



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



THIRD SESSION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PROGRAM, BUDGET, AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 11-13 March 2009

Provisional Agenda Item 3.3

SPBA3/4, Rev. 1 (Eng.)
13 March 2009
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTER ON HEALTH SCIENCES INFORMATION (BIREME)

Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to present to the Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration (SPBA) with the proposed new institutional framework for the governance, management and financing of the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (hereinafter BIREME or the Center). This proposal is the result of an extensive review of the Center's institutional framework over the past several years.

Background

2. BIREME is a specialized center of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for technical cooperation in health information and communication sciences in the Region of the Americas. Established in São Paulo, Brazil in 1967, its operations are geared to the development of national and regional capacity and infrastructure for management, dissemination, and access to scientific information, knowledge and evidence, keeping abreast of international state-of-the-art methodologies and health technologies. PAHO technical cooperation through BIREME has made a significant contribution to the democratization of quality information in health, which is essential to health development and social inclusion in this Region.

3. Since its creation in 1967, BIREME has operated under the legal framework of a Maintenance Agreement subscribed by PAHO and the Government of Brazil, through the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the State Secretariat of Health of São Paulo, and the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP), whose campus houses

BIREME's physical headquarters. The Agreement, which is renewed every four or five years, remains in effect until 30 December 2009.

4. Under the BIREME Maintenance Agreement PAHO is responsible for the technical and administrative management of BIREME and provides the international staff and regular resources for its operation as approved in the PAHO regular budget by the Governing Bodies of the Organization. The international staff selected and financed by PAHO currently include the Director of BIREME and three additional staff members. The Ministry of Health and the State Secretariat of Health of São Paulo contribute to BIREME thorough regular financial resources. Until recently, the Ministry of Education of Brazil funded BIREME's annual subscriptions to hard copies of the scientific journals and currently supports online access to the journals. Finally, under the Agreement UNIFESP provides BIREME with national staff, physical facilities, and the scientific journal collection.

5. The contributions detailed in BIREME's Maintenance Agreement are supplemented with extra-budgetary financial resources from projects, agreements, grants, and the sale of information products and services.

6. BIREME has an average annual budget of US\$ 6 million. Regular contributions under the Maintenance Agreement represent 31% of the Center's budget, including the 10.4% contribution of PAHO for international staff and technical cooperation and the 21% contribution of Brazil, which includes the national staff and infrastructure of the UNIFESP (9%) and the financial resources from the State Secretariat of Health of São Paulo (1%) and the Ministry of Health (11%). The Ministry of Education's contribution, represented by the provision of online access to health science journals, is not included in BIREME's annual budget.

7. It should be noted that 70% of BIREME's total budget comes from extra-budgetary resources that is, from projects, agreements, grants, and the sale of information products and services. These resources are critical to the sustainable management of BIREME, especially since US\$ 3.6 million (65%) are allocated to staff wages. Thus, management of BIREME's cash flow depends, on the one hand, on the timely disbursement of the regular resources provided for in the Maintenance Agreement (at mid-year or in the second semester) and, on the other, on BIREME's capacity to mobilize extra-budgetary resources. It is therefore important to provide BIREME with a budget that better balances regular and extra-budgetary resources.

8. Notwithstanding the remarkable increase in the technical cooperation that BIREME provides to the Region of the Americas and the status of the extra-budgetary resources that it generates, BIREME's institutional framework established through the

Maintenance Agreement, has not been substantially modified in its 42 years of existence and does not adequately meet the Center's management, operational and financing needs.

9. The formulation of a new institutional framework for BIREME stems from resolutions of PAHO's Governing Bodies on the review and strengthening of all Pan American centers of the Organization¹ and from consultations and agreements between PAHO and the Government of Brazil in recent years. In 2004 when the last renewal of the Maintenance Agreement was signed, the parties agreed to promote the modification and development of an institutional structure and maintenance arrangement for BIREME, in line with national and international interests.

10. At the 138th Session of the Executive Committee, PAHO underscored the importance of BIREME's technical cooperation to the Region and noted the need for strengthening the institutional framework of the Center to afford it more sustainable legal, administrative, and financing conditions.²

11. In August 2007 PAHO, WHO, and the Government of Brazil signed the Technical Cooperation Strategy for PAHO and Federative Republic of Brazil, 2008-2012, reaffirming the need to amend the Maintenance Agreement "in order to strengthen and expand BIREME's capacity at the global, regional, and local level as an international cooperation center specializing in health information and communication sciences."

New Institutional Framework for BIREME

12. In light of the above, PAHO, in consultation with the Government of Brazil through the Ministry of Health, has developed a proposed new institutional framework for BIREME, established through three legal instruments.

