

Cooperation between NIB and Brazilian research institutions:

In 2004, Prof. Dr. Alenka Malej from the NIB Marine Biology Station in Piran established cooperation with Prof. Dr. Eduard Maron from the IOI - South Western Atlantic Ocean (Brazil), with Dr. André Cararro Marandini from the University of São Paulo and with Prof. Dr. Antonio Carlos Marques from the Department of Zoology, University of São Paulo. Prof. Marques visited NIB in 2012 within the framework of the bilateral project »Biophysical Models and Phylogeography of Key Species of Jellyfish (Cnidaria) in the Coastal Areas of Slovenia and Brazil«.

From 2004 until his retirement in 2014, Prof. Dr. Andrej Čokl worked with Prof. Dr. Miguel Borges and Prof. Dr. Raúl Alberto Laumann from Embrapa, the largest agricultural institute in the world. Prof. Borges visited NIB in 2011 and Prof. Laumann in 2013, both within the framework of the bilateral project "Pentatomidae Communication and Their Implications to Soybean Pest Management". In this period Prof. Dr. Andrej Čokl also collaborated with other top scientists, namely Prof. Dr. Antonio R. Panizzi and Prof. Dr. Francisco De Assis Marques.

In the field of biodiversity of water, cooperation between Prof. Dr. Anton Brancelj and Prof. Dr. Adalberto Luis Val, the former Director of the INPA (the Brazilian National Institute for Research in the Amazon) took place within the framework of the project "Effects of Climate Changes to Animals and Temporary Water Bodies" from 2011 to 2013. In 2012, the cooperation between NIB and INPA was further strengthened with the signing of the agreement on the exchange of academic and scientific cooperation (NIB-INPA) and the memorandum for the exchange of students on the basis of academic exchanges at the Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

An important cooperation of Prof. Dr. Bojan Sedmak and Prof. Dr. Sandra Azevedo from the Carlos Chagas Filho Institute of Biophysics, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), was established in 2010. The outcome of this cooperation was a joint project entitled »Transfer and Implementation of Methods for Toxin Production and Degradation Cyanobacterial Bloom Monitoring in Samples from the Tropical Environments«. During cooperation period Prof. Azevedo visited NIB several times.

Director of the National Institute of Biology Prof. Dr. Tamara Lah Turnšek is professionally involved with several groups in Rio de Janeiro, namely with Prof. Dr. Vivaldo Moura Neto from the Carlos Chagas Filho Institute of Biophysics, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in the field of glioma brain tumors (glioblastoma). She is also cooperating with Prof. Dr. Stevens Rehen from the Medical Faculty of the same University in the field of stem cells. Currently she is also involved in an ongoing project (funded by the CNPQ) titled »The Relevance of Bradykinin System and Related Purinergic Signalling Pathways and GBM Cells upon Co-culturing with Human Mesenchymal Stem Cells« together with two PhD students. One of them is Mona de Neves Oliveira, whose one-year training is taking place at NIB. As co-head of the project in São Paulo, Prof. Dr. Maria Luiza Vilela Oliva from the Federal University of São Paulo is also involved, namely in the area of the impact of natural plant inhibitors on cancer cells. The third area of cooperation with the University of São Paulo is also the project of development of aptamers as biomarkers of tumor cells in the blood. PhD student and FAPESP (research agency in São Paulo) scholarship holder Mateja Delač is working on this project, together with COBIK - Centre of Excellence as the third partner. Prof Dr Tamara Lah Turnšek is the co-head of the bilateral project on this topic, which is currently being finalized.

In addition to scientific cooperation between NIB and INPA and the University of São Paulo there is also good cooperation in the field of education and the exchange of professors, teaching assistants / researchers and undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Thus, the research and the field of education, we need political support from the highest officials and representatives of both countries. A more concrete legislative measures and financial commitments (such as scholarships and funds for research and educational projects) Slovenia should follow the example of the Brazilian government, which supports the important forms of these activities. Such investments have undoubtedly long-term economic and social benefits in all areas of development - from technology to tourism and culture.

Political support from the highest officials and representatives of both countries is essential in the field both research and education. Unfortunately, it has faded with the end of these projects and we have been waiting for new tenders and calls for proposals for over three years. In Slovenia, legislative measures and financial commitments should follow the example of the Brazilian government, which supports the important forms of activities like scholarships and funds for research and educational projects. Such investments have undoubtedly long-term economic and social benefits in all areas of development - from technology to tourism and culture.