



GROUP ON
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO-VI

17-18 November 2009

Report of the User Interface Committee

Document 18

for information

Report of the User Interface Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The User Interface Committee (UIC) has been working throughout the past year through a variety of paths to improve user engagement, document user needs, support user-oriented applications of Earth observations, provide user-based feedback on GEOSS, improve collaboration with Committees, deliver Work Plan content, improve internal committee organization and productivity, and expand communication throughout all aspects of GEO. Our focus remains on user engagement and increasing participation in targeted regions.

The UIC embraces significant activity; indeed, with more activities than volunteers at present, we welcome new members.

User engagement needs improvement within the GEO Tasks. The UIC has conducted an analysis of the role of the UIC in GEO Tasks and has developed a proactive strategy to improve the user engagement role.

In the spirit of improving information sharing and information flow, the UIC recommends that its Co-Chairs work with the appropriate ExCom and/or C4 representatives to determine the best method for discussing Committee topics that might require some level of response from the ExCom.

We thank the ADC, CBC and STC for their active engagements with the UIC.

We welcome the IGOS Theme teams to GEO. We recognize that they have produced a significant body of science that needs to become part of GEOSS and be accessible through the GCI, the Best Practices Wiki and the GEO web site. The GEO-IGOS symposium to be held on the 19th of November, 2009, is an important milestone in this process.

We are pleased to report that the UIC has made significant progress in GEO Task US-09-01a to identify Earth observation priorities common to many of the Societal Benefit Areas. The UIC thanks the Plenary for their support in identifying documents and volunteering participants to be part of the SBA Advisory Groups. We request the Plenary to read the SBA reports when we deliver them in the coming months; we expect to deliver the complete results at the GEO-VII Plenary.

In cooperation with the CBC, we want to notify the Plenary that the new due date for the Call for Proposals on “Earth Observations for Decision Support” is 15-January 2010. Teams may submit proposals directly to the Full proposal stage. We request that the Plenary notify Members of this opportunity. We request that the Plenary seek volunteers to be reviewers for the full proposals and to be Advisors to project teams.

We request that the Plenary continue to support the Communities of Practice and IGOS Theme Teams by volunteering new participants to these groups and identifying in-kind contributions to their work plans.

We request that the Plenary support the new UIC efforts to develop and populate the databases on user types, user applications and user requirements, as well as the Best Practices Wiki, in each of the SBAs, by designating points-of-contact that can bring their “user” experiences into this work.

1 MEMBERSHIP

Co-Chairs: EC, France, Germany, IEEE, India, United States

Member Countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, EC, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA

Participating Organizations: CEOS, EEA, ESA, ESIP, EUMETSAT, ECMWF, FDSN, IEEE, GOFC-GOLD, GOOS, GTOS, IAG, IGACO, IGOS-Coastal Theme, IGOS-Cryosphere, IGOS-Natural Hazards, IGOS-Water Cycle, INCOS, ISPRS, POGO, UNEP, UNITAR, UNOOSA, WMO

2 USER INTERFACE COMMITTEE’S MAIN OBJECTIVES, APPROACHES AND FUNCTIONS

2.1 Objectives:

To engage users in the 9 Societal Benefit Areas in the development, implementation and use of a sustainable GEOSS that provides the data and information required by user groups at national, regional and global scales

To address cross-cutting issues; to promote and facilitate the communities of practice (CoPs), ensuring added value to existing activities

To oversee and manage the following Tasks and Sub-Tasks:

USER ENGAGEMENT	US-09-01: User Engagement	US-09-01a: Identifying Synergies between Societal Benefit Areas
		US-09-01b: Communities of Practice and Partnership Development
	US-09-02: Socio-Economic Indicators	US-09-02a: Socio-Economic Benefits of GEO and GEOSS
		US-09-02b: Socio-economic and Demographic Global Data
		US-09-02c: Global Road and Human Settlements Mapping on GEO Grid
	US-09-03: Cross-Cutting Products and Services	US-09-03a: Development of Global Map for GEOSS Societal Benefit Areas
		US-09-03c: Global Soil Data
		US-09-03d: Global Phenology Data

2.2 UIC Approach and Functions as updated through the 2009 UIC Activity Planning Process:

Make recommendations to the GEO Plenary to improve the delivery of user needs from a “user-centric” perspective;

Work with CoPs, the IGOS Theme teams and willing organizations to identify existing inventories of major user requirements and gaps to be filled;

Conduct a process to identify, document and prioritize Earth observations common to many SBAs and review and update them periodically;

Coordinate GEO WP Tasks assigned to UIC;

Conduct User Engagement activities;

Work with the Architecture and Data Committee on User Testing of the GEO Portals through ongoing GCI Useability Testing that was started in Stresa in 2009;

Work with the Capacity Building Committee on a Call for Proposals;

Provide user engagement support to Tasks throughout GEO; and

Improve committee participation by colleagues in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and South America.

