



GEO News (Issue #4, 21 July 2009)

BUILDING GEOSS

Japan and the US launch ASTER GDEM

From the beginning, GEO has encouraged the development of a comprehensive, highly accurate, fully consistent, and freely available global Digital Elevation Model (GDEM). Japan and the US have responded to this critical need by collaborating through Work Plan [Task DA-09-03d](#) to build the ASTER GDEM. This new digital topographical map was formally launched on 29 June. [More...](#)

Data Sharing Task Force prepares for 2010 Ministerial

The November 2007 Cape Town Declaration called on GEO to reach a consensus at its 2010 Ministerial Summit on the practical steps for implementing the GEO Data Sharing Principles. To advance towards this goal, the GEO Data Sharing Task Team produced draft guidelines on how to implement the principles. The Task Team has thus concluded its mandate, and the GEO Data Sharing Task Force has now been established to take this issue forward. [More...](#)

Thailand hosts 2nd GEO Forest Monitoring Symposium

The 2nd GEO Forest Monitoring Symposium, held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, from 1 to 3 July, focused on making further progress towards a GEOSS Forest Monitoring System. Building on the achievements of the 1st Symposium, held last November in Brazil, the Chiang Rai Symposium explored how to meet the operational needs of the full range of users dealing with forests and forest-related issues. [More...](#)

Becoming a GEONETCast User

GEONETCast is a global, near-real-time, environmental data dissemination system in support of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). It uses commercial telecommunication satellites to broadcast data and products to a wide User community.

GEONETCast is particularly useful for distributing operational or project data

where a large number of users can benefit and/or where Internet access has low bandwidth or is non-existent. [More...](#)

Users assess the GEO Portals

In June 2008, GEO launched a one-year assessment of the GEO Portals. Last May, while the world's remote sensing community was meeting on the shores of Italy's Lake Maggiore for the 33rd International Symposium of the Remote Sensing of the Environment (ISRSE-33), GEO's User Interface Committee (UIC) conducted an invaluable user assessment of the Portals. [More...](#)

How UN-SPIDER supports disaster management

The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response ([UN-SPIDER](#)), which is a program of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs ([UNOOSA](#)), is a major contributor to GEO Tasks on disasters and capacity building. [More...](#)

GEO UPDATE

Malta and Guinea join GEO

The Governments of Malta and the Republic of Guinea joined the Group on Earth Observations on 29 May. The total number of GEO Members is now 80 (79 governments plus the European Commission). A complete list of [GEO Members](#) and [Participating Organizations](#) can be found on the GEO Website.

Announcing the GEO Carbon Community of Practice

The GEO Carbon Community of Practice has been established as an open user group of scientists, program managers, funding agencies and policy makers with an interest in observing and understanding the global carbon cycle. [More...](#)

GEO Co-Chair from EC departs ...

After standing as the GEO Co-Chair from the European Commission (EC) for nearly three-and-a-half years, Mr Zoran Stančič has announced his pending departure from GEO. Addressing the June meeting of the Executive Committee, he explained that EC staff mobility rules now required him to transfer to another senior position within the Commission. With effect from 1 September 2009, Mr. Stančič will become a Deputy Director-General in the Information and Media Society Directorate General. On behalf of the GEO community, we would like to thank Mr Stančič for his important and energetic contribution to GEO.

... and new Co-Chair from the US arrives

Following the departure of VADM Conrad Lautenbacher last year, Ms Shere Abbot has joined the GEO process as the new GEO Co-Chair from the US. As Associate Director, Energy and Environment at the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and an expert on sustainable growth, Ms Abbot advises the White House on technology that relates to energy and the environment. She also focuses on the three-pronged challenge of climate change, sustainable development and the need to foster new and cleaner sources of energy. The OSTP advises the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the effects of science and technology on domestic and international affairs. We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to Ms Abbot.

