/8</p> <p>National CHMs are able to develop and implement activities in support of GTI related programmes</p>	<p>Global taxonomy Initiative</p>	<p>Develop initiatives pursuant GTI's operational objectives in decision VI/8 and highlight the costs associated with the taxonomic impediment;</p>	<p>Availability of future and current taxonomic expertise;</p> <p>Resources and expertise is made available</p>	Ongoing	<p>National CHMs develop national, sub-regional and regional initiatives in support of the GTI and increase taxonomic expertise in the GRULAC region</p>
		<p>National CHMs should link with GTI NFPs to assist with work pertaining to invasive alien species;</p>	<p>to national CHMs to develop joint capacity building activities;</p> <p>Resources are made available to promote relationships with available national taxonomic expertise to assist national CHMs in building capacities;</p>	1 year	<p>Communication mechanisms and information is shared between national CHMs and GTI NFPs and links with programmes pertaining to invasive alien species are established</p>
		<p>Collaborate with BioNet and regional initiatives such as the Integrated Taxonomic Information System in development of GTI related capacity building activities (pursuant to operational objectives of decision VI/8)</p>	<p>Resources to develop checklists and catalogues;</p>	Ongoing	<p>Items in the GTI related to capacity building and joint initiatives are operationalized</p>
		<p>Link BioNet LOOPs with national CHMs</p>		Ongoing	<p>BioNet LOOPs share expertise and strengthen national CHMs</p>
		<p>Each national CHM establish relationships with national taxonomic experts and better involve them in the development of taxonomic catalogues and acquire required resources for this endeavour;</p>		2 years	<p>Relationships are operationalized and established with taxonomic experts with a view to develop needed taxonomic catalogues</p>
		<p>Develop, subject to available resources, a Flora of the Americas checklist within the GTI and Global Plant Conservation Strategy and develop a checklist of pollinator bees;</p> <p>Work with the GTI to identify priorities in the region in collaboration with museums, institutions, and students.</p>		3 years	<p>Checklists are developed and made available</p>
				Ongoing	<p>Relationships are established in support of the GTI programme of work</p>

Objectives	Themes	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
<p>National CHMs are able to assist Parties to implement decisions V/6 and VI/12;</p> <p>Partnerships are established to strengthen national CHMs to assist in initiatives related to the ecosystem approach</p>	Ecosystem approach	Use national CHMs to assist in technology transfer and promote sub-regional, regional cooperation pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision V/6;	Resources to assist national CHMs in developing mechanisms for technology transfer;	Ongoing	National CHMs Initiatives in support of technology transfer are operational; sub-regional, regional cooperation on ecosystems is established
		Exchange information on success stories, expertise and projects pursuant to paragraph 4 of decision V/6;	Resources for the development of tools to create and further develop national and sub-regional, regional databases on protected areas;	2 year	A sub-regional and regional database on best case stories is available
		Use national CHMs to identify protected areas and areas requiring restoration through the use of the ecosystem approach and develop inventories of bilateral and regional projects;	Resources to involve more effectively indigenous and local communities;	2 years	A national, sub-regional and regional system identifying protected areas is made available (in collaboration with existing initiatives)
		Use CHMs to identify national, sub-regional, and regional priority areas, biological corridors ecoregions, and transborder areas;	Resources to assist national CHMs to jointly develop classification systems;	2 years	National CHMs identify priority areas, biological corridors, ecoregions and transborder areas;
		Take measures to involve indigenous and local communities to develop information exchange systems pursuant to decision VI/18 paragraph 5;	Resources to develop and use systems to visualize data;	Ongoing	Indigenous communities are involved actively in activities of national CHMs
		Collaborate with IABIN and other initiatives on classification of ecosystems and collaborate to standardize classifications;	Resources to encourage sub-regional and regional integration of existing ecosystem maps into one system;	2 years	Joint projects related to classification are developed
		Collaborate on ways to visualize data;		2 years	Systems to visualize data are available at the sub-regional and regional level
		Collaborate to integrate existing ecosystem maps into one system;		3 years	An integrated system of ecosystem maps is made available
		Collaborate in the development of decision support tools;		2 years	National CHMs collaborate in the development of decision support tools.

