



# SPECIAL INITIATIVE ACCESS FOR ALL

Wise decision-making depends on use of an ever-growing pool of data, information and knowledge. Access is critical; nevertheless, decision-makers often find the resources to be inaccessible, absent or simply hidden.

Eye on Earth (EoE) converges initiatives that address the challenges of increasing access to environmental, societal, and economic information. More specifically, EoE is facilitating the global convergence of world class thinkers, actors and capacity builders with a focus on resolving data and information gaps, blockages and needs as required for more effective decision-making towards sustainable development.

In December 2011, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), convened global leaders, innovators and decision-makers to the inaugural EoE Summit. Delegates committed to a suite of outcomes, including the EoE Summit Declaration and Eight (8) Special Initiatives (SIs). The SIs address major environmental issues and are categorized into five thematic and three foundational initiatives. Among the foundational initiatives is the Eye on Access for All SI.

In 2012, EAD, through the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), and UNEP established a Secretariat to support and facilitate the aims of EoE through the SIs. Each Initiative is comprised of stakeholders that form a global community of practice. Together, the SIs represent a major portion of the EoE community. Stakeholders are actively engaged in moving initiatives forward through exemplary projects that demonstrate the guiding principles of the EoE Summit Declaration.

## THE EYE ON ACCESS FOR ALL SPECIAL INITIATIVE

The Eye on Access for All SI promotes and encourages further the implementation of Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration globally. Principle 10, one of the major outcomes of the Rio Summit, recognizes and stresses that "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided." While Principle 10 refers to the national level, it has been widely recognized and confirmed by the outcomes of the 2012 Rio + 20 Conference that Principle 10 is universal, to be applied at all levels.

There is significant support in the EoE Community for "the development of adequate institutional and legislative enabling conditions for furthering the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration". The Eye on Access for All brings together key entities to help implement Principle 10 globally and take advantage of the significant advances in technology, data base and geographic information and analysis to further these aims.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness among national governments and civil society of Principle 10 and the benefits of its implementation including sharing good practices and experience from other regions or countries.
- Development of legal frameworks at national and regional levels that promote public information access and engagement rights and better implementation practices in the spirit of Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration.
- Increased amount of information and data available for decision making and policy development, as well as increased public participation in decision making.
- Increased visibility and influence of environmental information in societal decision making processes and national planning.

## EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

To achieve the expected outcomes listed above, the Eye on Access for All SI has initiated the following activities to comprehensively address the issues from multiple perspectives:

- To provide capacity building, training and legal advice to governments and civil society in order to develop national legislation along the 2010 Bali Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

- To develop and deploy assessment tools that will enable a multi-stakeholder evaluation of national legal regimes and institutions with the goal of identifying Principle 10 related legal and implementation gaps and developing an incremental programme of improvement; and develop a web-based mechanism for monitoring and tracking improvements in Principle 10 laws and implementation worldwide.
- To transfer experiences from regions and countries (e.g. UN ECE Region) that have applied Principle 10 successfully, through exchange forums, targeted training, capacity and skill building programs (including web-based programs) for government officials at various levels, the judiciary and civil society organizations as well as businesses.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVE PROJECTS & LEAD STAKEHOLDERS

The projects listed below have been selected for seed funding by AGEDI:

- Strengthening capacity of governments, Major Groups and other stakeholders to implement Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the UNEP Bali Guidelines for the development of national legislation on Access to Information, Public participation in decision making and access to Justice in environmental matters – UNEP/United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).
- Deploy a web-based Principle 10 Legal Index Globally and publish results biannually – World Resources Institute (WRI).
- Building bridges between regions by improving public access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice, with the first pilot project undertaken to share European experiences with Latin America –Regional Environment Center - Hungary.

## STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

By participating in the SIs your organisation can play a key role in helping us achieve ‘best-impact’ from the SI programme. Through your support, you can play a leadership role in the provision of environmental and societal data and information to address the most critical issues of our time. It is only with your help that we can collaborate to bridge the data and information gap between developing and developed countries, and build a more sustainable future founded on informed decision-making based on access to environmental and societal data and information by all of those who need it. With the common vision of EoE you are offered a unique opportunity to support projects that have already been embraced by the international community, and highlight your distinction as an environmental leader in your chosen SI area of interest. For further information, please contact the EoE SIs team at [eoecommunity@ead.ae](mailto:eoecommunity@ead.ae)

## STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

AGEDI, UNEP, World Bank, Economic and Social Research Institute (Esri), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Environment Agency (EEA), US Department of State, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), UNITAR, European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information (EUROGI), Central European University (CEU), Regional Environmental Center (REC), World Resources Institute (WRI), The Access Initiative (TAI), Environmental Management and Law Association (EMLA), Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), National Institute for Space Research Brazil (INPE), International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

## WHAT IS A SPECIAL INITIATIVE?

A critical objective of the EoE Summit was to ensure that **compelling, specific, achievable outcomes** translate the principles of the Summit to **tangible commitments and actions**. The chosen eight initiatives are those considered by the EoE Community to fundamentally improve the landscape of environmental and societal information networking for the benefit of mankind, and from which compelling, tangible results can be achieved over the next 2-5 years.

## BE PART OF THE EYE ON EARTH COMMUNITY

To find out more on which SI best aligns with your own environmental programme interests and how you can become an active participant, email us at [eoecommunity@ead.ae](mailto:eoecommunity@ead.ae) or visit [www.eoesummit.org](http://www.eoesummit.org)

Join us and make your commitment to the SIs or keep up to date with our latest events and news through **Facebook/EyeonEarthSummit**.

## OTHER 7 SPECIAL INITIATIVES:

- Eye on Biodiversity
- Eye on Community Sustainability & Resiliency
- Eye on Disaster Management
- Eye on Environmental Education
- Eye on Global Network of Networks
- Eye on Oceans & Blue Carbon
- Eye on Water Security



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