

Report on

The 3rd Meeting of the IABIN Invasive Species
Technical Working group

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The 5th Meeting of the Inter-American Biodiversity
Information Network (IABIN) Council Meeting

held in

Punta del Este, Uruguay

from

May 7-12, 2007

by

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Executive Summary

The third meeting of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) Invasives Information Network (I3N) technical working group (TWG) met in Punta del Este, Uruguay from May 7-8, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the process of the work plan set for 2007-2008 set out by the group in November 2006. In addition, a meeting of the South America I3N leads and focal points was scheduled to promote south-south cooperation. This would allow for discussions on progress of each country highlighting the achievement and challenges faced. These meetings were facilitated by Ms. Andrea Grosse of National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) the coordination institution of the I3N thematic network.

This was followed by the 5th Council meeting of IABIN from May 9-12, 2007. The purpose of which was to convene a meeting of all the Focal Points (council members) of all countries participating in the IABIN GEF funded five year project to analyze its progress. The project is currently at its half way point. Presentations on the progress of the five IABIN thematic networks (i.e. Invasive Species, Pollinators, Ecosystem, Protected Area and the Species and Specimen Thematic Network) were made by the respective coordinating institutions. The most advanced was the IABIN Invasives Information Network (I3N) thematic network of which the Jamaican I3N Lead, Mr. Sean Townsend, participated in the progress presentation.

In addition, all the recipients of a content building grant made presentations on the progress of the projects taking place in their respective countries. Jamaica as a beneficiary of such grant also participated in this session

One of the most important issues discussed was the sustainability of IABIN beyond the tenure of the project as well as the reviewing of several documents that were in circulation which needed finalizing. Member sit on the executive council for a period of two year and as such three posts were currently vacant and would be filled at council meeting. Jamaica was nominated and selected as one of the newest member of the IABIN Executive Council (IEC). Mrs. Dionne Newell of the Natural History Division of the Institute of the Jamaica at the end of the meeting started her two year tenure as a member of the IEC along with focal point of Panama and NGO representation of TNC and GBIF.

A special luncheon of the Caribbean focal point also took place on Thursday May 10th, 2007. This meeting was facilitated by Jamaican representatives present and allowed for a discussion of the challenges being faced by the Caribbean members. This meeting was open to observers however the meeting was to allow discussion between the executive council and the Caribbean focal points. The luncheon was the brainchild of the I3N coordinator who was also present.

On the 12th of May a field trip took place which allowed participants to experience the hospitality and beauty of Uruguay. Places visited were a remote village with limited access (Only via sea or through a national park) and fort once occupied by the Spanish and Portuguese.

The first activity was a closed meeting of the Uruguayan I3N co lead with various representatives of governmental and non-governmental agencies to discuss the progress and activity of I3N in Uruguay. This was to generate enthusiasm among the agencies to get involve with the various activities taking place and so allow for Uruguay to apply for a content building grant if necessary.

The main meeting of the Technical working group took place during the afternoon and was open to observers. This meeting discussed the progress of the work plan for 2007-2008. Andrea Grosse (I3N manager, NBII) welcomed all the members of the technical working group who were present including Anne Simpson (NBII), Dr. Silvia Ziller (Brazil), Dr. Sergio Zalba (Argentina), William Ulate (Costa Rica and representative of the Species and Specimens Network), Jacie Klaver (representative of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, PAIGH) and Sean Townsend (Jamaica). Other members present included the leads from Uruguay, Peru, Chile, Ecuador as well as Ben Wheeler and Dr. Richard Smith (Information technologists from NBII), as well as a representative from TNC and Dr. Anna Arber how organized and coordinated the meeting in Uruguay.

Highlights were that an overview and achievements of I3N was presented at the meeting as well as an update of the progress of the work plan for 2007. Status of the main I3N tool is shown in table one below.

