

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS.

Workshop: Biodiversity information and community-based use of natural resources.

CONABIO, Mexico City and Iztlan, Oaxaca

11-18 June, 2009 (plus travel time).

Sponsors: DIVERSITAS, US National Science Foundation, Mexico's National Commission of Biodiversity (CONABIO), National University of Mexico (UNAM)

Faculty. Rodolfo Dirzo, Professor of Biology at Stanford University, is coordinating the workshops. Other faculty include: Professor David Bray (Florida International University), Prof. Leticia Merino (UNAM), Professor Javier Caballero (Director, UNAM's Botanical Gardens). Instruction will be in Spanish and English.

Applications are invited from USA and Mexico-based doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in ecology conservation biology, and the social sciences to participate in a unique training workshop in Mexico. This workshop provides 'on-the-ground' experience of community-based natural resource management as part of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Training (BESTNet) program. The workshop offers two different but complementary experiences in Mexico. It will expose participants to the challenges and opportunities of interacting with researchers and students from other cultures, and will analyze the ways in which academic institutions and rural, indigenous institutions are undertaking the challenge of sustainably managing their biological resources, . The two experiences are i) the National Commission of Biodiversity (CONABIO) and UNAM in Mexico City,, and the indian communities of Iztlan and Santa Cruz Tepetotla, near the city of Oaxaca.

UNAM (<http://www.unam.mx>) is one of the finest universities in Latin America, with international recognition in a variety of academic areas including ecology, conservation biology and the social sciences. UNAM holds the national collections of most organisms and its botanical gardens are renown for their educational and research programs on biological resource management, ethnobotany and conservation.

CONABIO (<http://www.conabio.gob.mx>) represents an effort by Mexican scientists to develop an institution dedicated to synthesize and compile, in several complex data bases, the relevant information on the biodiversity of this country and to apply this information to address a variety of demand-driven needs presented by different sectors of society (e.g., distribution of vectors of disease and predictions of their likely routes of expansion).

Iztlan and Santa Cruz Tepetotla represent ongoing examples of how rural communities are successfully addressing the challenges of forest-resource management and ecotourism by trying to reconcile biodiversity conservation with local economic benefit and social well-being.

This international experience is aimed at accomplishing the three main, broader impacts, contemplated in the overall proposal.

Organization and venues. There are two sub-workshops. The one focusing on UNAM and CONABIO will take place in Mexico City, in the facilities of both institutions. It will include presentations by scientists and technicians from these institution describing the conceptual bases, philosophy, technical operation, data management examples and mechanisms of making information available to the general public. Planned discussions and practical activities (e.g., hands-on software operation) will be led by scientists and technicians from several disciplines from CONABIO, as well as invited faculty from UNAM.

The other sub-workshop will be organized around an on-site visit to the community of Iztlan, Oaxaca www.planeta.com/planeta/97/0897oaxaca.html. This component will include presentations by faculty working in the area, the local authorities, and extension workers associated with these communities. It will take place in the offices of the forestry management program at the village of Iztlan and of ecotourism at Santa Cruz. In the field, there will be faculty presentations (David Bray, Leticia Merino), and visits will be made to forestry plots, processing plants, shops and product-distribution and marketing offices. There will be a group field project on quantitative ethnobotany led by co-PI R. Dirzo and faculty David Bray, with participation of local inhabitants. Gustavo Ramirez, a local resident (a former student of Co-PI R. Dirzo), and trilingual (Spanish, Zapotec and English) and other local inhabitants will be helping in leading the presentations and discussions, but we will include the participation of other PIs and Diversitas scientists to analyze and discuss the potential, limitations and accomplishments of program of this type.

Application procedures. Interested researchers should complete application at <http://ecoservices.asu.edu/bestnet/training.php>, attaching their *curriculum vitae*. Applications will remain open until March 30. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 April. All travel, registration, accommodation and subsistence expenses will covered.