



GROUP ON
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO-IX

22-23 November 2012

Rules of Procedure

Document 20

As accepted at GEO-IX



Rules of Procedure

Updated on 23 November 2012

Rules of Procedure

1 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 ***GEO***: The intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations, established by the Resolution of the Third Earth Observation Summit in February of 2005, consisting of a Plenary, an Executive Committee, a Secretariat, and Implementation Boards and working groups as appropriate.
- 1.2 ***GEOSS***: The Global Earth Observation System of Systems.
- 1.3 ***Implementation Plan***: The GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan endorsed by the Third Earth Observation Summit in February of 2005.
- 1.4 ***Plenary***: The GEO Plenary, the main body of GEO Principals representing GEO Members and Participating Organizations.
- 1.5 ***Principal***: The designated representative of a GEO Member or Participating Organization.
- 1.6 ***Principal Alternate***: The alternate representative of a GEO Member or Participating Organization.
- 1.7 ***Executive Committee***: The GEO Executive Committee.
- 1.8 ***Secretariat***: The GEO Secretariat.
- 1.9 ***Director***: The Director of the GEO Secretariat.
- 1.10 ***Implementation Board***: A board of the Plenary, consisting of representatives of GEO Members and Participating Organizations.
- 1.11 ***Working Group***: An ad hoc working group of the Plenary convened to address a specific topic for limited-time duration, consisting of representatives of GEO Members and Participating Organizations.

2 PLENARY

- 2.1 **Membership and Participation:** Membership in GEO is open to all member States of the United Nations and to the European Commission. GEO welcomes, as Participating Organizations, intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations with a mandate in Earth observation or related activities, subject to approval by GEO Members. GEO may invite other relevant entities to participate in its activities as observers. Membership and Participation is contingent upon formal endorsement of the Implementation Plan.
- 2.2 **Decisions:** Plenary decisions will be made by consensus of GEO Members present.
- 2.3 **GEO Co-Chairs:** Four GEO Members will co-chair meetings of the Plenary and the Executive Committee. The composition of and method of selection for the Co-Chairs is provided in Rules 3.3 and 3.4. Between Executive Committee meetings, the Co-Chairs will act on behalf of the Executive Committee to provide guidance to the Secretariat and will report to the Executive Committee on actions taken.
- 2.4 **Meetings:** The GEO Plenary will meet at least once annually to adopt (as a minimum) the Annual Work Plan and associated budget for the following year and to receive reports from the Executive Committee, Secretariat, Implementation Boards, and working groups.
- 2.5 **Principal and Principal Alternate Designation:** All GEO Members and GEO Participating organizations should designate one GEO Principal and not more than two GEO Principal Alternates to serve as the representatives of that Member or Participating Organization in the Plenary, and to receive and submit all official communication to and from the Secretariat. When a GEO Member serves as a GEO Co-Chair, the designated GEO Co-Chair will serve as the GEO Principal for that GEO Member. These designations, including complete contact information, should be submitted in writing to the GEO Secretariat using the form provided by the Secretariat.
- 2.6 **Official Delegations:** The GEO Secretariat will issue a call for official delegation lists no later than 6 weeks prior to any Plenary meeting. The GEO Principal, the GEO Alternate, or their designated representative on file with the Secretariat should submit an official delegation list to the GEO Secretariat no later than 2 weeks prior to any Plenary meeting. Submission may also be forwarded by means of a Note Verbale to the Secretariat by the Member's Permanent Mission in Geneva. All official delegates should register with the GEO Secretariat no later than 1 week before any Plenary meeting. A roster of registered official delegates will be made available to delegates arriving for the Plenary meeting. On-site registrants will be excluded from this official list but included in the final record of the meeting.
- 2.7 **Documents:** All new documents for final decision by Plenary will be numbered and released by the Secretariat to all Principals for comment in sufficient time to allow for a full review period in advance of the Plenary meeting at which the document will be formally considered. Documents originating outside the Secretariat should be provided to the Secretariat at least seven weeks prior

to the Plenary meeting at which the document will be formally considered. No documents may be considered unless numbered and circulated by the Secretariat. Working papers may be circulated for informational purposes as necessary. Documents not meeting the above criteria may be considered for decision by the Plenary if the Plenary so decides.

- 2.8 **Reports:** The Secretariat will produce a draft summary of Plenary proceedings including decisions, actions, and timelines for completing actions and disseminate it to GEO Principals no later than four working weeks following each Plenary meeting. Based on the comments and corrections received, the Secretariat will prepare a draft report for distribution to the entire GEO community no later than six working weeks following each Plenary meeting.

