

2012 Annual Report



Reshaping our interaction with the environment



Dear Reader,

I am very delighted to be writing this message as Executive Director of the Environmental Governance Institute (EGI).

The gap between rich and poor continues to widen on a global scale. In Africa, this gap is underpinned by lack of access to basic environmental resources such as water, forests and land. There is a serious need to investigate the underlying causes of lack of access to natural resources, to redefine natural resources governance practices and to *reshape our interaction with the environment*.

The Environmental Governance Institute (EGI) has been created to contribute to generating the knowledge that will inform policymaking in natural resources and thus contribute to alleviating poverty in West, Central and East Africa.

At the end of this first year, we would like to share recent developments with you.

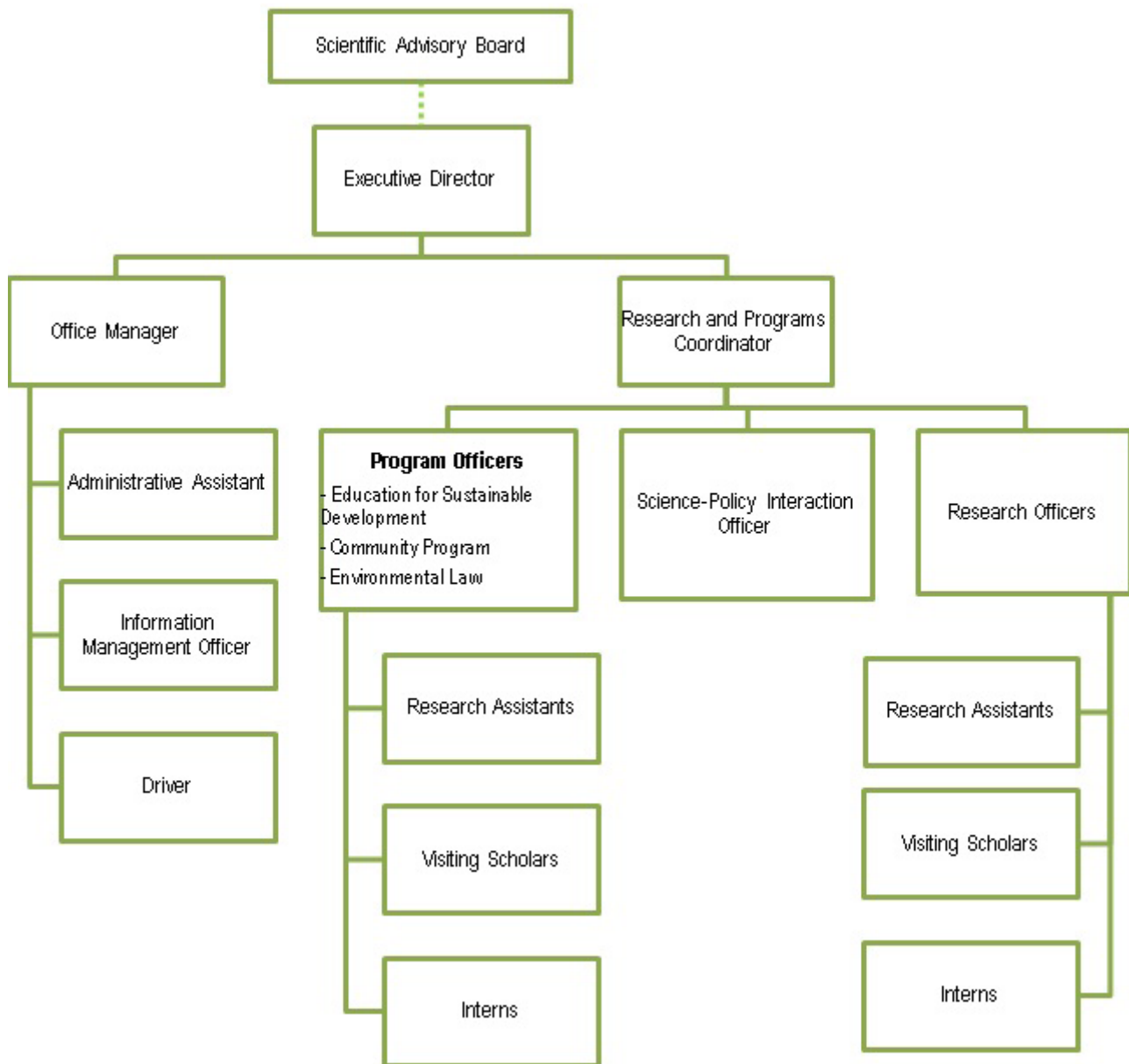
On 1st October, 2012, the Environmental Governance Institute acquired formal status as a not-for profit organisation from the Government of Cameroon. We now have a functional office with 9 permanent staff of which 5 are male and 4 are female.