3 MAIN MESSAGES, 2009

The UIC has been working throughout the past year through a variety of paths to provide feedback on collaboration, user engagement, Work Plan content, and communication throughout all aspects of GEO. Our focus remains on user engagement and increasing participation in targeted regions.

The UIC has an organized, structured approach to address the significant user engagement opportunities and expectations within GEO. The UIC has been making steady progress and has made substantial strides this past year in its activities and organization.

The UIC embraces significant activity; it has more activities than it has volunteers at present.

User engagement needs improvement within the GEO tasks and the UIC has conducted an analysis of the role of the UIC in GEO Tasks and has developed a proactive strategy to improve the User engagement role;

In the spirit of improving information sharing and information flow, the UIC recommends that its Co-Chairs work with the appropriate ExCom and/or C4 representatives to determine the best method for discussing Committee topics that might require some level of response from the ExCom.

4 MAIN 2009 ACTIVITIES

Continue to encourage the establishment of new Communities of Practice and provide periodic oversight of their progress. Rewrite and update the GEO Information Document on the Communities of Practice to provide clear guidance for groups wishing to create a GEO CoP.

Continue to engage the IGOS Theme Teams, highlight their work in the UIC and utilize their workshops as opportunities for user engagement.

Provide review, discussion among members and oversight of the progress for the Work Plan Tasks assigned to the UIC.

Provide a user perspective for the GEOSS Common Infrastructure by continued active participation in the follow-on work of the IOC Task Force.

Build upon a flourishing partnership with the Capacity Building Committee to jointly identify user needs and capacity building opportunities.

Continue the partnership with the ADC through active participation in the Architectural Implementation Pilots.

Perform an ongoing self-assessment of the UIC and its progress through monitoring and evaluation of Activity Plan.

Initiate a Call for Proposals with CBC “Earth Observations for Decision Support” to promote practical applications of Earth observations to improve decision making and provide societal benefit.

Identify Earth observation priorities in each of the Societal Benefit Areas and prioritites common to many.

4.1 Report on Significant 2009 Activities:

A) UIC GEO-Task Sheet Analysis –

The GEO User Interface Committee conducted an analysis of user engagement in the GEO Work Plan Task sheets and delivered an 18-page report in August 2009. The UIC performed this analysis to assess user-engagement activities in all 114 Task sheets and to identify opportunities for UIC support to Task teams. The analysis showed that 51% of the Task sheets had strong or fairly-substantive statements about user engagement; 49% had insufficient statements (dozens left the *User Engagement* section of the Task sheet blank). The analysis found a general need to improve the user-engagement activities in many Tasks. The analysis identified 20 Tasks of strong interest to the UIC in which the UIC is not currently involved. The UIC report included 5 findings and 5 recommendations, including specific ideas for support to Task teams to assist with user engagement. The UIC discussed these recommendations at the September 2009 meeting.

B) GEO US-09-01a Analysis –

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the IEEE, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) are leading the GEO effort on identifying critical **Earth observations priorities common to many Societal Benefit Areas**. This activity (Task US-09-01a) involves (i) Identifying existing publicly-available documents, published by GEO Members and Participating Organizations from 2000-present, that specify observation needs, (ii) Performing a meta-analysis across the documents, and (iii) Preparing interim and final reports. The Task Team held a kick-off meeting in October 2008, and the GEO Secretariat issued a letter requesting input from the GEO community in January 2009. The Task Team identified analysts for the nine SBAs, held an Analysts meeting in February 2009, and is holding monthly teleconferences. Each Analyst formed an *ad hoc* Advisory Group of subject-matters experts (including CoP members) to help identify documents, assess findings, and review reports. Across all the SBAs, the task involved 121 people in the Advisory Groups, and the Analysts examined over 670 documents.