Table 1: SUMMARY OF COUNTRY REPORTS RECEIVED APRIL 2007

<i>Country</i>	<i>Species (06 / 07)</i>	<i>Occurrence records (06/07)</i>	<i>Trainees (06 / 07)</i>	<i>Data providers (pers/instit)</i>	<i>Policy, mgt, etc</i>	<i>Publications, posters</i>	<i>Other products</i>
<i>Arg</i>	407/452	450/1087	5	238	Yes	Yes: 3	--
<i>Bra</i>	267 / 281	9524 / 9639	--	613 / 260	Yes	Informe Nacional sobre espécies exóticas invasoras	--
<i>Col</i>	-- / 368 [diff. format]	-- / 230 [diff. format]	--	45 / --	Yes	Yes: 3	Yes
<i>CoR</i>	--		--	--	Yes	Yes: 1	--
<i>DoR</i>	138 / 138	-- / 342	--	112 / 24	Yes	Yes: 2; article listing the benefits of I3N activities to the country	Yes
<i>Jam</i>	83 / 84	247 / 271	21	30 / 12	Yes	2 posters, 2 brochures	Yes
<i>Mex</i>	--	--	--	--	Yes	None reported	Yes
<i>Per</i>	--	--	35	--	Yes	Poster	--
<i>Par</i>	-- / 23	-- / 77	--	11 / 6	Yes	None reported	
<i>Uru</i>	107 / 170	911 / 1306	--	19 / 7	Yes	Yes: 3; scientific article that contains a reference to I3N: Especies acuáticas exóticas en Uruguay: situación, problemática y manejo	--
<i>USA</i>	[diff. format]	[diff. format]	15-50	- / 7	Yes	Yes: 2	Yes

Notes:

1. Second column: The total number of species in new I3N database, as of 31 December 2006, and as of March 31, 2007 (only Arg, Bra are online)
2. Third column: The total number of occurrences (location records) for all species in new I3N database, as of 31 December 2006, and as of March 31, 2007 (only Arg, Bra are online)
3. Fourth column: The number of individuals and institutions that have contributed data to new database.
4. Fifth column: Persons and institutions that provided data.
5. Sixth column: Related achievements, such as national policies influenced, key national coordination meetings held, etc. (05-07)
6. Seventh column: publications, posters created
7. Last column: Any other related achievements, such as partnership agreements, university theses, international meeting presentations, etc. (05-07)

No reports received from 5 countries.

Activities for 2007/2008 included the conducting of I3N workshop with many African nations which had expressed an interest in utilizing the database. The call for a second content build grants had been issued in November 2006, five countries sent in application and four were approved (Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Columbia), Peru was unsuccessful. The development of pathway and risk analysis tools were also introduced which were developed by the I3N Leads from Argentina and Brazil. The majority of the discussion was based on the development of a mapping application to go along with the database. Many of the content building grant recipients were able to use open source GIS application tools such as GoogleEarth to map the contents of their database. However standards of mapping need to be developed and was the main concern of the TWG. The Caribbean was identified as the region to be targeted for 2008 to enable these countries to benefits as much as the participants form Latin America.



Photograph 1: I3N Technical Working Group and observers

The main purpose of this meeting was to facilitate a forum for I3N Leads from South American, especially the grant recipient, to present the achievements and challenges encountered in carrying out their various I3N related activities.

Chile: Presented first and expressed that the reason why invasive alien species was a concern theirs was IAS affect trade. As a result they have conceived a long term objective of achieving control of entry of IAS by 2015 and so have implemented the Integrated National Programme for the Control of IAS. In April 2007 a workshop of biodiversity data providers – IABIN – I3N was held. It was organised by IABIN and CONAMA with the participation of a great number of public institutions, education centres and NGOs. The objective was to organise the meeting at a national level with institutions that are providers and managers of the data about biodiversity in order to promote the formation of a national network (BIORED) within the Thematic Networks of IABIN, to consolidate the Net I3N-Chile. Main benefits to Chile are as follows:-

