

Biodiversity Discovery Corridor Workshop
Terms of Reference
St. Andrews, February 28th – March 2nd, 2006

Background:

The Biodiversity Discovery Corridor initiative (BCDI) is launching into its third year of activity. The objectives of this program are:

1. Inventory of species and seascapes within the corridor, and methodology development.
2. Act as a catalyst for training in systematics.
3. Promotion of biodiversity research and conservation.
4. Establish monitoring program to look at long-term change.
5. Outreach (data sharing, education, and general public).

With respect to these objectives there have been a number of successful achievements both in the field and in communicating and organizing the “Discovery Corridor” approach.

The purpose of this workshop will be to:

- review our progress to date;
- identify any major changes in the intended approach;
- establish a research plan for 2007-08;
- and develop strategic guidance for BDCI activities in field work, systematics, and bioinformatics over the next several years.

The workshop will take place over a 3-day period and will explore each of four thematically structured sessions (approximately ½ day devoted to each). Within each of these themes there should be presentations on past and current activities, perceived challenges, and future opportunities. Each thematic session will close with a synthesis of findings:

I. Existing Projects

This theme will provide opportunity for up to 7 talks from participants who have BDCI funded projects underway, or for projects which would be new candidates for inclusion (may already be underway under other funding)

The synthesis portion should evaluate the present field activities against the original objectives set for the BDCI, and identify opportunities for realignment if required. Discussion should also evaluate how we are placed to conduct additional inventory and monitoring work in various portions of the corridor.

II. Biodiversity Characterisation

This theme will also provide for up to 7 talks (it is not a requirement though to fill the agenda with talks if particular sessions would be better conducted as a plenary discussion around a range of specific topics).

Within the broad domain of systematics there would be opportunities to present and discuss associated projects (e.g. Barcode of Life) which could represent strong partnering opportunities for the BDCI.

The systematics theme should also provide an opportunity for short presentations to update participants on requirements and resources for consolidating taxonomic processing, archiving, and dissemination of authoritative species records obtained through the BDCI (e.g. OBIS, etc).

III. Program Infrastructure and Integration

This theme should evaluate some of the sampling techniques which have been used or may be available in the future for BDCI projects. Technical and informatics requirements to ensure new observations are fully geo-referenced, properly archived and managed in databases could be covered. The context for this theme is that in order to achieve the overall inventory and monitoring of biodiversity within the BDCI we need to build an overall program architecture which means information from diverse projects and resources (e.g. seabed mapping) is accessible for integration with ongoing projects, and for periodic inventory of the overall BDCI data holdings.

IV. Future Directions

A final ½ day session will review these syntheses, discuss outreach aspects of the program, and provide an opportunity to discuss any immediate next steps and strategic recommendations.

Participants:

Invited participants should include:

All members of the Biodiversity Discovery Corridor (BDC) steering committee.
Individuals/organizations who have or may be participating in BDC activities.
Biodiversity Science advisors from DFO-HQ.
Assistant Deputy Minister of Science -NHQ
Regional Director of Science – Maritimes
U.S. researchers
Census of Marine Life
Fish Barcode of Life.

Funding:

The estimated budget is \$30K from a NHQ allotment for the BDC Initiative received this FY.

Additional funding is also anticipated: \$5K-DFO Ocean Sciences to support participant travel, \$5K NSERC to support hospitality costs.

Location:

The proposed location for the workshop is St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

Organizing Committee:

Dr. Peter Lawton –DFO Maritimes

Dr. J. Andrew Cooper – DFO Maritimes

Dr. Kent Smedbol – DFO Maritimes

Mr. Lou Van Guelpen – Atlantic Reference Centre HMSC