

Report from the Programme Board

1st GEO Programme Board Meeting

**2-3 February 2016, GEO Secretariat
Draft Summary Report**

*Note: all presentations referenced in the report may be consulted at:
http://www.earthobservations.org/geo_pb.php?smid=200*

1 WELCOME AND OPENING

The meeting was opened and initially chaired by Douglas Cripe (GEO Secretariat).

Rudolph Strohmeier, GEO Co-Chair from the European Commission, then delivered his opening remarks on behalf of all four GEO Co-Chairs, in which he noted that the large number of nominations put forth for this initial one-year term Programme Board included broad regional representation and expertise. He emphasized that the task now before GEO was to show that GEO can deliver to users and demonstrate GEO's added value. At the same time, it is also critical not to lose momentum or lessons learned from the past decade of GEO's existence. He reminded the Board that the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing the GEOSS (and its accompanying documents), approved by the GEO-XII Plenary, are to serve as the reference on which the Board should base its work. The role of the Board is to be pro-active and take the lead in ensuring the overall coherence and alignment of the GEO Work Programme with GEO's Strategic Objectives and Core Functions as described in the Strategic Plan. In particular, the Executive Committee would be looking to the Board to analyze and prioritize the tasks described in the Transitional 2016 Work Programme (WP), and that activities of Foundational Tasks and Initiatives should be carefully matched with the resources available. He concluded his remarks with several concrete suggestions and expectations from the Executive Committee, before thanking the Board for having answered the call to be pioneers of this new structure and encouraging a collaborative spirit of entrepreneurship for the good of GEO. (The full text of Mr Strohmeier's remarks may be found in Appendix A.)

Barbara Ryan, GEO Secretariat Director, next reviewed expectations for the GEO Programme Board. She observed that the transition from the past decade to the future one presented a unique moment in GEO's history, where the GEO community has the chance to learn from experience and make corrections. Based on the "grand experiment" from 2005-2015, the Post 2015 and Implementation Plan Working Groups set out a framework for GEO activities for the next decade which aimed to capitalize on all the work previously accomplished. She reminded the Board that, with the new Strategic Plan, new programmatic structures and mechanisms had been put in place, and the Board was being called upon to serve as one focal point for programmatic alignment and leadership with respect GEO activities of the WP. She added that this had been the year of the Participating Organizations (POs) in GEO, which resulted in a meaningful voice through new roles on Board membership and observer seats on the Executive Committee. Further, the programmatic advisory boards of many PO institutions could perhaps serve as a model for the Board, and the tremendous coordination already being performed by POs should be leveraged to the greatest extent possible, to avoid duplication. She noted that the new Societal Benefit Area (SBA) structure moves GEO towards those thematic areas where informed decision-making is greatly needed. Thus, the challenge before the Board is to provide the systematic, rigorous analyses necessary to make meaningful evaluations of

the efforts used to build the system of systems, and ultimately deliver on the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Personal attributes of energy, intellect, engagement and commitment were critical for Board membership and optimizing its work. She concluded by observing that, as the transitional Board, this is the opportunity to get things right for next 3-year Board (2017-2019) and encouraged finding ways to promote meaningful engagement across GEO as it delivers on its Vision (see presentation: [Expectations for the GEO Programme Board](#)).

2 BOARD MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS (MEMBERS / POS)

Board members briefly introduced themselves around the table, including those who participated by WebEx.

3 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without modification. However, after the lunch break, the Secretariat suggested swapping agenda items 7 and 8 in the interest of logic flow, which was agreed by the Board.

4 OVERVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF PROGRAMME BOARD

D. Cripe reviewed the concept of the Board, as presented in the GEO Strategic Plan, as well as the Terms of Reference as outlined in the GEO Rules of Procedure, accepted by the GEO-XII Plenary (see presentation: [GEO Programme Board Terms of Reference](#)).

5 APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAMME BOARD CO-CHAIRS

D. Cripe explained the proposed voting procedure, to be held in 3 rounds by secret ballot. First the co-chair from Member candidates would be elected, then the co-chair from PO candidates, and finally the co-chair from the combined pool of remaining candidates (see presentation: [Programme Board Co-Chair candidates](#)).

The Board indicated no objection to this procedure. Each candidate was then invited to make a short speech on ideas for leading the Programme Board.