3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 3.1 **Function:** The role of the Executive Committee is to facilitate the decisions of the GEO Plenary and to oversee and to make recommendations on the implementation of those decisions. The Plenary remains the GEO's primary decision-making body.
- 3.2 **Duties:** Acting by consensus, the Executive Committee will:
- a. Ensure the efficient conduct of GEO business between meetings of the plenary;
 - b. Supervise the work of the Director of the Secretariat and ensure that it is consistent with the direction received from Plenary;
 - c. Examine the draft Annual Work Plan and budget in preparation for its presentation to Plenary;
 - d. Report in writing at least annually to GEO;
 - e. Fix the date and location of the next Plenary for approval by each Plenary before the end of meeting, and, through the Director, convene the meeting, produce the necessary documents and ensure the production of a timely meeting report;
 - f. Maintain detailed Rules of Procedure for GEO, to be reviewed regularly;
 - g. Provide recommendations to GEO regarding the need for and effectiveness of the Implementation Boards and working groups, and recommend continuation or adjustments as needed;
 - h. Undertake such other tasks as may be delegated to the Executive Committee by the Plenary.
- 3.3 **Composition:** The Executive Committee will consist of 13 GEO Members based on the following geographic distribution: Africa (2), Americas (3), Asia and Oceania (4), CIS (1), and Europe (3). Four Executive Committee Members will serve collectively as Co-Chairs of the Plenary and the Executive Committee, with two Co-Chairs representing developed countries and two Co-Chairs representing developing countries. One Co-Chair will serve as lead to guide the discussion for each meeting. The lead Co-Chair will rotate among the Co-Chairs as agreed by the Co-Chairs. Individuals serving on the Executive Committee do not serve in their individual capacity but as Member representatives.

- 3.4 **Selection:** Executive Committee Members, including those Members serving as Co-Chairs, will be nominated through regional caucuses. Based on the conclusions of the regional caucuses and further consultations as necessary, the Director of the Secretariat will present a slate of nominees, including those nominated to serve as Co-Chairs, to the Plenary for its approval. Upon approval, Executive Committee members will serve a term of up to two years. The process will be guided by the following principles: (1) preserving sufficient continuity in the Executive Committee's membership; (2) ensuring sufficient opportunity for participation of GEO Members in the Executive Committee by rotation; (3) preserving the balance of developed and developing countries at the level of the Co-chairs. If a Member chooses not to complete its term of service, then the regional caucus may select another Member to represent it in the Executive Committee to complete the remaining term of service.
- 3.5 **Decisions:** Executive Committee decisions will be made by consensus of the GEO Members present. The Executive Committee will not take any decision involving a commitment beyond that which has been approved by the GEO in Plenary, unless the activity is fully in accord with the approved Annual Work Plan and the additional costs are guaranteed by a Member or Participating Organization.
- 3.6 **Meetings:** The GEO Executive Committee will meet at least once annually and may hold additional meetings as agreed by the Executive Committee. The Committee will work mainly by electronic mail and telephone conference.
- 3.7 **Documents:** The GEO Secretariat will prepare all documents for the Executive Committee's consideration and will release them to all GEO Members and Participating Organizations for information at least 15 calendar days prior to any Executive Committee meeting. The GEO Co-Chairs will approve draft Executive Committee agendas.
- 3.8 **Reports:** The Secretariat will release a preliminary report of Executive Committee proceedings to the Members of the Executive Committee within two weeks and to the full GEO community no later than six weeks following the Executive Committee meeting.

4 GEO SECRETARIAT

- 4.1 **Function:** The Secretariat, led by the Director, will facilitate and support GEO activities. The Secretariat will consist of co-located, well-qualified, professional and administrative staff.
- 4.2 **Duties:** The Secretariat will:
- a. Prepare and submit, for Plenary approval, the Annual Work Plan - including activities and budgets;
 - b. Support the implementation by Members and Participating Organizations of the Annual Work Plan and execute expenditure of the budget;