Earth Observation Priorities (Task US-09-01a)		
Documents Reviewed & ad hoc Advisory Groups Members, by SBA		
<i>(figures as of 4-August-2009)</i>		
GEO Societal Benefit Area	Advisory Group Members	Documents in Meta-Analysis
Agriculture	11	15
Biodiversity	8	55
Climate	7	35
Disasters	13	40
Energy	14	53
Ecosystems	11	71
Human Health: Aeroallergens	16	117
Human Health: Air Quality	10	35
Human Health: Infectious Disease	17	165
Water	9	56
Weather	5	34
Total	121	676

Analysts have completed Final reports for five SBAs: Climate, Disasters Ecosystems, Energy, and Weather. Analysts have completed Preliminary reports for four SBAs: Agriculture, Biodiversity, Health, Water. The Task Team established a website (<http://sbageotask.larc.nasa.gov>) to support the

management of this Task and report results. Analysts and Advisory Group members originate from various GEO Members and Participating Organizations, including Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Paraguay, Russia, United States, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia, CEOS, DIVERSITAS, ECMWF, ESA, FAO, GCOS, IEEE, UNESCO, WMO, and others.

In 2010, the UIC Task Team will analyze and synthesize information across the reports from the 9 SBAs. The UIC will synthesize the information to identify the observation priorities common to many SBAs. The UIC expects to complete an over-arching report in mid-2010 and convey the results to the GEO Community for GEO-VII.

C) GEO Call for Proposals-

GEO issued a Call for Proposals (CFP) in February 2009 inviting organizations to propose or participate in projects that apply Earth observations to decision-support activities. The Capacity Building Committee and User Interface Committee are co-managing this CFP together with GEO Secretariat experts. This CFP seeks to promote **practical applications of Earth observations** for improved decision making and to highlight specific examples of how Earth observations can benefit society. The CFP focuses on projects in four societal benefit areas – Agriculture, Energy, Health and Water. GEO received 133 Concept proposals in June 2009. CBC-UIC representatives and GEO Secretariat experts organized panels to review of the proposals, providing feedback to proposal teams in September. Full proposals are due in January 2010; the final selections will be announced in 2010. The UIC and CBC have involved the relevant Communities of Practice in the review. Consistent with the sub-Task “Resource Mobilization” (CB-09-01), the GEO Committees will broker connections between project teams and resource providing organizations. These projects clearly represent activities that will occur because of GEO.

D) The UIC developed and now maintains an activity plan that more closely aligns UIC work with current and existing Work Plan tasks and other GEO initiatives, as well as acting as a management tool for the UIC as a whole. This document is for internal UIC use, is managed by UIC members, and is updated and discussed at each meeting.

5 UIC ISSUES FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE GEO-VI PLENARY MEETING

Recognize the significant progress that the UIC has made in the last year.

Thank the ADC, CBC and STC for their active engagement of the UIC.

Welcome the IGOS Theme teams to GEO. Recognize that they have produced a significant body of science that needs to become part of GEOSS and be accessible through the GCI, the Best Practices Wiki and the GEOSS web site. The GEO-IGOS symposium to be held on the 19th of November, 2009, is an important milestone in this process.

Thank the Plenary for its overwhelming support for advertising the Call for Proposals “Earth Observations for Decision Support.” Request that the Plenary seek volunteer participants to be reviewers for the full proposals and Advisors to project teams. Notify the Plenary that the new due date for full proposals is 15 January 2010. Request that the Plenary notify Members of the new due date and that teams can submit proposals directly to the Full Proposal Stage.

Continue to support the Communities of Practice and IGOS Theme Teams by volunteering new participants to these groups and identifying in-kind contributions to their work plans.

Support the new UIC efforts to develop and populate the databases on user types, user applications and user requirements, as well as the Best Practices Wiki, in each of the SBAs by designating points-of-contact that can bring their “user” experiences into this work.

Request volunteers to participate in the UIC to accomplish the numerous priority activities and user engagement opportunities in the UIC Activity Plan.

6 REPORTS ON MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST PLENARY

Detailed minutes are available on the UIC GEO website for the three UIC meetings in 2009. The following notes summarize the objectives and outcomes.

