

**Partnerships/Initiatives to strengthen the implementation of Agenda 21  
(To be elaborated by interested parties in preparation for the World Summit on  
Sustainable Development for launching at the Summit)**

**Name of the Partnership/Initiative**

My Community, Our Earth (MyCOE) – Geographic Learning for Sustainable Development

**Expected date of initiation:** Summer 2001

**Expected date of completion:** First round of student projects will be displayed at WSSD and other international venues from July 2002- July 2003; plans are underway to continue effort after WSSD

**Partners Involved:**

*MyCOE Project organizers* and other sponsors are listed below.

Governments:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development,

Intergovernmental organizations:

*United Nations Environment Programme*, Inter-American Development Bank

Major groups: (NGO's)

*National Geographic Society, Association of American Geographers*

Other: (private sector)

*ESRI*, ERDAS, Earthscape, 3M

*Leading Partner:*

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**Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative**

Please provide a brief description:

Secondary school and university students around the world will participate in an innovative project that challenges them to use the tools and methods of geography to study how their communities can become healthier and more livable, how they can exist in greater harmony with the natural world, and how to plan for the future.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

The MyCOE sustainable development themes were selected from the 40-chapter programme of actions developed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These 40 chapters, referred to as "Agenda 21," were identified as the environmental and sustainable development

issues that need to be addressed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 11 themes highlighted in this project are provided to foster ideas by students and institutions of higher learning. The themes are: biodiversity, climate change, deforestation, environmental pollution, food production, freshwater supply, health and disease, mountain development, poverty reduction, rural development, and urbanization.

Students are invited to create geography-oriented projects around one of these themes. Issues from a local, regional, or national scale can be examined, with the emphasis on using geographic analysis to identify viable solutions for sustainability. Students can use digital tools such as GIS software or more traditional manual methods such as hand drawn maps and charts to complete projects.

**Expected results:**

Please provide a brief description:

There are four principal objectives to the My Community, Our Earth project:

- Give students a medium in which to learn about and present current sustainable development issues to international leaders.
- Raise awareness internationally of the importance of geography and geographic information system (GIS) technology in dealing with issues of sustainable development.
- Present the students' projects using maps, images, and graphs at international venues in 2002 and 2003 such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).
- Demonstrate the power of geography and GIS to participants of WSSD and interested individuals worldwide via the Internet and other venues.

**Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:**

Students enrolled in any secondary school or university at any time during 2001 or 2002 are eligible to participate *in initial project efforts leading up to WSSD*.

MyCOE is also enrolling volunteer mentors to work with students via email, post, or telephone. Actual meetings between mentors and students under 18 will include instructors or parents.

Projects must be submitted by May 31, 2002 to be considered for display at WSSD.

**Coordination and Implementation mechanism**

Please provide a brief description of expected coordination/implementation mechanism of the Partnership/Initiative.

The MyCOE partnership coordinates activities via a steering committee of the project organizers and a coordination committee that includes organizers and other sponsors. Most coordination is via email and teleconference calls, with some face-to-face meetings.

The primary implementation mechanism is via the online website:

<http://www.geography.org/sustainable>

Resources available to students and schools developing a MyCOE project are also listed on the website. The MyCOE Resource Kit is sent to registered students and schools as appropriate for the recipients' geography and educational level.

Organizers and sponsors have distributed MyCOE posters and other outreach and informational materials via email, post, and at domestic and international conferences and other venues.

**Arrangements for funding**

Please describe available and/or expected sources of funding for the implementation of the Partnership/Initiative (e.g. donor government(s); international organization(s)/financial

institution(s); foundation(s); private sector; other major groups, etc.)

All MyCOE organizers and listed sponsors, including all of the above, are providing funding and publications, expertise, and other in-kind support.

### **Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer**

Please include information if the Partnership/Initiative provides for training, informational support, institutional strengthening and/or other capacity building measures:

The project distributes to Secondary school and University instructors, the *My Community, Our Earth – Instructor Guide and Project Resources* booklet. This guide provides detailed information for instructors on how to help students, including a methodology to analyze an issue geographically.

The Resource Kits distributed to students to enhance geographic learning include the ARGUS CD, an interactive geography teaching guide. Also included are GIS software, books and other project resources and instructional materials.

Please also provide here a brief description of expected arrangements for technology transfer (if applicable).

Several hundred sustainable development, GIS, and geography professionals were registered as mentors to help students complete projects. These are organized by country and distributed with resource kits and on the website.

This is a unique opportunity for students and schools to establish mentoring relationships with professionals who have expertise in the area the students are exploring. With increased global communications, students and mentors can communicate via email, post, or fax even when located in different cities or countries.

### **Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)**

Please provide a brief description:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and other partners have included information on on-going sustainable agriculture, forest and watershed management, and other projects in the resource kit and lists of resources.

One example is the Large-Scale Watershed Projects throughout the United States sponsored by the USDA Forest Service and other partners at the local, state and federal levels. Some of these projects have provided mentors for the MyCOE project.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

Please describe expected arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of Partnerships/Initiative after it will be launched at the WSSD:

(e.g. frequency/modalities of preparation of progress reports; electronic updates, news-letters, etc)

Students register projects on the web, via post, or fax and received a project number.

Projects will include the project number when submitted via email, post or private shipping company.

All projects submitted will receive an award for participation. Those projects selected for featured display on the MyCOE website or at major international meetings also receive additional prizes. Prizes may include GPS receivers, GIS software, computers, travel for students and instructors to meetings for displaying MyCOE projects.

### **Other relevant information:**

Web-site (if available): <http://www.geography.org/sustainable>

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