The results from the first round of voting to select a Board co-chair from among the Member pool of candidates were:

- China (Pendge Li): 6
- Columbia (Natalia Cordoba): 2
- **USA (John Matusak): 17**
- Blank: 2
- Total: 27

The results from the second round of voting to select a Board co-chair from among the PO pool of candidates were:

- CEOS (Stephen Briggs): 9
- **EEA (Tim Haigh): 12**
- OGC (Mark Reichart): 1
- POGO (Francisco Chavez): 2
- WMO (Wenjian Zjang): 3

Total: 27

The results from the third and final round of voting to select a Board co-chair from among the combined Member and PO pool of remaining candidates were:

- **China (Pengde Li): 12**
- Columbia (Natalia Cordoba): 0
- CEOS (Stephen Briggs): 10
- OGC (Mark Reichardt): 1
- POGO (Francisco Chavez): 1
- WMO (Wenjian Zhang): 3

Total: 27

The newly-elected co-chairs, USA (J. Matuszak), EEA (T. Haigh) and China (P. Li), then briefly convened with the Secretariat to discuss chairing responsibilities for the remainder of the meeting.

The co-chairs also agreed that they alone would share chairing responsibilities for all Board meetings; there will be no chairing of any Board meeting by alternates.

6 COMPLETING THE TRANSITION (CHAIR: J. MATUSZAK)

This session focused on lessons learned from GEO's 1st decade and provided a setting for "handing off" practices and recommendations to the Board, and included presentations from the Institutions and Development (IDIB), the Societal Benefits (SBIB), and Infrastructure Implementation Boards (IIB), as well as the Data Sharing Working Group (DSWG) and Data Management Principles Task Force (DMPTF).

Stuart Marsh (UK), former co-chair of the IDIB, observed that:

- A capacity building core group has been established (with CEOS) and the resource facility GEOCAB is being maintained by volunteers; the Board was encourage to keep watch on this process;
- The term 'user' has not been defined clearly enough to ensure consistent interpretation and measurement; need to develop a GEO-adopted set of definitions;
- User engagement is a 'push' function (GEO participants have to go engage with users rather than wait for the users to come); surveys are not enough, need an engagement strategy that is specific and measurable;
- Concrete process examples may help find the resources in the future; use the *GEOSS Water Cycle Implementation Plan* to go to potential funders; gather lessons; extrapolate from there;
- Science & Technology pervade the WP, yet the *S&T Roadmap* and other dedicated Tasks have had mixed results; need to establish a PB mechanism to take an overview of S&T.

(see presentation: [ID-Board: lessons learned](#))

Rifat Hossain (WHO), former co-chair of the SBIB, commented that:

- "Capacity building" is a loaded word; need to demystify and clarify what GEO means by it;
- In-kind contributions can only take GEO so far; need for dedicated funding to properly resource GEO globally;
- There is a considerable "built-in" user community contained in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring framework process; need to engage with the SDG users network to the fullest extent possible with engagement strategy, perhaps through similar process as has been done for the Water SBA and SDG indicators;

- The case for Earth observations has been made for SDG monitoring, but what is the case for GEO? Need an advocacy document detailing the added-value of GEO;
- Data discoverability and accessibility are not enough; data needs to be actually used, in order to truly benefit society;
- GEO has to elevate itself from its scientific community to a policy body; the Programme Board is best mechanism to drive this process.

Max Craglia (EC), former co-chair of the IIB, summarized that:

- Developing and maintaining a Global Earth Observations System of Systems (GEOSS) relying on voluntary best-effort and in-kind resources is a formidable challenge because of the cultural and disciplinary diversity in the GEO community, rapid technological change, and organisational practices and investments that are autonomous and moving at different speeds; making the GEOSS infrastructure more relevant by closing the gap between policy and scientific demand of GEO Initiatives, Flagships and global initiatives such as the SDGs and the supply of data and services through GEOSS is most urgent need;
- Sustained operations of the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI) should be seen as a public good; need to promote GEOSS architecture principles of openness, effectiveness, flexibility, sustainability, and reliability as basis for the evolution of the GCI, and interoperability with other initiatives at the global and regional level;
- The links between GCI development and user needs via selected GEO Initiatives or Flagships should be coordinated/organized, and the links to data sharing and data management likewise; the role of the Program Board in relation to the execution of the WP, and of the operations and evolution of the GCI is critical.