- c. Provide annual reports on the performance of GEOSS including milestones of the Annual Work Plan;
- d. Provide annual reports on Secretariat operations, including execution of annual budget expenditures;
- e. Organize, prepare, and support meetings and other work of the GEO Plenary, Executive Committee, and other GEO Implementation Boards and working groups;
- f. Pursue activities to identify and secure funds for Secretariat operations and GEO activities in accordance with the direction of GEO;
- g. Oversee the implementation of the GEO communication strategy as outlined in the Annual Work Plan;
- h. Organize the GEOSS user and other fora as required in coordination with GEO Implementation Boards as appropriate;
- i. Facilitate overall cooperation and liaise with GEO Members and Participating Organizations, and other programmes and bodies as appropriate or as needed to support the work of GEO, with particular emphasis on existing systems and Earth observation coordination mechanisms;
- j. Identify staffing and other resources necessary to support the Annual Work Plan, develop indicators for Secretariat performance, and report to Plenary on Secretariat performance against indicators;
- k. Ensure an open and transparent process is utilized for all employment to the Secretariat, including short-term contractors, and for the designation of experts to the various GEO Implementation Boards and working groups;
- l. Facilitate and coordinate the updating of the 10-Year Implementation Plan as directed by the Plenary;
- m. Conduct the day-to-day administrative activities of the Secretariat;
- n. Carry out additional duties as required by the GEO.

5 GEO IMPLEMENTATION BOARDS AND WORKING GROUPS

- 5.1 ***Purpose and Function:*** The GEO Plenary may establish Implementation Boards and working groups to address aspects of GEOSS implementation and provide a mechanism for GEO Members and Participating Organizations to engage fully in the work of GEO. The Implementation Boards and working groups will provide high-level review advice, recommendations, and support in the ongoing development and implementation of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. The Implementation Boards or working groups will also actively promote the implementation of GEOSS activities as described in Annual Work Plans.
- 5.2 ***Duration and Terms of Reference:*** The Plenary may establish and develop terms of reference for Implementation Boards and/or working groups. The maximum duration for working groups will be 3 years, with the possibility of extension by the Plenary. All Implementation Boards and working groups are listed in Annex B, which will be updated as appropriate, and their terms of reference are appended to these Rules of Procedure.

- 5.3 **Membership:** Implementation Boards will operate on the basis of the membership described in Annex B. The Executive Committee will oversee renewal of Board membership and submit the outcome of this renewal to the Plenary.
- 5.4 **Leadership:** Each Implementation Board will designate, every year on a rotation basis, one to two of its member(s) to serve as chair(s) to the board. Rotation of the chair(s) is encouraged.
- 5.5 **Meetings:** Implementation Boards and working groups will meet at such times and places as determined by their members, and will work mainly through e-mail and teleconferences. Implementation Boards and working groups will work by consensus of their Members.
- 5.6 **Reporting:** Implementation Boards and working groups will post a report on the GEO website of each meeting held, including a list of all participants and highlighting outcomes. In addition, Implementation Board and working group chairs will report to the GEO Plenary and will deliver progress reports to the GEO Executive Committee as necessary.
- 5.7 **Funding:** Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from Implementation Board or working group activities will be borne by the Member or Participating Organization that incurs them, and will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.
- 5.8 **Review and Renewal:** The effectiveness and need for the Implementation Boards and working groups will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee, which will make recommendations to the Plenary concerning Implementation Board or working group renewal.
- 5.9 **Support and Coordination:** The Secretariat will provide full administrative support to all GEO Implementation Boards and working groups. The activities of the Implementation Boards and working groups will be closely coordinated with the Secretariat to maintain consistency with the approved GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan and to maximize the effectiveness of the GEO in pursuit of a GEOSS. All GEO Implementation Boards or working groups will liaise with the Executive Committee and the GEO Secretariat.

6 GEO TRUST FUND AND FINANCES

- 6.1 **Trust Fund Establishment:** The ad hoc Group on Earth Observations at its sixth session (Brussels, Belgium 14-15 February 2005) decided to enter into a Standing Arrangement between GEO and WMO, which arranges for the GEO Secretariat to be located at WMO. In order to provide for a mechanism for GEO to support the GEO Secretariat and other GEO activities as approved by the GEO Plenary, GEO also agreed to undertake steps to create a GEO-WMO Trust Fund to support the work of GEO. (See GEO-WMO Trust Fund Terms of Reference, Annex A).
- 6.2 **Finances:** The Annual Work Plan and associated budget produced by the Secretariat will detail all operating expenses for the coming year, and will contain provisions for monitoring and execution

of the budget throughout the year. Indicative budgets shall also be provided for a further two years. The Secretariat will report quarterly to the Executive Committee on the progress of budget execution, including income and expenditures. Priorities for the expenditure of GEO funds will include:

- a. Approved Secretariat staff salaries and benefits
- b. Annual Work Plan development activities
- c. Annual Work Plan implementation activities
- d. Secretariat operating costs
- e. Meeting support costs
- f. Other approved costs

6.3 ***Solvency and Audit:*** The Secretariat shall maintain solvency at all times. No expenditure may be authorized in the absence of available funds. Notwithstanding the principle of a single external auditor of WMO, GEO may engage independent financial reviews of the GEO budget against expenditures.

