

# INSPIRING GENERATIONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND DISCOVERY



## STRATEGIC PLAN



Smithsonian Institution

*Fiscal Years 2010–2015*

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A SMITHSONIAN  
FOR THE  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## Introduction

### IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Imagine being able to access all known information about an insect species – whether it was discovered 100 years or 100 days ago – with one touch of the screen. Picture a world in which you can not only see Smithsonian objects online but also hear them and watch them in motion. Or imagine learning that Smithsonian astrophysicists discovered a new, Earth-like planet orbiting a star five light-years away.

Imagine school students worldwide able to watch Smithsonian anthropologists examine Mayan artifacts without leaving their classrooms. Envision a time when citizen-scholars interested in Theodore Roosevelt can, with a single query, view the breadth of the Smithsonian's holdings on America's 26th president across our many museums – from the birds he collected as a boy to the camp table he used on safari, to his contemporaries' recollections of his vigor and confidence.

All of this and more is within our reach. As we blend the tremendous assets of the Smithsonian Institution – the world's largest museum and research complex, unique in its scope and unparalleled in its holdings – with the innovations that technology makes possible, our potential to reshape the Institution seems limitless.

This Strategic Plan is designed to capitalize on Smithsonian strengths and address critical issues facing the world. It serves as a clear yet flexible roadmap to guide our choices and direct our resources over the course of the Plan.

### ON THE VERGE OF A NEW ERA

The Plan is historic in that it represents the first time in the Institution's 163 years that we have undertaken such a comprehensive and inclusive process. The effort is appropriate to the times, because the Smithsonian stands on the threshold of a new era.

The complexity of the world's problems overwhelms any one field of knowledge. Answers often lie at the intersection of disciplines and can be facilitated through collaboration with allied organizations. Few institutions are more suited to deliver an integrated approach, for we possess both depth and breadth of knowledge across the branches of history, science, art, and cultural studies. Our work in more than 100 countries over as many years has cemented strong relationships and forged external partnerships.

We also live in a time when technology is changing before our eyes. Delivery channels that seemed like science fiction a decade ago now live on every desktop. Think about the potential for the Smithsonian, holder of remarkable and scientifically important objects and home to world-class expertise, to expand knowledge and add meaning to our world.

## A SMITHSONIAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The journey of this Plan engaged us in broad thinking and critical focus. We carefully considered alternative scenarios for the future and the role the Smithsonian could best play. Out of careful consideration and healthy debate emerged a vision for a 21st century Smithsonian characterized by:

- An interdisciplinary outlook that combines our disparate strengths in ways that increase perspective and impact.
- A collaborative spirit that encourages us to build public and private partnerships and forges strong ties with nations, organizations, and individuals whose interests we share.
- An entrepreneurial culture that leverages emerging technology, rewards innovation, and invents new business models that help us build capacity and extend our reach.
- A commitment to excellence and accountability that calls for us to account for and control our processes, improve performance, measure outcomes, support ongoing learning, provide equal opportunity, and recognize our people – the Smithsonian’s great resource.

The finished Plan charts our course through fiscal year 2015; it lays out specific priorities, which, in turn, will help guide the hard choices we must make among competing projects. Most importantly, it will direct the allocation of human and financial resources over the course of the Plan.

A Smithsonian that can effectively respond to challenges and grasp opportunities will thrive in the 21st century as a source of pride to Americans and a fount of knowledge and inspiration to the world. We anticipate that this Plan will both honor our past and shape our future.

### MISSION

The increase and diffusion of knowledge

### VISION

Shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world

### VALUES

- **Discovery:** Explore and bring to light new knowledge and ideas, and better ways of doing business
- **Creativity:** Instill our work with imagination and innovation
- **Excellence:** Deliver the highest-quality products and services in all endeavors
- **Diversity:** Capitalize on the richness inherent in differences
- **Integrity:** Carry out all our work with the greatest responsibility and accountability
- **Service:** Be of benefit to the public and our stakeholders



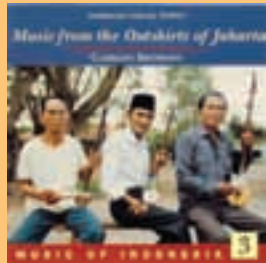
# Priorities

## FOCUSING ON GRAND CHALLENGES

Four challenges provide an overarching strategic framework for Smithsonian programs and operations. Meeting them will allow us to integrate the work of many disciplines within Smithsonian museums and research centers, as well as broaden our external collaborations. All are grounded in research and emphasize complementary education programs; together, they will influence how the Institution directs our resources and focuses our energies.

- Unlocking the Mysteries of the Universe
- Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet
- Valuing World Cultures
- Understanding the American Experience

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the Institution's nonprofit record label, launched its Smithsonian Global Sound initiative in 2005, making tens of thousands of audio recordings and hundreds of video features available to academic and public libraries who subscribe to packages scaled for every library type and size. Patrons can access music from more than 160 countries from their libraries, dormitories, or homes.



## BROADENING ACCESS

New tools and technologies will exponentially broaden our access worldwide. The nation's growing diversity challenges us to reach new audiences and ensure that Smithsonian collections, exhibitions, and outreach programs speak to *all* Americans. We also must remain relevant to visitors who come from around the world. To accomplish this, we will leverage the power of technology using new media and social networking tools to deliver information in customized ways and bring our resources

to those who cannot visit in person. Digitizing the collections and making them accessible online are major Institutional priorities, as is exploring next-generation technologies that speak to "digital natives" who expect to be reached online. Finally, we will improve the visitor experience, for even in the digital age, physical access to the "real thing" has enduring value.

## REVITALIZING EDUCATION

Smithsonian content experts and educators will work together to help strengthen American education and enhance our nation's ability to compete globally. The Smithsonian will serve as a laboratory to create methods and models of innovative informal education and link them to the formal education system. Our venues will take advantage of a range of interactive, Web-based technologies, and our programs will encourage continuous exploration by learners of all ages. To guide our educational efforts across the Smithsonian, we will create a pan-Institutional approach for education that leverages resources, strengthens communications, coordinates programming, and rewards inventive thinking and collaboration.