- (a) Statute of BIREME: This governance framework will maintain BIREME's institutional status as a specialized Pan American center of PAHO, and define its objectives, functions, membership, and the legal framework for its management, operations, and financing.
- (b) BIREME Headquarters Agreement between PAHO and the Government of Brazil: This agreement will define the commitments and responsibilities of the parties and the rights, privileges and immunities of the Center in Brazil.

¹ See Resolution 31 of the 20th Pan American Sanitary Conference, CSP20.R31 (1978) and Resolution CD46.R6 of the 46th Directing Council of PAHO.

² See Final Report of the 138th Session of the Executive Committee, CE138/FR (2006).

- (c) Facilities Agreement between PAHO, the Government of Brazil and the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP): This agreement will clearly define BIREME's physical facilities in the University campus, updating the existing commitments related to the assignment of national staff, physical facilities, and the journal collection. UNIFESP would also support the management of BIREME through its foundations, which operate in the country under Brazilian law.

13. The proposed Statute of BIREME (attached as Annex 1) defines the "Member States of BIREME" as all the Member States of PAHO. Additionally, with a view to strengthening BIREME's international technical cooperation to other regions of the World Health Organization (WHO), the proposed Statute will permit other WHO Member States (that are not members of PAHO) to participate in BIREME by creating a new membership category called "Participating Members of BIREME." Furthermore, the proposed Statute of BIREME will allow any international organization with an interest or specific expertise in information and communication sciences to participate in BIREME under the membership category of "Participating Organization of BIREME." It should be noted that under the new Statute, every Participating Member or Participating Organization admitted to BIREME would have to make annual financial contributions. The Membership in BIREME of PAHO's Member States would entail no additional cost to them.

14. The proposed Statute of BIREME will also create a new governance structure for the Center consisting of three bodies.

- (a) The Advisory Council, whose function will be to make recommendations to the Director of Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) on the programmatic functions, work plan, and financing of the Center. The Advisory Council will be comprised of PAHO and the Government of Brazil as permanent members, plus five representatives of the Members of BIREME (i.e., five Members selected on a rotating basis by the Directing Council of PAHO);
- (b) The Scientific Council, whose function will be to assist in the development of BIREME's programmatic functions, will be comprised of scientific information specialists selected by the BIREME Advisory Council; and
- (c) The Secretariat of BIREME, whose function will be the technical execution of BIREME's work program under the direction of an international Director appointed by and responsible to the Director of the PASB.

15. The institutional framework described above will provide BIREME with a new governance structure and a stable, balanced source of financing that will include the regular resources approved by the Governing Bodies of PAHO, the contribution of the

Government of Brazil, the quota contributions of the Member States of WHO and/or Participating Organizations, and the income generated by projects, agreements, grants, and the sale of BIREME services.

16. The proposed institutional framework for BIREME presented herein was developed in consultation with the Government of Brazil.

Action by the Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration

17. The proposed institutional framework for the governance, management and financing of BIREME, including the attached Statute of BIREME, is submitted to the SPBA for consideration and comment prior to its submission to the 144th Session of the Executive Committee in June 2009 and its presentation for approval to the 49th Directing Council in September 2009, with a view to its full implementation by December of 2009.

Annex

ANNEX I

PROPOSED STATUTE OF BIREME

Article I Legal Status

The Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information, also known by its original name the Regional Library of Medicine ("BIREME"), is a specialized center of the Pan American Health Organization ("PAHO") Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization ("WHO"), established pursuant to the resolutions of the Directing Council of PAHO and operating continuously in Brazil, with headquarters in the city of São Paulo since its creation, effected through an agreement signed between PAHO and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Article II Objective

The objective of BIREME is to contribute to health development for the populations of the Region of the Americas, promoting cooperation among countries, the democratization of access to scientific and technical information, legislation and the sharing of knowledge and evidence to support steady improvement of the health, education and research systems.

Article III Functions

To meet its objective, BIREME shall have the following technical cooperation functions, included in the Regional Strategic Plan of PAHO:

- a. Support and strengthen health sciences information systems in PAHO Member States.
- b. Help develop and strength public health actions and policies and national and regional capacities and infrastructure for the acquisition, organization, access, publication, and use of information, knowledge, and scientific evidence regarding health processes and decision-making.
- c. Help develop and strengthen networks of institutions and individual producers, intermediaries and users of scientific, legal, technical, and factual information in health through the cooperative management and

operation of information products, services, and events in the common forum of the Virtual Health Library, in cooperation with the complementary national, regional and international networks.

- d. Contribute to the global development of health sciences information and communication through partnerships, programs, networks, and projects among international, regional, and national institutions, with a view to increasing the visibility, access, quality, use, and impact of the scientific and technical output of developing countries and regions;
- e. Help develop health science and technical terminology in Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese;
- f. Help develop distance education systems in the Region of the Americas, through infrastructure- and capacity-building for access to and the dissemination of information as an integral part of PAHO's Virtual Public Health Campus; and
- g. Support and promote collaboration among governments, professionals, health workers, consumers, relevant scientific institutions and international organizations, and society at large to establish and strengthen national health information systems that promote education and ongoing research through innovation and the application of information and communication technologies.

