

*Beyond Our Boundaries: A Report on the Baseline Inventory of the Smithsonian's Active Strategic Partnerships with External Organizations*

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Abstract:

The partnership study report, issued at the request of Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough, describes baseline information on the frequencies and characteristics (number of external partners, years active, distribution by unit and top-level divisions, use of central SI offices, level of formality, type of written agreement, resources, purpose, and Grand Challenge and functional areas) of Smithsonian partnerships as collected in an online survey of all Smithsonian units in summer 2011. To be included in the inventory, “partnerships” had to be active, involve at least one external partner, be carried out at the organizational level, and meet the following definition:

*A collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations that builds on the time, talent, and resources of participants to achieve common goals, and where partners share decision-making, risks and rewards, participation in activities, and responsibility for outcomes. A partnership may or may not involve a financial transaction and may or may not be based on a formal written agreement.*

Thirty-nine Smithsonian units completed the partnership survey. A total of 907 individual partnerships were reported.