

**International Barcode of Life Consortium – Press Release**

**ACADEMY OF FINLAND APPROVES €2,760,000 IN FUNDING FOR EXPANSION OF FINNISH BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY**



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The Finnish Biodiversity Information Facility (FinBIF) – a leader in digital open-access biodiversity data sharing and collection – will leverage €2,760,000 (\$4,237,149 CAD) in funding to expand and intensify its operations. Approval of “FinBIF 2.0 – Second Construction Cycle of the Finnish Biodiversity Information Facility” was [announced](#) by the Academy of Finland on Dec. 11 in Helsinki. The funding will extend over four years from January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2022.

FinBIF 2.0 is a consortium of four partners established to build biodiversity information infrastructure in Finland. It includes the Ecology and Genetics Research Unit at the University of Oulu, that has been promoting DNA barcoding activities across Finland as a member of the International Barcode of Life (iBOL) Consortium since 2011. With the Academy’s support of €387,000 from the FinBIF 2.0 project and internal resources, Oulu will receive €553,300 (\$849,620 CAD) to advance the completion of a DNA barcode reference library for the Finnish flora and fauna.

Marko Mutanen, Senior Curator at the Ecology and Genetics Research Unit at Oulu and coordinator of Finnish Barcode of Life (FinBOL), said: *“Finland is at the forefront of a comprehensive DNA barcode reference library for biota at a national level. Currently, about one half of the species documented from Finland have at least a single reference barcode. With the new funding we will be able to expand the species coverage by thousands of species”*.

FinBIF was established in 2012 to compile Finnish biodiversity information to one single service for open-access sharing. The Laji.fi portal enables visitors to browse, record, share, and download information and observations about species distribution and occurrences. Currently, FinBIF shares over 30.7 million observations on more than 33,000 species from 180 information sources.

In March 2018, the Academy of Finland – an agency within the administrative branch of the Finnish Ministry of Education, Science and Culture – asked for proposals for FIRI 2018: Infrastructures on Finland’s Roadmap as part of Finland’s Strategy and Roadmap for Research Infrastructures. €12 million was provided to eight beneficiaries with nationally significant research infrastructures that promote cutting-edge research.

*“The top score received by FinBIF in the international evaluation reflects the strength and maturity of the implementing Consortium. The very welcome national support enables us to stay in the forefront of the rapidly developing field of biodiversity informatics,”* says Professor Leif Schulman, Director of the Finnish Museum of Natural History LUOMUS at the University of Helsinki and Principal Investigator of the FinBIF Consortium.

With a new injection of funding, FinBIF 2.0 will be able to intensify its support for climate change research, eco-informatics, metagenomics, and evolutionary developmental biology through tailor-made data sourcing and services. Some of these services include a wider data network, faster collection digitization through the addition of new technologies, and next generation sequencing for DNA barcode production from historical specimens. The project expansion will also include new technologies for specimen imaging, and the incorporation of new analysis tools to Laji.fi.

*“We can foresee exciting breakthroughs in the technologies for gathering and mobilising biodiversity data, such as autonomous recording of species observations and extraction of DNA barcodes from our centuries-old historical collections. This will provide the scientific community with an invaluable asset for cutting-edge research in various fields.”*

**Links:**

[Academy of Finland](#)

[Finland’s Strategy and Roadmap for Research Infrastructures 2014–2020](#) (PDF)

[Finnish Biodiversity Information Facility](#)

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*The International Barcode of Life (iBOL) Consortium is a research alliance of 31 nations with a mission to develop and apply a globally accessible, DNA-based system for the discovery and identification of all multi-cellular life. Our vision is to illuminate biodiversity for the benefit of all life.*

To learn more about iBOL, visit [www.ibol.org](http://www.ibol.org)