

SUBGROUP 1

Michael Sideris and Ayman Ibrahim would like to acknowledge the following GEO PB members for their valuable inputs to the template creation process:

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Template for GEO Work Programme 2017-2019 Application

Table of contents (20 pages maximum)

Executive Summary (1 page)

1. Synopsis of objectives and benefits **(2 pages)**
 - List of objectives and planned way of attaining them
 - Expected outcomes, impacts and user/societal benefits
 - Relevance to GEO's strategic objectives
 - For Flagships: identification of Policy Mandate **(one extra page)**
2. Relationship to previous developments and results **(one page)**
 - New activity or an extension/follow-up to a previous activity
 - Status and outcomes of previous activity, if applicable
 - Relationship between the new and existing activity (objectives, teams, added value to ongoing activities within and outside of GEO)
3. Participants/contributors **(one page)**
 - Organizations, institutions, government agencies, private sector
 - Their roles in/contributions to the project
4. Description of activities **(4 pages)**
 - Tasks definition, overall logic and phasing
 - Geographical scope
 - Tasks description (for each of them: description, planning, partners responsibilities, resources)
 - Capacity building/science & technology/training activities; communication/outreach/branding
 - Expected connections to other areas of the GEO Work Plan
5. Involvement of end-users **(2 pages)**
 - How established user communities link to, or participate in the initiative
 - How the activity would benefit stakeholders (in particular developing countries)
 - How it feeds into decision-making processes
6. Planning, including specific milestones and deliverables **(2 pages)**
 - Implementation plan
 - Milestones and deliverables (with Gantt chart)
 - Monitoring and evaluation approach, including feedback from participants/partners
 - Reporting to participants and to GEO PB/Secretariat (GEO Strategic Plan reference document)
7. Data management & data policy **(2 pages)**
 - Description of the key datasets used or created by the activity
 - Degree of adherence to the GEOSS Data Sharing and Data Management Principles
 - Contributions to the GEOSS Data CORE
 - Interoperability with the GCI (GEOSS Common Infrastructure)

8. Risk assessment (**one page**)
 - Risk assessment
 - Risk mitigation plan and required resources
 - Risk management procedures
9. Management and governance (**one page**)
 - Organizational structure
 - Project coordinator and supporting organization
 - Advisory/steering committee
 - Communication with partners and participants
10. Summary of committed resources and annual budget(s) (**one page**)
 - Secured and expected resources (cash and in-kind)
 - Sources of funding, data, services, etc.
 - Annual budget allocation
11. For Flagship candidates, path to operational phase (**one page**)
 - Steps for the transition of the Flagship from the implementation to the fully operational phase
 - Operational plan, goals, objectives, requirements, challenges, threats
 - Leadership, management, resources and sustainability
 - Concrete actions in support of policy mandate, communications, user involvement

ANNEXES

- A. Technical Annex(es), if applicable
- B. Acronyms and Abbreviations
- C. List of references
- D. CV of Project Leader and names
- E. Full addresses of all participants

Guidelines for completing the application template

Length and format requirements

Type format: Single spacing, font size 12

Maximum length: 20 pages, excluding Annexes

Please note: The number of pages given for the whole document and its individual sections should only be considered as the allowable and expected maximum, respectively, and not as the required length of each section and the overall proposal. Hence the individual section pages can be less than the number specified in the table of contents; if necessary, they can be higher than specified, too, provided that the overall length of the proposal does not exceed 20 pages.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should clearly identify the type of activity (Foundation Task, CA, Initiative, or Flagship). The executive summary should describe briefly the overall objectives, methodology and expected outcomes of the project. Moreover, it should emphasize how the project and its impact align with GEO strategic plans and objectives.

1. Synopsis of objectives and benefits

Outline why the proposed project is relevant to GEO's strategic objectives and or core functions, and for Flagships, discuss their policy mandates. Provide a list of objectives and mention briefly the implementation plan for achieving each of them. The expected products, services, policies or other outcomes should be clearly stated, and their societal impacts and benefits to the users should be clearly articulated.