Objectives	Themes	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
<p>National CHMs are able to assist Parties in support of programmes pertaining to protected areas;</p> <p>Partnerships are established to strengthen national CHMs with issues related to protected areas;</p>	Protected areas	Compile and consolidate existing identification guides to species into digital format and support the development of new guides.	Resources to develop electronic guides to species;	3 years	Identification guides are available in electronic format
		Harmonize national, sub-regional and regional activities on protected areas;	Resources to assist the region in harmonizing activities;	Ongoing	Sub-regional and regional activities are harmonized; Initiatives among the CBD CHM and other initiatives are harmonized
		Assist in the development of criteria and classification system for protected areas and make this information available and information on the use of such resources;	Resources to more actively involve indigenous and local communities;	3 years	Criteria and classification systems are developed
		Assist indigenous and local communities, when requested and as appropriate to national legislation, to develop information management systems to support the management of sacred sites and land use.	Resources to develop systems to visualize data on protected areas and tools to track invasives;	Ongoing	Indigenous and local communities are involved actively in national CHM activities
		Use and share available tools such as GIS to share information on national, sub-regional and regional risks to protected areas;		2 years	GIS tools are used to share information
		Assist in the development of monitoring tools for use to track invasive species in protected areas;		3 years	National CHMs assist in the development of monitoring tools
		Strengthen links with BirdLife International to identify important bird areas;		Ongoing	National CHMs links with international initiatives and international thematic focal points are strengthened
National CHMs assist actively Parties in implementing obligations under the Convention	Pollinators	Collaborate with IABIN and others in the development of information tools on pollinators;	Resources to develop sub-regional, regional programmes and activities;	Ongoing	Collaborative projects are established between national CHMs and international initiatives

Objectives	Themes	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
related to pollinators; Partnerships are established to strengthen national CHM focal points		Develop a sub-regional and regional programme on pollinators taking into account the Convention's programme and those of IABIN, FAO and the GBIF;	Resources to develop interactive keys and sub-regional, regional checklists; Resources to assist indigenous and local communities to activities in this theme	2 years	Sub-regional, regional programme is established
		National CHMs assist in the develop interactive keys, a regional checklist for pollinators and translate materials		3 years	Interactive keys and regional checklists are developed and made available
		Take into account indigenous and local communities knowledge in regards to plants with cultural significance, and, subject to available resources, develop indicator systems to evaluate risks to cultural resources.		Ongoing	Indigenous and local communities are involved actively

III. Regional Needs to Implement Effectively Recommendations Related to The Potential Joint Initiatives

Objectives	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
<p>Region has established sub-regional, regional programmes and mechanisms to assist national CHMs in developing and implementing initiatives in support of the implementation of the Convention;</p> <p>National CHMs are better integrated and able to initiate joint programmes;</p> <p>A regional CHM is established and able to enter into partnerships with international organizations and initiatives</p> <p>Inter-operability of information among different initiatives is accomplished among the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility among others.</p>	Setting of priorities:	<p>Resources to undertake activities in support of:</p> <p>development of inventories;</p> <p>identification of resources and user groups;</p> <p>compiling data on accomplishments at the national level;</p> <p>identifying partners;</p> <p>developing and improving national CHM websites;</p> <p>developing evaluative criteria for national CHMs and assisting national and sub-regional, regional data custodians</p>		
	Develop inventories to catalogue resources;		3 years	Inventories are developed and made available
	Use national CHMs to increase (horizontal) cooperation in the region;		Ongoing	National CHMs have effective cooperative programmes
	Identify user groups who will benefit from use of biodiversity in the context of sustainable use;		1 year	User groups are identified
	Assist in the development of means to evaluate risks to biodiversity; What has a Party or Government has accomplished in implementing the CBD;		3 years	National CHMs participate in the development of evaluative risk criteria; Criteria for evaluating accomplishments of national CHMs are developed
	Define who are the potential financial, technical and expert partners to strengthen the national CHMs; Develop a CHM website where not available		1 year	Partners are identified. CHMs are strengthened and all National CHMs have a website
	Develop ways to assist in the evaluation of activities of national CHMs;		2 years	Criteria for the evaluation of activities by national CHMs are developed
	Strengthen sub-regional, regional and national data custodians to administer and make available their data		1 year	Data custodians have the means to better administer their data
	Harmonization of initiatives and activities:	<p>Resources to develop and operationalize a regional CHM</p> <p>Resources to develop a</p>	3 years	Regional CHM is operational
	Develop a regional CHM;			