Article IV Membership

BIREME Members are defined below under the following categories: Member States, Participating States, and Participating Organizations.

- 1. Member States of BIREME: All PAHO Member States, Participating States, and Associate Members.
- 2. Participating States of BIREME: Any WHO Member State may be admitted as a "Participating State of BIREME," under the following conditions:
 - a. The WHO Member State must communicate to the Director of PAHO its intention to participate in scientific and technical cooperation and contribute financially to BIREME, through annual contributions established by the Advisory Committee of BIREME, as described in Article IX of this document, and recognize the present Statute and

follow its respective regulations.

- b. The Advisory Committee must endorse the proposed membership as a Participating State of BIREME by at least a two-thirds majority of its Members.
3. Participating Organizations of BIREME: Any international public organization with specific expertise in scientific and technical information and communication may be admitted as a "Participating Organization of BIREME," under the following conditions:
 - a. The international organization must communicate to the Director of PAHO its intention to participate in scientific and technical cooperation and contribute financially to BIREME, through annual contributions established by Advisory Committee of BIREME, as described in Article IX of this document, and recognize the present Statute and follow its respective regulations.
 - b. The Advisory Committee must endorse the proposed membership as a Participating Organization of BIREME by at least a two-thirds majority of its Members.
4. A Participating State or Participating Organization may withdraw its membership in BIREME by so communicating to the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee. Membership shall terminate six (6) months after the Director of PAHO receives the notification.

Article V Structure

BIREME shall consist of the following bodies:

- (a) Advisory Committee;
- (b) Scientific Board;
- (c) Secretariat.

Article VI The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is a permanent body of BIREME and performs advisory functions for the Director of PAHO.

1. The Advisory Committee of BIREME shall be made up of designated Members with the following composition:

- a. Two (2) permanent members: one (1) appointed by the Representative of the Government of Brazil and one (1) by the Director of PAHO;
 - b. Five (5) nonpermanent members, selected and named by the Directing Council of PAHO from among the BIREME membership described in Article IV, taking geographical representation into account;
2. The nonpermanent members of the BIREME Advisory Committee should be rotated every three (3) years. However, the Directing Council of PAHO shall be able to indicate a shorter rotation period in cases where it is necessary to maintain balance among the members of the Advisory Committee.
3. The number of nonpermanent members of the Advisory Committee may be modified by the Directing Council of PAHO as new BIREME Members are admitted.
4. The BIREME Advisory Committee shall:
 - a. Make recommendations to the Director of PAHO regarding the programmatic functions of BIREME, based on PAHO's Regional Strategic Plan and Technical Cooperation Work Plan and on recommendations from the Members of BIREME's Scientific Board;
 - b. Review the proposal for BIREME's Biennial Work Plan and make recommendations to the Director of PAHO aimed at strengthening and developing national and regional capacity and infrastructure in scientific and technical information;
 - c. Review BIREME's Biennial Budget Proposal and make recommendations to the Director of PAHO to strengthen the financing structure;
 - d. Propose the annual quota contributions of Participating States and Participating Organizations;
 - e. Evaluate BIREME's international cooperation with other regions and make recommendations to the Director of PAHO for its improvement;
 - f. Recommend to the Director of PAHO, providing justification, that the number of Nonpermanent Members on the Advisory Committee be modified to maintain geographical balance;

- g. Appoint the members of BIREME's Scientific Board:
- h. Recommend to the Directing Council of PAHO, when necessary, amendments to this Statute;
- i. Recommend to the Director of PAHO the creation of technical committees and working groups to assist BIREME in performing its programmatic functions, executing the Work Plan, and addressing health sector priorities;
- j. Adopt internal Rules of Procedure to be approved by all its Members in regular session;
- k. Hold an annual regular session. Permanent Members of the Advisory Committee may request that the Director of PAHO convene special sessions.

Article VII Scientific Board

The Scientific Board is a permanent body of BIREME and performs advisory functions for the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee.

