Acknowledgements and A Brief History of the Expert Group

The UN Science-Policy-Business Forum's Big Data High Level Expert Group — working closely with the Estonian Presidency of UNEA and Bureau members — directly informed and supported the adoption of the 2019 Ministerial Decision that mandated UNEP to develop a Global Environmental Data Strategy (GEDs) by 2025. Since then, UNEP has taken on this challenge, with its Chief Digital Officer driving the work on GEDs in a collaborative and inclusive manner, allowing knowledge and co-creation to shape this work.

The 2023 Second Expert Group meeting in Vienna highlighted the need for greater integration of industry and market data in environmental decision-making. It also underscored the need for: comparable, verified ESG data; methodologies for whole-of government, whole-of-economy, whole-of-society data sharing. The Expert Group noted the need to apply the latest technologies for optimal results.

As we embark on this leg of the journey, we thank all our Experts for the knowledge they share and for staying the course. To our Facilitators and Rapporteurs, our sincere gratitude.

Special recognition and appreciation for the work undertaken by UNEP Chief Digital Officer Sally Radwan and her team for supporting co-creation, knowledge-sharing and collaboration; and to Dany Ghafari and the SDGs team for sharing their knowledge and insights.

Our gratitude to the Government of Estonia for trailblazing the data revolution.

A special thanks to the Government of Italy and ISPRA for co-convening the 2025 session of the Expert Group (Stefania and team, thank you!) to UNEP MAP for their support; and to ESA for generously hosting us.

We acknowledge the support received from the Government of France, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IRD (shout out to Laurent Durieux for co-conspiring to establish the Expert Group in 2018), the French Space Agency (CNES) and the Space Climate Observatory for their ongoing support.

A special thank you to UNSPBF Senior Advisors, Partners and the A-Team :
Charlie Arden-Clark, for stepping in during Shereen's leave. Benoit
Martimo-Asso, for his leadership and ongoing support.
Tim Nixon and Levent Ergin for sharing their knowledge and helping us fill gaps.

Special acknowledgement to Ado Lohmus for his exceptional efforts to determinedly push this work forward across his different designations.

We acknowledge with gratitude Laura Bullon's genius in translating diverse and sometimes conflicting thoughts and ideas into cohesive, clear, readable recommendations and reports. And to Maria Guiterrez for bravely taking us on.

Deepest gratitude to the capable and inspiring UNSPBF core team: William Thornton, Margaux Abrieu, Youssef Aboali, Shuzhi Hou, Rehana Velji — for delivering great ideas and great work, no matter what. And for consistently going over and beyond the call of duty.