

European Biodiversity Research Strategy in support of the Global Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO • BON)

Venue

Best Western Hotel Aquarell

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Important: Accommodation will be arranged for you by the organizers upon receiving your confirmation of attendance.

Dates

25-27 September 2008.

accommodation is available from the 24th afternoon to the 28th morning

Organizers

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Important notes:

The travel, accommodation and meals (from 24th dinner to 28th breakfast) of all participants is organized and paid by Biostrat. Travel should be arranged through the Hungarian travel agency Ticketair (ticketair@mail.galileo.hu; +36 1 317 3087).

Objectives

The main objectives of the meeting are to:

- discuss a strategy to support the implementation of the conceptual approach for GEO-BON at the European scale; and
- propose research priorities to support the involvement of the EU community into the implementation of GEO-BON.

Outcomes

A set of recommendations for the European Research Strategy for the implementation of the GEO BON in Europe, to be published as EPBRS workshop recommendations.

Produce a strategy presenting steps and actions to implement GEO-BON in Europe. This strategy would be a lively document to be used and refined as the project develops. This could also lead to a position paper from the European community on GEO-BON.

Draft Agenda

24th September

- 14:00 – Arrivals, registration
- 18:00 – 22:00 Welcome drink, Dinner, Icebreaking

25th September

- 9:00 –9:30 Opening remarks
Dr. Katalin Török – Biostrat Coordinator
Dr. Gábor Fodor - Minister for Environment and Water
Norbert Jürgens – GEO BON
- 9:30 – 10:00 Overview of task and meeting objectives, focal areas, and meeting output products
Dr. Katalin Török / Douglas Muchoney / Anne-Helene Prieur-Richard

10:00 – 10:30	FIRST KEYNOTE Prof. Georgina Mace (under discussion)
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:15	SECOND KEYNOTE Dr. Jurgen Tack
11:15 – 11:45	THIRD KEYNOTE Dr. Terry Parr
11:45 – 12:15	FOURTH KEYNOTE Dr. Rob Jongman
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00	Introduction to breakout groups
14:00 – 16:00	Working groups Chair: Rapporteur:
16:00 – 16:30	Break
16:30 – 18:00	Reports from the breakout groups and plenary discussion
16:00 – 18:00	Working groups discussions Chair: Rapporteur:
19:00 – 22:00	Dinner

26th September

9:00 – 10:45	Working groups discussions and drafting Chair: Rapporteur:
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- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 12:15 Working groups discussions and drafting
Chair:
Rapporteur:
- 12:15 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 15:30 Reports from the breakout groups and plenary discussion
Chair:
Rapporteur:
- 15:30 – 15:45 Break
- 15:45 – 17:00 Finalising the recommendations and the implementation strategy for
GEO-BON in Europe
Chair:
Rapporteur:
- 17:00 – 18:00 Closing remarks and introduction to the excursion
Dr. Katalin Török
Dr. Miklós Kertész
- 18:00 – 22:00 Dinner /Early departure

27th September

- 9:00 – 17:00 Excursion to an integrated study site in the Kiskunság
(details to be given by Dr. Miklós Kertész)
- 18:00 – 22:00 Dinner

28th September

Departure

Background information

Background information on GEO-BON

DIVERSITAS and NASA are currently leading the early planning stages for a Global Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON) under the Group on Earth Observations (GEO, <http://www.earthobservations.org/>). The goal of GEO is to proactively link together existing and planned observing systems around the world and supporting the development of new systems where gaps exist. This objective is met through the development of the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS, <http://earthobservations.org/>). GEOSS is a worldwide effort, which includes 72 member countries, the European Commission, and 52 participating organizations. GEOSS will work with and build upon existing national, regional, and international systems to provide comprehensive, coordinated Earth observations from thousands of instruments worldwide, transforming the data they collect into vital information for society. One of the Societal Benefit Area of GEOSS is dedicated to biodiversity observation (Task BI-07-01 of the GEO 2007 – 2009 Workplan) and is currently developing GEO-BON.

This global Network, GEO-BON, aims to design, plan, and implement a global biodiversity observation system that will collect, manage, analyze, and share data on the status and trends of the world's biodiversity, and regularly report its findings through the GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) under GEO. GEO-BON is intended to be an open umbrella network of GEO Members and Participating Organizations, and other institutions interested in contributing to this ambitious agenda. GEO membership currently consists of 72 national governments and the European Commission and also includes 52 intergovernmental, international, and regional participating organizations.