(see presentation: [IN-Board: lessons learned](#))

Simon Hodson (CODATA), on behalf of the DSWG, delivered the following messages:

- Data sharing implementation goes very much hand in hand with the development of the GEOSS infrastructure and the work conducted within each of the SBAs; coordination between GEO Tasks needs to be rethought/improved;
- The GEOSS Data Collection of Open Resources for Everyone (Data-CORE) concept has the potential to be one of the key success stories of GEOSS, distinguishing it from any other web-based infrastructure; however:
 - Too many members of the GEOSS community of users are not yet aware of / not yet using available GEOSS Data-CORE datasets;
 - Some thematic areas still poorly represented amongst the GEOSS Data-CORE;
 - Spatial extent and temporal resolution of available GEOSS Data-Core datasets often do not fit users' needs;
 - Need to collect usage metrics for GEOSS Data-CORE.
- It is essential to improve visibility and access by the whole GEO community to the produced guidelines and to promote best practices.

(see presentation: [GEOSS Data Sharing: Achievements, lessons learned and way forward](#))

D. Halpern (COSPAR), co-chair of the DMPTF, and Siri-Jodha Khalsa (IEEE) noted that:

- The proposed Data Management Principles (DMP) Implementation Guidelines (IGs) (presented to GEO-XII Plenary), provide direction for the science community to improve the stewardship of Earth science data;
- However, clarity was called for with respect to the IGs, such as description and guidance of each guideline (with examples), application timelines (existing repositories versus new ones), resources implications for implementing each principle, and suggested metrics measuring adherence to each principle;
- The IGs should remain an “open document” and should reference ongoing work to bridge geospatial (e.g. Open Geospatial Consortium - OGC) and W3C (linked data) worlds;
- Issues such as license recommendations, how to become a part of the GEOSS Data-CORE, and data served from various sources with differing data management policies, need to be dealt with.

(see presentation: [The GEOSS Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines](#))

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION 2016-2025 (CHAIR: P. LI)

(Note: this item was presented *after* agenda item 8 below.)

Giovanni Rum (GEO Secretariat) presented lessons learned with regard to monitoring and evaluation processes from the GEO’s first decade, and provided an overview of those activities for current and future WPs. In terms of lessons learned, he noted the former Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group (M&EWG) mentioned: evaluation process had been successful but there were too many evaluations; M&E Recruitment became difficult over time and M&E functions became too far removed from programs; GEO measurement of member activities was very difficult, reporting processes cumbersome and idiosyncratic measures of success for strong tasks became unwieldy; and the former Strategic Targets were too broad and not readily measureable. In response, he observed that the new GEO Strategic Plan called for fewer evaluations, with the Implementation Mechanisms outlining how M&E should be performed, and the Core Functions with 37 indicators defined in the GEO Strategic Plan Reference Document. He clarified that an annual **Progress Report** will be compiled by the GEO Secretariat on all activities, based on the inputs received from all Community Activities, Initiatives and Flagships, and on the Secretariat-prepared report on Foundational Tasks. The annual **Evaluation Report** will be developed by the Programme Board, using the information contained in the Progress Report and the value of the indicators (see presentation: [Monitoring & Evaluation 2016-2025](#)).

8 GEO STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2025: IMPLEMENTING GEOSS (CHAIR: P. LI)

In order to achieve a common understanding, D. Cripe reviewed highlights of the GEO Strategic Plan, such as the Strategic Objectives and Core Functions, and then outlined each of the Implementation Mechanisms (IMs) – Community Activities (CAs), GEO Initiatives (GIs), GEO Flagships (GFs), and Foundational Tasks (FTs) - based on their descriptions in both the Strategic Plan and the accompanying Reference Document. He emphasized that the different IMs do not represent a hierarchy of importance, but rather a function of degree along several dimensions, including: committed resources, user involvement, partner types, management style, scope and maturity. To illustrate the individual roles they play, he likened the various IMs to various types of cumulus clouds: CAs are like summer cumulus, small and individual, mostly having an impact by changing the Earth’s reflectance (albedo); GIs are like towering cumulus (cumulus congestus) which show a greater degree of coherence and consolidation as they draw on steady supplies of atmospheric heat and moisture, and begin to have an impact on surrounding atmospheric dynamics; and finally GFs are like the fully mature cumulonimbus which not only allows maximal redistribution of atmospheric convective