The EGI resource centre is fully functional and has been very well received. Additionally, a very diverse and experienced panel of advisors has been recruited, who will guide the organisation in setting its research agenda and provide strategic direction to the operations of the Institute.

We have identified four key programme areas for the year 2013: research, policy related work, community-level interventions and environmental education. Our priorities in these programme areas are outlined in this annual report.

On behalf of the entire EGI- team, I want to express our sincere gratitude to all partners and well-wishers who have contributed to our achievements in one way or the other. We count on your continued support and look forward to an exciting year.

John Manyitabot Takang (MSc.)



14th International Wildlife Conference

For the first time, the international wildlife law conference, in its 14th edition, was held in Africa. The theme of the conference, which took place on 6th and 7th December 2012 in Eta Palace Hotel, in Buea, Cameroon, was “Conserving Africa’s wildlife fauna and flora: the role of international agreements.”

In line with our Education for Sustainable Development program, the conference aimed to present scientific research findings on wildlife related laws and policies and to introduce young academics from different disciplines to the exciting field of wildlife law and environmental law generally. It was organized by EGI in partnership with the Institute of Biodiversity Law and Policy, Stetson University College of Law, USA. The conference was sponsored by the American Bar Association and the American Branch of the International Law Association.

Over 100 participants from academia, legal practice, the public sector and non-governmental organisations attended and listened to presentations from wildlife and environmental law experts from all over the world. They participated in lively debates and discussions. The topics covered included protection of endangered species, wildlife health, community-level initiatives and implementation of national and regional laws and policies.

After the conference, on 8th December, participants went on an excursion to the Mount Cameroon National Park, which is a gazetted conservation area. This visit provided participants with hands-on experience on conservation efforts in Cameroon.



International Moot Court Competition West Africa Round

The West African round of the Stetson International Environmental Moot Court Competition, an annual event that is run by the Institute of Biodiversity Law and Policy of the Stetson University College of Law was held in tandem with the conference held in Buea in December 2012.

The objective of the moot court was to build the capacity of the next generation of environmental lawyers to deal with environmental law cases, which by nature, are different from typical civil and criminal cases. The debate involved graduating students from the University of Buea, Department of Law.

The 4 winners earned the right to represent the region in the finals to be held in March 2013 in Florida, USA.

Establishment of resource centre

In December 2012, over 700 book, E-Book and CD titles were catalogued and added to the EGI resource centre. The opening of the resource centre was made possible with book donations from Prof. Kirk Junker of the Chair of US-Law, Faculty of Law of the University of Cologne and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre based in Bonn-Germany. The information resources cover a wide range of topics related to environmental sciences, environmental and natural resources law and policy, international environmental law, public international law, among others. Entry to the resource centre is at a minimum fee that will help the organisation manage and keep the resource centre at the right standard. The resource centre has been received positively by staff and students of academic institutions based in Buea, as well as legal practitioners, who have been plagued by a shortage of material for literature research for a long time.



Research: We will refine our research agenda and build partnerships with individuals and institutions to implement research projects. Our thematic focus is: adaptation to climate change, environmental education, forests and biodiversity conservation, management of freshwater resources and access to water and alternative energy resources.



Science-Policy Interaction: We will share our research and policy analysis reports with opinion leaders, academics, government officials, the media and private sector. We will also help communities to access information that will help them to participate in decision making and advocate for their rights to natural resource benefits. We will carry out training activities geared to improve interaction between researchers and policy makers.

Community programs: We will work with community members, building on already existing knowledge and research findings, to develop and implement sustainable environmental solutions that will foster socio-economic development while ensuring sustainable resource use. In 2013, our community programs will concentrate on promotion of clean energy and optimization of forestry based economies in Cameroon.



Education for sustainable development: We will hold training workshops for practitioners and implement environmental education projects in schools and the communities with which we partner. Our aim is to create awareness of environmental dynamics, law, rights and responsibilities of stakeholders.



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