

SPECIAL INITIATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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 Environmental Education Special Initiative (EoEE 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 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SPECIAL INITIATIVE

Awareness and education precede responsible decisions, policy making and actions, by individuals, organisations, and nations. There are numerous environmental education and awareness programs around the world addressing parts of this need at multiple levels, but there is no common knowledge management infrastructure of available materials, curricula, best practices, data networks, educators, and other resources. The EoEE SI will consolidate and build on other existing environmental education initiatives so as to collectively and effectively contribute towards sustainable development through all the educational arenas (formal, non-formal, informal and capacity building).

As one of the Eye on Earth Foundational Initiatives, The EoEE SI aims at enhancing Environmental Education and Awareness in the formal, non-formal and informal education as well as capacity building sectors for responsible decision and policy making and transformative action for environment and sustainability in six target regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia.

This SI aims to establish a networked commons of collaborating entities and resources, based on the reorientation, alignment and strengthening of existing programs and networks. It will also support and offer an educational and outreach platform to the EoE Thematic SIs.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Enhanced sharing and networking in Environmental Education (EE) by people, governments and institutions, and building capacity in the process.
- Improved knowledge base on EE, by developing new and innovative content, approaches and practices relevant to decision making, policy development; as well as transformative learning and action(s) for sustainable development.
- Increased visibility and influence of EE for sustainable development in higher education, for policy formulation and implementation; societal decision making processes; and national planning mechanisms.
- Increased visibility and influence of EE for sustainable development in basic education, non-formal and informal education.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- The consolidation and strengthening of partnerships and networks to support coordination, collaboration, resource sharing and access EE in the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors, as well as stakeholder community.
- To develop a common global EE knowledge management infrastructure of available materials, curricula, best practices, data networks, educators, and other resources in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors of education.

- To enhance a systematic approach to sector wide mainstreaming of environmental and sustainability concerns into education systems, programs, projects, and initiatives through the EE global academy network.
- To provide capacity building opportunities that facilitate and strengthen the EE of future environmental professionals, using current & emerging technologies and learning techniques.
- To support the thematic SIs by offering a platform for education and outreach.
- To pilot test region-based applications of the EE academy network project in all six regions.

The following projects have been selected for seed funding by the EoE Secretariat:

- Global Universities Partnership for Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) - UNEP.
- In-Service ICT training for Environmental mid career professionals to secure access and ability to use available Environmental Information (ISEPEI) [Integrated within the GUPES project] - Central European University.

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

- Educational Support – Comunicacion y Educacion Ambiental SC (Environmental Communication and Education SC).
- My Community, Our Earth (MyCOE) – Association of American Geographers (AAG).

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Nearly twenty stakeholders have engaged in this SI. They include governmental organizations, NGOs, private firms, and other interested organizations. Stakeholders include: AGEDI, Africa Conservation Centre (ACC), Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Arabian Gulf University (AGU), Central European University (CEU), Comunicacion y Educacion Ambiental SC, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), Digital-Earth, Escuela Nueva, Economic and Social Research Institute (Esri), European Environment Agency (EEA), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), League of Arab States (LAS), National Environment Agency (NEA) - The Gambia, National Geographic Society (NGS), UNEP Global Resource Information Database (GRID) Arendal, UNEP, University of Twente - Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), US Department of State, European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO).

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 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 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 INITIATIVES:

- Eye on Access for All
- Eye on Biodiversity
- Eye on Community Sustainability & Resiliency
- Eye on Disaster Management
- Eye on Global Network of Networks
- Eye on Oceans & Blue Carbon
- Eye on Water Security