available potential energy (CAPE) to stabilize the atmosphere, but also provides services in the form of precipitation and electrical discharges. In all cases, the FTs are like the underlying surface of the Earth in that it provides the turbulent fluxes of latent and sensible heat necessary to initiate and support the convective processes. Finally, he reviewed the path for WP development, which includes the Initiation, Consolidation and Acceptance phases (details are contained in the Strategic Plan Reference Document). Finally, when the WP is presented to Plenary for acceptance, GEO takes note that the CA, GI and GF activities are expected to be implemented with the corresponding indicative resources. Plenary further accepts that the FTs should be implemented with the resources indicated (see presentation: [GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS - Achieving a common understanding](#)).

9 THE TRANSITIONAL 2016 WORK PROGRAMME (CHAIR: P. LI)

G. Rum provided an overview of the Transitional 2016 WP, including its history, development, structure, Secretariat interface, and development and update cycle. He noted that the WP had been developed through a process involving the GEO community and Governance to implement the provisions of the new Strategic Plan, which included GEO Core Functions for dictating the definition of the activities to be included and their description, and a strengthened role for the Secretariat. On this latter point, he observed that the Secretariat role would be twofold: to ensure the coordination among the different teams in charge of the Foundational Tasks, and to provide a clear point of reference for the other GEO activities (Flagships, Initiatives, and Community Activities). Management arrangement from the Secretariat standpoint included shared information with clear duties and responsibilities for each member of the Secretariat staff; a master bar chart, showing: key milestones for each FT and GI; functional and temporal interactions among different activities; and finally constant interaction of Secretariat experts with “external” teams. He observed that several support tools were under development, such as an update of the GEO website to allow easy access to WP activities; a “GEO Documents Management System”, which includes external access to GEO documents produced by the different activities; an on-line “GEO Work Programme Reference Document” to contain detailed information of all IMs of the WP; and a “working space” for each FT which would allow task teams to work and share information, plans and documents. He concluded with a proposed timeline for regular WP updates on a twice-per-year basis; in December (immediately following Plenary), and in June (following the WP Symposium) to acknowledge the advent of new CAs, and allow for adjustments in the budgets of FTs, as needed (see presentation: [The GEO 2016 Work Programme](#)).

10 PREPARATION OF THE 2017-2019 WORK PROGRAMME (CHAIR: T. HAIGH)

Main points of the discussion (see presentation: [Programme Board Results - day 1](#)):

- There was general acceptance of the Implementation Mechanisms (IMs) as presented in the Strategic Plan and Reference document. However:
 - Criteria for distinctions among IMs need confirmation and, for Initiatives and Flagships, the criteria need to be reflected in the Implementation Plans (IPs) and reporting requirements;
 - IPs should address items such as measureable, meaningful performance indicators (building on those already included with the Core Functions); partnership with users; capacity building; branding; resourcing risks/shortcomings; and expected impacts;
 - Flagship IPs in particular need to reference a policy mandate;
 - All terminology should be clearly defined.
- A process for recommending Initiatives to become Flagships needs to be developed;

- Although the Terms of Reference do not explicitly call for the Board monitoring of CA progress, it was suggested that Board members choose a CA to “mentor”, on a voluntary basis;
- Issues that are transversal to the WP such as S&T, quality (broadly defined), and links with SDGs should be addressed;
- A feedback loop with the GEO community for process improvement and increased engagement needs to be established.

To examine these issues in more detail, several subgroups were formed:

Subgroup 1 - Consolidate the Table of Contents of the Implementation Plan that each candidate GEO Initiative and GEO Flagship should provide and produce a set of guidelines addressing their compilation and the criteria that the Board will use for its assessment. (Note: criteria are defined in the Strategic Plan Reference Document, chapter 2, pages 10-15 and table on page 24.)

Lead: IUGG (M. Sideris)/ Egypt (A. El-Dessouki Ibrahim)

Input due: 12 February

Subgroup 2 - Foundational Tasks structure review and recommendations for the 2017-2019 WP, as defined in the GEO 2016 WP v4.

Lead: POGO (F. Chavez)

Input due: 15 April

Subgroup 3 - Performance indicators suitability analysis and preliminary assessment of methodologies and underlying information to calculate them (Note: criteria are defined in the Strategic Plan Reference Document, pages 17-21 and table on page 24.)

