

GEOSS Data Sharing Task Force**First MEETING***27-28 May 2009**GEO Secretariat, Geneva*Meeting Record

2009-06-24

1. Opening (J. Achache, Executive Director, GEO Secretariat)

José Achache welcomed participants, and addressed the context of the Data Sharing Task Force in the historic and future GEO processes. Milestones have been the:

- Support of the GEO Ministerial Summit in Cape Town to establish a process with the objective to reach a consensus on the implementation of the Data Sharing Principles of GEOSS to be presented to the next GEO Ministerial Summit;
- Recognition by the GEO Ministerial Summit in Cape Town that the success of GEOSS will depend on a commitment by all GEO partners to work together to ensure timely, global and open access to data and products;
- Development by the GEO Task Team of a White Paper, providing an overview of international data sharing laws, principles and policies, and draft Implementation Guidelines for the GEOSS Data Principles;
- Establishment of the GEO Data Sharing Task Force comprising GEO Members and including the current Task Team.

He advised the Task Force to be practical, focusing on small, concrete steps rather than on broad, sweeping recommendations for national and international policies. Whatever the Task Force recommends should demonstrate that it moves GEOSS forward.

2. Current Status of Process Paper and Implementation Guidelines (B. Chen, CODATA)

The DA-06-01 Task Team was formed in 2006 with CODATA as lead, and prepared the Data Sharing Principles white paper for review at the 2007 ministerial summit. In 2008, the draft Implementation Guidelines were drafted including several updates, taking into consideration comments from GEO Members and Participating Organizations. A side event was held at the GEO-V Plenary in Bucharest. In 2009, CODATA published an interview on data sharing with José Achache, and the task team has foreseen further presentations, publications and workshop sessions. He clarified that the Task Team tried not to be prescriptive and that liability and data quality issues were not addressed in the Implementation Guidelines because the GEOSS Data Principles do not address these issues.

It was proposed that the current Task Force seek additional feedback from GEO initiatives such as GEONetcast, GEOBon, Global DEM, and from partners like CEOS and IOC, and that it propose an action plan for reaching consensus on the Implementation Guidelines.

The discussion highlighted the need to avoid different data sharing implementations in different parts of GEOSS, and the role of the task force in harmonizing implementation. Selected communities like Forest Carbon are currently already addressing data sharing, and the Data Sharing Task Force should reach out to such interfaces.

The European Commission (EC) noted that the GEO Initial Operating Capability Task Force (IOC-TF) will report in September to the Executive Committee regarding on a large number of issues associated with the operation of the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI), including restrictions on access to and use of data in the GCI. He sees the purpose of the Task Force as needing to make the link to the political level without making policy. He supported the idea of developing demonstrations to attract the attention of ministers prior to the 5th Earth Observation Summit (EOS-V [2010 GEO Ministerial]). The United States (USA) concurred that demonstrations would be useful in showing the benefits of enhanced data sharing and suggested that forest carbon monitoring was a prospective candidate.

3. Milestones (M. Tanner, GEO Secretariat)

The following milestones precede the November 2010 GEO Ministerial Summit: The Executive Committee Meeting in June 2009, the GEO Committee Meetings in September 2009, the GEO-VI Plenary meeting in November 2009, the Committee Meetings in April 2010, the Executive Committee Meeting in June 2010, and the Committee Meetings in September 2010.

Participants stressed the need to provide Task Force deliverables not only in the form of repeated document updates, but also demonstrations and case studies.

4. Background and context of Guideline discussions (J. Gabrynowiz, IISL)

The guidelines are processes and procedures to encourage practices consistent with the already adopted principles. It was suggested that the Task Force reach consensus on the implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, and propose ways to approach barriers. A bottom-up approach to broadening the application of the principles was highlighted, where the Task Force seeks to gradually expand the list of domains where data sharing is expanded. It was noted that enhanced data sharing is already common when disasters strike and that the forest carbon monitoring domain is progressing. Experiences in the Disaster SBA also point to the exclusion of full and open data sharing during the disaster recovery phase.

5. Discussion on data policy topics (all)

This agenda item was structured following the sequence of guidelines in the draft Implementation Guidelines document. These were exploratory discussions with no consensus achieved. All items continue to be considered by the Task Force.