6.4 ***Revenue Continuity:*** GEO Members and Participating Organizations will endeavor to provide assured multi-year revenue for the Secretariat to maintain approved staff levels and continuity of Secretariat operations, subject to the budget systems and cycles of GEO Members and Participating Organizations. Additional contributions may be earmarked for specific purposes and special projects.

6.5 ***Surplus Funds:*** Surplus funds remaining in the GEO Trust Fund at the end of the calendar year will immediately be made available for the following year unless otherwise restricted by the donor. In the event the GEO Trust Fund is dissolved, any remaining funds will be dispersed under the terms of the GEO Trust Fund Terms of Reference.

6.6 ***Engaging the Private Sector:***

- a. Private sector engagement in the implementation of GEO Work Plan Tasks will be managed primarily by individual GEO Members and Participating Organizations, according to the established procedures of those GEO Members and Participating Organizations.
- b. The GEO Secretariat is encouraged to organize international forums, or expositions, in collaboration with the private sector, in addition with Members and through the involvement of GEO Principals, for example in conjunction with the GEO Plenary and the GEO Work Plan Symposium, and to facilitate dialogue among private sector entities and the GEO Work Plan participants.
- c. The GEO Secretariat may negotiate terms and conditions based on the guidance provided by the GEO Executive Committee, and subject to the Executive Committee's review, under which private sector entities may make contributions to GEO.

7 EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENT

- 7.1 *Effective Date:* These Rules of Procedure will take effect immediately upon adoption.
- 7.2 *Amendment:* These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Plenary at any meeting. Proposals to amend these rules of procedure should be submitted to the Secretariat at least 8 weeks prior to the Plenary meeting at which the amendment will be considered.

ANNEX A

GEO-WMO Trust Fund for the GEO/GEOSS

Terms of Reference and Rules

Introduction and Purpose of the Fund

- 1 The Fifty-Sixth Session of the WMO Executive Council in its Resolution 9 (EC-LVI) authorized the WMO Secretary General to confirm to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) strong support for the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS) concept; to work closely with his counterparts in the other Earth-observing United Nations agencies and programmes to ensure an effectively coordinated United Nations system role in the implementation of GEOSS; and to indicate WMO readiness to host the GEO Secretariat.
- 2 The ad hoc Group on Earth Observations at its sixth session (Brussels, Belgium 14-15 February 2005) finalized the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation plan. At the sixth session, GEO agreed to enter into a Standing Arrangement between GEO and WMO and to arrange for a GEO Secretariat to be located at WMO. In order to provide for a mechanism for GEO to fund the GEO Secretariat and GEO activities, GEO also agreed to undertake steps to create a GEO-WMO Trust Fund to support the work of GEO/GEOSS. The Third Earth Observation Summit (Brussels, Belgium 16 February 2005) established the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and endorsed the GEOSS Ten-Year Implementation Plan, and instructed GEO to take those steps necessary to implement GEOSS in accordance with its implementation plan.
- 3 The primary purpose of the GEO-WMO Trust Fund will be to support the direct and indirect costs of GEO/GEOSS and its Secretariat as well as related GEO activities. The full cost of the GEO Secretariat contains direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are those directly attributable to the GEO Secretariat, such as salaries of GEO Secretariat staff, travel expenses by GEO Secretariat staff, cost of equipment used by GEO Secretariat staff. The direct costs of the GEO Secretariat shall be covered by GEO. Indirect costs are those incurred by WMO for the provision of administrative services to GEO. As a principle, WMO shall not charge GEO for the total indirect costs, but rather for the incremental costs only. The incremental costs of administrative services provided by WMO to GEO shall be identified in a Service Level Arrangement to be concluded between GEO and WMO.
- 4 The GEO-WMO Trust Fund will also be used to accomplish GEO/GEOSS objectives and goals through the preparation of necessary studies, reports and relevant materials, the use of consultants to assist the GEO Secretariat, and other activities relevant to the GEO/GEOSS as approved by the GEO Plenary.
- 5 The Trust Fund will be established from voluntary cash contributions from GEO Members, organizations involved in Earth observations, grants, donations, funds deposited for specific purposes, hereafter referred to as deposits, and other contributions. Contributions shall be normally made in Swiss Francs or any other convertible currency.

