



American Institute
of Biological Sciences

A COMMUNITY ADVANCING
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN
THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



STRATEGIC PLAN

APPROVED BY THE AIBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012



INTRODUCTION

The American Institute of Biological Sciences' Strategic Plan uses programmatic and business priorities to chart the organization's course of action. The plan describes a results-oriented AIBS, envisaged through an extensive long-range and strategic planning effort that took place throughout 2010 and 2011. This data-driven process allowed AIBS to develop a better understanding of the organizations and individuals that advance the biological sciences, AIBS as an organization, and its role in the community. The plan is a living document, reviewed regularly by the Board and staff, designed to enable AIBS to adapt and evolve in response to new information and changing circumstances.

BACKGROUND

AIBS was formed with a vision of bringing together the organizations and individuals that advance the biological sciences to work together on matters best addressed through united action. Founded in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences, AIBS became an independent, member-governed nonprofit organization in the 1950s. In late 2009, AIBS initiated a process to consider its role at the start of the 21st century and how to adapt its programs to the rapid social, technological, and economic changes that are influencing the practice of the life sciences.

TODAY, AIBS WORKS TOWARD SPECIFIC OUTCOMES THROUGH **THREE CORE ACTIVITIES**

- **Scientific Peer Advisory and Review Services** for research proposals and programs sponsored by funding organizations, including the federal government, state agencies, private research foundations, and other non government organizations.
- **Publications and other Communications**, including authoritative reports, analyses, and the peer-reviewed journal *BioScience* as a forum for integrating the life sciences and applying that knowledge to important societal challenges.
- **Community Programs** that advance the field and profession of biology and promote and provide leadership, with a particular emphasis on public policy and advocacy, education, and the public understanding of science.

VISION

We envision AIBS as an organization that informs and leads research, education, and policymaking at the frontiers of the life sciences. AIBS will be the go-to organization for biology, recognized for catalyzing efforts that advance the field, improve the profession, and bring its discoveries to a broad audience.

MISSION

The mission of AIBS is to enable wise decisions in which the life sciences and society meet while building the capacity of our communities to advance research and education in biology. AIBS listens; anticipates; advises; collaborates; and, when needed, leads efforts in the life sciences community to address scientific and societal challenges.

VALUES

LISTENING

We solicit input from the community to inform our work and guide our decisions.

DATA

We thoroughly and objectively analyze data to inform our own decision-making and our work with biologists and biology organizations.

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

We invest our effort strategically and constantly strive to increase our capacity to do more for the community.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

We define targets, chart and measure our progress, evaluate the effectiveness of our work, and demonstrate our impact.

ADAPTABILITY

We expect to work in rapidly changing conditions, so we continually assess the community's needs and our efforts, measuring our progress, watching for challenges, and adapting our plans accordingly.

DIVERSITY

We consider a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, experiences, and talents in everything we do.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

We promote the understanding of biological research and education as a universal endeavor and work with the knowledge that the life sciences community and the people it serves are connected to one another around the world.

SYNERGY

We focus on our unique niche while collaborating with anyone who shares our goals.

STAKEHOLDERS

We recognize that researchers, educators, and the public are all essential stakeholders in our science, and we foster a mutual respect and appreciation for what each brings to the other and to the whole.

WHAT WE DO

WE INFORM DECISIONS by providing peer-reviewed or vetted information about the biology field and profession.

WE CATALYZE ACTION through building the capacity and the leadership of the community to address matters of common concern.

OUR COMMUNITY

AIBS works with any stakeholder that advances the field and profession of biology. Organizations and individuals partner with us on initiatives, work with us to identify and communicate matters of common concern, and help connect us to their communities for idea and information exchange—particularly regarding public policy, education, public understanding of science, and matters of professional concern.

AIBS has individual members and member societies and organizations that support our work financially.

AIBS has clients from government agencies to biological societies and other nonprofits that use our expert services for a fee.

THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

AIBS has **three overarching outcomes** that define what will change in the world as a result of our work. The work is advanced through our core activities as in the tables below:

- SCIENTIFIC PEER ADVISORY AND REVIEW SERVICES
- PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS
- COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
- AIBS LEADERSHIP

OUTCOME: INFORMED DECISIONMAKING

As a result of AIBS actions, the public, legislators, funders, and the community of biologists will have access to and use information that will guide them in making informed decisions about matters that require biological knowledge

THIS OUTCOME'S GOALS

Funders of biological research make informed funding decisions using peer review.

The public is able to make decisions informed by the biological sciences, particularly through an understanding of the nature of science and how biology informs societal issues.

Policymakers are able to make more informed decisions using vetted and reliable knowledge from the biological sciences, particularly about federal investments in scientific research and research infrastructure, science education and a well-trained workforce, the role for scientific peer review, and opportunities for science to inform policymaking.

Biologists further advance integrated biological knowledge about research topics through publishing, reading, and citing peer-reviewed research.

AIBS ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

● AIBS works with federal and state government agencies, foundations, and other institutions to implement a peer-review process that informs decisions on how to best allocate research resources.

● AIBS works with organizations in biology and across the scientific community to advance knowledge about issues and best practices to improve public understanding of science.

● AIBS works to promote the use of biological sciences knowledge in developing our nation's public policy and to develop and advance science policy that serves the needs of the scientific research and education communities, particularly the biological sciences.

● AIBS publishes peer-reviewed overviews of current biological research, together with information about biology education, history, and the profession in general.

OUTCOME: LEADERSHIP

As a result of AIBS actions, the biology community will have information and leadership that is a guide for advancing the field and profession

THIS OUTCOME'S GOALS

The community knows the external and internal forces that influence the field and profession.

Biology-serving organizations and biologists have leadership support in making informed decisions and in taking collective action to advance biology.

Biology-serving organizations and biologists will collectively act to advance biology, particularly in matters of public policy and formal and informal public education.

AIBS ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

- AIBS surveys the community; conducts literature reviews; and listens to public opinion, policy decisions, and other trustworthy information about the forces that influence the field and profession. AIBS then informs the organizations and individuals in biology about the results and implications of that information.
- AIBS convenes meetings to discuss matters that influence the field and profession.
- AIBS enhances the progress of scientific knowledge by helping ensure that the best new ideas are supported.
- AIBS nurtures mentorship and education for biology.
- AIBS strengthens proposal-preparation skills.
- AIBS publishes reports, articles, and peer-reviewed materials that inform the biological sciences community.
- AIBS helps members of the scientific community become effective advocates for their science and helps them to better understand the public debates that relate to or impact the biological sciences.
- AIBS works within the community to advance public policy and biology education and to ensure that the citizens of the future are biologically literate.

- AIBS facilitates activities that bring biology organizations together around matters of common concern.

OUTCOME: SUSTAINABILITY

As a result of AIBS actions, AIBS is a financially and programmatically sustainable organization

THIS OUTCOME'S GOALS

AIBS has sufficient working capital and an adequate operating reserve, diversified revenue streams, goals to increase financial capacity, and budgets that are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the best return on investment.

AIBS proactively plans for growth by allocating staff time and financial resources to adaptive capacity and uses a strategy screen before taking on new work.

AIBS is structurally healthy, maximizes the potential of its leadership and the performance of its staff, monitors success and charts impact concretely, and makes the most effective use of its resources and physical infrastructure.

AIBS ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

- AIBS maintains a business plan for each major line of business to lay out a road map for achieving success, including plans for responding to opportunities and obstacles.
- AIBS maintains an organizational plan that demonstrates how each business line supports the overall organization's success and how the programs work together to achieve the outcomes.
- AIBS uses a strategy screen to filter new ideas and existing programs to ensure that they are focused on advancing the organization's mission and work toward the three outcomes.
- AIBS staff members regularly examine how financial resources are best used to advance existing programs and initiate new programs.
- Staff job descriptions include activities that allow the organization to adaptively respond to changes in business markets.
- Members of the AIBS Board of Directors have a clear understanding of their role in contributing toward the organization's success
- AIBS monitors its impact and progress toward outcomes using quantitative and qualitative measures.
- AIBS staff members understand how their individual activities contribute to mission success.



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