



More than 300 leading conservationists unite in Windhoek, Namibia to shape the future of conservation area management at the inaugural SMART Global Congress

The SMART Partnership* is pleased to announce the inaugural SMART Global Congress in Windhoek, Namibia from 10-14 March 2024. Established in 2011, the SMART Partnership is the global leader in conservation area management solutions, offering an integrated suite of powerful tools and services to help conservation practitioners improve management effectiveness and better protect wildlife.

Since its creation in 2011, in response to the alarming decline in global wildlife populations, the SMART Partnership has aimed to provide the tools and training that are critical for effective conservation area management. Originally developed for collecting and analyzing conservation law enforcement data in terrestrial protected areas, SMART's (Spatial Monitoring and Report Tool) power and flexibility has allowed it to transcend its initial purpose. Currently deployed in over 1,200 sites across more than 100 countries, SMART has become an indispensable resource for the protection and conservation of global biodiversity.

Recent international developments underscore the significance and potential for impact of tools like SMART. The new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, signed by almost 200 countries at COP15, commits nations to safeguarding 30 percent of the planet by 2030. Tools like SMART will play a critical role in the effective management of these sites, monitoring and reporting important data on progress towards meeting these ambitious targets.

SMART's impact now extends well beyond terrestrial sites - it is deployed by local and Indigenous communities, field researchers, and even facility managers. Its applications span diverse environments, including marine areas, deserts, the arctic and globally-focused climate change mitigation projects. With tens of thousands of conservationists around the world using SMART, the tool has become integral in crafting data-driven strategies for effective biodiversity conservation.

The SMART Global Congress marks a significant milestone in the nearly 15-year history of SMART. For the first time ever, we are convening SMART users from around the globe to share experiences and lessons learned, and we are excitedly expecting over 300 SMART practitioners from more than 55 different countries.



We are also honored to have several notable speakers, including our distinguished keynote from Mr. Teofilus Nghitila, Executive Director of the Namibian Ministry of Forestry, Environment & Tourism, as well as several other renowned conservation practitioners from around the world, including:

- Dr. Madhu Rao, Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas: Dr. Rao brings over 25 years of experience in designing and supporting the implementation of conservation field programs across Asia.
- Dr. Emma Stokes, Vice President Field Conservation, Wildlife Conservation Society: Dr. Stokes oversees the global portfolio of regional programs for Wildlife Conservation Society's in nearly 60 countries and across the world's oceans.
- Dr. Tara Stoinski, President, CEO and Chief Scientific Officer, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund: Dr. Stoinski has studied gorillas for more than two decades and is the author of over 150 scientific publications and books.
- Dr. Supagit Vinitpornawan, Director of SMART Patrol Monitoring Center, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Thailand: Dr. Vinitpornawan leads the National SMART center for DNP in Thailand.
- Rohit Singh, Director of Protected and Conserved Area Management and Governance, World Wildlife Fund (WWF): Mr. Singh has worked on conservation, protected area management and illegal wildlife trade issues for 19 years, and has been instrumental in driving forward the agenda to professionalize the ranger force globally.
- Dr. Richard Bergl, Director of Animal Care, Conservation, Education and Science, North Carolina Zoo: Dr. Bergl has worked in wildlife conservation across Africa for 25 years, and is one of the founding members and current Chair of the SMART Partnership.

The congress will be hosted at the Mercure Hotel and Conference Centre located at the corner of Auas and Aviation Road, Windhoek, Namibia., 9000 WINDHOEK, Namibia.

For media inquiries, interviews, or other information, please contact us at globalcongress@smartconservationsoftware.org or visit <https://smartconservationtools.org>.

*Current SMART Partnership members are: Frankfurt Zoological Society, North Carolina Zoo, Panthera, Re:wild, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Protection Solutions, World Wildlife Fund, and Zoological Society of London.



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