Administration of the Fund

- 6 Financial arrangements for administration of the Fund are specified in: (1) the GEO-WMO Standing Arrangement; (2) the WMO Financial Rules and Regulations; (3) delegations of responsibility from the Secretary-General to the GEO Director.
- 7 The accounting of the expenditures of the Fund shall be as provided for in paragraph 6 above, including any other directly identifiable charges related to the administration of the Fund. No additional programme support cost charges will be incurred. The interest accrued from any investment of the principal of the Fund will constitute an income to the Fund.
- 8 The Fund shall be maintained on a continuous basis and amounts standing to the credit of the Fund at the end of any annual period shall remain in the Fund for use in the subsequent period.
- 9 Financial reports on the Fund will be made in Swiss Francs. The United Nations rate of exchange prevailing on the date of the transaction or report will apply for the conversion into Swiss Francs of contributions or income received and payments made or charges incurred in any other currency. The GEO Director shall submit a financial report, annually, to Trust Fund contributors, to the GEO Executive Committee, and report to GEO on the overall use of the Fund
- 10 External audit will be conducted as provided for in the WMO Financial Regulations.
- 11 At the closure of the Fund, any cash balance of the Fund will be returned to GEO Members.

Procedures for the utilization of the Fund

- 12 The utilization of the Fund shall be based upon a general budget prepared by the GEO Secretariat and approved by the Plenary. Day-to-day spending decisions shall be by the GEO Secretariat Director.
- 13 The GEO Director will not enter into any financial commitments unless he/she has received the funds required.

Legal responsibilities

- 14 Under no circumstances will the Fund be made liable to pay and/or reimburse any taxes on emoluments or honorarium, or any customs and import duties, value added taxes or similar charges. If applicable, these will be payable by the beneficiaries of the support provided.

ANNEX B

Group on Earth Observations (GEO)

List of [Implementation Boards] and Working Groups

- Infrastructure Implementation Board
- Institutions and Development Implementation Board
- Societal Benefits Implementation Board

- Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group
- Data Sharing Working Group
- Post-2015 Working Group

APPENDIX 1 to ANNEX B

Infrastructure Implementation Board

Institutions and Development Implementation Board

Societal Benefits Implementation Board

Terms of Reference

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 one to two of their members to serve as chairs to the Board. Rotation of the chair(s) is encouraged.

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.

Membership

Infrastructure Implementation Board

(Approx. 15 individuals serving as Member or Participating Organization representatives)

- 8 GEO Members or Participating Organizations to reinforce expertise needed to meet the objectives (ToRs) of the Board
- 5 GEO Members or Participating Organizations to represent the Tasks overseen by the Board (1 per Task)
- Additional GEO Members or Participating Organizations to fill gaps in expertise (e.g. regarding in-situ data, modeling, information and communications technology, data sharing), as appropriate

Institutions and Development Implementation Board

(Approx. 15 individuals serving as Member or Participating Organization representatives)

- 8 GEO Members or Participating Organizations to reinforce expertise needed to meet the objectives (ToRs) of the Board
- 5 GEO Members or Participating Organizations to represent the Tasks overseen by the Board (1 per Task)
- Additional GEO Members or Participating Organizations to fill gaps in expertise, as appropriate

Societal Benefits Implementation Board

(Approx. 20 individuals serving as Member or Participating Organization representatives)

- Approx. 16 GEO Members or Participating Organizations to represent the Tasks overseen by the Board and provide expertise needed to meet the objectives (ToRs) of the Board (1 per Task and 1 per Community of Practice (if not already covered by the Tasks))
- Additional GEO Members or Participating Organizations to fill gaps in coverage and/or expertise, as appropriate

APPENDIX 2 to ANNEX B

Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (M&E WG) will coordinate monitoring and evaluation of GEOSS implementation until 2015, the end of the 10-year Plan.