- IABIN represents for the Chilean State an opportunity to collect data about the richness of the natural biodiversity and to renew the information that the Chilean specialist and relevant institutions manage. In this way an institutional presence at the national and global level to fulfil the CBD and CITES criteria.
- The I3N network represents the development of the abilities of countries and their institutions to achieve better management and control strategies for introduced alien species.
- The structure of I3N, based on standards and protocols, allowed for the integrated approach in the use, management and exchange of information

Ecuador: I3N lead from Ecuador is also the IABIN focal point. In Ecuador he is the Minister of Environment. A pilot project was conducted in 2002 which developed a database of invasive species found in Ecuador and the Galapagos Island. This investigation highlighted the fact that little information existed on invasion found the Galapagos Island. Subsequently a 3 day workshop was facilitated by the Drs. Silvia Ziller and Sergio Zalba. The information presented at this workshop was well received and inspired work which produced a comprehensive database of invasion in the Galapagos Island and western Ecuador which is also accessible via the internet.

Columbia: Activities in this country is primarily facilitated by research carried out by the Instituto Humboldt and started in 2004. The I3N activities in Columbia allowed for multiple agency participation of institutions with an environmental mandate. The initial achievement was the assessment of biological invasions which took place between 1997 and 2000. Activities carried under I3N have been coordinated with Columbian CHM. Subsequently two workshops have occurred first in November 2004 and the second in October 2006 and as well as production of numerous publications. One of the major achievements of I3N-Columbia has been the drafting of a nation strategy to control and

manage IAS. However further work need to be done to convince the government and the populace of the impact and importance of managing IAS before it is too late. Other constraints include the difficulty in obtaining information from other researchers.

Uruguay: A workshop held in 2005 had a special session dedicated to IAS, from this workshop it was decided that InBUy would be the organisation responsible for the development of the I3N database. The I3N co-leads have utilised several workshop and meetings they have participated in to inform people of the impact of IAS. In 2006 a special meeting was held to inform stakeholders of the I3N content building grants, from this a contact list was generated. The previous day (May 7th) was the second meeting of this group. A major gap identified by the group was lack of involvement of researchers and other government agencies in the management of IAS. Despite this they have been several publications on IAS as well as a chapter in the book on the management of the Uruguayan Coast is dedicated to IAS. Work has also been initiated with the Botanical Garden and the management of the National Parks to develop databases aimed at providing information to preserve the natural biodiversity.

Paraguay: The I3N initiative was started in 2002 with the pilot project. Since then they have been able to establish a legal framework related to IAS control and introduction. Breaches of these laws may result in fines and imprisonment. They have also been able to successfully prevent the invasion of three species *Cervus elaphus*, *Axis axis* and *Antilope cervicapra* based on information from other countries. Currently the IAS database consists of 70 species with 400 validated occurrences which is accessible. However they were experiencing difficulties in validating the occurrences of plants. This database has been utilized by many agencies to manage IAS in National Parks. Some of the achievements highlighted were:-

- Increased awareness and developed and interested by the public
- Laws have been drafted however require implementation
- Better decision making as a result of accessing the database especial for potential invasives.

Brazil: Data collection has been collated since 2003 by using the Argentinean database they were able to engage the Ministry of Environment and make them aware of the threat of invasive alien species. Since then the Universidad Nacional del Sur was able to make improvements to the database. In 2004 collaboration between Andrea Grosse (I3N) and the Instituto Horus was able to create a database consisting only of IAS found in Brazil. The database was originally in Portuguese and has been translated into Spanish and is accessible via the internet. Technical cards were also developed for each species. Presently 250 species are registered in the database with over 2500 occurrences. Plans are being developed to utilize the existing GPS information in the database to produce dynamic distribution map. The Ministry of Environment has been very supportive and has enhanced the collection of data, facilitated interagency collaboration as well as provided funding. The first workshop attracted 700 people and was a tremendous success as they were able to highlight the impact of IAS in protected areas. The first national symposium was attended by over 500 people. They have also been able to coordinate activities with GISP and TNC. Some of the other achievements of I3N Brazil are:-

