



## Taxonomic Databases Working Group Annual Meeting 2005 St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

### Minutes of the TDWG Business Session British Council Building 16 September 2005

The meeting started at 10:00.

1. Apologies: Stinger Guala, Patricia Koleff
2. Adoption of Minutes – no objections and no amendments.
3. Report from the Chair (Walter Berendsohn)

Walter gave a summary of current subgroup activity, together with details of new subgroups and proposed new subgroups.

Revised standard for Economic Botany: It is unsatisfactory as it stands because not available electronically. Walter said we will push this forward and make sure it is available. In the future we will not accept things as standards unless available electronically.

Printed versions of accepted standards may be supported from the TDWG Treasury, decided on a case by case basis.

Liaison with other organisations: we have received a letter from CIDOC. Liaison will be discussed during the TDWG Infrastructure Project (TIP) reorganisation of TDWG.

Main activity over the year has been preparation for presentation of the draft infrastructure at this meeting. Stan & Donald had been driving the TDWG Infrastructure Project forward. Walter expressed his appreciation of their efforts. He said that this was the most important thing for TDWG, ever.

4. Report from the Treasurer (Stan Blum)

Stan apologised for a few technical problems preventing a detailed statement, in particular:

- a) problems setting up the new bank account
- b) still no final account from Oeiras

Total membership (members in good standing) is reduced but Stan expects more previous members to regularise their membership in the forthcoming year. Stan apologised that he had had insufficient time to pursue this matter but he will do in the near future. About 70% of members in good standing attend the Annual Meeting.

Christchurch meeting: there was significant cost overrun resulting in a limited liability payment of over 2000 USD to Landcare. Using the RegOnline mechanism costs us more than 1000 USD but helps the meeting greatly. Stan thanked Jerry Cooper (Landcare) for a wonderful meeting. Jerry pointed out that the New Zealand Government had provided some funding.

This year in Russia charges to the delegates have been raised giving us a better base for a stable financial meeting account. There may be a small profit of ca. 7000 USD.

The Executive is not seeking approval of a formal report because this has to be an interim report until the outstanding issues can be resolved.

There was a question with regard to how the TDWG bank account could be held somewhere neutral to avoid problems when the Treasurer changes. Stan is seeking to establish the account in California as “non profit” to make the best of the situation. He will report next year.

5. Election of Officers (Returning Officer: Chuck Miller)

Chuck reported that all (and only) the incumbents remained on the ballot but that in addition the Newsletter Editor post had one nomination. There was no nomination for Africa.

6. Standards (Returning Officer: Chuck Miller)

The result of the ballot on proposed standards was as follows:

Standard	Yes	No	Abstain
ABCD	27	2	1
SDD	26	1	3
TCS	23	4	3

The newly recommended standards will be distributed electronically for voting to be completed by the deadline of 17 October. Members not in good standing will be advised that they may vote if they pay their dues.

Rebecca Shapley asked if the voting mechanism is satisfactory or introduces delays. Stan said the voting only at the Annual Meeting may skew the voting so we intend to retain the current voting process. However, we intend to streamline the finalisation and dissemination of proposed standards.

Stan said that the RegOnline site can remain open for members who have attended the meeting to pay their dues. He is looking at ways to make the payment of dues easier and will report to the membership by e-mail. There is a “grace period”.

7. Meetings in 2006 and 2007 (Walter Berendsohn)

For 2006 we previously had an offer for New Orleans. This has been replaced by an offer from LSU. We also have offers from the Missouri Botanic Garden and NESCENT in North Carolina. We are open to further suggestions until the end of the Business Session.

The Executive will construct a questionnaire to be sent out to prospective hosts.

Anna asked if the difficulty over visas to the US will be a problem. Walter said that had been an issue for St. Petersburg. The situation will be better for the US – a head count amongst those present suggested that the problem should be relatively small. We recognise that certain areas of the world have different problems and we will seek to address them.

For 2007 we have a new invitation from INRA in France and a standing invitation from Bratislava. They, and any other prospective hosts emerging during the next year, will be invited to answer via a questionnaire. We would also welcome further proposals.

Jessie Kennedy asked if we can do something to encourage participation from Africa. There is a possible contact in South Africa. Next year there will be GBIF activity in South Africa and there is more of a chance for the future.

8. The future of TDWG and interaction with the TDWG Infrastructure Project Secretariat (Walter Berendsohn)

Walter said that we need to maintain the bottom up approach but we need to achieve sustainability of the process. We need to formalise the links and mechanisms between the subgroups and the process.

We need to consider the scope of TDWG. If we are to adopt a new name, what are the elements we need in that name?

Visibility and public relations are important issues that we must address urgently.

We need to increase the role of the membership in the running of the organisation. The Project only runs for 2 years and we need to have the membership contributing more by then.

Reed asked if a name change had officially been tasked to the Project. He sees a need to consider Biology, not just biodiversity or taxonomy. Walter said there is no formal proposal for a name change and that the time is not right because there is no-one to give a mandate to. Stan said the Project contains no presumption of a name change but the Constitution will be reviewed and revised by amendment. Walter said that some sort of name change is inevitable to reflect the changing role of the organisation.

There was long general discussion on current and possible future activities that might affect the name decision, and concern that certain words (like biodiversity and taxonomy) could be restricting.

It was clear that great care will be needed to define the future scope of the organisation and the eventual name, and to amend the Constitution accordingly. The Infrastructure Project and the Executive will find ways to ensure that the views of the membership and other stakeholders are canvassed.

9. AOB

There was no other business.

10. Close

Walter thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting closed at 11:55.

Author: Adrian Rissoné, Executive Secretary

Last updated: 19 October 2006