

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of UN Biodiversity Lab 2.0: Spatial data and the future of our planet

- The UNBL 2.0 release responds to a known global gap in the types of spatial data and tools
- The redesign offers modern web app design and enhanced functionalities
- Microsoft commits to support the digital ecosystem of UNBL with their Planetary Computer and custom analytics

New York, Oct 4 – The [UN Biodiversity Lab \(UNBL\) 2.0](#) was launched today at Day 1 of the [Nature for Life Hub](#). The UNBL 2.0 is a free, open-source platform that enables governments and others to access state-of-the-art maps and data on nature, climate change, and human development in new ways to generate insight for nature and sustainable development. It is freely available online to governments and other stakeholders as a digital public good.

Developed jointly by the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), the [United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre \(UNEP-WCMC\)](#), and the [Secretariat of the UN Biodiversity Convention](#), the launch highlighted strong partnerships, and included an announcement from Microsoft of its commitment to support the digital ecosystem of UNBL with their Planetary Computer and custom analytics as digital public goods.

“The UN Biodiversity Lab will enable anyone to access state-of-the-art spatial data and dynamic indicators that will generate brand-new insights into conservation and sustainable development,” says UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner. “And crucially, the lab will provide decision-makers with access to over 400 spatial data layers across biodiversity, climate change, and development – helping them to identify new opportunities to act in the best interest of both people and planet.”

The UNBL 2.0 release responds to a known global gap in the types of spatial data and tools, providing an invaluable resource to nations around the world to take transformative action. Users can now access over 400 of the world’s best available global spatial data layers; create secure workspaces to incorporate national data alongside global data; use curated data collections to generate insight for action; and more. Without specialized tools or training, decision-makers can leverage the power of spatial data to support priority-setting and the implementation of nature-based solutions. Dynamic metrics and indicators on the state of our planet are also available.

“The UN Biodiversity Lab brings together a strong coalition of partners, data providers, and technological innovators to support the creation of a digital ecosystem for the planet. As an advocate for the environment, UNEP has a key role to play in providing information on the state of nature and to deepen the science-policy linkages. We are firmly committed to this partnership so that policymakers can effectively use open data in spatial planning to deliver on the Paris

Agreement and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,” stated Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.

“UNBL has the potential to provide critical resources to support Parties in national reporting of biodiversity indicators under the emerging post-2020 global biodiversity framework and also for the revision, implementation and monitoring of national biodiversity plans,” stated Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the UN Biodiversity Convention.

UNBL was first launched in 2018 to support governments in their commitments to the UN Biodiversity Convention, leading to a [two-fold increase in the number of maps used in countries’ national reports on the state of biodiversity](#). UNBL 2.0 is now available in English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The redesign offers modern web app design and enhanced functionalities based on user feedback, including more data, enhanced analytic capabilities, and analyses that support action at the national level*.

For more information:

Sangita Khadka, Communications Specialist, UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. Email: sangita.khadka@undp.org, tel: +1 212 906 5043.

Keisha Rukikaire, Head of News and Media, UNEP. Email: rukikaire@un.org, tel: +254 722 677747.

David Ainsworth, Information Officer, CBD Secretariat. Email david.ainsworth@un.org, Tel +1 514 561 2720.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The full new feature list of UNBL 2.0 includes:

1. Modern web app design and enhanced usability.
2. Fully available in English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.
3. An expanded global data list now including over 400 layers on biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development.
4. Secure workspaces available to any not-for-profit actors where they can incorporate national data alongside global data.
5. Analytics to calculate dynamic indicators for any area of interest.
6. Curated data collections on key thematic areas to generate insight for action.
7. New functionalities coming in 2022 will also enable countries to map their Essential Life Support Areas, where action to protect, manage, and restore nature can support the achievement of global priorities for biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development.