- Conducting training workshops with 6 African Nations after raising the issue at Conference of the Parties (COP) 9.
- Developed a national strategy which has been endorsed by the Brazilian government to control IAS in parks
- Establish an official list of IAS for each state
- An agreement between the private and public sector has been developed to eliminate some species from Brazil
- Disseminating information to pet owner, distributors and pet shops.
- Discourage the importation of non-native plants
- Replace all the non-native plants found in Curitiba (Brazilian state)

Argentina: InBiAr is responsible for carrying out the I3N activities in Argentina. In 2002 a research project was conducted which produced a database on invasive species in 2003 this information was published on the internet. In 2006 they were the recipient of a content building grant in order to centralize the information which existed in the country. As a result of various interactions with data providers through workshops they have been able to improve the I3N tools and make the database available online. Currently databases for Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay are available online and interoperable, thus allowing simultaneous search of the databases from the I3N central portal. Tools in development are mapping and risk analyses for potential IAS. They have detected latent invasive alien species and are trying to convince people to discard these species before they become a problem. Information of these are available on the Argentinean website as well as a list of characteristics which make there species potential invasive.

Peru: Dr. Victor Morales presented the status of I3N in Peru. A workshop was held from the 15-16 of March 2007 in North Peru this was coordinated with the government. Information was collated in the north and then disseminated to Central and South Peru. Currently the database was comprised of 86 species of which 12% are fauna and 86% flora.

These presentations were followed by the content grant manager presentation on the status of the I3N grants. In 2006 seven (7) institutions have been the recipients of grants. In November 2006 a second call for applicants was issues 5 institutions responded with 4 being successful. Another call was scheduled to be issued in June 2007; counties which have not received or applied for a grant will be priority especially those from the Caribbean.

An open discussion session followed, points of interest were as follows:-

- Costa Rica would like more help to establish a legal framework
- Bolivia has changed contact person (now resides in the Ministry of Environment)
- Venezuela has a focal point but no I3N Lead
- French Guyana and Surinam are not active, therefore steps should be taken to engage them
- 2008 would focus on get the Caribbean more actively involved

- Risk analysis and Pathway analysis tools were discussed further as to their true benefits
- Development of a tool to assist with the development of national strategies
- The issue of mapping was address as there were concerns in regards to scaling and standards

The USA is very involved in the I3N thematic network as they have recognized that there is a wealth of information on invasive species which needs to be digitized and centralized to allow for better decision making. Therefore they have encouraged the development of a registry of IAS, mapping of IAS and the accessibility of this information.

During this session the Jamaican I3N lead gave a report of the progress with making more contact with the other Caribbean nation participating in IABIN. The most notable is the CABI project 'Mitigating the threat of Invasive Species in the Insular Caribbean'. The technical working group was informed that the project plans to utilise the I3N database during its implementation. In fact 50% of the countries selected as pilot countries have already developed there own database using the I3N tools and standards.

There was also the signing of a formal agreement between I3N and the Global Invasive Species Program (GISP) by Andrea Grosse and Silvia Ziller respectively. This would enhance the already existing collaboration between the two entities.

Day 3 –May 9, 2007

This was the first day of the 5th IABIN Council Meeting. It was opened by greeting delivered by Arq. Mariano Arana, Head of Ministry of Environment in Uruguay. Gladys Cutter, the chair of the IABIN Executive Council then introduced the activities scheduled for the three day meeting as well as highlighted the progress of IABIN. Eric Mata of InBio, Costa Rica reported on the activities of the IABIN Executive Council (IEC), he then open up the nominations of the 3 vacate post to be filled on the IEC. During this forum Jamaica, Panama, GISP and TNC were nominated to fill these posts. All nominees were accepted on the last day of the meeting owing to a suggestion by Gladys Cutter to increase the membership of the IEC by one, where the two NGOs would be member but not voting members. Ivan Valdespino (IABIN Secretariat Director) reported on the progressed made by IABIN since the 4th Council Meeting in Panama. This presentation can found online at iabin.net. These were followed by status report of all five thematic networks:-