1. The Scientific Board shall consist of at least five international specialists, named for their recognized expertise in scientific research, health information and knowledge management, and scientific and technical communication in health and their knowledge in the areas of research, ethics, development, operations, and financing. Members of the Scientific Board shall be appointed as specialists in their individual capacity and rotated every three (3) years.
2. The members of the Scientific Board shall be appointed by BIREME's Advisory Committee from lists of international experts drawn up by the two (2) Permanent Members of the Advisory Committee, based on the thematic diversity and expertise necessary for their functions.
3. The Scientific Board shall:
 - a. Make recommendations to the Advisory Committee on BIREME's programmatic functions based on the international state-of-the-art in scientific information and communication, which shall include: policies and quality criteria for the selection of content; management of information, knowledge, and scientific evidence; publication management; information storage and retrieval infrastructure; bibliometrics; infometrics; and science metrics;

- b. Advise the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee on the methodologies and technologies used by BIREME for the management of information products and services, and recommend the solutions and upgrades needed;
- c. Advise the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee on the adoption of innovations in scientific information and communication;
- d. Advise the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee on the preparation and implementation of BIREME's Biennial Work Plan, in keeping with the PAHO Strategic Plan and Biennial Work Plan;
- e. Advise the Director of PAHO and the Advisory Committee on the adoption of international partnerships for the development of health science information and communication;
- f. Adopt internal Rules of Procedure to be approved by all its Members in regular session;
- g. Hold an annual regular session. Three (3) members of this Scientific Board may request BIREME's Advisory Committee to hold special sessions.

Article VIII Secretariat

Subject to the general authority and decisions of the Director of PAHO, the Secretariat is a permanent body of BIREME, responsible for the technical and administrative management and execution of BIREME's Biennial Work Plan and Budget, pursuant to PAHO regulations and standards.

- 1. The Secretariat shall be comprised of the Director of BIREME and the necessary technical and administrative personnel, as determined by the Director of PAHO and subject to the availability of financial resources.
- 2. The Director of BIREME shall be appointed by the Director of PAHO, through an international competition, pursuant to the rules and regulations of the Pan American Health Organization.
- 3. Staff members who hold positions in BIREME shall be appointed pursuant to the rules and regulations of PAHO.

4. The Director of BIREME shall be responsible to the Director of PAHO for the executive management of BIREME, pursuant to PAHO rules and regulations. Responsibilities include:
 - a. Prepare, based on PAHO's Regional Strategic Plan, the Proposal for BIREME's Biennial Work Plan and Biennial Budgetary Proposal and submit them to the Advisory Committee for review and recommendations from the Director of PAHO;
 - b. Executing Biennial Work Plan and Biennial Budget of BIREME approved by the Director of PAHO as an integral part of PAHO's Biennial Work Plan;
 - c. Promoting and establishing collaboration with entities and organizations connected with BIREME's programmatic functions;
 - d. Promoting and forging international partnerships for the development of health science information and communication, in keeping with PAHO priorities;
 - e. Representing BIREME at events and in initiatives relevant to its programmatic functions as a Specialized Center of PAHO;
 - f. Manage BIREME's administrative and financial affairs;
 - g. Present an annual progress report on BIREME and submit it to the Advisory Committee for review and recommendations to the Director of PAHO;
 - h. Prepare any other report requested by the Director of PAHO, the Advisory Committee, or the Scientific Board of BIREME;
 - i. Serve as the Secretary *ex officio* at meetings of the Advisory Committee and Scientific Board.
 - j. Accept funds or contributions from individuals or corporations through agreements and/or contracts, as related to BIREME's functions, subject to the conditions established by the Director of PAHO and with his prior written authorization.

Article IX Finance

1. Resources for funding BIREME's Biennial Work Plan shall be obtained from the following sources: the annual contribution from PAHO determined by the Director of PAHO; the annual contribution from the Government of Brazil, pursuant to the agreement signed with PAHO; annual contributions from the Participating States and Participating Organizations of BIREME, and financial resources from projects, sale of services, and voluntary contributions.
2. All annual contributions shall be due on 1 January of each year and are to be paid by 30 June of the same year at the latest.
3. BIREME funds and assets shall be treated as PAHO trust funds and administered pursuant to PAHO's financial regulations.
4. BIREME shall maintain a Permanent Reserve Fund for its financial sustainability, equal to one (1) regular annual budget of BIREME. Ten percent of the fund shall come from the annual contributions of PAHO, 10% from the Government of Brazil, and 10% from BIREME Members, and 50% of the administrative fees from special projects, until the targeted amount is reached, always ensuring replenishment after use, although partial. The Permanent Reserve Fund shall be included in BIREME's Work Plan and annual budget.

Article X Privileges and Immunities

The privileges and immunities granted to BIREME in Brazil as a Specialized Center of PAHO, as well as the financial responsibilities of the Government of Brazil in regard to the maintenance of BIREME in Article IX of this Statute, should be reflected in a specific agreement between PAHO and the Government of Brazil.

Article XI Facilities

The arrangements regarding the physical facilities and other services provided to BIREME, headquartered since its creation on the UNIFESP campus in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, should be reflected in a specific instrument to be signed by PAHO, the Government of Brazil, and UNIFESP.

Article XII Amendments

Amendments to this Statute, as recommended by the BIREME Advisory Committee, shall enter into force on approval by the Directing Council of PAHO.

Article XIII Entry into Force

The provisions of this Statute shall enter into force on the date of its approval by the Directing Council of PAHO.

- - -