



Second Conference Announcement, June 2009

e-Biosphere 09: The International Conference on Biodiversity Informatics
Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London: 1-5 June 2009

Dear Colleagues,

During the week of 1 June 2009, e-Biosphere 09, an international conference devoted to Biodiversity Informatics, will be held in London. This field has undergone explosive growth in the last decade, creating unprecedented access to information on biological species and their role in nature. The goals of the conference will be to:

- Present and discuss the extraordinary progress made in Biodiversity Informatics over the past decade,
- Provide participants with demonstrations of current capabilities in this field, and
- Bring stakeholders together to create a roadmap for the next decade.

Please join The Encyclopedia of Life, The Natural History Museum (London), and other co-sponsors* to celebrate the many successes of this rapidly expanding field and explore the challenges that lie ahead.

This Second Conference Announcement provides an overview of the week of events, a preliminary programme, and the timeline for future announcements and deadlines. Please note several 'Calls for Participation' in the document that invite you to: become a conference co-sponsor; propose and lead breakout discussions; present posters, software demonstrations and exhibits; and hold side-events. The official conference website (<http://www.e-biosphere09.org>) will provide you with up-to-date information as the conference approaches. This website will enable you to register for the conference, submit a poster abstract, get information about hotel rooms, and get information for travelers according to the schedule listed below. The organizers will also be providing travel support, on a competitive basis, to a limited number of students and participants from developing countries. Eligible participants will be able to submit requests for travel support through the conference website.

We look forward to seeing you all in London in June 2009. Don't hesitate to contact us at inquiries.e-biosphere09@si.edu.

Best regards,


 Norman Macleod
 Natural History Museum London
 Host Committee Chair


 James L. Edwards
 Encyclopedia of Life
 Conference Chair

* e-Biosphere 09 is hosted by **The Natural History Museum London** (NHM) and is co-sponsored by: **Encyclopedia of Life** (EOL); **Consortium for the Barcode of Life** (CBOL); **Global Biodiversity Information Facility** (GBIF); **JRS Biodiversity Foundation**; **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**; **Ocean Biogeographic Information System** (OBIS); **European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy** (EDIT); **Darwin200**; **LifeWatch**; **BioNET-INTERNATIONAL**; **Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network** (IABIN); **Atlas of Living Australia** (ALA); and the **Pan-European Species-directories Infrastructure** (PESI).



SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

The Scientific Programme of e-Biosphere 09 will consist of two events:

- A three-day International Conference on Monday to Wednesday, 1-3 June 2009. The Conference will be open to all registered participants; and
- A two-day Planning Meeting on Thursday and Friday, 4-5 June 2009. The Planning Meeting will bring together invited representatives of initiatives and major stakeholders in Biodiversity Informatics.

Programme for the International Conference

The organizers of the e-Biosphere 09 International Conference have designed the programme as a learning experience for participants and a forum for forward-looking discussions. Sessions will use a wide range of stimulating formats. Plenary presentations will be complemented by panel discussions, break-out discussion sessions, and unstructured time for visiting the Biodiversity Informatics [‘Street Fair’](#).

Summary of e-Biosphere 09 International Conference Programme

Monday

1 June 2009	0900-1030	Session 1: Impact and Importance of Biodiversity Informatics
	1100-1300	Session 2: The Major Initiatives
	1300-1630	Session 3: The e-Biosphere 09 ‘Street Fair’
	1630-1730	Session 4: Looking to the Future

Tuesday

2 June 2009	0900-1000	Session 5: Biodiversity Informatics at Work
	1030-1230	Session 6: Cultural Changes and Challenges
	1400-1500	Session 7: Planning Ahead I: Setting the Stage
	1530-1730	Session 8: Planning Ahead II: Break-out Discussions

Wednesday

3 June 2009	0900-1030	Session 9: Planning Ahead III: Reports from Break-Outs
	1100-1230	Session 10: Planning Ahead IV: The Users’ Perspectives
	1230-1330	Session 11: Summing Up
	1330-1730	Session 12: ‘Street Fair’ (continued) and Side-Events

In the following descriptions of the sessions, please note the ‘Calls for Participation’ which solicit your ideas and expressions of interest in organizing sessions.