- I3N (IABIN Invasives Information Network) TN by Andrea Grosse(USGS), Sergio Zalba (Argentina), Silvia Ziller (Brazil) and Sean Townsend (Jamaica)-USGS
- Protected Area TN by Cristiano Cegana (Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza" (Brazil))
- Pollinators TN by Mike Ruggiero (CoEvolution Institute)
- Ecosystem TN by Mike Ruggiero (Smithsonia Tropical Research Institute, STRI" (Panama).
- Species and Specimen TN by Eric Matta (INBio)

This was followed by a progress report of content grant recipients of the I3N TN. Reports were given by the leads in Argentina- Universidad Nacional del Sur, Brazil-Instituto Horus, Colombia- Instituto Humboldt, Jamaica- Institute of Jamaica, Paraguay- Guyra Paraguauy , Peru- Museo de Historia Natural de la Universidad Ricardo Palma and Uruguay- Universidad de la República.



Photograph 2: I3N Lead Jamaica - Progress Report

Day 4 –May 10, 2007

The second day of the meeting started with a report of the IABIN catalog developed from the pilot project. This was followed by Boris Ramirez of the IABIN secretariat who spoke on the architecture of the searchability of the IABIN website and the interoperability of the different databases being developed by the different thematic network. Hence they would have to comply with the IABIN standards to achieve this. He outlined how this was to be achieved by using a basic infrastructure to develop the databases. The other thematic networks were encouraged to use the standards developed by I3N as a model. They also discussed two of the documents which were to be finalized at the meeting, components of the project to be implemented and value added tools for IABIN by Rita Besana and Iván Valdespino respectively. The latter was of utmost important to the I3N TN as well as the other TN as it presented an opportunity to receive additional funding for the development of their individual value added tools. Richard Huber then spoke on the performance indicators of the project and Rita Besana reviewed the evaluation methodology and IABIN monitoring process especial on the status of the grants granted by the various TN. The administration of the project is by OAS a report of the financial status of IABIN was presented by Richard Huber and Carolina Peña. The very important issue of the sustainability of IABIN beyond the GEF funding was addressed by Douglas Graham a representative from the World Bank. He presented both the ideal scenario as well as the discontinuation of the secretariat as options for the sustainability. He proposed that the entity could continue as it exist especially if they can get the participating governments to fund the venture as well as the option of the secretariat existing as a single person who coordinated the activities and see to the sustainability of the network. The day ended with a discussion of the vision, outlook, challenges and opportunities the IABIN faces as well as its legal status.

On day 4 a special luncheon of the Caribbean focal points with chair and vice chair of the IEC and the manager of the I3N TN was facilitated by the Jamaican focal point and the I3N Lead from Jamaica. The main focus was to determine why there was not more participation from the Caribbean in the I3N thematic network and IABIN in general. This also presented an opportunity for the focal point to get clarification of various issues facing the Caribbean. It was decided that a special meeting of the Caribbean focal points should take place hopefully in collaboration with the IWCAM.



Photograph 3: Caribbean contingent outside the Hotel in Punto del Este, Uruguay

At this meeting some of the coordinating institutions of the different TN would be invited namely the Protected Area, Ecosystem and Invasive Species networks. Richard Huber proposed that the Caribbean in wanting to benefit from the IABIN project could propose an additional TN which would benefit them better for example a marine thematic network region. This should also be coordinated with the other marine projects taking place in the region. There was also encouragement for the I3N TN to coordinate activities with the Caribbean Invasive Species Working Group (CWISWG).of the project. The group was also informed of the CABI project and its status as many of the countries participating, as five of the six pilot countries are also IABIN countries. It was decided that the proposed meeting should have two components a training component and a discussion component for the Caribbean to decide what would be its participation in IABIN for the remainder of the project. This was important because presently the Caribbean is not benefiting from the project as much as the countries of Latin America. Andrea Grosse proposed that the training workshop carried out in the various countries could be condensed to train and inform participants on the tools of I3N. A budget of US\$30,000 would be allocated to this meeting. This meeting would be coordinated by the Jamaican Focal Point Mrs. Dionne Newell with assistance form the I3N-Jamaica.

