

## Biological Resource Centers Networking Model in Brazil

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The demand for high quality biological material and information is increasing as a consequence of the growth of the Brazilian biology-based economy. There is a growing need to consolidate the integrated infrastructure of distributed biological resource centers not only to underpin the increasing demand for biological material from industry and academia, but also to address the emerging technical and sanitary barriers associated with the global market. Instead of establishing a large national center as a provider of a wide range of materials and specialized services, the Brazilian strategy is focused on the consolidation of a distributed network of specialized resource centers to meet the growing demands of the user community. The Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT) is currently funding the implementation of a quality management program in selected microbial collections that are candidates to acquire the status of Biological Resource Centers (BRC). This effort is being complemented by the development and installation of *SICol-management*, a software to support the documentation and traceability of processes and products in service collections. *SICol-Net*, the networking mechanism to provide the virtual catalogue of biological materials and services is being developed with the adoption of internationally agreed standards and protocols. This information system allows the dynamic integration of strain data from microbial collections with botanical and zoological specimen data provided by the *speciesLink* network and other relevant information resources. MCT's program is being implemented in coordination with the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC) that focuses on the establishment of a Biological Material Depository Authority for patent purposes at the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization, and Industrial Quality (INMETRO). A key associated development is the INMETRO program to define the criteria for certification and/or accreditation of Biological Resource Centers in Brazil. The presentation will address the current development of coordinated programs focused on the digitization of strain data, development of information systems to monitor the quality management procedures in microbial collections, and the roles of collections, institutions and federal agencies involved in the implementation of the national program.