Lead: GEO Secretariat (G. Rum)

Input due: 15 April

Subgroup 4 - Review of the GEO Science and Technology Roadmap to track the fate of various issues (such as data citation), and assess whether they either have been resolved, or are adequately addressed in activities of current Work Programme.

Lead: UK (S. Marsh)

Input due: 15 April

Subgroup 5 - Initial cross-reading of the description of GEO Initiatives in 2016 WP with focus on criteria relating to Flagship status / resourcing / scope.

Lead: EEA (T. Haigh)

Input due: 15 April

Subgroup 6 - Board members are encouraged to identify a particular Community Activity with which they would like to engage on an informal basis as a “mentor” (see version 4 of the Transitional 2016 Work Programme for full list of Community Activities). The idea would be to foster engagement and provide a means of feedback to/from the Programme Board by contacting the lead of the selected Community Activity (this interaction is not specifically called for in the Programme Board Terms of Reference). A Google spreadsheet has been set up to match Community Activities with Board representatives:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pNCgukJ1g_MOa5R1uf7qoSeFeN5v3VLtEHZrPHVNG3o/e/dit?usp=sharing

Lead: IEEE (S.-J. Khalsa)

Input due: 15 April

11 APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAMME BOARD PO OBSERVER SEATS ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CHAIR: T. HAIGH)

(Note: this item was taken place prior to the continuation of the Programme Board meeting on day 2.)

The Participating Organizations expressing interest in an observer seat on the Executive Committee were:

- Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), represented by Stephen Briggs
- Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), represented by Erik Buch
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), represented by Siri-Jodha Khalsa
- International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), represented by Xingfa Gu
- World Data System (WDS) / International Council for Science (ICSU), represented by (Arona Diedhiou)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO), represented by Wenjian Zhang

Three successive rounds of voting were held among all POs involved in the PB meeting (including via WebEx), by secret ballot, a total of 14. After each round, the PO with the least number of votes was eliminated from the pool of candidates before the next round. The final three POs at the end of all rounds were: CEOS, GOOS and WMO.

12 MESSAGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CHAIR: J. MATUSZAK)

Programme Board co-chair John Matuszak offered to report to the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board.

Messages/questions include:

- Issue of Board meeting attendance with respect to African and Latin American participants;
- Should the Board determine priorities with respect to FTs when resources are lacking? Should some FTs be achieved regionally?
- How should the Board deal with non-resourced activities?
- What level of recommendations is expected of the Board by the Executive Committee?
- Nomination procedure for 2017-2019 Programme Board.

13 REPORTING THROUGH 2016 (CHAIR: J. MATUSZAK)

- Co-chair report to the Executive Committee meeting in March (J. Matuszak). From Mr. Strohmeier's opening remarks:
 - Present an overview of the outcomes and decision points from the first meeting, particularly as concerns how you have dealt with the analysis of the 2016 Transitional WP, priority setting, managing a smooth transition, delegating or dividing responsibilities (expert groups or GEO Secretariat as appropriate);
 - Present a roadmap for further tackling these points and others in a timeframe leading to the GEO WP Symposium in May.

- Co-chair report to the Executive Committee meeting in July. From Mr. Strohmeier's opening remarks:
 - Provide concrete and realistic recommendations on priorities for GEO Foundational Tasks matched to expected resourcing;
 - Provide the Committee with a clear outline a transparent and efficient process for establishing the next three-year WP – one which is sufficiently ambitious and resourced;
 - Provide the Committee with a critical appraisal as to how the Programme Board is working, including an assessment of engagement/participation by members.Co-chair report to November Executive Committee meeting and GEO-XIII Plenary.
- Annual Progress Report (produced by Secretariat, reviewed by PB);
- No Evaluation Report for 2016 WP.

14 MEETINGS THROUGH 2016 (CHAIR: J. MATUSZAK)

- It was agreed that the 2nd Programme Board meeting would be held on 5-6 May 2016, at the GEO Secretariat (immediately following the WP Symposium on 2-4 May 2016);
- It was also agree that the 3rd Programme Board meeting would be held on 7-8 September 2016, at the GEO Secretariat;
- Appendix B “GEO Programme Board - 2016 Year-at-a-glance” provides dates for other relevant GEO meetings.