2. Relationship to previous developments and results

The proposal should clearly identify whether the current activity is an extension or a follow-up to a previous activity stating the type of the previous activity and the outcomes of it. Moreover, the status of the other activity should be stated and whether the current activity will affect the execution of the other activities especially if the team (or subset of it is participating in both activities).

In the case of flagship the justification for developing and initiative(s) to a flagship should be stated.

3. Participants/contributors

Name the main participants (individuals, organizations, institutions, government agencies, private sector) and specify their roles (PI, co-PI, member, partner, sponsor, user, etc.). Also specify their participation in various tasks, or their other contribution to the project (e.g., provision of data, services, communications, etc.). Indicate if they have participated previously, and in what capacity, in GEO activities. In Annexes D and E, include a short CV of the project leader, and contact information of all participants, respectively.

4. Description of activities

Task descriptions should indicate: task description, geographical scope, required resources, partners' responsibilities, milestones, deliverables, any critical breakpoints and key performance indicators. These should be identified by the Task Team to allow the PB support in the task implementation to achieve coherence between resources available and task objectives, and to allow early identification of any schedule or delivery impact due to resource limitations. Tasks should include, whenever relevant, provisions for capacity building including training, provision for adopting/promoting science and technology, outreach, production and branding.

For flagships, it is particularly important to identify the geographical scope for implementing the tasks in order to justify the evolution from initiative to a flagship or the direct initiation of a flagship.

5. Involvement of end-users

GEO promotes involving the end-users in ALL its activities. Applicants should specify the role of the end-users/stakeholders in the implementation of the activity, and how they will benefit throughout and after its implementation.

6. Planning, including specific milestones and deliverables

An Implementation plan with milestones and deliverables in the form of a Gantt chart should be provided (e.g., by using one of the standard tools, such as MS Project). Moreover, a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation should be stated in the proposal. This mechanism should involve the stakeholders, users and partners. Regular reporting to the participating organizations, GEO Programme Board (PB) and GEO Secretariat with periods clearly identified on the GANTT chart should be included. Besides milestones and deliverables, task descriptions should also indicate any critical breakpoints and key performance indicators. These should be identified in the proposal to allow the PB support in the task implementation to achieve coherence between resources available and task objectives, and to allow early identification of any negative schedule or delivery impact due to resource limitations.

7. Data management & data policy

Provide details for each of the key datasets used or created by the activity, of the extent to which they conform to the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, whether they are or will be part of the GEOSS Data CORE, and whether they will be managed using as reference the GEOSS Data Management Principles. Where applicable, please provide details on interoperability with the GCI (GEOSS Common Infrastructure).

8. Risk assessment

Anticipated risks, relating to project implementation, with appropriate mitigation measures should be indicated in this section. The effect of each risk on the outcomes of the project should also be stated, together with the extra resources (if any) required to mitigate that risk. Risks that might result in a partial or total halt of the project should be indicated and carefully analyzed.

9. Management and governance

Describe the organizational structure, the decision-making mechanisms and the persons involved in the management and governance. Provide the CV of the Project Leader. Explain how the organizational structure and decision-making mechanisms will help reaching the objectives. If an advisory board/steering committee is set up or will be set-up describe its composition and role. Describe the communication processes within the project and the plan for communication with partners.

10. Summary of committed resources and annual budget(s)

The Proposal should clearly state the available resources in the participating organizations, which justify granting the project to this group of institutions/organizations. The level of availability of each resource (all the time or partially available, stating the percentage whenever possible) should be clearly identified. If cost sharing is possible, this would be an advantage. Sources of funding should be stated, and whether they are cash or in-kind. The annual and overall budget should be included. The budget tables should include the following items as a minimum: Incentives; Equipment and Consumables; Software and/or data costs; Services; Travel; Communications; Other direct costs (please specify); Overhead and other indirect costs.

11. Transition plan to operational phase

Applicants are expected to provide description of the policy mandate and main steps and procedures to be followed for the transition of the *Flagship* from the implementation to the fully operational phase. That should include, where applicable, the concept of operations (brief operational plan, goals and objectives), a landscape analysis with a statement of maturity, operational requirements, challenges and threats, resources arrangement (e.g., additional support to ensure ongoing sustainability), processes (with milestone) for operational readiness control, leadership and/or ownership issues, planning for the transfer of commissioning responsibilities, concrete interaction schemes with end-users, communication policy.

