



GROUP ON
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO-V

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Report of the Target Task Team (T3)

Document 9

This document is submitted to GEO-V for information.

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1 BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the recommendation from the 12th Executive Committee meeting (March 2008), a Target Task Team (T3) has been established to propose an updated set of Targets for GEOSS (The list of invited T3 experts is reported in Appendix I). The initial intention had been to review all GEOSS Targets in time for recommendations to be presented to the 14th Executive Committee and GEO-V Plenary in November 2008.

2 OUTCOME OF THE FIRST T3 MEETING (26-27 JUNE 2008)

The first meeting of the T3 was held on 26-27 June 2008 at the GEO Secretariat, with Greg Withee (USA) and Johnson Owaro (Uganda) serving as Co-Chairs.

Discussions at the meeting, which could not be attended by all invited members, arrived at the following conclusions:

- A revision of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan Reference Document Targets is in fact needed, without modifying the negotiated objectives, to provide an up-dated and better integrated description of GEOSS.
- It would not be feasible for the Team to provide a complete and meaningful update of all Targets in time for GEO-V, and different approaches were required for the different time-scales:
 - 2-Year Targets were reviewed by the Team at the 1st T3 meeting and the results of this review were to be taken into account in drafts of the new GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan.
 - 6-Year Targets needed to be updated to take account of recent developments and to identify the relevant milestones leading to the 10-Year Targets.
 - 10-Year Targets deserved the most attention because they need to provide a coherent overview of the envisioned GEOSS by 2015.
- A second T3 meeting was necessary to carry on with the Target review process, scheduled for 4-5 September 2008.

3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS AND OUTCOME

An update on the T3 process outlining these conclusions was presented to the 13th Executive Committee meeting in July 2008. Following discussion of the report from the first T3 meeting, the Executive Committee at its July 2008 meeting noted:

- Progress made with the revision of the 2-year Targets.
- The amended time schedule for the revision of 6- and 10-year Targets.
- Constraints identified at the first T3 meeting regarding the availability of T3 members, given their respective responsibilities and schedules.

Notwithstanding bullets 2 and 3 above, the Executive Committee felt that, in addition to reasons of consistency and continuity, it was important to have the 6- and 10-year Target review sufficiently advanced by GEO-V in November 2008 so that the Plenary could take informed decisions with respect to the new 2009-2011 Work Plan. To expedite the review process, the Executive Committee agreed to identify and nominate full time experts from their respective countries to join the T3 and contribute to the effort. In addition, the Executive Committee suggested that a week-long working meeting/retreat be organized as a complement to the 4-5 September meeting to properly address and complete the Target revision in due time.

4 OUTCOME OF THE SECOND T3 MEETING (4-5 SEPTEMBER 2008)

The T3 met on 4-5 September 2008 at the GEO Secretariat to continue planning work regarding the update of the GEOSS 10-Year Targets. The group took note of the recommendations of the 13th Executive Committee and agreed to develop a document to provide a new set of Strategic Targets for GEOSS Implementation. These Strategic Targets will replace the former 10-year Targets, with the 6-year Targets being considered as interim milestones. The document will also include a refined definition of GEOSS, as well as several high-level goals based on the Cape Town Declaration of 2007.

5 NEXT STEPS

As next steps, individual volunteers were identified from within the T3 to develop a few new Targets per SBA and per cross-cutting area, with the goal being to draft new strategic guidance stressing the GEOSS achievements expected by 2015. It was requested that the Targets be no more than a sentence or two in length, and that they form the link between the negotiated text of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan and the text of the emerging GEO Work Plan for 2009-2011. However, the volunteers were asked to consider the ideas of the original 241 Targets.

A drafting session of the Strategic Targets document was scheduled to take place 21-23 October to refine the Targets in time for review by GEO-V. The resulting draft document containing the new Strategic Targets will be provided to the Executive Committee during the last week of October for review, before being submitted to GEO-V, along with this report.

The Target Task Team also recognized the need to synchronize the GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan with the draft Strategic Target document. This should take place shortly after GEO-V in late winter, and the C4 – Coordination of Committees Co-Chairs - should be involved.

6 T3 AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Coordination is in place between T3 work on 10-Year Target revision and the definition of the GEOSS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. There is a clear relationship between Targets and performance indicators (see point 4.3 of the agenda, GEOSS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework). The Targets, in addition to being the basis for the GEO Work Plan definition, serve also as the reference for the performance evaluation by providing the link between outputs of the Work Plan and the targeted outcomes.

In fact, the GEOSS Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Document 11) makes a clear distinction between “outputs” – the direct products and services which result from the activities of GEOSS – and “outcomes” – the effects and results attributable to the GEOSS outputs, and clearly states that Targets should address outcomes and not outputs. This approach was shared by the Target Task Team Co-chairs who asked individual members, when drafting the new Strategic Targets, to explicitly address outcomes and, furthermore, to phrase these new Targets in such a way that one could (easily) derive indicators to assess performance of GEOSS.

ANNEX I: TARGET TASK TEAM PARTICIPANTS

Family Name, First Name	Representative of	Email address
Angoloti, Marta	Spain	mangoloti@inm.es
Baker, Jim	USA, POGO	djamesbaker@comcast.net
Barrell, Sue	Australia	s.barrell@bom.gov.au
Briggs, Stephen	ESA	stephen.briggs@esa.int
Colohan, Peter	USA	Peter.Colohan@noaa.gov
Edwards, Alan	EC	Alan.Edwards@ec.europa.eu
Eide, Lars Ingolf	Norway	l-ingo-e@online.no
Fernandez, Diego	ESA	diego.fernandez@esa.int
Gärtner, Udo	Germany	ugaert@aol.com
Gibson, Roy	UK, CEOS (Ret.)	roy.gibson@numericable.fr
Grimes, David	Canada	david.grimes@ec.gc.ca
Gusev, Alexander	Russia	gusev@mecom.ru
Ishida, Chu	Japan	ishida.chu@jaxa.jp
Korporal, Kenneth	Canada	kenneth.korporal@ec.gc.ca
Lawford, Rick	Canada	lawford@umbc.edu
Medico, Anna	Argentina	amedico@conae.gov.ar
Owaro, Johnson	Uganda (Co-Chair)	Johnson.owaro@gmail.com

Family Name, First Name	Representative of	Email address
Pearlman , Jay	IEEE	Jay.pearlman@ieee.org
Sempris , Emilio	CATHALAC	emilio.sempris@cathalac.org
Scholes , Bob	South Africa	bscholes@csir.co.za
Stokes , Carrie	USA	cstokes@usaid.gov
Townshend , John	USA	jtownshe@geog.umd.edu jtownshe@mail.umd.edu
Withee , Greg	USA (Co-Chair)	Greg.Withee@noaa.gov
Woldai , Tsehai	Netherlands	woldai@itc.nl
Zhao Datong	China	zhaodt@cma.gov.cn
Zillman , John	Australia	J.Zillman@bom.gov.au
GEO Secretariat Support Staff		
Achache , Jose	GEO Secretariat (Director)	jachache@geosec.org
Cripe , Douglas	GEO Secretariat	dcripe@geosec.org
Massacand , Alexia	GEO Secretariat	amassacand@geosec.org
Rum , Giovanni	GEO Secretariat	grum@geosec.org
Saloojee , Imraan	GEO Secretariat	isaloojee@geosec.org