Objectives

The M&E WG is convened to:

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework document defining the monitoring and evaluation of GEOSS implementation, including outcome performance indicators and drawing from the outline prepared at the September 10-12, 2008 workshop where appropriate.
- Develop a plan for the first evaluation of GEOSS implementation, including provisions for overseeing the execution of the plan. The final report of this evaluation should be completed by mid 2010, for use in planning the Earth Observation Summit anticipated in November 2010. Develop plans for subsequent evaluations, responding to lessons learned from previous evaluations.
- Provide oversight of the execution of the M&E process

Approach and Functions

- Adapt best practices and tools in use by other organizations for monitoring and evaluation as applicable to the GEOSS context.
- Identify criteria for evaluating the success of GEOSS based on the Societal Benefit Areas, (crosscutting areas) Strategic Targets and Tasks in the GEO Work Plan.
- Develop a set of viable, yet uncomplicated indicators to monitor GEOSS implementation with particular emphasis on outcomes, as stated in the strategic targets for GEOSS.
- Ensure that the evaluation covers subtasks and overarching tasks of the Work Plan, strategic targets, and other high-level collaborations within GEO.
- Implement the monitoring and evaluation framework through a phased approach.
- Review the existing GEOSS reporting system and utilize it in the monitoring and evaluation process as appropriate.
- Build, where appropriate, on tools and methodologies being used by task contributors for monitoring and evaluation of task activities.
- Provide recommendations to Executive Committee for mobilizing financial and human resources to implement the framework and accomplish the first evaluation of GEOSS implementation.
- Report to the GEO Executive Committee and the GEO Plenary the results of the first and subsequent evaluations, the implementation of evaluation recommendations, and respond to lessons learned.

APPENDIX 3 to ANNEX B

Data Sharing Working Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The GEOSS Data Sharing Working Group (hereafter referenced as “DSWG”) will support the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) in its goals to put into practice the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, the Implementation Guidelines for the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles and the GEOSS Data Sharing Action Plan. It will have responsibility for executing the GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan Task ID-01.

Objectives

The DSWG is convened to work with GEO collectively, including the Implementation Boards and all other tasks in the Work Plan, to enable effective implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles by:

- Supporting and expanding the GEOSS Data Collection of Open Resources for Everyone (GEOSS Data-CORE), a distributed pool of documented datasets with full, open and unrestricted access at no more than the cost of reproduction and distribution;
- Ensuring that the framework for full and open access to data is addressed in the implementation of the GEOSS Common Infrastructure and the GEOSS;
- Monitoring the use and impact of resources made available with full and open access;
- Promoting the efficacy of the Data Sharing Principles in delivering societal benefits;
- Evaluating the outcomes of the GEOSS Data Sharing Action Plan and recommending further actions, including promoting comprehensive data documentation and any mechanisms needed to further enhance the ability of the GEOSS architecture to provide access to data, metadata and products;
- Assisting GEO Members in establishing national coordinating mechanisms, with the support of relevant Participating Organizations, to promote and monitor engagement with the implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles and provide feedback to GEO;
- Supporting GEO Members in developing policy frameworks, with the support of relevant Participating Organizations, to further implement the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles and GEOSS Data Sharing Action Plan;
- Maximising the number of documented datasets made available on the basis of full and open access;
- Promoting to data providers the benefits of full and open access to data, in particular the benefits of the GEOSS Data-CORE.

Membership and Working Arrangements

- The DSWG was created by, acts on requests from, and reports to, the GEO Plenary;
- The DSWG will provide reports to, and request the guidance of, the Executive Committee, as required;

- The DSWG shall be composed of individuals nominated by GEO Members and Participating Organisations, in particular those with relevant expertise, with administrative support provided by the GEO Secretariat;
- Co-chairs of the DSWG shall be decided by the DSWG. There should be a minimum of four co-chairs with representation from both GEO Members and Participating Organizations. GEO Members and Participating Organizations may nominate co-chairs for consideration by the DSWG;
- The DSWG will meet at such times and places as determined by its members and work mainly through teleconferences and e-mail;
- Participation in GEO events is strongly encouraged;
- The DSWG will coordinate its work with that of the Implementation Boards as appropriate;
- The DSWG will coordinate with other international and regional initiatives and organisations working on data sharing issues;
- The DSWG will support developing country initiatives on data sharing;
- Specific research work or investigations may be assigned by the DSWG to sub-teams of individual experts to address identified issues at the appropriate level of detail and professional expertise.

Duration

- The duration of these Terms of Reference shall be March 2012 through to the GEO Plenary in 2015.