## CROSSING BOUNDARIES

The loss of native languages, the degradation of landscapes, and the growing diversity of U.S. society – these are examples of complex issues that researchers across the Smithsonian study every day. To maximize our impact on such critical problems, we must marshal resources across disciplines and strengthen external relationships. To leverage the scholarship and experience that reside in each field of knowledge, the Smithsonian will create interdisciplinary centers around each of the four grand challenges. These centers, which can be virtual as well as physical, will spark innovative research and educational programs, and broker partnerships. In addition, the Smithsonian will fortify existing external relationships and forge new ones as potential collaborators emerge in our priority areas.



The Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) is using the power of the Internet to help students enrolled in the Department of Defense's international school



system gain an appreciation for American art. SAAM's expert curators, art historians, and educators deliver lectures and answer student questions in real time via teleconferencing and also provide teachers across the world with lesson plans and high-quality images.

## STRENGTHENING COLLECTIONS

The Smithsonian's collections represent our rich national heritage, art from across the globe, and the immense diversity of the natural and cultural worlds. The collections are fundamental to our work and to that of countless scholars and many federal agencies; it is our responsibility to preserve them for future generations. To ensure they remain available, we will improve collections storage and management, substantially expand access to collections through digital technologies, and build public/private partnerships that strategically enhance collections care. We will also develop a pan-Institutional collections plan to support the Smithsonian's four grand challenges and Institution-wide initiatives.

## ENABLING OUR MISSION THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

As we deliberate on how best to use our vast resources for the public good in the midst of unceasing demographic, technological, and social change, we must also include strategies on how to sustain and grow those resources – both physical and human.

Continued success requires strengthening our capacity for organizational learning, and increasing our flexibility to respond quickly to new opportunities and challenges. It requires forward-thinking leaders and managers

who align resources to priorities, encourage excellence, and reward innovation. The backbone of the Smithsonian must remain a dedicated workforce of employees and volunteers with 21st century skills and perspectives. Strong, responsive support services – such as collections stewardship, facilities management, Web and new media, audience research, marketing, and financial management – are essential to accomplish the Smithsonian's mission and vision. Finally, we need to generate revenue in new ways to ensure that we can fund our vision moving forward.

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

By 2015, we will measure the success of our endeavors by asking three broad questions. Has the Smithsonian:

1. Made leading contributions to national and global efforts to unlock the mysteries of the universe, understand and sustain a biodiverse planet, value world cultures, and understand the American experience, through collaborative efforts among 19 museums, nine research centers, and numerous outreach and education programs?
2. Harnessed the power of technology to grow and share the Institution's knowledge and collections through exhibition, education, and outreach, and to triple the number of meaningful learning experiences we offer daily?
3. Increased the number of visitors, employees, and key partners and stakeholders who rate us as an excellent organization in which to invest, work, and learn, through new and more efficient ways of working and increased collaboration, accountability, and financial stability?

# Outcomes, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

## UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

Throughout history, people have observed the universe, seeking to understand its origin and how the galaxies, stars, and planets formed. Central to human consciousness, this search has led to increases in knowledge that have altered and enriched our lives and led to extraordinary scientific and technological advances. It has inspired philosophies and perspectives foundational to the world views of different societies, and found expression in all forms of cultural, artistic, and scientific endeavor.

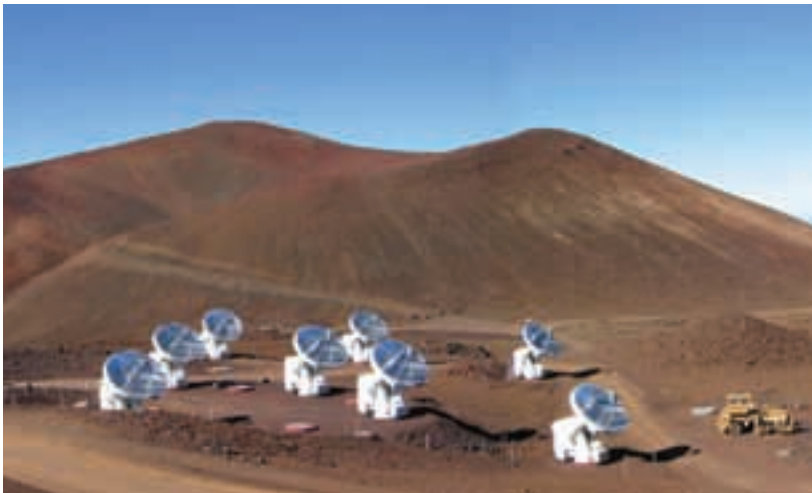
We have made great strides in comprehension since the first astronomers gazed into the night sky, but even as we answer questions about the reality we inhabit, newer and deeper ones arise.

The Smithsonian will continue to lead in the quest to unlock the fundamental secrets of the cosmos, using next-generation technologies. We will delve into cosmic mysteries closer to home through exploration of our own solar system, meteorites, the Earth's geological past and present, and the paleontological record of our planet. We will showcase the results of our explorations and connect them to humankind's artistic and cultural endeavors.

### BIG QUESTIONS

The Smithsonian will undertake focused and integrative research on the following questions that will advance our knowledge and understanding of the universe and the Earth:

- What are the dark matter and dark energy that make up most of the universe?
- What happens under extreme conditions of space, matter, and time in exploding stars, neutron stars, and near black holes?
- How did galaxies and clusters of galaxies, stars, and planets form and evolve from the Big Bang?
- How did the stars and rocky planets like our Earth form and evolve?



Astronomers at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory helped pioneer technologies to coordinate the Institution's Submillimeter Array, pictured left, with other telescopes to image the giant black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy at resolutions close to the highest ever achieved – a scale equivalent to standing on Earth and observing a baseball on the moon!

## OUTCOME

Major strides in understanding the fundamental nature of the universe and our place in it



# Research: UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian advances knowledge at the forefront of understanding the universe and solid Earth.

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## OBJECTIVES

Better understand the early epoch of inflation of the universe, the nature and role of dark matter in the evolution of the universe, and the properties of the dark energy that is speeding up the expansion of the universe.

Comprehend extreme explosive phenomena in the universe, with foci on gamma-ray bursts and the birth of neutron stars and black holes in supernovae, whose huge explosions create the basic elements from which life is formed.

