

**OECD Global Science Forum**  
**Scientific Collections International (SciColl)**  
Progress report  
Presented by the Delegation of the United States

**Background**

Following an initial project lead by the Dutch delegation, a follow up activity was approved at the October 2008 GSF meeting to explore the practical elements for creating an international coordinating mechanism for scientific collections, under the chairmanship of Prof. Richard Lane, of the United Kingdom. Reports on progress were given to the GSF in April and October 2009.

At its 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting in April 2010, GSF delegates received and reviewed SciColl's Strategic Plan, Governance and Business Plans, and Work Program. Delegates were satisfied that SciColl's leadership should proceed to attract national and institutional members that are needed for its financial support.

**Progress since April 2010**

Since the last GSF meeting, a small core group of SciColl's Steering Committee has conferred by conference call to refine its strategy for approaching potential member nations and organizations. Following preliminary inquiries, there are both government agencies and research institutions that are interested in joining SciColl as contributing members. Based on these expressions of interest, the Steering Committee has decided to pursue three strategies in parallel:

- Engaging key participants from the full Steering Committee (34 people from 20 countries) and international conference held in Brussels in February 2010 (85 attendees from 35 countries) as national 'champions' for SciColl;
- Helping these champions to approaching the relevant government agencies and prominent research institutions with collections in their respective countries with information about the benefits and obligations associations; and
- Releasing a call for proposals to host the SciColl Secretariat Office.

Dr. Richard Lane, Natural History Museum London, has completed two years as Chair of the Steering Committee and that role has now shifted to Dr. David Schindel, from the Smithsonian Institution, United States. The core group of the Steering Committee will continue to act as an interim Secretariat that oversees and coordinates the activities described above. Outreach material has been developed and translated into several languages. SciColl's goal is to select a host organization for the Secretariat and secure financial commitments by early 2011, after which an Executive Board will be formed from member organizations and a Secretariat Office will be established.

The Australian members of the Steering Committee are organizing the second international SciColl conference for February 2011. The conference will focus on the integration of collections for research across disciplinary boundaries and discussions of SciColl's program of work.

**Timetable:**

- November 1<sup>st</sup> Deadline for submitting bids to host SciColl secretariat to the GSF secretariat. To date, three institutions have expressed their interest;
- December 31 Review of the expression of interest to join SciColl sent by institutions and governments to the GSF secretariat, and decision to move ahead if enough funding pledges have been secured;
- January 31 Recommendation to the interim Executive Board for the SciColl secretariat host (by external panel, chaired by GSF executive secretary);
- February 5-6 Second international SciColl conference, organised in Australia. The conference will focus on the integration of collections for research across disciplinary boundaries and discussions of SciColl's program of work;
- End February Final decision regarding SciColl secretariat host and launch by the interim Executive Board.