Guideline 1) Promoting the principle of full and open exchange of data

The Task Force should take upon itself to actively promote the benefits of data sharing. Considering mixed private/public data sources, it should be made clear that sharing could also apply to a part of a dataset.

Guideline 2) Encouraging the reuse and re-dissemination of shared data, metadata, and products

There were many differing views on this section of the guidelines. Some participants noted the push-back received from public/private data providers, and the need for traceability to the original provider in case of quality defects in re-disseminated data. In order to address these and other issues, it was suggested that applicable intellectual property rights, licences and other limitations of each dataset be identified while at the same time encouraging providers to maximize those parts of their data sets that can be fully and openly accessible. It would be useful to know of all data sets available however. Some participants suggested that there should be no reuse or re-dissemination restrictions on data and products being used for non-commercial uses for the public benefit. Many suggested there should be no restrictions on metadata. There is some concern that data and products provided for research or for the public benefit might end up being used for commercial purposes. The USA presented, on behalf of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), the CEOS data sharing principles for global change research and for operational environmental use for the public benefit, as agreed by CEOS Members.

It was recognized that interfaces between the Task Force and the GEO communities and Committees are necessary to identify data sharing needs, barriers to data sharing, and define procedures and workarounds.

The GCI should also take into account restrictions, and it was discussed that GEO/GCI should not be enforcing the restrictions that other sources pose on their datasets. The participants agreed to revisit this topic in due course.

Guideline 3) Encouraging consistency in implementation of DSP with international instruments and national policies and legislation

The adequacy of the guideline was confirmed, but it was stressed that a refocusing of the information would be needed for it to serve as input to ministers, demonstrating first the commitment to the objectives and then what needs to be performed by whom to achieve maximum benefits for GEOSS. This could be captured into a high-level action plan. Also case studies could be described. A variety of license models were discussed, including cases where usage limitations were time limited and data rights default to public access after an initial restricted period.

Guideline 4) Implementing pricing policies consistent with the DSP

Time allowed only limited discussion of this guideline and the remaining guidelines. One party objected to the wording “free” in the opening paragraph of this section and suggested it should be replaced by “transparent and fair.” It was also stated that it is necessary to identify and define public benefit (an example is the data needs of a commercial water company serving a community).

6. Nomination of (Co-)Chair(s) of Task Force (M. Onoda, GEO Secretariat)
China (Gufu Wang), India, Italy, Japan (Chiyoshi Kawamoto), and USA (Linda Moodie) expressed their interest and were named by consensus to be Co-Chairs of the

Task Force. India and Italy are to provide names of their Co-chairs (A/I-1). The initial Task Team will also co-chair; the specific representative may change as needed.

7. ToR discussion and adoption (Joanne Gabrynowicz, Task Force Co-Chair)

As raised in the discussions of Day 1 of the Task Force meeting, a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) was presented by the GEO Secretariat, and was discussed by the Task Force. The meeting agreed on a draft ToR, as attached, which will be presented to the GEO Executive Committee for review and direction.

8. Discussion on national data issues (Beth Greenaway, UK)

UK presented the UK Environmental Observation Framework. The Framework unites most government environmental observation organisations and environmental policy organisations. It includes a strategy for observation capabilities up to 2013, and an action plan for next 2 years. The elements of UK-EOF includes facilitating the sharing of knowledge and data.

9. Executive Committee presentation

The meeting decided that Alan Edwards of the EC should deliver a presentation to the Executive Committee (A/I-2). The Secretariat will prepare a presentation and circulate it to the Task Force members. It was also decided to report on the ToR, Co-chairs and a timetable of the activities of the Task Force.

10. Overall planning and Roadmap to Ministerial (Rob Koopman, GEO Secretariat)

The GEO Secretariat presented the roadmap to the 2010 Ministerial Summit. It was discussed that the Task Force participate as part of a half-day plenary event being organized for the GEO Committee meetings co-located in Melbourne, Australia, September 14-18, since this would be an opportunity to communicate to all the Committees at once. It was also proposed that the Task Force meet separately during that week in Melbourne and that the Task Force members interface with each of the committees meeting there. It was suggested to have the Executive Committee endorse this plan. It was requested that the Secretariat fill in the chart presented with exact dates of events and document deadlines.

