

Discussion Document: The International Society for the Barcode of Life (ISBOL)

August 19, 2015

Over the last decade, the international DNA barcoding effort has coalesced through support provided by preliminary initiatives like IBOL and CBOL. This support has led to the rapid growth of the international barcoding community of practice that stands in need of a formal coordination mechanism. National and regional initiatives are flourishing, and by the lights of the 6th International Barcode of Life Conference at which there are over 600 participants and 60 countries represented, barcoding has truly gone global.

The Kunming Declaration, signed at the 5th International Barcode of Life Conference, recognized the rapid expansion and diffusion of barcoding, its great potential for scientific and social impact, the growth of the international barcode community, and the need to sustain that community by creating an international coordinating organization. This organization would be tasked with implementing the eight actions envisioned in the Declaration. The Declaration called for progress against this latter goal by creating an *ad hoc* governance committee, establishing governance structure, and consulting and reporting back to the 6th International Conference.

The authors of the Kunming Declaration have made progress in advance of the 6th International BOL Conference, and at an August 17, 2015 workshop session with more than 100 participants. To undertake the objectives set out in the Kunming Declaration, and to harness the momentum of the international community as reflected by the strength of participation in the 6th International BOL Conference, it is hereby proposed that:

1. The International Society for the Barcode of Life (ISBOL) represents a mature scientific community of practice dedicated to building a DNA-based registry of eukaryotic life using short, standardized gene sequences (DNA barcodes). It derives from the integration of experiences and perspectives of those who have participated in the myriad campaigns, conferences, consortia, networks, projects, training programs and working groups that have emerged since barcoding was first proposed in 2003. It exists to coordinate completion of the registry, to facilitate the development of barcoding applications and to communicate with stakeholders at all levels.
2. The participants at the 6th International BOL Conference become the first ISBOL members-at-large, but membership is open.
3. That an interim governance council, consisting of the authors of the Kunming Declaration and representatives of key regions, organizations (such as IBOL and CBOL) and other major barcoding initiatives, be created and entrusted to develop a:
 - a. Proposed governance structure and related articles for ISBOL that will allow it to be legally recognized and operational;
 - b. Process and associated timelines for ISBOL executive positions (president, secretary, treasurer, etc.) to be filled in manner consistent with community preferences;
 - c. Outline for a set of working groups with draft mandates (for example standards, education & training, policy & regulatory, fundraising/grant writing, and communications & outreach working groups);
 - d. Develop an evaluation process and timelines for subsequent International BOL Conferences;
 - e. Consultation process to enable effective and timely communication with the community to shape the organization;
 - f. Ratification process for key decisions during the period that the IGC is operational.