Day 5 –May 11, 2007

The first session of the meeting had presentation from various agencies and initiatives participating in IABIN in one way or another. They were as follows:-

- PAIGH – Pan American Institute of Geography and History- Jacqueline Klaver
- GBIF – Global Biodiversity Information Facility- Beatriz Torres
- IABIN and GBIF- Bonnie Carroll

- PORTALBio- Portal Brasileiro sobre Biodiversidade- Luciana A. Zago
- TNC- The Nature Conservancy- M. Kappelle & S. Schill
- GISP –Global Invasive Species Programme- S. Burgiel
- OBIS- Ocean Biogeographic Information System- Fábio Lang da Silveira
- IRBio- Instituto Regional de Biodiversidad (CCAD)- Jorge Restrepo
- AAPAD-Andres Amazon Protected Areas Database- Richard Huber
- Development Grant Facility: Vinculando Información Ambiental y GeoEspacial – Vincent Abreu

These presentations were followed by adaptation of IABIN rules of procedure document as well as the resolutions and agreements to come out of the meeting. The session was concluded with elections of the new IEC members and the vote of thanks. The vote of thanks included an award ceremony to honors some of the person who have been very active in the project from its inception including the focal point of Antigua and Barbuda.

Day 6 –May 12, 2007

On Saturday May 12, 2007 the group went on a field trip in Uruguay. We visited a quaint village on the coast which is only accessible by sea or through a national park to get there the group traveled by truck provided by the park and travel along the seaside.



The village was more or less deserted due to the fact that it was approaching winter. The area houses a lighthouse and a small broth of seals.



Following this the group then visited a fort with a rich history. It was a prime vantage point to observe invaders. It was one of the few dry places with a suitable foundation to house the fort. It was first occupied by the Portuguese and then by the Spanish who improved upon the infrastructure.



The meeting in Uruguay was very successful it provided an opportunity for the IABIN member countries to meet and discuss the future of the project, as many see it as a much need entity which will be beneficial to the region. Many organizations have benefited by participating in the project as a result of capacity building, where as countries have benefited by the digitization and centralization of information related to the different thematic networks which will enhance decision making. Focal points were informed of the progress of the different TN especially as it relates to retrieving information from their respective countries and make recommendations.

The technical working group was able to meet and discuss the work plan's progress as well as to offer assistance to individuals who were experiencing difficulties. The two value added tools were discussed therefore persons were able to have a better understanding and critique the tools for their improvement. The mapping issue being faced by the different participants was also addressed and advice offered where possible. I3N Jamaica was also able to obtain a copy of the template to upload the database on the internet so that it may also be accessible and searchable.

The meeting also presented the opportunity for the CABI project to be presented to the council and it was recommended that IABIN endorse the project. Subsequently an agreement between the I3N network and the CABI project was developed and the new document submitted to the GEF was amended to include I3N as a partner to the project. This was due to the effort of I3N Jamaica and so the Institute of Jamaica's role in achieving this has been recognized. As a result it was recommended that Jamaica act as the focal point to the Caribbean.

The Jamaican Focal Point has subsequently submitted a proposal for the holding of the Caribbean focused meeting in partnership with IWCAM to be held in the Caribbean later in 2007, possibly in the Bahamas. The Institute of Jamaica may benefit from the administrative fees of the project as coordinators of the meeting. This meeting will also provide the opportunity for persons in the Caribbean to be trained in new areas according to the theme of the meeting. Originally the meeting was to be held in conjunction with the IWCAM GIS training workshop however this was held in July and so there was not enough time to coordinate a joint workshop. Therefore a new meeting is being planned and is tentative for November 2007.