Monday, 1 June 2009:

- [Session 1: Impact and Integration of Biodiversity Informatics](#). Two plenary keynote speakers will provide overviews of the impact that Biodiversity Informatics is having on research and societal applications, and the importance of building globally integrated capabilities for biodiversity information.
- [Session 2: The Major Initiatives](#). Six members of a discussion panel will give very brief presentations on some of the largest and most important initiatives in Biodiversity Informatics. These introductory remarks will be followed by a full-panel discussion and interactions with the audience.
- [Session 3: The e-Biosphere 09 “Street Fair”](#). Following lunch, conference participants will have several hours to visit poster exhibits, see software demonstrations, and visit exhibits. Please see additional information about the [‘Street Fair’](#) below.
- [Session 4: Looking to the Future](#). Two plenary keynote speakers will offer their views of the future directions, opportunities, and challenges for Biodiversity Informatics, including the need to bridge the ‘Digital Divide’.

Tuesday, 2 June 2009:

- **Session 5: Biodiversity Informatics At Work.** Three plenary speakers will show how advances in informatics now make it possible to bring together information about biodiversity from a wealth of online databases and both historical and current literature. These approaches allow information to be recombined and used in support of research and planning in ways that may not have been foreseen by those who first produced it.
- **Session 6: Cultural Changes and Challenges.** Six members of a discussion panel will present their views on how the growth of Biodiversity Informatics is changing community policies and practices in areas such as data sharing, intellectual property rights, and open access publication. These introductory presentations will be followed by discussion among panelists and with the audience.
- **Session 7: Planning Ahead I: Setting the Stage.** This session begins the second half of the International Conference, in which participants will play the major role by contributing their ideas for the future development of Biodiversity Informatics. Three plenary speakers will set the stage for the second half of the Conference by framing the major challenges ahead, such as:
 - What technical and cultural challenges will we face in creating a seamless global web of biodiversity information?
 - What capabilities will users want from Biodiversity Informatics in the next 5-10 years?
 - How can we ensure global participation in and access to Biodiversity Informatics?
- **Session 8: Planning Ahead II: Break-out Discussions.** Ten conference rooms have been reserved for separate break-out discussions of topics relating to the future of Biodiversity Informatics. The Conference organizers propose the following preliminary list of topics. The list will be finalized based on input from the community (see [Call for Participation](#)) and will be presented in the Third Conference Announcement.
 1. Developing world
 2. Conservation and land use
 3. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and economic development
 4. Public Health
 5. Ecology and ecosystems, environmental sustainability, climate change
 6. Taxonomic groups
 7. Uses in public, K-12 and higher education
 8. Basic biodiversity science research
 9. Training in biodiversity informatics
 10. Citizen science

Call for Participation: Break-out Discussions

The Conference organizers want the Break-out Discussions to respond to the varied interests of the Biodiversity Informatics community and potential users. For this reason, the Conference organizers ask you to submit:

- Your suggestions for other possible topics for Break-out Discussion Groups, and
- Expressions of your interest in being a Moderator or Rapporteur for a specific Break-out Discussion Group.

Please send your input to inquiries.e-biosphere09@si.edu

Wednesday, 3 June 2009:

- **Session 9: Planning Ahead III: Results of Break-Out Discussions.** The rapporteurs of the break-out discussions will present the findings and recommendations of Session 8.
- **Session 10: Planning Ahead IV: The Users' Perspectives.** A small discussion panel will react to the results of the break-out discussions from the perspective of potential users of Biodiversity Informatics, and will engage the audience in a discussion of future needs.
- **Session 11: Summing Up.** This final plenary session will bring together the recommendations of the Conference participants for the future of Biodiversity Informatics. These recommendations will provide critical input to the Planning Meeting that will follow the International Conference.
- **Session 12: 'Street Fair' (continued) and Side-Events.** Participants will have the final afternoon of the Conference to re-visit the posters, computer demonstrations, and exhibits on the e-Biosphere 09 'Street Fair'. The Conference organizers will also work with groups that wish to hold side-meetings during this session.

