

Introduction to the e-Biosphere Workshop (W. Berendsohn)

What brought us here? This workshop is an initiative of the sponsors of the e-Biosphere conference. These initiatives recognised the need for more coherence and interoperability in the context of pursuing their specific goals and thought that initiating a ‘roadmap’ process could be a way forward. We should like to emphasize that there is no “hidden agenda” and that the intention is to pave the way for others who want to participate in the process, particularly the data provider community, user communities, and underrepresented domains within the same biodiversity community.

Participants: In order to create a true workshop atmosphere and achieve results, the number of participants had to be restricted. The e-Biosphere Steering Committee took the decision to invite funded organisations and initiatives that operate internationally including:

- Major aggregators
- Major international organisations with significant, cross-disciplinary data holdings or specific functions in the field of biodiversity informatics (TDWG)
- Centres of biodiversity informatics research and implementation
- Exemplary national centres of biodiversity informatics, esp. in the South (6 have been invited, but visa problems led to absence of representatives of SANBI, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Indian Bioresources Information Network).

Participants in the workshop are representatives of their organisations, which had to cover the costs of participation. Participants were also required to attend the e-Biosphere conference.

Objectives of the Workshop: The focus is on Biodiversity Informatics, not Biodiversity or Biodiversity Research in general. The term “Biodiversity” is here used in its broad sense, following the CBD (i.e. from Genes to Ecosystems).

The expected outcome was slightly reworded from the original agenda to read “*the outcome should be a proposal for developing an integrated roadmap for Biodiversity Informatics over the coming 5-10 years*”

The direct output may include:

- A resolution stating basic common principles and needs, contributing to the common foundation we want to build and stabilise.
- Concrete technical goals to be tackled collaboratively.
- Topics to be tackled by spin-off workshops.

We will start with an analysis of the existing landscape based on the outcome of the e-Biosphere conference, the summary given by James Hanken the on the conference’s last day, and the input of participants (self descriptions, network survey). Following is a presentation of a Vision for an Interoperable Landscape to provide a base for the following almost 2 days of discussions.