11. Way forward (Linda Moodie, Task Force Co-Chair)

The Task Force decided to have bi-weekly telecons. The date of the next telecom was scheduled for Wednesday, 10 June 2009 at 1100 UTC. This telecon would be chaired by Linda Moodie of US.

The following actions were decided for each objective stated in the ToR:

Objective 1: Martha Maiden to generate a revised version of the Implementation Guidelines incorporating the comments that came out of the Task Force meeting, based on the meeting minutes to be provided by GEO Secretariat, then to circulate the revised Implementation Guidelines to the Task Force members for comment, giving suggested specific text changes by line number.(A/I-3). GEO Secretariat to compile comments submitted by Task Force members on the Implementation Guidelines and

provide a document with track-changes (A/I-4). The Task Force will discuss the comments compiled at the next telecon.

Objective 2: Bob Chen to draft a communiqué to Committees in order to canvas existing data procedures (A/I-5). This communiqué would introduce the activities of the Task Force and invite the Committees to a meeting event in Melbourne in September, and should include questions such as:

1. Have you been developing or do you have data sharing policies or procedures in your area?
2. If you do not, do you need them?
3. Do you have any other concerns and issues about Data Sharing Guidelines?

The GEO Secretariat to send out the communiqué drafted by Bob Chen to Committees during the month of July, and also to seek the possibility of the User Interface Committee to reach out to Communities of Practice (A/I-6). The Task Force to consider possible activities at this event and to address this in the next Telecon (A/I-7). The GEO Secretariat to work with the Committees to organise this half-day Plenary session in the co-located Committee meetings (A/I-8).

Objective 3: Beth Greenaway to draft a strawman for the action plan as described in objective 3 of the ToR (A/I-9).

12. Discussion on national data issues (Linda Moodie, US)

There was a proposal from the US on a suggested change to the third Data Sharing Principle:

All shared data, metadata, and products free of charge or no more than cost of reproduction will be encouraged for environmental use for the public benefit and for research and education.*

(* 'For the public benefit' refers to the pursuit of social and equitable objectives, directed by government, public authority or international organization)

The EC expressed the view that, in terms of a strategy, the proposal could be brought forward to the Ministerial Summit as a separate data sharing principle without changing the adopted Principles.

13. Closing Remarks

The Co-chairs closed the meeting by expressing their thanks to the Task Force members for the productive two-day discussions and the GEO Secretariat for their support.

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Attachment

GEOSS Data Sharing Task Force Terms of Reference

Purpose

The GEOSS Data Sharing Task Force (hereafter referenced as “DSTF”) will support the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) in its objective to reach a consensus at its 2010 Ministerial Summit on the practical steps to implement the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles. This reconfirms the Cape Town Declaration that “the success of GEOSS will depend on a commitment by all GEO partners to work together to ensure timely, global and open access to data and products.”¹

Objectives

The DSTF is convened to

1. Submit an updated draft of *Implementation Guidelines for the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles* to Plenary 2009.
2. Interact with GEO Committees and Task Teams on their data sharing opportunities and needs and work to promote harmonization of data sharing procedures consistent with the Data Sharing Principles.
3. Prepare an action plan to implement the Data Sharing Principles and to enable the development of working procedures for data sharing within GEOSS.
4. Produce documentation (including assessments on the actions to be taken; some representative costs and benefits; and, responsibilities for the proposed data sharing processes) to support adoption of the *Implementation Guidelines* and the action plan by the 2010 GEO Ministerial Summit.
5. Consider possible recommendations to improve the principles for data sharing within GEOSS.

Membership and Working Arrangements

1. The DSTF shall be composed of individuals named by GEO Members and Participating Organizations, with administrative support provided by the GEO Secretariat.
2. Chairmanship or co-chairmanship of the DSTF shall be decided by the DSTF.
3. Specific research work or investigations may be assigned by the DSTF to sub-teams of individual experts to address identified issues at the appropriate level of detail and professional expertise.
4. Work milestones will be identified and tracked through delivery of reports and recommendations to the appropriate GEO bodies.
5. The DSTF will run from 27 May 2009 through the 2010 Ministerial Summit.

¹ *Cape Town Declaration*, adopted at the GEO Cape Town Ministerial Summit, 30 November 2007.