Greek GEO hosts sub-regional meeting

[Greek GEO](#) and the [GEO Secretariat](#) organized the GEO South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Mediterranean Symposium on Earth Observation Services for Monitoring the Environment and Protecting the General Public on 8-10 June in Athens. The event was attended by participants from Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, Lebanon, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey, as well as by speakers from the European Environment Agency and the European Space Agency. [More...](#)

Executive Committee reviews progress

The GEO Executive Committee, including the new representatives from Belize, France and the Republic of Korea, met in Geneva on 1-2 June. The Committee heard reports from, and gave guidance to, the various GEO ad hoc bodies; considered how best to strengthen the GEO Trust Fund; and started to prepare November's GEO-VI Plenary meeting in Washington DC. [More...](#)

GEO BON holds first Steering Committee meeting

Building on the work of its Interim Steering Committee, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) has now established a Steering Committee. The new Committee met in Geneva on 22-23 June to chart the way forward over the coming year. [More...](#)

Next steps for Work Plan update

The three-year GEO Work Plan is updated every year by the Plenary. Initiating the process for the annual update, the Secretariat invited technical comments by 8 July 2009 on version Rev1.1 of the 2009-2011 Work Plan. [More...](#)

Secretariat readies Work Plan Information Management System

The GEO Secretariat is developing an interactive Work Plan Information Management System that the GEO community will soon be able to access on-line. This new web-based system will allow contributors to Tasks to access, exchange and report information relating to the GEO Work Plan. In this way, it will support Task implementation and promote the flow of information both within and between Task teams. It will also allow users to generate reports by, for example, searching across all of the Task sheets to collate information on a particular organization, country or theme.

THE SECRETARIAT

New staff assignments

With the departures of Yong-Seong Kang (expert from Korea) and Sebastian Miazza (contractor), and the return of Douglas Muchoney (expert from the US), several staff assignments have been adjusted. Giovanni Rum will now support the forest carbon task, thanks to a special contribution from Norway. Douglas Muchoney is responsible for Biodiversity, Masami Onoda for Health, and Koki Iwao for Weather. Fernando Ramos and Michael Williams have joined Imraan Saloojee in supporting the Capacity Building Committee. Koki Iwao will join Rob Koopman to support the GCI-IOC Task force, replacing Fernando Ramos.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Earthzine offers news and features on GEO

[Earthzine](#) is a searchable, online environmental journal that features articles on Earth observation linked thematically to the nine societal benefit areas of GEOSS. Sponsored by GEO Member ICEO (IEEE Committee on Earth Observation), it frequently publishes GEO news and has been designated a GEO subtask to build capacity for non-technical decision-makers in the use and impact of Earth observation. The current issue features an account of GEO's impact on end users in [From Satellites to Solar Walls: A Look at GEO Energy](#). A subscription to Earthzine is FREE. Just click the Free Subscription button on www.earthzine.org.

Canada launches survey on SAR & agricultural monitoring

Canadian GEO is inviting the GEO community to participate in a "Survey on SAR to Support Agricultural Monitoring". The Survey aims to capture user

views on the use of SAR for agricultural applications. The results will contribute to a better understanding of user requirements and help to inform international providers of SAR data about the requirements for agricultural monitoring. For more information, see the Canadian GEO website at www.cgeo.gc.ca.

QA4EO workshop to review EO quality assurance strategy

The entire GEO community is invited to the QA4EO Workshop to be held in Antalya, Turkey from 29 September to 1 October. The workshop will focus on the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework for GEOSS that is the result of a GEO work plan activity being led by the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS). The workshop will focus on the practical implementation of these guidelines in all GEO Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs). For more information, please visit the [workshop pages](#) and the introductory [guides and documents](#) for the Framework.

Optical Land-Surface Imagers to be compared

The Infrared, Visible and Optical Sensors (IVOS) subgroup of the CEOS Working Group on Calibration and Validation (WGCV) will carry out a set of linked international comparisons of radiance measurements by satellites over reference target areas. The main target area will be Tuz-Golu, a lake bed in southern Turkey, which will also be characterized on the ground and from aircraft during the week from 23 to 28 August. This activity will confirm with the new Framework for Quality Assurance for Earth Observation (QA4EO). Operators of optical land-surface imagers that are interested in participating should send an email to the IVOS contact at nigel.fox@npl.co.uk.

SAFARI Symposium on Remote Sensing and Fisheries

The SAFARI initiative (Societal Applications in Fisheries and Aquaculture using Remote Sensing) is organising an international symposium on Remote Sensing and Fisheries to be held in Kochi, India from 15-17 February 2010. The symposium will address the operational use of remote sensing for fish harvesting; ecosystem indicators to assess fish health, growth and recruitment; the implications of climate change; and other themes. For further information please visit www.geosafari.org/kochi.

IUGG announces 2011 General Assembly

The International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) will hold its next General Assembly from 27 June - 8 July 2011 in Melbourne, Australia. The conference will address major scientific issues of global and regional significance and concern, including recent natural disasters and extreme

weather events. For more information, see www.iugg2011.com.

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