Discover how galaxies form, cluster, and interact; grow supermassive black holes; and evolve with cosmic time.

Understand how stellar processes change clouds of gas and dust into stars and planets, including the Earth, and the emergence of life here and perhaps elsewhere.

Explore how diverse peoples throughout history have interpreted the cosmos and its role in their lives.

Understand the formation, geological diversity, and dynamics of the Earth, the Moon, and other rocky bodies in our solar system.

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## STRATEGIES

Establish a center that supports integrative research by Smithsonian scientists to address one or more big questions in the origin and evolution of the Earth, planets, stars, galaxies, and universe; and integrates development activities through public and private partnerships with organizations working in similar areas.

Play a leading role in the development and operation of the world's largest next-generation telescope, the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT), which is required to address priority research areas of astronomy.

Increase support and staffing for the operations of existing, and development of new, scientific instrumentation, including ground- and space-based telescopes and major laboratory-based analytical instrumentation.

Continue to develop and expand the Institution's world-class collections (e.g., the global volcanism database, meteorites, rocks, minerals, planetary images, and astronomical data) that are critical to unraveling the histories of rocky planets and understanding what makes a planet habitable.

Leverage the Smithsonian's research capacity through partnerships with Federal agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, industry, and other private national and international organizations, including a broadening of ongoing collaborations with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) related to space exploration and planetary geosciences research.

Organize collaborations of scientists, humanities scholars, cultural experts, artists, and educators to explore varied ways of understanding the nature of the universe.

# Access: UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

**GOAL:** Inspire people to probe the mysteries of the universe and planetary systems.

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## OBJECTIVES

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Engage the public in the excitement of astronomy and geology.

Encourage a new generation of astronomers and Earth scientists by sharing the excitement of Smithsonian research through formal and informal STEM education initiatives.

Transfer Smithsonian knowledge and technology to advance science-based solutions to real-world problems.

## STRATEGIES

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Engage in participatory research opportunities with students at all educational levels.

Exhibit cutting-edge astronomical and geological research, and further disseminate results through informal and formal education and new media outreach initiatives.

Create a seamless digital view of the universe by providing access to astronomical, geological, geophysical, and atmosphere-hydrosphere datasets with guides to promote scientific experiences for K-12 learners and the public at large.

Tell the stories of how people in many places and times have interpreted, visualized, and imagined the universe, the Earth, and their places in them, as reflected in science, art, and cultural practices.

Develop a technology transfer initiative to identify and disseminate innovative new technologies and applications developed by Smithsonian researchers.

## UNDERSTANDING AND SUSTAINING A BIODIVERSE PLANET

For four billion years the Earth and its life-forms have adapted and changed together, resulting in an amazing diversity of species and ecosystems. While environmental variability has resulted in major changes in biodiversity, it is the activities of man that have greatly accelerated the rate of change, threatening life on the planet. Over the past decade, the disappearance of many species and the degradation of ecosystems are signs that the world may be in the initial stages of the sixth major extinction event in the history of life on Earth, something akin to the massive environmental changes associated with the demise of the dinosaurs.

Efforts to address the loss of biodiversity raise a critical issue – science has documented almost two million species, but the more we explore, the more we realize that enormous numbers are yet to be discovered. In some ways, we know more about the stars in the universe than we know about the biodiversity in our own backyards, or its role in the ecosystems that supply us with clean water and a host of other environmental services.

Responding to the growing threat of global change, how can we provide knowledge and answers to help life survive and flourish? We will do so through access to our unique resources and partnerships. The Smithsonian stewards the world's largest collections of biological specimens and is at the forefront of studies that describe and make sense of the diversity, distribution, and evolution of life. We maintain strong partnerships with Federal and state agencies in charge of managing natural resources, and we have the stature, impartiality, and intellectual leadership to convene scientific and policy gatherings to address issues such as climate change, invasive species, and over-exploitation of natural resources.

### BIG QUESTIONS

The Smithsonian's hundreds of researchers across our scientific museums and centers will work with our unparalleled collections to significantly advance our knowledge and understanding of life on the planet and its role in sustaining human well-being. To accomplish this, we will accelerate focused, integrative research on the following questions:

- How biologically diverse is the Earth, and how does this diversity change across geography and through time?
- What does the planet's history teach us about the impacts of environmental change on the evolution and extinction of species?
- How do we better understand the life-sustaining services of ecosystems, and best sustain their contributions to human well-being locally and globally?
- How do we secure the survival and recovery of ecosystems, habitats, and species?
- How can science better forecast environmental change and mitigate the adverse impacts of human-induced change on biological diversity?





“Citizen scientists” join with Smithsonian scientists and our international network of collaborators to study the incredible diversity of tropical and temperate forests. Detailed studies pioneered in the Panamanian rain forest, which is very sensitive to fluctuations in climate, have shown how rapidly tropical forests respond to changes in our environment.



The world’s wild tiger population was over 100,000 at the turn of the 20th century. Today, experts estimate fewer than 3,500 remain. The Smithsonian is a leading member of the Global Tiger Initiative, whose mission is to save wild tigers from extinction. Our scientific and conservation expertise will help stabilize and restore these animals to their natural habitats.

## OUTCOME

Sustainability of life on Earth through improved knowledge of biodiversity and its role in the healthy functioning of ecosystems

# Research: UNDERSTANDING AND SUSTAINING A BIODIVERSE PLANET

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian advances and synthesizes knowledge that contributes to the survival of at-risk ecosystems and species.

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## OBJECTIVES

Improve understanding of and access to the biology and natural history of species – information that is lacking for the vast majority of species on the planet.

Increase knowledge of the evolutionary and ecological history of species and ecosystems, and the processes responsible for population declines and extinction.

Increase access to Smithsonian collections, data, and long-term research platforms to better document biodiversity and its importance to the complex interactions of natural systems.

Develop concepts, theories, tools, and models that contribute directly to halting biodiversity loss, managing species and their habitats, restoring ecosystems, and mitigating threats to the environment.

Increase and strengthen comprehensive collections that represent the diversity of life, including live organisms that are a critical hedge against extinction.

