**Biodiversity Heritage Library**

**Membership Proposal**

**June 21, 2012 draft**

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is a consortium of natural history, botanical, and research libraries that cooperate to digitize and make accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global “biodiversity commons.” The BHL consortium works with the international taxonomic community, rights holders, and other interested parties to ensure that this biodiversity heritage is made available to a global audience through open access principles. This document outlines the governance and administrative structure of the BHL consortium.

**Key Values of the BHL**

* Open access -- The digital content served by the BHL is available without cost and can be reused by other projects and users.
* Collaboration -- Each BHL member institution will actively coordinate its activities with other BHL member institutions to achieve agreed-to objectives.
* Interoperability -- BHL systems will interoperate with major biodiversity project systems.
* Transparency -- The processes and administration of the BHL will be clear and documented.

**Membership**

Membership is institutional. There are three levels of membership, the BHL Executive Committee, the BHL Institutional Council, and the BHL Partner. Membership level depends on the level of commitment and responsibility that the member institution agrees to assume, as explained below. Each BHL member institution shall designate an individual to serve as that institution’s representative. The individuals who serve in either body represent their host institutions and the BHL program as a whole.

**1. Executive Membership: $10,000 annual dues**

**Members are represented on the BHL Executive Committee (BHL EC). The BHL EC is composed of the library directors or their designees and provides governance and decision-making at a policy level for the BHL. Officers must be members at this level.**

BHL EC Responsibilities:

* Establishes standards, priorities, and policies for the BHL.
* Approves the BHL budget.
* Promotes awareness of the BHL internationally.
* Identifies programs and other activities for possible involvement in the BHL.
* Evaluates performance against the BHL’s planned outcomes.
* Provides advice and guidance on BHL fund-raising.
* Authorizes BHL working groups and committees as needed.
* Approves applications for BHL membership.
* Approves Bylaws for the operation of the BHL EC and the BHL IC.
* Approves the hiring of the BHL Program Direct, the Technical Director, and Deputy Director.

**2. Institutional Membership: $1,000(?) annual dues**

**Members are represented on the BHL Institutional Council (BHL IC).** The BHL Institutional Council is composed of all BHL C members plus members who are contributing content to the BHL or are from biodiversity or other allied organizations with an interest or stake in its success. The BHL IC provides guidance and feedback, concerning the operations and development of the BHL and promotes content sharing and acquisition for the BHL. Membership is renewed upon payment of dues.

3. BHL Partner: In-kind contributions

Organizations, institutions, or regional projects that agree that provide content, technological support, or other key services may be recognized as BHL Partners.

**Withdrawal or Removal**. Members may withdraw from the BHL at any time via written notice to the BHL EC Chairman or non-payment of dues. Membership may be revoked with cause effective at the end of any fiscal year by two thirds vote of the BHL EC.

**Membership Criteria**

In general, the BHL will consider those institutions that are strategic to the BHL’s mission. The members of the BHL shall be institutions concerned with biodiversity in higher education and research. A new member institution shall:

1. Demonstrate that it provides and maintains library services and collections at an appropriate level addressed to the needs of research or scholarly pursuits in biodiversity.

2. Contribute to the support of programs and research being offered by the present membership

3. Have the resources to make collections digitally accessible via open access means to the constituents of the present membership and the world wide community of users of out-of-copyright and/or permissions information.

4. Have the institutional resources to participate in BHL program by providing some combination of the following:

1. Financial support (e.g. scanning, travel to IC meetings, etc.)
2. Human Resources (e.g. quality control on BHL metadata,  workflow process, etc.)
3. Content (e.g. digital, paper, film, etc.)
4. Technology expertise or infrastructure (e.g. server support, imaging studio, etc.)

**New Member Process**

1. Applications should be submitted to the Executive Director of the BHL who will review the criteria and process with the applicant.
2. Completed applications will be reviewed by the BHL EC. Institutions may, after meeting the requirements above for membership become members upon approval by a two‑thirds vote of the BHL EC. No institution shall be admitted to membership until it presents evidence satisfactory to the BHL EC that such membership has been duly authorized by that institution and a Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by the Institutional leader.
3. Applicants will be notified of the BHL EC decision by the Executive Director. If the decision is negative, the applicant will be notified and given feedback by the Executive Director.
4. To complete the application process, the new member will submit a standard BHL Memorandum of Understanding with the authorized signatory and the payment of membership dues.

**Membership Application**

Institution name:

Address:

Phone number: Fax number:

Authorized signatory:

Individual completing application:

E-mail address:

Library Profile (Please submit a brief statement addressing the following areas)

Collection size & strengths

Staff size & areas of expertise

Digitization projects experience

Technology infrastructure

Grant-writing experience

Statement of interest in BHL & Other pertinent information

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