GEO-BON is guided by an interim steering committee (see Annex 1). This steering committee met for the first time in Geneva 14-16 January 2008, to produce a draft concept document, which is a plan outlining a vision and overarching approach for GEO-BON. This draft concept document will be available for consultation mid March 2008 and will be the basis for the discussion at the GEO-BON meeting in April 2008 (8-10 April, Postdam, Germany). The goal of this meeting will be to discuss and agree on this conceptual approach and to articulate a strategy for implementing the Network, including next steps for GEO Members.

Background information on Biostrat

Biostrat is an FP6 SSA, dedicated to the development of the European Biodiversity Research Strategy. Such Strategy brings together ideas on research priorities in fundamental and applied sciences to address critical gaps in knowledge on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It is intended to support the decision-making process regarding biodiversity-related research at both the European scale and in individual EU Member States by linking existing structures. Rather than developing new structures, Biostrat provides specific support to EPBRS (European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy, see below), which provides a representative forum for researchers, science and environmental policy makers, and National Biodiversity Platforms. Biostrat also ensures that other European and international efforts to develop research strategies in different fields of biodiversity research are linked to the development of a European Research Strategy through the EPBRS forum. As such, Biostrat is committed to participate in the development of the GEOSS Societal Benefit Area on Biodiversity by incorporating GEOSS objectives related to biodiversity in the EU Biodiversity Research Strategy, as well as introducing European vision into the development of a global biodiversity observation network; and by assisting GEOSS to implement specific biodiversity related actions at the European scale.

The Biostrat community will provide input into the consultation process on the vision for a global biodiversity observation network, which will be discussed at the GEO-BON meeting on 8-10 April 2008 (Postdam, Germany). To be actively involved in the development of the implementation of GEO-BON at the European scale, Biostrat, in collaboration with GEO-BON conveys a workshop (25-27 September 2008, Cegléd, Hungary) to address this issue.

Background information on EPBRS

The Lisbon European Council endorsed the “open method of co-ordination” (OMC) as a new technique of governance to help Europe “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth”. The European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) contributes to the European Research Area by implementing important aspects of the OMC.

The EPBRS “is a forum for scientists and policy-makers to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.” Its participants, from across Europe, meet to identify and promote strategically important biodiversity research that will contribute to policies and management to reduce biodiversity loss, and help to conserve, protect, restore and make the use of the components of biodiversity sustainable.

The EPBRS keeps close connections with relevant international bodies, national governments, and the EU institutions. Since its inception in 1999 it has met twice a year under successive EU Presidencies. The agendas of the meetings of the EPBRS balance science and policy. The scientific flavour of the meeting ensures that all participants enjoy sufficient depth of understanding to discuss the substantive issues constructively. The themes addressed in the meetings are not only important to Europe, but of particular relevance to the organising country, and are often to forthcoming CBD meetings. The group has so far dealt with many topics, including biodiversity and climate change, health, islands and archipelagos, invasive organisms, water and forest, the ecosystem approach, indicators, the new Member States, sustainable use, sustainable development, and sustaining livelihoods.

The main tangible deliverable of each EPBRS meetings is the short written agreement of the group on issues that are of high scientific and policy importance.

The strength of the EPBRS lies in its members, among whom are several delegates to SBSTTA. Membership in the EPBRS is open to all states that participate in the 6th Framework Programme and to the EU institutions. The participating states each nominate one scientist and one policymaker to attend the meetings. The scientists are mostly biologists, so the Commission invites some socio-economic experts to participate ad personam. Other stakeholders are invited to participate as appropriate.

The EPBRS process consists of meetings, activities between meetings, and activities of national platforms. Preparatory activities involve ad hoc working groups that design and help to prepare the meetings, run electronic conferences, prepare and discuss draft agreements, and respond to the decisions of the plenary or of the steering committee. The meetings involve

keynote speeches, presentation of European research, breakout groups to prepare agreements, and plenary meetings to discuss and adopt agreements.

The EPBRS encourages and helps to establish national platforms for biodiversity research, composed of scientists, policy makers, funding agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders. The forms and functions of these platforms depend on the needs and administrative landscape of their country. One shared purpose is to identify knowledge gaps whose reduction would help support national policy, and to bring these national concerns to the EPBRS. The national platforms use the EPBRS agreements to identify issues that are of particular national importance.

The EPBRS also makes extensive use of an active internet discussion list – ‘EU Biodiversity Science’ – whose membership is open to anyone interested in biodiversity science.

Annex 1: GEO-BON Interim Steering Committee

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Annex 2: Biostrat partner list

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