APPENDIX 4 to ANNEX B

Post-2015 Working Group

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The Post-2015 Working Group will assess options and scenarios for the next phase of GEOSS implementation, including the scope of activities, institutional arrangements, internal governance and resourcing of GEO. The Working Group will consider the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation that was presented to the GEO-VII Plenary. It will produce recommendations under the guidance of the Plenary that will be forwarded to the GEO-X Plenary and 2013 Ministerial Summit for decisions.

The mandate of the Working Group will expire at the end of the 2013 Ministerial Summit unless the Plenary takes action to renew it.

Outputs

The Working Group will regularly report to the Executive Committee and produce an Interim Report for the GEO-IX Plenary and a Final Report for the GEO-X Plenary and 2013 Ministerial Summit.

Membership and Nomination

The Post-2015 Working Group is open to all GEO Members and Participating Organizations. Working Group members need to be nominated by their Principals.

It should be co-chaired by representatives from at least two different caucuses.

The Working Group will be supported by the GEO Secretariat.

Activities and Schedule

The Post-2015 Working Group will:

- Hold its first meeting in Geneva in March/April 2012 to decide on its co-chairs and schedule of work;
- Report on progress to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, probably in July 2012, and submit an initial draft of the Interim Report to Plenary;
- Hold one or more additional meetings and/or teleconferences during 2012, as decided by the Working Group at its first meeting;
- Report on progress to the GEO-IX Plenary in late 2012, both orally and by submitting a written Interim Report. This Interim Report should present options and scenarios for the post-2015 period; ideally it will already include views of the benefits and drawbacks of each option as well as recommendations on which options to continue exploring;
- Hold meetings and other activities in 2013 as agreed by the Working Group. Report on progress to the Executive Committee. Submit updated drafts of the Final Report to the meetings of the Executive Committee and the GEO-IX Plenary;
- Present the Final Report to GEO-X and the 2013 Ministerial Summit with detailed recommendations for the post-2015 future of GEO and GEOSS

ANNEX C

Guidance for Recognition of New GEO Participating Organizations and Observers

Entities requesting official recognition as a GEO Participating Organization will be considered based on the following guidelines:

- 1 The entity must meet the criteria specified in Section 3. 3 of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan:

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- 2 The entity must endorse the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan, consistent with Rule 2. 1 of the GEO Rules of Procedure:

Membership and Participation is contingent upon formal endorsement of the Implementation Plan.

- 3 A sub-programme or subgroup of a currently recognized Participating Organization need not be considered for independent recognition.
- 4 Joint programmes (programmes established under the auspices of two or more recognized Participating Organizations) may be designated by the Plenary as observers or Participating Organizations. Such programmes must fulfill the above criteria (1 and 2).
- 5 GEO may invite other relevant entities to participate in its activities as observers. Observers may be invited to send representatives to GEO Implementation Boards and to participate fully in specific GEO activities.
- 6 Before each Plenary, the Executive Committee will review requests for recognition received by the Secretariat, and will recommend Participating Organizations and observers for recognition by the Plenary.
- 7 The Plenary will make decisions on the requests for recognition according to Paragraph 2. 2 of the GEO Rules of Procedure, taking into account the recommendation by the Executive Committee. Paragraph 2. 2 of the Rules of Procedure states:

2. 2 Decisions. Plenary decisions will be made by consensus of GEO Members present.

ANNEX D

Guidelines for the Use of Additional Contributions to the GEO Trust Fund

- 1 The GEO Secretariat Operations Budget for each calendar year will be approved by the Plenary in the preceding year and will reflect contributions pledged at or before that Plenary meeting. These contributions will be referred to as “pledged contributions.”
- 2 Subsequent contributions pledged and received for that calendar year will be referred to as “additional contributions” and will be reported in the quarterly financial update.
- 3 The Secretariat will operate under the approved budget for the calendar year.
- 4 In the event that all pledged contributions are received, additional contributions, unless otherwise specified by the donor, will be carried forward to the budget for the following calendar year.
- 5 In the event that some portion of the pledged contributions is not received by the Secretariat within the calendar year, the Secretariat will use additional contributions to maintain a balanced budget, and will report this adjustment in the final annual report of resources and expenditures.
- 6 If the donor requires its additional contribution be used to finance specific additional activities within the current calendar year, the Secretariat will produce a revised budget including these activities, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Plenary.
- 7 For all specific activities, the Secretariat will provide to the donor a detailed statement of expenditure incurred in undertaking the activity.