Understand how species interactions, climate change, habitat fragmentation, diseases, environmental contaminants, and invasions of exotic species affect the survival of species and the functioning of ecosystems.

Improve knowledge of the relationships between cultures and biological diversity over time in order to better sustain both.

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## STRATEGIES

Establish a center that supports and brokers interdisciplinary research on big questions that could result in major scientific breakthroughs; dissemination of data and information; and public and private partnerships.

Strengthen incentives to establish and maintain interdisciplinary initiatives, e.g., the Encyclopedia of Life, the Consortium for the Barcode of Life, and the Marine Science Network.

Enhance the Smithsonian's platforms for long-term research on biodiversity and ecosystems, particularly the Smithsonian Institution Global Earth Observatories (SIGEO).

Marshal the Smithsonian's critical mass of biologists and paleontologists, in partnership with experts in other disciplines, to develop understanding of species and ecosystems and find innovative approaches to the complex meta-problems of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate change.

Leverage the Smithsonian's research capacity through partnerships with Federal agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, industry, and other private organizations, national and international.

Foster the development and use of cutting-edge equipment, technologies, and informatics that can advance biodiversity and ecosystem research.

Improve the facilities needed to strengthen and secure the long-term conservation of collections, including DNA and biomaterials banks. Take a leadership role in convening experts to develop action plans for programs and projects related to the survival of at-risk species, ecosystems, and cultures.

# Access: UNDERSTANDING AND SUSTAINING A BIODIVERSE PLANET

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian inspires all generations of learners to turn knowledge of life on Earth into awareness and action aimed at improving sustainability.

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## OBJECTIVES

Be the trusted, authoritative organization for credible, impartial scientific expertise and data to inform global initiatives and policy formulation related to the sustainability of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Provide expanded access to Smithsonian collections, including museum specimens, living collections, environmental data, and library resources.

Increase awareness of and appreciation for ecosystem services, threats to biodiversity, and the possibility of ecosystem collapse.

Inspire a new generation of scientists, nationally and internationally, by linking research with STEM education initiatives.

Engage the public in physical and virtual exhibitions, citizen science, and other programs that advance science literacy and lead to sustainable practices.

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## STRATEGIES

Digitize the Smithsonian science collections and develop new ways to analyze, integrate, and share this information in formats appropriate to different audiences.

Develop and maintain new physical and virtual exhibitions that address the diversity, evolution, and conservation of life.

Capitalize on the Smithsonian's reputation and status to convene conferences, symposia, and workshops of experts and policy makers on current issues.

Foster collaboration among Smithsonian units and diverse partners, to better transform knowledge into action on the ground.

Disseminate information and raise awareness through Web-based information portals, for example, the Encyclopedia of Life, the Consortium for the Barcode of Life, the Biodiversity Heritage Library, and the Ocean Portal, as well as invasive species initiatives.



## VALUING WORLD CULTURES

The human family is diverse in language, art, traditions, and ways of understanding the world. Globalization and the ubiquity of rapid change have brought people closer together but also may have put some of the world's cultures at risk. Similarly, the competition for scarce resources, population growth, and violent confrontations threaten the integrity of centuries-old cultures and lead to the neglect of cultural treasures in all realms. In a time of growing intolerance, we are challenged to find ways to increase respect for cultural differences and ensure that we preserve the treasures of the past. One way to build respect is to raise awareness of the universality of art and creativity. Encountering and understanding mankind's cultural accomplishments across millennia and continents can stimulate reflection and enlightenment and empower the peoples of the world to better appreciate and interact with each other.

As a steward and ambassador of cultural connections, with a presence in some 100 countries and expertise and collections that encompass the globe, the Smithsonian is in an exceptional position to engage people in valuing and understanding the world's richness. Through our research, collections, exhibitions, and outreach, the Smithsonian builds bridges of mutual respect and presents the diversity of world cultures with accuracy, insight, and reverence.

### BIG QUESTIONS

The Smithsonian will focus on the following six questions:

- How have humans evolved, and how have demographic, technological, social, and philosophical changes over time contributed to cultural diversity?
- How do the world's cultural heritage and the creativity of its peoples enrich and connect to the lives of Americans, and vice versa?
- What are the challenges to cultural diversity, and what are the strategies that people use to maintain, assert, and represent their cultural identities?
- What do art, music, and other creative expressions around the world tell us about cultural values and salient contemporary issues?
- How can we better understand the relationship between culture and the environment in order to promote the sustainability of both?
- What insights do we learn about the nature of the world through the study of diverse systems of knowledge and aesthetics?



Artful Animals, an exhibition of the National Museum of African Art, showcases works featuring African animals as symbols of leadership, beauty, and values. The museum collaborated with the Discovery Theater, the National Zoological Park, the National Museum of Natural History, and the National Postal Museum to mount activities that explore themes drawn from the art.

## OUTCOME

Greater understanding of, respect for, and meaningful engagement among the world's peoples and cultures

# Research: VALUING WORLD CULTURES

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian contributes insights into the evolution of humanity and the diversity of the world's cultures, arts, and creativity.

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## OBJECTIVES

Add to knowledge of migrations, diasporas, and interactions of cultural groups.

Study historic and contemporary cultural and artistic heritage, with particular emphasis on the arts of Asia and Africa, the heritage of the Americas, indigenous knowledge and expressive systems, and modern and contemporary art and design.

Shed light on the interconnections among world cultures.

Augment knowledge about the processes leading to the loss of cultural diversity – tangible and intangible heritage – and exercise leadership in promoting cultural conservation.

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## STRATEGIES

Develop a pan-Institutional center for world cultures that organizes museum and research center directors and key scholars to define and implement a research agenda for cross-cultural scholarship and exchanges.

Marshal Smithsonian expertise and resources to develop research activities that result in new perspectives on cultural change and support the research agenda.

Develop strategic partnerships and encourage engagement with cultural leaders and organizations, scholars, and fellows around the world.

Strengthen collections from the ancient to the contemporary in order to represent and understand the breadth of cultural creativity.

Expand the Smithsonian's research into the conservation of material and oral culture, historic and contemporary.