15 AOB AND WRAP UP (CHAIR: J. MATUSZAK)

Action items (see presentation: [Action items & future meetings](#)):

- 12 February: Year-at-a-glance (SEC, see Appendix B);
- 12 February: Preliminary draft summary report of 1st Programme Board meeting circulated for comments (SEC);
- 12 February: Inputs due from sub-group 1;
- 19 February: draft summary report of 1st Programme Board meeting and presentations posted on GEO website (SEC);
- 15 April: Inputs due from sub-groups 2-6;
- 21 June: Preliminary structure and content of 2017-2019 WP due (PB/SEC);
- 27 September: 2017-2019 WP due (PB/SEC);
- Participation (see Appendix C):
 - 14 Members represented;
 - 14 Participating Organizations represented.

APPENDIX A

Message from GEO Co-Chairs to the GEO Programme Board 02/02/16

- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I am very pleased to address you today on behalf of all four GEO Co-Chairs and on behalf of the GEO Executive Committee to wish you all the very best as you meet together for the first time as the 2016 GEO Programme Board.
- We were particularly impressed to see the level of nominations put forward and confident that many sectors and geographical regions are represented.
- A huge amount of effort, consultation and debate – to which many of you contributed personally - has culminated in the GEO Mexico Plenary and Ministerial Summit just three months ago, agreeing on the Strategic Plan and founding this Programme Board.
- Now we must show that we can deliver to users and demonstrate GEO's added value.
- You will be aware that this transitional phase makes 2016 somewhat exceptional and in a sense, experimental. For this reason, you have been appointed to the Programme Board for one year. Your experience will be invaluable in planning for the longer-term.
- The Executive Committee had expressed its concern that this transitional year for GEO must be carefully managed – concluding that *we cannot afford to lose momentum or expertise or forget lessons already learned.*
- For this reason a 'Transition Plan' was developed and presented to the GEO Plenary in November. This document contains important principles which should be taken into account.
- In this vein, further information will be presented to you in the course of your meeting by the representatives of the previous Boards and Working Groups
- The “GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing the GEOSS” (and its accompanying documents) is the reference on which you will base your work.
- The strategic objectives and core functions described in the Strategic Plan are service-oriented; they are aimed at delivering impactful information to decision-makers through significant engagement at all necessary levels of stakeholders.
- The big task of achieving these objectives is now in the hands of our community whose activities form the GEO Work Programme.
- To be successful and to deliver the desired impact, we must endeavor to make sure that the key activities are properly planned out, resourced and implemented with commitment.
- The 2016 Transitional Work Programme was approved at Mexico and contains numerous worthwhile proposals. But, as agreed by the Plenary, it must be examined further and that is the task of this Programme Board
- Your task is therefore clear – you are responsible for supporting the on-going development and implementation of the GEO Strategic Plan through the GEO Work Programme.

- You will be working to ensure the overall coherence and alignment of the GEO Work Programme with GEO's Strategic Objectives and Core Functions described in the Strategic Plan.
- In line with discussions at Plenary XII, we would strongly urge you therefore to *analyse and prioritise* the tasks described in the Transitional Work Programme 2016, particularly the foundational tasks and candidates for GEO initiatives and flagships. But please keep in mind that the Work Programme is not set in stone nor is it necessarily a template for the future.
- It has generally been agreed in ExCom that activities in these three categories in particular should be carefully matched with the resources available.
- You are not being asked to rewrite or re-issue the transitional WP but instead to take what is already there and to recommend what you trust realistically can be achieved with the resources at GEO's disposal.

There may also be cases where an important activity will require additional support and commitments in order to be put on solid ground. We expect that this Programme Board will also have the capacity to provide access to institutional networks (in your governments and organizations) to solicit additional support for these activities.

