Project Scope

Integrated Digitized Biocollections (iDigBio) is the national resource for digitized information about existing, vouchered natural history collections within the context established by the community strategic plan for the Network Integrated Biocollections Alliance (NIBA) and is supported through funds from the NSF program Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections. As such, iDigBio serves as the coordinating center for the national digitization effort; fosters partnerships and innovations; facilitates the determination and dissemination of digitization practices and workflows; establishes integration and interconnectivity among the data generated by collection digitization projects; and promotes the uses of biological/paleontological collections data by the scientific community and stakeholders including government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and other national and international entities to benefit science and society through enhanced research, educational, and outreach activities. iDigBio provides these services to all stakeholders with clarity, simplicity, transparency, intuitive methodology, and intuitive design.

In-Scope Activities

To accomplish these objectives, iDigBio is responsible for the following specific in-scope activities:

Activity 1 - Implement a scalable and secure cloud-based infrastructure and web portal to enable the storage, integration, search, and retrieval of existing biological/paleontological specimen data, images, and other media files contributed by Thematic Collections Networks, other networks, resources, and collaborating institutions.

Activity 2 - Deliver appliances that integrate and package existing digitization technologies in a manner that enhances and/or simplifies the user experience. Appliances are intended to improve the deployment and interoperability of digitization tools, and to simplify integration with the iDigBio specimen database and storage infrastructure.

Activity 3 - Provide user services to support interaction with both specimen databases and with appliances. User services will support both data/appliance contributors and data/appliance consumers. User services are provided in the form of a ticket submission and tracking system for requests and problems, telephone support, email support, user documentation, and site visits.

Activity 4 - Research, evaluate, benchmark, integrate, and disseminate digitization methodologies, end-to-end processes, tools, recommended standards, and workflows that improve the efficiency and scalability of digitization.

Activity 5 - Provide user services to support efficient, scalable and effective digitization of

specimen images, media, and specimen data. User services are provided in the form of a ticket submission and tracking system for requests and problems, telephone support, email support, user documentation, and site visits.

Activity 6 - Coordinate and fund workshops and working groups to:

- a. Foster partnerships and collaboration within the collections community, as well as to connect to stakeholder organizations external to the collections community.
- b. Conduct training related to digitization, technology, workflows, and other applicable fields.
- c. Recommend standards, common practices, guidelines, workflows, and optimal digitization tools and software for use by ADBC participants.
- d. Foster innovation related to bio/paleo-collections digitization and imaging. The outputs of these innovation workshop sessions may include:
    - i. Specific application and/or hardware development requirements that are assigned to existing organizations funded for, and tasked with, tool development.
    - ii. Documentation of challenges and proposed solutions that may lead to proposals to obtain funding for separate projects to deliver required technologies.
    - iii. Creation or improvement of digitization, imaging, and databasing tools resulting from "hackathons". These sessions bring together skilled session participants to deliver a specific functional product during the workshop. Tools created in "hackathons" must be delivered with pre-conceived strategies for maintenance and sustainability.

Activity 7 - Facilitate the development of standards for digitization, technology, and process training.

Activity 8 - Coordinate and execute iDigBio Education and Outreach activities. Provide advice to and coordination with other digitization projects regarding the integration of outreach activities.

Activity 9 - Provide opportunities and technologies that encourage communication, collaboration and status reporting among members of the ADBC community.

Activity 10 - Oversee development of a community implementation plan to accomplish digitization of existing biodiversity collections in the US, and establish the long-term sustainability of the ADBC data and related infrastructure, and for iDigBio user services operations.

Activity 11 - Establish an iDigBio Internal Advisory Committee that meets regularly to report on progress in digitization efforts, share and identify best practices and standards, identify gaps in digitization areas and technology, and enhance training efforts. Also establish an External Advisory Board that meets annually to provide advice regarding project activities, the integration of digitization projects, research, education and outreach activities, strategic direction, and management policies.

Activity 12 - Track research outcomes, the results of outreach activities, and innovative discoveries related to the project.

Out-of-Scope Activities

In order to reduce uncertainty in the scope of iDigBio's mission and to prevent scope creep as project requirements are evaluated, the following specific activities are defined as outside

the scope of iDigBio:

1. Direct development of new tools (hardware or software), or improvements to existing software tools intended to enhance the digitization of existing, vouchered biological/paleontological collections. iDigBio is not funded or staffed to execute hardware or software development; exceptions are the creation and maintenance of the core iDigBio.org website, the portal/database designed to integrate digitized specimen data, and integration via appliances with existing tools that support digitization.

2. Specimens collected outside the United States but housed within a US collection/location are within scope as are specimens of interest to US scientists housed in foreign institutions Federally owned collections will be integrated with iDigBio through BISON [1], the federal data center.

3. Occurrence records and media not supported by voucher specimens (e.g., bird sightings without a collected specimen) will not be included in the iDigBio collections integration portal. However, as other resources for these data are established, appropriate links to specimen ancillary data will be created.

4. iDigBio is not responsible for the acquisition, data curation/management, and quality control of data provided by TCNs and other collaborating collections. However, as part of the execution of in-scope Activity #1 [2] and Activity #2 [3], iDigBio will endeavor to provide tools, features, error-checking, historical record tracking, and feedback mechanisms designed to simplify data curation/management, fitness for use tracking, and quality control by TCNs and other contributing institutions.

Source URL: https://www.idigbio.org/about/project-scope

Links
[1] http://bison.usgs.ornl.gov/
[2] https://www.idigbio.org/redmine/issues/1
[3] https://www.idigbio.org/redmine/issues/2