

Review of iDigBio in supporting Thematic Collection Networks

iDigBio External Advisory Board (EAB) November 1, 2017

Since 2011, the NSF-ADBC program has funded [19 Thematic Collection Networks](#) (TCNs) and 24 Partners to Existing Networks (PENs). The role of TCNs is to mobilize a community of museums and herbaria to provide specimen related data and media to iDigBio. Additionally, they collaborate with each other and iDigBio to promote the use of digitization products for research and education. As part of its role in advising iDigBio, the External Advisory Board (EAB) wants to better understand the relationship between iDigBio and the TCNs in order to assess how iDigBio is meeting community needs.

The description and makeup of the EAB can be found here https://www.idigbio.org/wiki/index.php/IDigBio_External_Advisory_Board. Every year the EAB meets with iDigBio and NSF at the ADBC Summit. For the upcoming 2017 meeting in Gainesville the EAB would like to meet with TCN leaders to discuss the role of iDigBio in supporting TCN activities. The meeting will be held 8-9AM on Thursday morning (Nov 2) in the McGuire Classroom in the Florida Museum. There will be someone posted outside the museum to help people gain access to the meeting room and you can text Neil Cobb 928-607-4075.

To help frame the discussion for the meeting the EAB is interested in having TCN leaders consider two broad questions: **1)** How much and in what form do TCNs currently interact with iDigBio; and **2)** What services would be of greatest benefit to the TCN – including their individual participating institutions – sustain their digitization and sharing of information into the future. Below are more specific issues to consider for the meeting, feel free to bring your own to the meeting.

1. iDigBio provides services that can be categorized in four areas, which of these areas do you interact with iDigBio and do they meet your expectations?
1) Digitization workforce training, 2) Informatics/Website/database, 3) Promoting Research use of data, and 4) Education/outreach. Are there other services not included in the ones above? Do TCNs contribute to ADBC beyond providing TCN data?
2. Among all of the ideas discussed, what are the top three opportunities for iDigBio to help the greatest number of TCNs, and their member institutions to maintain viable digitization and data sharing programs?
3. What are the 2-3 major challenges you face regarding the future of your TCN's digitization, collaboration, or data sharing efforts over the next five years?
4. What are the plans for sustaining your TCN after ADBC funding ends?
5. What would you like iDigBio to do to help you address these concerns, and to help you or TCNs in general sustain a viable digitization and data sharing program?
6. iDigBio provides a number of specific resources on the website; to what degree do TCNs use these resources, for example the data usage stats and data compliance reports.
7. Is your TCN able to access and link to all necessary and relevant databases and information systems (at a national or international scale)? If not, are there services that iDigBio could develop to assist with such linkages?

8. What do you foresee as the most important barriers to having iDigBio provide the services you need?