

IIASA is a long-standing and active member of GEO. For those of you who do not know IIASA, it is a global think tank based just outside of Vienna. It was founded in 1972 to promote East-West scientific cooperation during the Cold War and has evolved today to address global challenges of the 21st century.

IIASA has been contributing to the activities of GEO from its inception. We first assessed the added value and the socio-economic benefits of GEOSS as part of an EU funded framework project including what benefits better global Earth Observation will bring for society. More recently, IIASA has been contributing to GEOSS with applications in the field of land cover classification and validation tools as well as improved cropland data for the activities under the flagship GEOGLAM initiative. Since 2009, IIASA has engaged in citizen science and the development of crowdsourcing tools, both for visual interpretation of satellite imagery as well as mobile apps for in-situ based data collection in the field of environmental monitoring. We have recently had success in the development of serious games for classification of imagery, an approach that holds great promise for engaging citizens while providing a plethora of new cal/val data.

IIASA fully supports GEO and welcomes the recent activities and new tasks that are being established in the field of citizen science and citizen-based environmental monitoring. Moreover, IIASA welcomes the efforts of GEO to improve monitoring in developing countries and to make data and information more openly accessible. In particular, IIASA sees GEO as having a very important role in monitoring the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Earth Observation, both through satellite technologies as well as mobile technologies on the ground, can clearly contribute to monitoring progress towards the SDGs. We look forward to continue working with GEO and its members across multiple societal benefit areas.