# Access: VALUING WORLD CULTURES

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian will inspire audiences to explore the cultural and artistic heritage of diverse peoples.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Enrich audiences' lives by providing innovative avenues for encounters, dialogue, learning, and reflection on culture, history, the arts, and other forms of expression.	Develop an innovative, high-profile, signature pan-Institutional exhibition and education series that explores cultural diversity through the lens of many different relationships between place and cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world.
Collaborate with communities to make culturally significant resources available to them.	Develop a major new exhibition and educational initiative on human evolution.
Serve as a preeminent venue for international cultural exchange and civic engagement by different peoples, communities, and cultures.	Collaborate with Federal agencies and national and international organizations and participate in high-profile, high-impact programs that further the achievement of our objectives.
Serve as an international platform and source of inspiration for creative expression by artists and musicians.	Inform critical cultural issues of international concern through a robust program of exhibitions, symposia, on-line offerings, and publications.
Provide museological training nationally and internationally to professionals seeking to preserve, better understand, provide access to, and manage cultural heritage, diversity, and creativity in a variety of fields.	Fill gaps in our collections, from prehistoric to contemporary, to represent and understand the universality of human creativity.
Increase understanding of the relationship between culture and scientific knowledge, such as the ways in which Galileo's discoveries affected religion, society, and cultural expression.	Form strategic alliances and partnerships with cultural communities and organizations, domestically and internationally, that advance cultural exchange and the ability of people to preserve, extend, and represent their own cultures.
	Exploit the full potential of the Internet to reach the broadest public with compelling representations of the world's heritage.
	Connect people from diverse cultures through multimedia channels, such as virtual worlds and videoconferencing.

## UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The United States is known around the world for its long-lived democracy, robust economy, technological innovation, and rich tradition of artistic and cultural creativity. Yet few Americans and even fewer global citizens have an in-depth understanding of how conflicts and struggles for freedom, technological accomplishments, and social progress led to the formation of a nation and a people.

We continue to evolve into an ever more diverse society, where no single racial, ethnic, or religious group constitutes a majority, and where the impact of global movements of people and ideas is felt across the country. Understanding how diverse peoples have become one nation; how that nation has been shaped by various communities, individuals, leaders, inventors, heroes, and artists; how it has changed over time; and how our history, art, and culture connect to the world are of vital concern today. Exploring these issues helps us assess current challenges and opportunities and become responsible members of society. Such knowledge also enables people the world over to draw lessons and inspiration for their own lives.

As holder of the National collections – invaluable American art works; historical and technological artifacts and images; and extensive photographic, sound, and documentary archives – the Smithsonian is at the forefront of research institutions interpreting the American experience. We are superbly positioned to continue to collect the material culture and document the unfolding nature of American life in a way that represents the country's great diversity. The Smithsonian is particularly strong in documenting, analyzing, and presenting American history, art, and culture through stories that capture the characters and contributions of historical figures, artists, inventors, and cultural exemplars, as well as through extensive dialogue with the American people.

### BIG QUESTIONS

We will contribute to a knowledge-based, in-depth understanding of the American experience through a focus on the following questions:

- How did people arrive and establish themselves in the Americas?
- What makes the peoples of the United States one nation, and how have people construed nationhood over time?
- How do we understand the continued development of American political, economic, social, and cultural life?
- What are the experiences of the diverse cultural communities who make up the United States, and how are they expressed?
- How do American history, art, and culture impact the heritage and the creativity of people from across the globe?



Majestic, exuberant, and triumphant are words that capture the architects' vision for the National Museum of African American History and Culture, to be located on the National Mall. Set to break ground in 2012, the museum will help all Americans understand how African American history influences the national experience.

## OUTCOME

Greater understanding of the American experience by Americans and people across the world

# Research: UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian advances and synthesizes knowledge that contributes to understanding the American experience, particularly its history, arts and culture, and its connections to other world regions.

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## OBJECTIVES

Continue to use material culture and documentary collections to research and interpret national milestones and achievements; political and military struggles; economic, scientific, technological, and cultural innovations; and artists and leaders that have defined the United States and the character of its people.

Increase collections, documentation, and interpretation of the diverse communities of the United States, particularly African American, Latino, Asian Pacific American, and Native American, as well as the cultural interrelationships among these communities.

Conduct research and develop collections and documentation on contemporary American life and creativity.

Conduct research on historical migrations and diasporas to and within America and on the contemporary movements of people, art, artifacts, and cultural expressions that connect various world cultures to the American experience.

Use biography and stories of individuals such as leaders, inventors, artists, and cultural exemplars to put a personal face on the evolving nature of the American character.

Engage members of diverse communities in the collection of materials, oral history and narrative, information, and perspectives as expressed in photographic images, sound recordings, the arts, and other media to better understand and interpret the American experience.

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## STRATEGIES

Develop a pan-Institutional research initiative on the American experience that supports, brokers, and coordinates efforts across Smithsonian museums, research centers, and programs; fosters partnerships with other scholarly organizations; focuses resources on particular issues and capabilities; encourages interdisciplinary project teams; develops new sources of research funding; and develops pan-Institutional strategies for disseminating research results.

Build and develop the program for the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and upgrade research and collections activities with regard to Latino and Asian Pacific American communities, and the interactions and intersections of diverse ethnic and regional cultures in the United States.

Collect actively to document the historic and ongoing accomplishments and creativity of the American people.

Organize and encourage museums, research centers, and program offices to study the transnational and global influences of diverse cultures – particularly those from indigenous America, Europe, Africa, and Asia – on the political, social, scientific, technological, and artistic heritage of the United States and the influence of American culture on the world.

Develop the Smithsonian's collections to capture the evanescent elements of cultural heritage, such as performances and craft traditions, stories, oral histories and narratives, photographs and other still imagery, and media recordings.

# Access: UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian turns knowledge into awareness, action, and results and encourages American cultural vitality.

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## OBJECTIVES

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Be the trusted, authoritative organization for credible, impartial scholarly expertise on the American experience.

Foster understanding of American experience, identities, and places in the nation's narrative by providing the public with access to high-quality collections, exhibitions, publications, Web sites, and informal and formal education programs, all built on solid research.

Encourage the preservation of cultural heritage, creation of new art, and innovation in design and technology among the American people.

Educate and train professionals, teachers/students, and the public in the United States and other countries around the world in the study and presentation of American history, art, and culture.

