Special Initiative
BIODIVERSITY

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 thematic initiatives is the Eye on Biodiversity 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 BIODIVERSITY SPECIAL INITIATIVE

The Eye on Biodiversity SI focuses on the incentives required to further motivate people, government agencies and organizations to share their information and data on biodiversity, particularly with regard to Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration. This initiative also notes the emphasis placed on the Outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, The Future We Want, on the need to strengthen public access to information, share information more widely and better integrate information for the development of needed scientific assessments.

Within this context and through incentivizing the process and supporting the deployment of infrastructure where the benefits of sharing are simple, immediate and self-evident, an increase in the best available information, data and knowledge is expected to better support the decision-making process at multiple scales. The incentives for data sharing suggested as part of this initiative are not financial, but rather focus on sustainable measures such as acknowledgement of data sources, tools for simplifying data sharing, more effective achievement of desired conservation outcomes (such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets), and a broad movement to reward and require sharing of biodiversity related information and data. The Eye on Biodiversity SI will support these ends by facilitating resource investment and political support for multi-national data networks that have established mechanisms for mobilizing and delivering biodiversity information to decision makers.

Finally, work undertaken under this initiative acknowledges Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity which calls on its Parties to: respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Further increase the level at which people, governments and institutions share what they know about biodiversity through international biodiversity information networks.
- Increase the amount and quality of information and data needed for decision making and policy development.
- Increase the visibility and influence of biodiversity information in societal decision making processes and national planning, especially as related to conservation targets.
- Strengthen public access to information.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Initiate a transparent platform for acknowledging and recognizing sharing of data and information.
- Initiate a global movement for governments, funding bodies, academic and research institutions to reward and promote sharing of non-sensitive data and information.
- Initiate the development of a suite of coherently designed and interoperable personal information and data management tools that are your "link to the world".
- Further support existing distributed networks of connected nodes.
- Initiate unlocking of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) information.
- Initiate the contribution of biodiversity and conservation data to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

SPECIAL INITIATIVE PROJECTS

The following project has been selected for seed funding by AGEDI:

- Unlocking EIA information – Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

In addition, several projects affiliated or proposed through the SIs process will continue to be followed, supported and aligned:

- Global Movement for Governments, Funding Bodies, Academic and Research Institutions to Reward and Promote Sharing, and Building a Transparent Platform for Acknowledging and Recognizing Sharing - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Your Link to the World – Personal Nodes in the Global Network - NatureServe.
- Contribution of Biodiversity and Conservation Data to IPBES – UNEP- World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC).
- Local, National and Regional Biodiversity Assessment (Arabian Peninsula) – EAD/AGEDI.

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Stakeholders have engaged this SI across a number of sectors. They include governmental organizations, NGOs, private firms, and other interested organizations. Stakeholders include: EAD, AGEDI, UNEP, GBIF, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, NatureServe, Conservation International, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), University of Twente - Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), Group on Earth Observations - Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO - BON), UAE Ministry of Environment and Water, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

By participating in the SIs, your organisation can play a key role in helping us to 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

WHAT IS A SPECIAL INITIATIVE?

A critical objective of the Eye on Earth 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**
or visit **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 INITATIVES:

- Eye on Access for All
- 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

www.eoesummit.org