Objectives	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
	Develop a pilot project to interconnect national focal points at the sub-regional, regional level and promote synergies through participation in technical working groups, such as the proposed IABIN Technical Working Group and the GBIF technical committees;	programme to interconnect national CHMs; Resources to initiate a programme to digitize collections (in collaboration with existing initiatives, i.e., the IABIN, GBIF)	2 years	National CHMs can search, locate and retrieve information from their respective websites
	Test new systems developed under cooperative activities to illustrate progress;	Programmes to develop databases on best-case studies	1-3 years	Operational initiatives are highlighted and described through national CHMs
	Compare work programmes with existing initiatives to assist in the harmonization of activities;		2 years	A database on work programmes is developed at the national and sub-regional, regional levels
	Collaborate in the digitization of collections;		1-10 years	Criteria is develop to measure the size of digitized collections
	Publish best-case studies;			A database on best-case studies is developed at the sub-regional, regional level.
	Potential roles and responsibilities: A document on roles and responsibilities of the national CHMs and regional CHM is drafted; A document on the roles and responsibilities of the CBD clearing-house mechanism, IABIN, GBIF and others is drafted.			1 year
	Planned activities: Harmonize information exchange protocols among partners;	Resources to make data interoperable through commonly adhered to formats, standards and protocols; Resources to link health data with biodiversity data at the regional level.	3 years	National focal points adhere to commonly agreed to formats, protocols and standards and are interoperable among themselves and with other initiatives
	Develop feedback mechanisms to assist in the optimization of activities and procedures;		1 year	Feedback mechanisms are developed

Objectives	Activities/actions	Capacity needs	Time-frames	Indicators
	Share data and information on the links between biodiversity and health and poverty elimination.		3 years	Health data is integrated with biodiversity data
	<p>Strategies for the establishment of joint initiatives by CHM, IABIN and others:</p> <p>Develop well defined harmonized activities to promote national capacities to implement the CBD;</p>	National CHMs must have the resources to function adequately	1 year	Activities are developed
	Identify synergies among IABIN and national CHMs;		1 year	CHM NFPs are collaborating with IABIN NFPs
	Develop ways to evaluate progress of collaborative activities;		1 year	Criteria to evaluate collaborative activities is developed and applied on an annual basis.

General Recommendations

1. Use national focal points to develop a regional portal to visualize and exchange national and regional cartographic information (GIS and remote sensing) from all thematic areas (including maps, satellite images, datasets, etc.). Use the CHM toolkit to offer guidelines in the use of these data. Collaborate also in the development of a meta-database of cartographic data. Strengthen links among organizations which can assist in this endeavour.
2. National clearing-house mechanisms and the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, when developing and implementing national, sub-regional, regional and collaborative initiatives should strive to include all programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, particularly thematic areas such as agricultural biodiversity, sustainable use and Article 8(j).
3. Develop a regional GEF PDF proposal or other proposals to other funding agencies to strengthen national clearing-house mechanisms and develop a regional clearing-house mechanism focal point.

Annex II

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