6.1 10th UIC meeting: Sophia Antipolis, February 26-27, 2009

Objectives:

- Review UIC Committee efforts on major GEO activities the UIC is responsible for & make adjustments, if necessary;
- Discuss and initiate development of a GEO UIC 2009-2010 activities plan;
- Review UIC involvement in ADC Architecture Implementation Pilot (AIP) Scenarios and make any adjustments/recommendations, if necessary;
- Review UIC/CBC Call for Proposals and UIC member support;
- Discuss GEO Work Plan, especially for user engagement activities and current or possible UIC involvement;
- Review user assessment of GEO Portals & make necessary decisions;
- Discuss GEO UIC membership, including geographic breadth, goals for broader involvement, and targets for increased membership.

Outcomes:

- The draft activity plan was presented and UIC members decided to respond with comments;
- The status of task US-09-01a was presented and the revised schedule was agreed;
- UIC members agreed to support specific activities in UIC/CBC CFP, including advertising;
- Identifying experts and advisors, and working with resource-providing organizations;
- It was decided to ask UIC members to take specific assessment steps for the GEOSS portal and to participate in test rounds during the Stresa meeting;
- UIC members decided to develop a set of User Types;
- UIC members decided to conduct an analysis of all GEO Work Plan Tasks for the user engagement aspects and activities.

6.2 11th UIC meeting: Stresa, May 2 and 9, 2009

Objectives:

- Confirm the UIC 2009-2010 Activity Plan;
- Develop an initial catalog of UIC Member assignments for Activity Plan activities;
- Review progress on UIC-led Tasks;
- Discuss joint efforts with other GEO Committees;
- Review and finalize UIC events for ISRSE week;
- Identify specific UIC deliverables for 2009 Plenary and 2010 Ministerial Summit;
- Determine way forward for UIC's approach to US-09-01b & Communities of Practice.

Other UIC objectives for the week of the ISRSE Symposium:

- Identify new potential members for the UIC;
- Deliver individuals comments on the GCI Portal from user perspectives;
- Advertise and inform the ISRSE community about the Call for Proposals.

Outcomes:

- Collaboration between the UIC and ADC is very important to bring a user perspective to ADC's work. The two committees should hold further joint meetings;
- A glossary of terms would be useful. This relates to the broader issue that the AIP outputs are focused on the IT community, yet their value goes beyond the IT community. The ADC needs to scope or reformat their outputs to make them more broadly available;
- YouTube might be a useful vehicle for outreach to communities the ADC does not normally connect with;
- A cookbook would be helpful for users of the GEO Website and portals;
- Updating the tactical guidance document for those inserting components into the GEOSS registries is an ADC priority to build the system's content;
- The results of the GEO portal usability survey provide valuable input to the ADC. The ADC will take them up as soon as the UIC provides the survey results;
- The ADC should actively encourage responses to the CFP, get back to the UIC by the end of May regarding ADC proposal reviewers in the nine SBAs, and provide support with respect to the advisors and infrastructure to help this effort move forward. In their own agencies, ADC members can think of the CFP as a compendium of proposals that we could draw on for funding—i.e., as guidance material for accessing their organizations own resources;
- The UIC seeks ADC involvement in analyzing user types;
- For AIP-2, the UIC should promote testing, working with Nadine to determine opportunities for collaboration. For AIP-3, the UIC should be involved from the beginning;
- The UIC should consider how to better use the CoPs to reinforce ADC activities and encourage CoP involvement in the ADC's work;
- The UIC identified 42 people who expressed interest in becoming engaged with UIC activities and UIC members.

6.3 12th UIC meeting: Melbourne, September 15 and 16, 2009.

Objectives:

- Increase participation within this region;
- Increase awareness of UIC activities across all GEO committees;
- Prepare for the upcoming GEO Plenary in Washington, DC;
- Explore strategic ideas for next year's Ministerial;
- Provide for discussion forums for UIC Activity Plan elements;
- Review progress on UIC-led tasks in the GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan.

Outcomes:

- Development of GEO-VI report, presentation and final presenter assignment;
- Evaluation of the Carbon Community of Practice (CoP) within the context of the scope of the Forest CoP;
- Assessment of completed activity plan elements and update of other elements;
- Discussion of and input to the GEO Secretariat review;
- Identification of UIC contributions for presentation at the 2010 Ministerial;
- Update on the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group and discussion of the role of the UIC in future activities.

In addition, the Co-Chairs Committee held several telecons to review ongoing progress and plan upcoming agendas.