



GROUP ON  
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

BIODIVERSITY OBSERVATION NETWORK  
(GEO BON)

**GEO BON'S MISSION IS TO:**

- Provide a global, scientifically robust framework for observations on the detection of biodiversity change;
- Coordinate the gathering and delivery of biodiversity change information at the global scale;
- Ensure the long-term continuity of data supply; and
- Provide a set of innovative and relevant products based on the integration of key data sets.



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Cover photo: Rob Jongman

**HOW GEO BON CAN CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE  
OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

## MONITORING THE BIOSPHERE

Decision-makers rely on science when designing effective policies and programs for conserving and managing the world's dwindling biological resources. The Earth's biosphere, however, is extraordinarily complex. Studying and monitoring this dynamic network of ecosystems, species and genetic varieties is a major challenge.

Many excellent biodiversity observation systems and data bases have been established over the years, but these systems tend to be dispersed, unconnected and uncoordinated. Institutional and technical barriers can make it difficult to access the observations and data that have been collected. There are also gaps in coverage, and integrating biodiversity data with data from other disciplines, such as climate, weather and geology, remains difficult.

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is responding to the need for better information on biological diversity by establishing the GEO Biodiversity Observation Network. GEO BON is starting to coordinate the provision of sustained, cross-cutting, integrated and accessible biodiversity data and information.

Launched in 2005, GEO has been recognized by ministerial summits, the G8, and other leading forums. In addition to biodiversity it addresses eight other societal benefit areas: agriculture, climate, disasters, ecosystems, energy, health, water and weather. Over 80 governments and 50 international organizations are working through GEO to coordinate their observation strategies and establish the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS.



Phytoplankton Bloom in the Arabian Sea

### THE GEO BON VISION

A coordinated, global network that gathers and shares information on biodiversity, provides tools for data integration and analysis, and contributes to improving environmental management and human well-being.

## THE GEO BON PARTNERSHIP

Because environmental monitoring and data management are expensive, the scientific community has a strong incentive to build partnerships, exploit synergies and share data. GEO BON facilitates this cooperation by providing a global, scientifically robust framework for long-term observations and the detection of biodiversity change.

GEO BON consists of government agencies and intergovernmental and international organizations. Based on a regularly updated implementation plan, these partners work together on a voluntary basis to coordinate and connect their observation systems and develop information services and decision-support products.

GEO BON is guided by a steering committee and reports regularly to the annual GEO Plenary and to GEO Ministerial Summits. All systems, products and services, whether contributed to GEO BON or initiated by it, remain under the full authority and ownership of the agencies that produce and manage them.

GEO BON is taking the following steps to achieve its vision:

- Identify the providers of observations systems, data and data bases, information services and other resources and invite them to contribute to GEO BON.
- Build a network of people and organizations willing to collaborate and share ideas and information.
- Based on agreed technical standards for metadata and interoperability, work towards integrating various types of biodiversity data with other relevant data available through GEOSS.
- Identify gaps in coverage, assemble partnerships to address them, and advocate for strengthening and sustaining existing monitoring systems.
- Transform data and information into operational and user-driven decision-support products and end-to-end services.
- Promote full and open access to non-sensitive biodiversity data, as recommended by the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles.
- Disseminate data sets, decision-support tools and forecasting models through user-friendly web portals.
- Develop and contribute to programs for building the capacity of individuals and institutions, particularly in developing countries, to both use and contribute to GEO BON.

Based on these steps, GEO BON has already started to coordinate the gathering of data and the delivery of information. Over the next few years, it will provide a growing number of innovative and policy-relevant information products and services. GEO BON will continue to engage the scientific, resource-management and policy communities to ensure a dramatic increase in the availability of high-quality biodiversity information.