Enhance the representation of varied communities in the United States by adding more diverse scholars and curators to the Smithsonian's staff and by encouraging more fellows, interns, collaborating scholars, and organizations to work with the Institution.

## STRATEGIES

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Capitalize on the Smithsonian's reputation as a world-class research organization and its status as a trust instrumentality of the Federal government to convene conferences, symposia, and workshops of experts, civic and community leaders, and policy makers on issues of American history, identity, cultural and artistic expression, and connections with other world cultures.

Collaborate with Federal agencies, international organizations, non-governmental cultural and educational organizations, and other partners to disseminate knowledge of American history, art, and culture to American and international publics.

Work collaboratively with constituent groups and communities to provide scholarly expertise, technical support, recognition, and other forms of support to encourage ongoing American cultural and artistic creativity.

Actively recruit diverse scholars and seek focused, strategic partnerships with diverse organizations to ensure broad-based participation in the research and dissemination of knowledge relating to the American experience.

Cooperate with the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of the National Museum of the American Latino.



## ENABLING OUR MISSION THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Smithsonian is only able to fulfill our mandate to increase and diffuse knowledge – nationally and globally – because of the invaluable support provided by our people, collections, facilities, and administrative systems. A wide range of services – including human resources, facilities, collections management, information technology, financial, contracting, legal, safety and security, and communications – carried out in partnership with the units they support, are essential to the exciting work of the Institution. Through these critical services the Smithsonian acquires, protects, and preserves its assets and achieves its mission.

The people who deliver these services, experts in their fields, are dedicated to the Smithsonian; they maintain our customer-focused culture and are respectful of the needs of internal and external stakeholders. Effective and efficient, they strive to employ best practices, and their performance embodies the values of the Institution – discovery, creativity, excellence, diversity, integrity, and service.

### MISSION-ENABLING OUTCOME

Continuous improvement and exemplary service in support of the Smithsonian’s mission

## Mission Enabling

**GOAL:** The Smithsonian strives for organizational excellence in all it does.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p>Build an entrepreneurial and innovative organizational culture that is aligned with the Institution’s mission; emphasizes organizational learning; is agile, service-oriented, collaborative, transparent, and accountable; provides equal opportunity; and sets a leadership standard for organizational excellence.</p>	<p>Emphasize a culture of equal opportunity and personal, professional, and organizational accountability.</p> <p>Strengthen the partnership between the mission activities and mission-enabling functions of the Institution.</p> <p>Structure the Smithsonian to optimize coherence, efficiency, collaboration, and alignment with Institutional priorities.</p> <p>Ensure that outcomes reflect the diverse needs of all Smithsonian units by seeking input from relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Provide clear and steadfast direction at all levels throughout the organization, and allocate resources based on Institutional priorities, cost effectiveness, and demonstrated value.</p> <p>Encourage a culture that routinely identifies creative and innovative strategies to problem solving and shares lessons learned across the Institution.</p>

## OUTCOMES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

**MISSION-ENABLED GOAL:** The Smithsonian strives for organizational excellence in all it does.

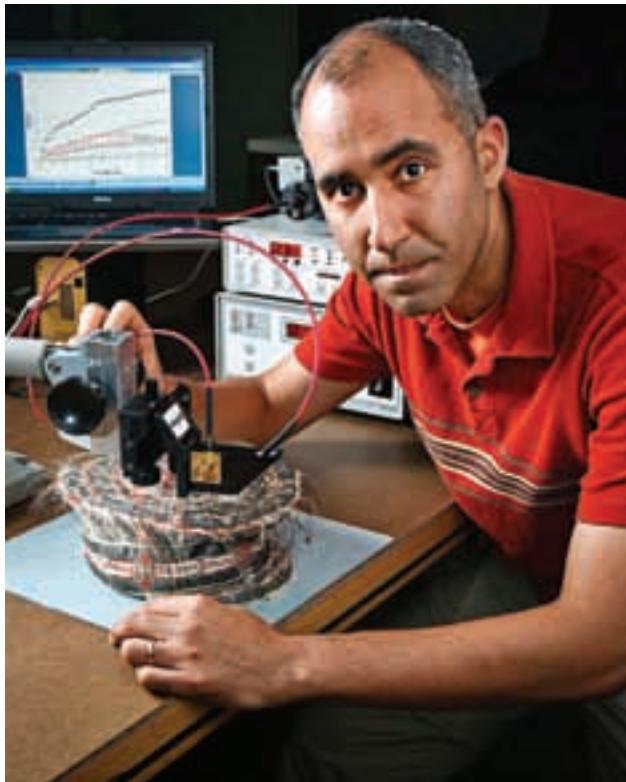
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### OBJECTIVES

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Invest in understanding the distinct needs of the publics, communities, and stakeholders the Smithsonian serves, and in communicating the unique value it offers.

Attract, maintain, and optimize a productive, motivated, and creative workforce that is representative of the nation's diversity and has the competencies needed to deliver sustained levels of excellence.



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### STRATEGIES

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Cultivate customer-centered and results-oriented mindsets and practices.

Involve audiences as partners in the increase and diffusion of knowledge through use of the Web and new media.

Improve the capability of the Smithsonian to explain and market its accomplishments, relevance, and wealth of offerings to the Congress, Administration, donors, sponsors, and the public.

Recruit and retain a diverse, highly skilled, and technologically competent workforce.

Strengthen the volunteer program by attracting more diverse volunteers of all ages and providing them with better technology.

Support the workforce with efficient, effective human resources, as well as financial, information technology, and administrative processes.

Develop the workforce through cross-functional leadership development, rotation of positions, joint appointments, sabbaticals, exchanges with outside entities, technology and business management training, and other professional development opportunities.

Encourage and maintain an organizational culture that embraces safety, health, and wellness.

Provide recognition, appreciation, incentives, and rewards for staff and volunteers who collaborate and innovate.

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**OBJECTIVES**

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Strengthen collections stewardship to ensure the vitality and accessibility of the Smithsonian's vast and diverse collections.

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**STRATEGIES**

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Develop collections to support the Smithsonian's programmatic goals through pan-Institutional collections planning.

