

Terms of Reference
For the
GEO Working Group on Global Land Cover for Africa
Technical Advisory Group
Version 1.5 (12, December, 2014)

Background: An important outcome of the International Symposium on Land Cover Mapping for the African Continent, which convened in Nairobi, Kenya in June 2013, was the commitment to establish a Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Working Group on Global Land Cover for Africa. In November 2013 along the sides of the Africa GIS/GSDI 14 conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, an interim Executive Board and a Technical Advisory Group for the Working Group were established. The members of the Executive Board and the Technical Advisory Group are composed of experts representing the different sub-regions of Africa and International partners.

Purpose: Is to contribute to the development of a land cover data program which includes monitoring land cover change for Africa at medium and high resolution for the African element of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (AfriGEOSS). This can be established by building mutually beneficial partnerships with national and regional institutions to assess their land cover needs, including products, while increasing their involvement in the Global Land Cover Dataset.

Objectives of the Technical Advisory Group:

- 1) Evaluate the development of medium and high resolution land cover products for Africa, including the standardization of the process and the validation of the final products;
- 2) Complement the priorities of the Global Land Cover task as related to the needs for Africa;
- 3) Encourage full participation of partners in the Land Cover inventory for Africa;
- 4) Support capacity building activities within the different regions of Africa;
- 5) Assess the use and applications of land cover data products for Africa;
- 6) Advocate for full and open access to datasets, including Earth observation satellite imagery and completed land cover datasets;
- 7) Provide guidance and support to the Executive Board to establish an Africa- focused Community of Practice for Land Use and Land Cover to facilitate networking between scientists and technicians.
- 8) Provide the Executive Board with technical support on other related issues as appropriate.

Membership: Will include at least two members from each of the six AfriGEOSS sub-regions of Africa, nominated by the Executive Board. International partners who are contributing to land cover mapping in Africa may be members, but their membership must be approved by the Executive Board.

Management: Will be composed of two co-chairs, one of which will be from Africa and the other can be from international partners. They will serve for a one year period and be elected by the Executive Board. The co-chairs will serve as TAG representatives to the Executive Board during their terms of office.

Meetings and Communication Approach: Due to the large geographic distance between many of the members of the Working Group, the approach to keep active and enhance communication will be a challenge. Therefore the Technical Advisory Group will endeavor to utilize the internet and teleconferences to conduct meetings, with a goal to have quarterly teleconferences and monthly updates through emails to all interested parties. Face to face meetings will be held at events, such as conferences, where many of the participants may be gathered and preferably back to back with Executive Board meetings.