



GROUP ON
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO-VIII

16-17 November 2011

Work Plan Management

Document 21

As accepted at GEO-VIII

Work Plan Management

The present document is submitted to the Plenary for acceptance. It accompanies the GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan (Document 20) and introduces Terms of Reference for new Implementation Boards that will be added to the GEO Rules of Procedure.

3 October 2011

I. TASK LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

Each Task of the 2012-2015 Work Plan is composed of, and implemented through, a limited number of Components. Each Component is supported by Leads (GEO Members and Organizations), a Point of Contact (representing one of the Leads) and contributors (additional Members and Organizations). Taken together, the Leads and Contributors of all Components within a given Task are also the Leads and contributors of the overall Task and thus form the Task Team.

The Task Team has direct responsibility (on a best effort basis) for the management, execution, and cross-coordination of the Task Components. This empowered Task Team is mainly supported by the Task Leads under the leadership of an overall Task Coordinator (identified by the Task Team) whose main role is to foster interactions and ensure cross-fertilization of Component activities. The Task Coordinator also provides a direct link to the Implementation Boards (see below) and looks for synergies with other Work Plan Tasks. Task Coordinators should be identified by 20 December 2011 so that they can be operational by January 2012.

Current Committee members will be invited to join relevant Task Teams. This will allow them to transition to an updated role giving them more direct responsibility for the management and execution of the Tasks for which they currently have indirect responsibility.

The current Data Sharing Task Force will evolve into a new Data Sharing Task Team (or into another body as recommended by Plenary) that will be fully in charge of implementing Task ID-01 and advancing the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles. The new Data Sharing Task Team will carry out specific actions, with a focus on promotion of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles and the Data Sharing Action Plan.

Participation in the Task Teams will be open and inclusive. This will allow any GEO Member or Participating Organization to play a part in GEOSS implementation by contributing to the best of its capability.

Coordination and interaction across Components within a given Task will be jointly ensured by the Task Team (see above), Communities of Practice (see Document 20 Appendix A), and the GEO Secretariat. Coordination and interaction across Tasks will be mainly ensured by the three Implementation Boards (see below) and the GEO Secretariat.

Coordination efforts will be supported by targeted annual events such as the GEO Work Plan Symposium (which promotes dialogue between Task Teams) and also by new initiatives such as the GEO Work Plan Forum (to improve communication between Work Plan Task Teams and the GEO community at large). With all members of the GEO community invited to participate, the Work Plan Forum could take place immediately prior to each GEO Plenary and/or in conjunction with the Work Plan Symposium.

In keeping with the new Work Plan, Points of Contact will regularly report on progress to the GEO community through interactive web pages. These web pages (maintained through the Work Plan Information Management System) will represent improved versions of the present Task Sheets and reflect the new structure of the Work Plan.

Reporting will follow the logic model used by the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (outputs-activities-resources) and identify implementation details such as expected achievements by 2015, milestones, issues and gaps, gap analysis activities, key users, and information relevant to decision making. Such a model will make it easy to see the linkages within and across Tasks.

Task Sheets will be updated at least twice a year. They will serve as a basis for monitoring GEOSS implementation as well as for reporting on progress on Work Plan implementation to the GEO Plenary and Executive Committee. Reporting will also rely on the Work Plan Symposium mentioned above, providing opportunities to assess progress and identify gaps and required actions.

II. WORK PLAN MANAGEMENT

As emphasized by the GEO community (see technical and official comments as well as Work Plan Symposium outcomes):

- Any future management approach for the GEO Work Plan should maximize the likelihood of GEO achieving the Strategic Targets by monitoring progress towards these Targets and enabling effective coordination and cross-fertilization of activities
- Each Work Plan part (Infrastructure, Institutions and Development, and Information for Societal Benefits) has specificities that should be acknowledged and properly addressed
- Any new management approach should remain simple and avoid creating sub-groups and/or multiple layers of coordination. Moreover, it should build on the achievements of the four GEO Committees and seek to improve the current Committee structure

Hence, the following management approach is recommended:

Three Implementation Boards, one for each part of the Work Plan: Infrastructure, Institutions and Development, and Information for Societal Benefits.

The main objectives of the Boards are to (i) monitor progress towards the 2015 GEOSS Strategic Targets; (ii) coordinate activities across Work Plan Tasks; and (iii) advise on the implementation of Tasks (see Terms of Reference in Annex).

The four existing GEO Committees will be disbanded from 31 December 2011. The role of the Committees will be transferred to the Task Teams (see above) and to the Implementation Boards (see below).

Corresponding updates to the GEO Rules of Procedure will be submitted to GEO-VIII for adoption.