ANNEX E

GEO Secretariat Arrangements and Procedures

Authority

1. GEO Rules of Procedure 3.2 (b, h) establish the authority of the Plenary to delegate tasks to the Executive Committee, including those pertaining to the supervision of the GEO Secretariat.
 - 3.2 **Duties:** Acting by consensus, the Executive Committee will:
 - b. Supervise the work of the Director of the Secretariat and ensure that it is consistent with the direction received by the Plenary;
 - h. Undertake such other tasks as may be delegated to the Executive Committee by the Plenary.
2. The Group on Earth Observations at its first session (Geneva, Switzerland 3-4 May 2005) created the Executive Committee and authorized the Executive Committee to recruit and select the Director and approve interim staff, including secondments. GEO also agreed that the WMO Secretary-General will appoint the Director as a WMO staff member.
3. The Third Plenary Meeting of the Group on Earth Observations (Bonn, Germany 28-29 November 2006) noted that the GEO Secretariat was to remain being filled by its Director and staff. GEO affirmed delegation of authority to the Executive Committee to ensure continuity of Secretariat operations and functioning.
4. The Standing Arrangement Between WMO and GEO states that the GEO Secretariat Director is selected by, and under the management authority, of GEO while under the administrative authority of the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It does not detail the process of recruitment, selection, renewal, or term of the Director. It does provide language affirming the applicability of WMO Staff and Financial Regulations.

Procedures

- The Director may serve a maximum of three three-year terms¹.
- In due time, the Executive Committee shall establish a selection panel (the Panel). The Panel shall be open to all members of the Executive Committee.
- The Panel may recommend the Executive Committee to re-appoint the incumbent Director for a second term without further competition. The Executive Committee should approve such a recommendation through unanimous consent, no less than nine months before the end of a Director's term.

¹ Current WMO procedures limit positions below DG to a 2 year term and it is proposed to establish an exception for the GEOSEC Director position to support a smooth alignment with GEO Ministerial Summits.

- If the Panel recommends opening the selection process to competition, then the Panel will oversee the announcement of the position, the review of the candidates, the interview process and the ultimate selection and recommendation to the Executive Committee.
- A Director who wishes to serve a third term shall take part in the open competition
- The final decision of the Executive Committee on the selection of the Director will be made no less than six months before the end of a Director's term and passed to the WMO Secretary General for formal appointment.
- In the event of the post of Director becoming vacant before the term expires, the Executive Committee will appoint an Acting Director, whose term of office shall not extend beyond the tenure of the incumbent Director.

ANNEX F

Engaging the Private Sector in the Implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)

Guidelines

Introduction

Since the establishment of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), the GEO community has recognized the value of engaging the private sector in the development and utilisation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). This stems from an understanding that both the public and private sector benefit from increased data sharing and the exploitation of integrated Earth observations for the provision of societal benefits.

The following guidelines have been developed to encourage further private sector engagement in GEOSS, while preserving the public good dimension of GEOSS and the principle of full and open data exchange.

Guidelines

1. When partnering with private sector entities, the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles will be followed:
 - *There will be full and open exchange of data, metadata and products shared within GEOSS, recognizing relevant international instruments and national policies and legislation*
 - *All shared data, metadata and products will be made available with minimum time delay and at minimum cost;*
 - *All shared data, metadata and products being free of charge or no more than cost of reproduction will be encouraged for research and education.*

--GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan, 16 February 2005;
2. GEO Members and Participating Organizations are encouraged to invite private sector entities to participate in the implementation of GEOSS through the Tasks of the GEO Work Plan, establishing appropriate arrangements in accordance with the established procedures of their individual agencies, including public-private partnerships;
3. When engaging with the private sector, GEO Members and Participating Organizations will respect their mandates and established procedures regarding transparency and competition in contracting;
4. GEO Members and Participating Organizations are encouraged to develop and organize private sector engagement events at the national and regional levels.
5. Private sector engagement in the implementation of GEO Work Plan Tasks will be managed primarily by individual GEO Members and Participating Organizations, according to the established procedures of those GEO Members and Participating Organizations.
6. The GEO Secretariat is encouraged to organize international forums, or expositions, in collaboration with the private sector, for example in conjunction with the GEO Plenary and the GEO Work Plan Symposium, and to facilitate dialogue among private sector entities and the GEO Work Plan participants.
7. The GEO Secretariat may negotiate terms and conditions based on the guidance provided by the GEO Executive Committee, and subject to the Executive Committee's review, under which private sector entities may make contributions to GEO.