Call for Participation: Side-Events

The Conference organizers call for expressions of interest from groups that would like to hold their own side-events during Session 12. A limited number of meeting rooms are available and the Conference organizers will help the sponsors of potential side-events to arrange meeting space. Please send your expressions of interest to inquiries.e-biosphere09@si.edu

IMPORTANT DATES LEADING UP TO E-BIOSPHERE 09

As you plan your participation in the e-Biosphere 09 Conference, please keep the following important dates and deadlines in mind:

- 7 July 2008: Release of the Second Conference Announcement (this document)
- 1 August 2008: Release of Important Documents on Conference website:
 - Full agenda with invited speakers,
 - Call for submission of abstracts for poster presentation, and
 - Applications for travel bursaries.
- 1 September 2008: Release of registration site, hotel and traveler information
- 15 December 2008: Deadline for submission of poster abstracts and applications for travel bursaries
- 1 February 2009: Announcement of accepted poster abstracts and awards for travel bursaries
- 1 April 2009: Deadline for exhibitor applications
- 1 May 2009: Release of abstract volume
- 1 May 2009: Release of Third Conference Announcement with final agenda
- 1-5 June 2009: e-Biosphere 09 conference

CONFERENCE WEBSITE

All announcements, documents, and information resources related to the e-Biosphere 09 Conference will be posted on the Conference Website: www.e-Biosphere09.org. Please visit this website for the most current conference information.

THE e-Biosphere 09 'STREET FAIR': POSTERS, SOFTWARE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND EXHIBITS

One of the main goals of the e-Biosphere 09 Conference is to familiarize participants with the full range of projects, networks, databases and other capabilities that constitute Biodiversity Informatics. There are too many outstanding activities to include in plenary sessions, so the Conference organizers will create an opportunity to learn about them in a 'Street Fair' format. Three adjacent areas in the conference venue will be devoted to:

- **Poster presentations.** The Third Conference Announcement will include a call for poster abstracts. The Conference Programme Committee will evaluate the abstracts and will award space in the poster presentation area on a competitive basis. Abstracts will be published on the Conference website and in a printed volume distributed at the International Conference. There will be no charge to presenters for their exhibit space.
- **Computer demonstrations.** Participants may apply for small display booths in which they can demonstrate their database initiatives and software developments. Electrical power, a table, chairs, and poster display areas will be provided for a base rental fee. Flat-panel display monitors on stands and wired Internet connections will also be available for an additional fee.
- **Exhibits.** Companies, societies, and other organizations will have the opportunity to display their exhibits. These exhibits can use either a standard display booth or floorspace for their custom-built displays.

The schedule of rental fees and application forms for a display booth, exhibit space, and equipment are now posted on the Conference website.

Call for Participation: Co-Sponsors

The Conference organizers are seeking organizational co-sponsors and contributors to the Conference, with the goal of keeping the conference fee as low as possible. Organizations interested in becoming Conference co-sponsors or contributors are asked to contact David Schindel at SchindelD@si.edu

TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND TRAVEL BURSARY AWARDS

Participants will be responsible for arranging their own travel and hotel accommodations. Travel and hotel information will be posted on the Conference website after 1 November 2008. The Conference organizers will support travel and accommodations for all invited speakers.

Travel bursaries will be awarded to approximately 40 doctoral students and participants from developing countries, contingent on the availability of funds. These travel bursaries will be awarded on a competitive basis and the application form will be posted on the Conference website on 1 August 2008. Applications will be judged according to the applicant's past involvement in Biodiversity Informatics and their plans for future involvement. Priority will be given to applicants whose abstracts have been accepted for poster presentations.

CONFERENCE FEES

Registration for the e-Biosphere 09 International Conference will require payment of a conference fee. The fee will be waived for invited speakers and recipients of travel bursary awards.

Programme for the e-Biosphere 09 Planning Meeting

The co-sponsors of the e-Biosphere 09 Conference and invited representatives of other initiatives in Biodiversity Informatics will devote two days to strategic planning. The findings and recommendations from the e-Biosphere 09 International Conference will be critical input to these discussions. The findings and recommendations developed during the Planning Meeting will be submitted for publication and will be summarized on the Conference website and the websites of the co-sponsor organizations.

The e-Biosphere 09 International Conference (1-3 June 2009) will be held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEICC), located near Parliament Square and Westminster Abbey in the centre of London.

The e-Biosphere 09 Planning Meeting (4-5 June 2009) will be held at The Natural History Museum (London) in South Kensington.