III. GEO IMPLEMENTATION BOARDS

INITIAL MEMBERSHIP

Infrastructure Implementation Board (approx. 15 members anticipated)

- A sample of current members of the Architecture and Data Committee (4 to 6)
- One expert per Infrastructure Task, if not already covered
- One member from the Institutions and Development Board, and one member from the Societal Benefits Board
- Additional members, as appropriate, to fill gaps in coverage and/or expertise (e.g. regarding in-situ data, space data, modeling, information and communications technology, data sharing)
- GEO Secretariat

Institutions and Development Implementation Board (approx. 20 members anticipated)

- A sample of current members of the User Interface Committee, Capacity Building Committee, and Science & Technology Committee (2 to 4 per Committee)
- One expert per Institutions and Development Task, if not already covered
- One member from the Infrastructure Board, and one member from the Societal Benefits Board
- Additional members, as appropriate, to fill gaps in coverage and/or expertise
- GEO Secretariat

Societal Benefits Implementation Board (approx. 25 members anticipated)

- One expert per Societal Benefits Task
- One expert per Community of Practice, if not already covered
- One member from the Infrastructure Board, and one member from the Institutions and Development Board
- Additional members, as appropriate, to fill gaps in coverage and/or expertise
- GEO Secretariat

Note that initial membership should take into account geographic balance and developed-developing country balance

IV. TRANSITION

The GEO Secretariat will coordinate the transition to the new management structure in the interval between the GEO-VIII Plenary and the March 2012 Executive Committee meeting. The Plenary will charge the Executive Committee with reviewing transition progress and with developing a process for renewing and refreshing Board membership by November 2012. Committees, Communities of Practice, and Task Teams will play a key role in ensuring a quick and smooth transition, as emphasized in the tentative schedule below.

Tentative Transition Schedule

2011

16-17 Nov The new Work Plan management approach is submitted to the GEO-VIII Plenary for acceptance. Pending acceptance by GEO-VIII, updated GEO Rules of Procedure are submitted to GEO-VIII for adoption

30 Nov The four GEO Committees are invited to identify current members to sit on the Infrastructure and Institutions and Development Boards (see “Initial Membership” above). Committee members who do not serve on the Boards are invited to join related Task Teams

Task Teams are invited to identify one expert per Task to sit on respective Boards. Each Community of Practice is invited to identify one representative to become a member of the Societal Benefits Board (if not already covered)

20 Dec Deadline for input from Committees, Task Teams, and Communities of Practice on Board initial membership

2012

Jan-Feb The Boards hold their first (virtual) meetings on the basis of initial membership above and identify one or two Chairs each. Immediate objectives include (i) design a detailed and tailored plan of action for addressing Terms of Reference and meeting GEO 2012 reporting milestones (see also the GEO Master Schedule); and (ii) identify representation across Boards and additional membership (as appropriate)

March The Executive Committee reviews transition progress (including initial membership) over its 24th meeting and provides further guidance

July The Boards provide initial reports to the 25th meeting of the Executive Committee on Target completion progress, with some analysis of gaps, needs and possible actions. The Executive Committee provides further guidance on the substance and form of the report required for the GEO-IX Plenary

Mar-Oct The Boards operate according to the plans designed in January, interacting with the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group as required, and adjusting their course of action following Executive Committee recommendations

Nov The Boards report to the GEO-IX Plenary

ANNEX

GEO IMPLEMENTATION BOARDS TERMS OF REFERENCE

(to be added to the GEO Rules of Procedure)

Objectives

- Monitor progress towards achieving the 2015 GEOSS Strategic Targets; annually assess Strategic Targets completion progress and provide an analytical review of Task performance against the Targets; identify issues, gaps, and Target objectives that require additional support from the GEO community; design and conduct actions for addressing these issues and gaps
- Actively coordinate activities across Tasks within a specific part of the Work Plan (e.g. Infrastructure), while also establishing cross-cutting links to the other parts
- Advise on the implementation of Tasks; provide guidance on issues of technical and non-technical nature (e.g. resources; delivery on commitments of Members and Participating Organizations)

Approach and Functions

Implementation Boards will be created by, act on request of, and report to, the GEO Plenary.

Implementation Boards will provide intermediate reports to, and request the guidance of, the Executive Committee, as required.

Implementation Boards will directly support the monitoring and evaluation of GEOSS, in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Working Group and Evaluation Teams.

Implementation Boards will designate, every year on a rotation basis, one to two of their members to serve as Chairs to the Board.

Implementation Boards will meet at such times and places as determined by their members and work mainly through e-mail and teleconferences. Participation in major events such as the GEO Work Plan Symposium and Forum will be strongly encouraged.

Coordination between Boards will (at a minimum) be ensured through cross-representation on the Boards and dedicated meetings during the Work Plan Symposium and Forum.