

The Story of the EBI



The Energy & Biodiversity Initiative

The EBI grew out of numerous conversations between Conservation International (CI) and a number of energy companies with existing or proposed operations in areas recognized for their biodiversity values. CI realized that something unique could be achieved by bringing together several companies and conservation organizations in a single forum to develop and promote ways to integrate biodiversity conservation into oil and gas development.

Initially, CI's Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB) approached companies that had expressed an interest in making a commitment to biodiversity conservation in their operations, as well as fellow international conservation organizations that had previously worked in partnership with industry in the field to improve the environmental performance of the sector. After more than a year of preliminary discussion, the ten original EBI members met in January 2001 to agree on a structure and workplan for the next two years. The original membership included BP, ChevronTexaco, Enron, Shell and Statoil from the energy industry and CI, Fauna & Flora International, IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Smithsonian Institution and The Nature Conservancy from the environmental community. (In December 2001, Enron ceased to be a part of the Initiative.)

The EBI members met eight more times over the course of the following two years to share progress and continually shape the course of the Initiative's work. Several public forums, including a January 2002 stakeholder workshop in Washington, DC, and presentations at oil and gas industry conferences and meetings, allowed the Initiative members to share their work with interested parties and receive feedback on the direction of their research and conclusions.

To facilitate their activities, the EBI members divided themselves into four working groups, each of which focused on a specific topic related to energy and biodiversity: The Business Case, Biodiversity Conservation Practices, Site Selection, and Indicators. From this work, the EBI members have continued to refine and revise their work, culminating in an integrated set of products that includes this summary document and several guides, discussion papers and resources on how to effectively integrate biodiversity considerations in energy development.

From here, the EBI will enter a new phase of cooperation and coordination with the wider energy industry and environmental community, in order to test and refine the products. As part of this phase, the EBI will establish close links with the Biodiversity Working Group jointly established by the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) and the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (OGP) to promote and increase awareness of the EBI and its products, and encourage the use, testing and refinement of these products within the industry.

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