

Integrated Biological Systems (IBS)

Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

May 2008

Background

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) is funding three infrastructure projects in the area of Integrated Biological Systems as part of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). The three projects are: the Australian Phenomics Network (lead institution, ANU); the National Plant Phenomics Facility (lead institution, University of Adelaide) and the Atlas of Living Australia (lead institution CSIRO). Funding agreements for the three projects have now been signed and implementation of the Infrastructure projects has commenced.

Overview of role

The IBS Steering Committee will have three broad roles. It will:

- provide a mechanism for higher-level coordination of the three IBS NCRIS projects;
- advise on potential joint activities of the three facilities;
- provide the Australian research community with a forum for strategic planning to guide current and future significant infrastructure investments to support IBS research, and to advise governments and funding agencies on related issues;

Composition

The Committee will comprise:

- three members representing the three individual NCRIS projects being funded. These ex-officio members will have key roles in the scientific leadership of the three IBS infrastructure projects (e.g. Chief Scientific Officer or equivalent).
- three independent members who will:



- provide independent expert advice regarding IBS infrastructure including in areas not specifically funded by NCRIS at this stage (these members will not be directly linked with any of the three projects being funded by NCRIS); and
- provide independent expert advice regarding the IBS infrastructure needs of significant user groups.
- a chair who will be elected by the Committee members from the Committee membership.

It is further proposed that:

- The three ex-officio members will collectively nominate the three independent members and recommend these nominees to DIISR for final approval.
- These terms of reference will apply to 30 June 2011.
- Independent Committee members will be invited to sit for initial terms of 2 to 3 years (staggered to enable a phased transition to the subsequent membership). One of the Committee's responsibilities will be to develop and implement a transparent, consultative mechanism to identify replacement independent members (including the election of a new Chair after at least 3 years).
- Independent members of the Committee will be remunerated for time spent sitting or preparing for meetings at a modest level, commensurate with the advisory rather than governance/managerial nature of the proposed IBSSC (at approximately Remuneration Tribunal rates).
- The Committee will meet at least bi-annually at times suitable to consider the Annual Business Plans and the Progress Reports provided by each of the three NCRIS IBS projects.
- Ex-officio members will sit on the Committee while they hold a relevant position within an NCRIS-funded facility (or where appropriate, in the host organisation). The host organisation/s can nominate a replacement member at any time so long as the replacement also holds an appropriate position.
- The Chair can invite other attendees to Steering Committee meetings if it is deemed that they could contribute to specific discussion topics. These attendees could be representatives of infrastructure projects, key collaborators or stakeholders.
- A small, part-time, secretariat funded by NCRIS through the Australian Phenomics Network will be established, at least for the duration of the current Funding Agreements.

IBSSC Responsibilities and activities

The IBSSC will undertake the following activities:

- monitoring developments and opportunities for integration and synergies across the IBS NCRIS projects/facilities;
- monitoring developments and opportunities for integration and synergies with other relevant NCRIS projects;



- providing guidance on (and a focus for) scientific business strategy for the NCRIS facilities;
- monitoring the accessibility of state-of-the-art IBS capability to the Australian research community and encouraging a strong service provision ethic amongst infrastructure operators;
- identifying opportunities for the ongoing funding and operation of large-scale infrastructure;
- facilitating the engagement of the IBS operators with the e-Research agenda and driving the availability of seamless data and information capability across the IBS technologies;
- identifying opportunities to coordinate education initiatives for users of the IBS capability;
- coordinating whole-of-IBS marketing, where appropriate; exploring marketing opportunities, especially for the international profile of the Australian IBS activities;
- providing advice to Government from time to time regarding suitable strategic investments in large scale IBS infrastructure.

The Committee will:

- consider the Annual Business Plans and Annual Progress Reports of the three NCRIS funded projects in the context of core planning for the further development of an overall IBS capability;
- provide feedback as appropriate to the three projects;
- advise the NCRIS Committee regarding any synergies and prospects for integration that may emerge;
- ensure that appropriate communication and linkages with other NCRIS capabilities are developed;
- commission a review panel to review critically the overall IBS capability in 2009 and 2011.

The Committee will have no formal role in approving the Annual Business Plans or Progress Reports.