Continue to improve the quality of collections preservation, storage space, management, information content, and physical and electronic access.

Provide leadership and leverage resources to support pan-Institutional initiatives and private/public partnerships that strategically improve Smithsonian collections care.

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Build, operate, maintain, and ensure a safe, secure, and healthy physical environment for the public and workforce.

Collaborate with the units to plan a program for a renovated Arts and Industries Building, and open the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Develop procedures to enable sharing of equipment and facilities.

Implement processes that comply with environmental regulations, and employ sustainability best practices.



MISSION-ENABLED GOAL: The Smithsonian strives for organizational excellence in all it does.

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OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

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Revitalize the education function.



Re-define a central office for education that provides pan-Institutional guidance, leverages resources, strengthens communications, coordinates programming across the Institution, supports information sharing on practices within and outside the Smithsonian, and serves the Smithsonian's education community as a partner.

Provide incentives for innovative education programming and internal and external collaboration.

Support the creation of a laboratory to advance the theory and practice of innovative informal education and use of technology, with strong linkages to the formal education system.

Strengthen skills and capabilities for the management of education, from setting goals to administering projects.

Take advantage of new revenue-generating education programs, products, and funding sources, and increase administrative support for securing external resources.

Augment marketing capabilities for Smithsonian education.

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Ensure financial strength by enhancing the resources available to the Institution and strengthening financial management.

Increase revenue from diverse private sources by strengthening the Smithsonian's fundraising capability, launching a national campaign, and identifying new sources of revenue.

Optimize utilization of resources to gain efficiency.

Strengthen financial management by enhancing internal controls.

Pursue new revenue-generation opportunities in collaboration with the museums and research centers.



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**OBJECTIVES**

Implement technologies and common support platforms to maximize flexibility and efficient use of resources and systems.

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**STRATEGIES**

Establish an authoritative virtual presence by developing innovative long-term information technology systems, infrastructure, and procedures to ensure preservation of and access to the Smithsonian's digital assets.

Develop and enhance the systems and infrastructure to support public and private collaboration.

Expand social networking capabilities internally and externally.

Provide high-capacity, resilient, and secure data, voice, video, radio, and mobile networks.

Enhance scientific computing through support of high-performance computing and advanced data collection, management, and delivery systems.

Increase user satisfaction by providing leadership and consultation on information technology best practices and improving operational efficiencies.



## MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Performance measurement of individuals, teams, units, and activities tells us whether we are achieving our objectives, goals, and outcomes. Measuring performance is also essential for clearly communicating our accomplishments to external audiences, including executive agencies, Congress, donors, and Smithsonian partners, so they are aware of the Institution's achievements and contributions and appreciate our impact on the world.

Our four grand challenge areas represent our commitment to making a difference in the world over the course of the Plan and beyond. We have the expertise and the opportunity to tackle pivotal scientific questions, provide intellectual contributions around complex societal and environmental issues, and enlighten and inspire creative experiences. We also have identified education and broadening access to new audiences as fundamental to this work and to our overall mission. Measuring our impact is both critical and challenging. Examples of important measures of success will include:

- Establishing centers around each of the grand challenges.
- Participating as a founding partner in the international Giant Magellan Telescope Project.
- Contributing to successful recoveries of at-risk species.
- Completing one million species pages for the Encyclopedia of Life and continuing our leadership in the Consortium for the Barcode of Life.
- Leading global environmental research and monitoring efforts such as SIGEO that provide fundamental assessments of the Earth's natural systems.
- Opening the National Museum of African American History and Culture by the year 2015.
- Doubling the current rate of digitization, and the quality and reuse of digital assets.
- Leading the world in creating and measuring informal educational experiences.

A system for measuring performance on a more detailed level includes gathering data, monitoring progress, and evaluating results, as captured in a set of performance indicators directly linked to what the Smithsonian wants to accomplish. Whenever possible, we will emphasize tangible outcomes that show the difference we are making, as well as output measures that are standard indicators of productivity, excellence, and world leadership. Specific measurable indicators will provide insight to assess performance measurements, for example:

- Dollar amount of external funding from peer-reviewed research grants and contracts.
- Number of peer-reviewed/refereed publications in priority research areas.
- Attendance at Smithsonian symposia on key areas of global concern.
- Number of strategic partnerships and collaborations.
- Numbers of Smithsonian interns and fellows who attain permanent positions at prestigious organizations.
- Number of people participating in Smithsonian educational programs.
- Assessment standards for measuring awareness and understanding of topics such as American history, conservation biology, or Asian art as a result of Smithsonian education programs.
- Student engagement and interest as evidenced by new ideas, creative expression, and experimentation.
- Number of physical visits to Smithsonian museums, the National Zoo, and Smithsonian traveling exhibitions.
- Number of visitors using online resources.

Performance management is critical to sustaining the highest standards of excellence. We will engage all levels of leadership in matching outcomes, goals, objectives, and strategies to performance indicators that will specifically and annually measure progress toward our goals. Indicators will be transparent and updated regularly.



## RESOURCING THE PLAN

### Where We Are

The Smithsonian annual budget is approximately \$1 billion. Current budget distributions according to the Plan's priorities are shown below.

#### CURRENT BASE

Grand Challenges & Broadening Access	
Universe	\$159 million
Biodiversity	\$180 million
World Cultures	\$55 million
American Experience	\$186 million
Mission Enabling	
Mission Enabling	\$466 million

### The Future

Moving forward, we will align our budget according to the priorities defined in the Plan. We anticipate that these priorities will require cumulative additional resources of approximately 16%–32% over our current base for the life of the Plan. Federal support for the Smithsonian and its museums, collections, and research activities will always be essential to sustaining our mission, but we anticipate that less than half of the new money needed for the Plan will come from the Federal budget. The Smithsonian will become a more entrepreneurial organization, and we envision funding new initiatives through a variety of sources. These include a National Campaign, new revenue-generating ideas, and a growth in grants and contracts. These resource requirements assume that the construction of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) will proceed at the pace Federal increases dictate.

