This program seeks to enhance and expand the national resource of digital data documenting existing vouchered biological and paleontological collections and to advance scientific knowledge by improving access to digitized information (including images) residing in vouchered scientific collections across the United States. The information associated with various collections of organisms, such as geographic, paleogeographic and stratigraphic distribution, environmental habitat data, phenology, information about associated organisms, collector field notes, and tissues and molecular data extracted from the specimens, is a rich resource providing the baseline from which to further biodiversity research and provide critical information about existing gaps in our knowledge of life on earth. Collections digitization is defined broadly to include the capture of digital images of specimens, transcription into electronic format of various types of data associated with specimens, linking ancillary data already stored in an electronic format apart from the voucher specimens, the georeferencing of specimen-collection localities, and mobilization of all the data together online. This program will create an organizational structure and processes inclusive of the broad biological and paleontological collections community, provide open data access, and empower biological and paleobiological researchers.

This solicitation focuses on proposals for Thematic Collections Networks (TCN) and proposals for Partners to Existing Networks (PEN) to link with existing TCNs. Both TCN and PEN proposals should include:

- a detailed management plan for accomplishing the project,
- training plan for participants and students,
- priorities for tasks,
- task analysis,
- a plan for sustaining the data and for TCN proposals, a plan for sustaining the network beyond the life of the award, and
- plans for interacting and integrating with iDigBio.

**LIMIT ON NUMBER OF PROPOSALS PER ORGANIZATION**

Only one Thematic Collections Networks (TCN) proposal may be submitted by any one organization as the lead organization. Organizations may be involved in more than one collaborative effort as a non-lead proposal.

**KEY DATES**

Internal Letter of Intent Due: June 22, 2015 (by midnight)
SUBMITTING A MANDATORY LETTER OF INTENT
Faculty members interested in this funding opportunity are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI). An LOI is required but not binding.

1. Click [here](#) to access the LOI form.
2. Name the LOI as follows: “LastName-FirstInitial-LOI-NSF-Biodiversity”, replacing “LastName” with your last name and “First Initial” with your first initial.
3. Click on the Vault ticket: [https://vault2.northwestern.edu/xythoswfs/webui/_xy-e6610408_1-t_7Xksssj6](https://vault2.northwestern.edu/xythoswfs/webui/_xy-e6610408_1-t_7Xksssj6)
4. Click the Upload button.
5. Click the Browse button and navigate to your file on your hard drive or network.
6. Click the OK button.

Note: You will get a tiny confirmation message upon upload. If you do not see it, you may contact Karen Cielo [kcielo@northwestern.edu](mailto:kcielo@northwestern.edu) for a confirmation.

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES
The Office of Research Development offers assistance in identifying and facilitating collaborations, putting together interdisciplinary teams, programmatic and administrative development of large, cross-school proposals, and leveraging institutional resources for outreach and education. Contact Fruma Yehiely ([yehiely@northwestern.edu](mailto:yehiely@northwestern.edu)), Associate Vice President for Research, Director of ORD, for more information.

CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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Limited Submissions web site: [http://www.research.northwestern.edu/ord/funding/limited-submissions/](http://www.research.northwestern.edu/ord/funding/limited-submissions/)