- We expect that as appropriate you will also facilitate access to experts and prospective partners within GEO Members and Participating Organizations and beyond, to ensure proper stakeholder participation in GEO initiatives, flagships and foundational tasks.
- In other words, we urge you to use your role as members of the GEO Programme Board to be proactive and take the lead in planning the content and implementation of the Work Programme – you do not merely have a rubber-stamping or overseeing role.
- Allow me to express some concrete suggestions:
- We would suggest that you take time to discuss the structure of the Work Programme in order to mainstream important horizontal issues such as user engagement, capacity building, data sharing & management, the uptake of the GEOSS across the SBAs as well as flagships and initiatives.
- GEO's outreach strategy has been a major weak point to date. This needs urgent attention in order to attract more active participation and to foster connections with other initiatives. (eg Belmont Forum, Research Data Alliance, Future Earth..).
- Your three Co-Chairs, to be selected by you over the next two days will guide you in this the process. We are confident that the GEO Secretariat will support you in your work.
- We would also urge you to capitalise on good-will and the expertise of the GEO Community. The Terms of Reference of the Programme Board give you the option to establish advisory groups for special topics if necessary.
- While the work going on within the individual tasks will progress at variable rates, the Programme Board will look at efficiency across the tasks and leverage efforts by triggering synergies. The Board will also see what is working well and plan for the future.
- A close relationship with EXCOM will be ensured by the three observers you will select and who will bring your recommendations to ExCom.
- Let me wrap up by 2 questions: What does ExCom expect? How do we expect you to report?

- For this purpose, let me outline several touch points to you
 - By the March ExCom:
 - Present an overview of the outcomes and decision points from the first meeting, particularly as concerns how you have dealt with the analysis of the 2016 Transitional Work Programme, priority setting, managing a smooth transition, delegating or dividing responsibilities (expert groups or GEOSEC as appropriate).
 - Present a roadmap for further tackling these points and others in a timeframe leading to the GEO Work Programme Symposium in May.
 - By the July 2016 ExCom:
 - Provide concrete and realistic recommendations on priorities for GEO Foundational Tasks matched to expected resourcing.
 - Provide ExCom with a clear outline a transparent and efficient process for establishing the next three-year Work Programme – one which is sufficiently ambitious and resourced.
 - Provide ExCom with a critical appraisal as to how the Programme Board is working..including an assessment of engagement/participation by members.
- ExCom looks forward to a constructive working relationship with you and is committed to act on your recommendations.
- Lastly, the Co-Chairs would like to thank you for having answered the call to join this Programme Board – as pioneers of a totally new structure. We are sure that you will work with a collaborative spirit of entrepreneurship for the good of GEO and that you will be fully successful as a result.

What is certain is that you will play crucial role in the success of the Strategic Plan and of GEO itself. The Co-Chairs are sure this Programme Board will be strong, engaged, committed and get off to a flying start to achieve this success.

APPENDIX B

GEO Programme Board - 2016 Year-at-a-glance

<p>January</p>	<p>February</p> <p>2-3: 1st 2016 PB meeting</p> <p>12: Review of WP Table of Contents Template (Sideris)</p> <p>19: Call for IPs and CA descriptions (SEC)</p> <p>19: 1st 2016 PB meeting report (SEC)</p>	<p>March</p> <p>8-9: 36th ExCom (US PB co-chair reports)</p>
<p>April</p> <p>15: IPs due</p> <p>15: Review/analysis of Science & Technology Roadmap (Marsh)</p> <p>15: FT structure review/Pis (SEC)</p> <p>15: Review 2016 WP Initiatives: cross-cutting view, suitability for 2017-2019 WP (Haigh)</p> <p>15: CA engagement (Khalsa)</p>	<p>May</p> <p>2-4: Work Programme Symposium</p> <p>5-6: 2nd 2016 PB meeting</p> <p>20 : 2nd 2016 PB meeting report (SEC)</p>	<p>June</p> <p>21: 2017-2019 WP preliminary structure and content</p>
<p>July</p> <p>6-7: 37th ExCom</p>	<p>August</p>	<p>September</p> <p>1: Preliminary draft of Progress Report (SEC)</p> <p>7-8: 3rd 2016 PB meeting</p> <p>22 : 3rd 2016 PB meeting report (SEC)</p> <p>22 : Call for 2017-2019 PB nominations (SEC)</p> <p>27: Deliver 2017-2019 WP (PB/SEC)</p>
<p>October</p> <p>21: Call for 2017-2019 PB nomination ends</p>	<p>November</p> <p>8 : 38th ExCom</p> <p>9-10: GEO-XIII</p> <p>11 : 1st 2017-2019 PB meeting?</p>	<p>December</p> <p>10 : 2017-19 WP post-Plenary update</p>

APPENDIX C

List of participants					
Programme Board Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 2-3 February 2016					
Member	Last Name	First Name	Email	Sub-group	
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