## Conclusion

### RESHAPING THE SMITHSONIAN

In 1846, as Congress debated the Smithsonian's role, John Quincy Adams commented on James Smithson's mandate, "the increase and diffusion of knowledge":

*To furnish the means of acquiring knowledge is, therefore, the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon mankind.*

*It prolongs life itself and enlarges the sphere of existence.*

This Strategic Plan respects the founding ideals for the Smithsonian, while at the same time providing a roadmap to success in a new era. It capitalizes on our strengths and positions us to make a larger impact on critical issues facing the world.

We will be an Institution defined by our hallmarks:

- An adaptive, accountable, entrepreneurial culture.
- Cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, discovery, and scholarship.
- Museums that celebrate knowledge, inform inquiring minds, and instill wonder.
- Collections that reflect the fullness of the world's heritage and identity.
- Convening activities that stimulate thought, engender debate, and generate answers about topics of importance to our nation and the world.
- New media that create interactive access and reach new audiences.
- A network of cooperative programs with universities, federal agencies, museums, and others.
- An ability to attract bright and passionate people to create and carry forward new initiatives.
- Unrivaled informal educational programs.

We envision the Smithsonian of 2015 as a world leader, an Institution that uses its resources to influence the great debates of the day and engages millions more people than it does today. In short, the 21st century Smithsonian will be an Institution that fulfills its vast potential to serve the nation and the world.

## Appendix A: The Strategic Planning Process

The Smithsonian embarked in the fall of 2008 on a year-long strategic planning process to set overall directions for the course of the Plan and beyond. It has been the most inclusive planning process in the Institution's history. Approximately 1,500 stakeholders from all parts of the Smithsonian and peer institutions participated directly, and all of our 6,000 employees had the opportunity to offer input. The process – overseen by a 22-member Steering Committee representing a wide range of functions, subject areas, and stakeholder interests – consisted of five stages.

The first stage involved soliciting input from staff and other stakeholders on the Institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through surveys, interviews, and face-to-face or virtual forums for exchange. Experts at several Federal agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Agriculture, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, provided extensive comments about potential roles for the Smithsonian.

The second stage entailed four scenario-planning workshops and a plenary session designed to explore the external forces that will affect the Smithsonian in the near, medium, and long term: economic and geopolitical influences, trends in the research and museum fields, demographic and technological change. These workshops examined four overarching scenarios for the future of the nation and the Smithsonian:

- *"Citizen of the World."* This scenario contemplated a future in which globalization continues at a fast pace, the United States becomes ever more intertwined with other nations, borders are more porous, and the global and transnational elements of Smithsonian activities come to the fore.
- *"Global Prosperity."* This scenario envisioned a bright future in which the emphasis was on opportunities for Smithsonian growth and leadership, freed from major economic constraints.
- *"Global Challenges."* This scenario focused on the Smithsonian's role in addressing challenges facing the nation and the world, such as climate change, threats to the planet's cultural and natural heritage, and need to improve education.
- *"The Most Respected Nation."* This scenario looked at the Smithsonian's role as a representative of what is best in the United States, both to the nation's own people and to the rest of the world – an Institution that values and embodies knowledge, learning, diversity, and progress.

Examination of these scenarios resulted in a vision statement and document to guide the formulation of specific goals and strategies for the Smithsonian. The vision document identified five guiding principles for a strategic approach to the Institution's future:

- *Embrace and support the common Smithsonian vision*, to create an Institution that has a common purpose that transcends the activities of its constituent parts.
- *Break down barriers among the sciences, between the sciences and the humanities, and between science and the public*, to foster an interdisciplinary approach to research that includes public education as an integral component.
- *Redefine, deepen, and broaden external collaboration*, to leverage the Smithsonian's limited resources for maximum impact.
- *Experiment, innovate, and share*, to become a learning organization committed to sharing lessons and best practices among units, as well as learning from external organizations.
- *Embrace a more global role*, to actively share the best of Smithsonian art, history, culture, and scientific expertise with the rest of the world.

In the third phase, the Steering Committee identified four grand challenges that capture the Smithsonian's areas of programmatic strength and delineate priorities for the Institution. Senior management, the Secretary, the Board of Regents Strategic Planning and Programs Committee, and the Board provided input to craft goals, objectives, and strategies for each grand challenge.

The remaining two phases of the process focused on writing and promulgating the Strategic Plan. The Plan emphasizes as never before the need to act as a unified organization, and to establish strong linkages with its publics and with other research and educational organizations.

## Appendix B: History

### A STRONG FOUNDATION AND AN ENDURING MISSION

We are able to look confidently toward the future in part because of the strength of our foundation. James Smithsonian, an English chemist and mineralogist who had never set foot in America, bequeathed his estate to the United States for the founding, in Washington, of an establishment for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge," to be named the Smithsonian Institution. That mission is as resonant today as it was more than a century and a half ago.

Over the years, the Institution has become renowned as:

- A steward of priceless collections that include icons of American history, unique treasures of the natural

world, diverse collections of art from across the globe, and vast natural science collections.

- A complex of art, culture, history, and science museums and research centers without peer in scope and breadth of subject matter.
- A focal point for the exploration of America's national identity and the understanding of the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and racial groups that comprise it.
- A resource for inspirational educational experiences for millions of children, youths, adults, and families.
- A powerhouse that includes 19 museums, nine research centers, and eight outreach programs, with dynamic exhibitions and programs that attract more than 28 million onsite visitors annually and over 170 million online.

Looking ahead, there are exciting opportunities to leverage our historic strengths.

## Appendix C: Acknowledgements

The development and drafting of the Smithsonian Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the following individuals. Sincere thanks to all who contributed ideas, guidance, and input to this year-long process.

### SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

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Dr. Carole Neves, Director, and the staff of the Office of  
Policy and Analysis

### SMITHSONIAN STAKEHOLDERS

The thousands of Smithsonian staff, volunteers, interns,  
fellows, and donors who shared their views and ideas in  
surveys and interviews

Smithsonian Museum, Program, Research Center, and  
Office Directors

Members of the Smithsonian National Board

Members of all Smithsonian Advisory Boards

Members and Staff of the U.S. House of Representatives,

U.S. Senate, and the Office of Management and Budget

Representatives of peer organizations in the educational,  
scientific, and cultural fields who contributed ideas and  
input during this process

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Peter Schwartz and the team from Global Business Network

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*As of November 2009*





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