

WORKING GROUP 4 (FRESHWATER GROUP) SUMMARY

Membership (nominal and active)

- (i) Active participants: Eren Turak (Working Group Leader); Ian Harrison (Working Group co-leader); Nicolas Tubbs; Carmen Revenga; Robin Abell; Jeanne Nel; Robin Abell; Sebastien Miazza; Pete McIntyre; David Dudgeon, Aventino Kasangaki, Lu Cai, Shin-ichi Nakano, Jaime Garcia Moreno.
- (ii) Nominal Participants: Klement Tockner, Jonathan Higgins (neither were available to help with the final stages of developing the Freshwater Implementation Plan, but we expect their input and collaboration in the future).

Summarize current activities

Currently focusing on identifying additional partners who can advise on how Working Group 4 can put its Implementation Plan into practice most effectively, and how the Group might need to refine some of the planned activities, and deliverables. In particular, we are investigating opportunities for collaboration/partnership with Ramsar. They will be an important partner to ensure that the freshwater actions of GEO BON are correctly aligned with the processes of international policy.

In addition, as an early product, we are investigating trial sites where it may be possible to assimilate comprehensive data sets that can be used to test larger, global models and analyses (Implementation Plan activity 4.3.5). Issues to be explored in the trial will include: comparability of sampling methods and effort; taxonomic resolution, data quality and other matters of data interoperability; and feasibility of deriving ecoregion-specific relationships between biodiversity observations and environmental features/drivers. The findings of the exploratory trial of global datasets will be published as a scientific, peer-reviewed journal article and will establish directions for further research in key topics, including development of standard protocols and modelling of collective properties of biodiversity in freshwater ecosystems.

Priorities for 2010/11, deliverables, and milestones

Priorities will include:

- development of the trial data sets (activity 4.3.5) discussed above and the production of a peer-reviewed paper based on the results (deliverable 4.4.4)
- start reviewing global projects and datasets related to freshwater biodiversity (activity 4.3.1), in order to produce a directory of global sources of freshwater biodiversity data (deliverable 4.4.1)
- start delineation of spatial units for analyzing global freshwater biodiversity data (activity 4.3.2)
- identify a list of core research questions and a strategy to address these questions (deliverable 4.4.3).

Identify barriers to progress and propose solutions

- The absence of high-level agreements and coordination between GEO BON and some of the key implementation partners (e.g., Ramsar, IUCN, GWSP). Effective involvement of these key partners in GEO BON will be critical and depends on the resolution of roles, identification of shared interests, avoidance of duplication of effort, and dissemination and ownership of outputs, as well as commitment of staff time and resources.
- The lack of a clear understanding of how the activities and deliverables of the Implementation Plan will be advanced as formal aspects of GEO BON; i.e. how the specific activities of the Implementation Plan will link to the objectives of GEO BON at a higher level.
- Lack of an operational budget to support the proposed work.

Key partnerships that need to be developed

- Ramsar
- IUCN's Species Programme and Species Survival Commission
- EU-BioFresh consortium study of "Biodiversity of Freshwater Ecosystems: Status, Trends, Pressures, and Conservation Priorities"
- Global Water System Project
- Society for Conservation Biology Freshwater Working Group
- Global Invasive Species Program
- EFlowNet