IUCN and OASIS join forces to develop open standards for conservation

Global organizations collaborate to enhance accessibility of information on biodiversity, species loss, and ecosystem integrity

Gland, Switzerland and Boston, MA, USA; 30 June 2006 - The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and OASIS, the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards, formalized an agreement of joint activity to define and promote international standardization within the conservation sector. This new alliance will result in the creation of open standards for the electronic exchange of conservation data.

"We see tremendous value in promoting common standards and best practices across the Union and the Conservation Community to effectively support conservation efforts," emphasized Ibrahim Thiaw, Acting Director General of IUCN. "This marks one of our first collaborations with the technology sector and the establishment of best-of-breed solutions for conservation organizations worldwide."

" Conservation is clearly one area where seamless access to accurate data?regardless of geographic boundaries, computer platforms, or language barriers?is absolutely crucial for positive, wide-reaching change to take place," said OASIS president and CEO, Patrick Gannon. "OASIS is excited by the opportunity to bring the advantages of open standards to this arena, working in close cooperation with the World Conservation Union and their many members."

Key initiatives to be pursued under this agreement include: the development of a new OASIS Biodiversity Conservation Member Section to bring together conservation, government, scientific and technical experts; the creation of a conservation-specific XML.org Focus Area to serve as a non-commercial, comprehensive information resource for those involved within the conservation domain; and the forming of committees to provide collaboration and resources to the global development effort.

" Much of existing conservation data is managed in silos of information, and there is demand for new formats and standards to successfully exchange information across the conservation community." said Alison Rowles-Anobile, Director of Operations of IUCN. "Our goal is to enable global conservation initiatives through the ability to exchange crucial biodiversity data and information from even the remotest parts of the world."

About the World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Created in 1948, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) brings together 81 States, 120 government agencies, 800 plus NGOs, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. The Union is the world's largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. The Union is a
multicultural, multilingual organization with 1,000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland. [1]

About OASIS:

OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards) is a not-for-profit, international consortium that drives the development, convergence, and adoption of e-business standards. Members themselves set the OASIS technical agenda, using a lightweight, open process expressly designed to promote industry consensus and unite disparate efforts. The consortium produces open standards for Web services, security, e-business, and standardization efforts in the public sector and for application-specific markets. Founded in 1993, OASIS has more than 5,000 participants representing over 600 organizations and individual members in 100 countries. Approved OASIS Standards include AVDL, BCM, CAP, DITA, DocBook, DSML, ebXML CPPA, ebXML Messaging, ebXML Registry, EDXL-DE, EML, OpenDocument, SAML, SPML, UBL, UDDI, WSDM, WS-Reliability, WSRF, WSRP, WS-Security, XACML, XCBF, and XML Catalogs. [2]

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