



# SPECIAL INITIATIVE OCEANS AND BLUE CARBON

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 Oceans and Blue Carbon 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 OCEANS AND BLUE CARBON SPECIAL INITIATIVE

This EoE SI focuses on collecting data on oceans and coastal ecosystems (specifically mangroves, seagrass and intertidal saltmarsh) and making them useful in the context of management for climate change mitigation (through carbon storage and sequestration) as well as maintenance of ecosystem services valuable to coastal communities. This SI will explore methodologies for collecting appropriate data sets (from remote sensing of the areal extent of ecosystems to measurements of organic carbon stocks in coastal sediments), structures for managing the data-sets (e.g. databases or clearing houses), and vehicles (e.g. policy or natural resource management tools) for making these data useful to decision-making and management of coastal ecosystems for climate change mitigation and ecosystem services. Needs and use of data for market-based mechanisms (e.g. carbon credit payments) will also be explored as part of these activities and projects will be developed around the world that use data for coastal management through market-based mechanisms. This SI will work in close collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Blue Forests project.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are reduced by management of coastal ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass and intertidal saltmarsh).
- Global standards are set for data collection (accounting and valuation of carbon and ecosystem services) in coastal ecosystems and integrated into relevant international frameworks.
- Coastal ecosystems are managed for climate change mitigation and ecosystem services through market-based instruments in selected countries.
- Our global knowledge and data on coastal ecosystems are improved and made more accessible for management of these ecosystems around the world.

## EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Globally standardized methodologies for accounting for carbon in coastal ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass and intertidal saltmarsh).
- Globally standardized methodologies for the valuation of ecosystem services for coastal ecosystems and integration of said methodologies into existing carbon markets, payment for ecosystem services schemes and international policy frameworks.
- Development of global databases and management systems for coastal ecosystems data that is structured to be easily applied for management and decision-making on a national level.
- Scientific research projects and data collection that help to address some of the important gaps in knowledge that we have surrounding blue carbon and coastal ecosystem services.
- Recommendations made for using data-sets in decision-making and forming policies for coastal management on a national level.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVE PROJECTS

The projects listed below are funded or co-financed by AGEDI and GEF:

- Abu Dhabi Blue Carbon Demonstration Project – EAD/AGEDI.
- Blue Forests – UNEP/GEF.

## 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, GEF, UNEP, UNEP Global Resource Information Database (GRID)- Arendal, World Bank, Blue Ventures, Ecological Society of America (ESA), United States Geological Survey (USGS), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Forest Trends, Open Oceans Global (OOG), Conservation International.

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](mailto: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](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](https://www.facebook.com/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



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