



Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the second full meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) of the International Barcode of Life Project (iBOL). This meeting represents a great opportunity for important discussions to shape the future direction of the project.

There are two overarching issues I would like us to address at the meeting:

SCIENCE: Moving beyond delimitation and identification: developing strategies for addressing big scientific questions with DNA barcode data

A critical step for iBOL is to take a strategic approach to tackling big questions with barcode data, with the aim of (a) undertaking excellent science, (b) generating good PR for barcoding, (c) and engaging and enthusing scientists to speed up the construction of the barcode library itself. The densely populated sequence database that iBOL will produce has the potential to open up many interesting lines of enquiry in fields such as macro-ecology, conservation biology, ecological forensics, phylogenetics and molecular evolution. Much interesting science will doubtlessly emerge from simple post-hoc data-mining of the barcode database. However, it is also likely that without intervention the barcode library may not perfectly align with the requirements for some important biological questions. It is thus timely, to identify the big questions that can be tackled with DNA barcode data, and to evaluate what modifications are required in our sampling schemes and protocols to make this happen.

MANAGEMENT: Developing plans and strategies to ensure efficient construction and utilization of the barcode library

The iBOL project involves many constituencies and many committees. The SSC is the committee which brings the project together and includes representatives of participating nations, of the different working groups, and representatives of core sequencing facilities. This meeting is an opportunity for dialogue about the structure and organization of the project, and to look for opportunities to streamline our efforts and increase productivity. An outline of the iBOL management plan will be presented, and attention given to the functioning and inter-relationships of different components of the project. Two specific issues that need discussion and decisions are (a) the development of a new data release policy for iBOL, and (b) assessing the iBOL targets and re-setting and re-prioritizing these where necessary.

We aim to pack a lot into the SSC meeting, to capitalise on the expertise of the assembled team. The meeting contains a mix of exciting scientific topics and important aspects of project management. We look forward to your input and ideas.

Best wishes
Pete

Professor Pete Hollingsworth
Chair, iBOL Scientific Steering Committee