ANNEXES

A. Technical Annex(es)

Should be provided only for projects where technical information is an integral part of the proposal (e.g., to justify the need, objectives, impacts, etc.)

B. Acronyms and Abbreviations

A list explaining all acronyms and abbreviations used in the proposal should be included.

C. List of references

A list of all publications cited in the proposal. For electronic publications or websites, the internet (url) links should be provided.

D. Short CV of Project Leader

Should include qualifications, expertise, and relevant past experience (scientific and managerial) of the project leader.

E. List of participants

Names, affiliations and full contact information of all participants.

Feedback on the Template

1. The template seems to be aligned with flagship service projects than initiatives

- a. The outline requests a lot of detailed and specific information in a 20 page template which is challenging for a global initiative that is aiming to coordinate many activities

2. The template seems to be aimed at well-developed initiatives and flagships

- a. I am assuming that many initiatives that are in the developing stage do not specifically address many of the requested points in the outline. This is due to being in a development stage as well as to the page limit
- b. I understand the desire to have initiatives being well developed and supported but in order to get buy in, they need to be recognized as initiatives in GEO. It becomes somewhat of a chicken and egg scenario

3. Asking for a full list of all participants and addresses for all was challenging due to varying degrees of participation of individuals and the desire to expand involvement

4. For the timeline, we also started with 2016 when the implementation plan asked for 2017-2019

- a. This is mainly because a lot of the ramp up is planned before 2017 and we needed to make it clear how and when we were planning to ramp up over the remaining time period.
- b. It would be helpful if it was clear on when and how these implementation plans could be updated within the GEO Work Programme. Will the work programme be updated yearly? How will this be done?

From members of the Secretariat

1. The structure of the TOC asked for the same information in multiple places

- a. People were unsure whether they needed to actually repeat some information or to make decisions about where it should go
- b. My guidance was not to repeat details and that it was okay (and in some cases perhaps useful) to mention something in more than one place (but perhaps point to where details could be found)

2. There was also some confusion over what was wanted for the monitoring/evaluation area (I forget exactly what it was called)

- a. This was referring to how the activity would monitor its own activity.
3. They did struggle some with the "operations" area, not sure what to say (in part because they have a ways to go) though I think it was a good way to get them to think about that.

1. There were some uncertainties in what was required: just for initiatives or for all, for transition period or for 2017-2019

- a. The e-mail is clear, but too long for a short reading... No solution!

2. The most difficult part in my opinion is definitely milestones and, above all, resources. I would suggest to consider the following:

- a. i) organize a 2-step document: 1. confirmation of the activity with broad objective and main activities (commitment). 2. Later on, schedules and resources.
- b. ii) Clearly identify if the activity is existing outside GEO (e.g., H2020 project), where simply coordination time is required, or if it's something specific, and therefore more time-consuming (e.g., capacity building).
- c. Prepare a resource table template showing in kind and cash, GEO dedicated resources and general resources.

3. I would encourage to incorporate a short section describing what the added value of GEO will be (what's unique, what's the expected return of investment)

1. I think that the template is perfect

- a. more similar to the requirement of more than 10 million dollar science project management framework in China
- b. To GEO work programme management, I think that these 11 sectors can give us enough information in case of GEO strategic plan and the reference.

2. Two suggestions:

- a. **1.** how to establish the platform to enforce the cooperation between the participants and contributions in the GEO initiative and flagship. More participants in the region or in GEO community, a perfect cooperation mechanism facilitate the fulfillment of the GEO programme and GEO vision.

- b. **2.** the monitoring and evaluation area. Just Giovanni said in Monday meeting, basic and continuously feedback of the GEO Programme should be collected through the formal channel. So in Sector 9 Management and Governance, supplement one item "Monitoring and Evaluation" and some sentence in the following guideline

1. Most people seem to struggle with the chapter on resources. Not only with the difficulties to mobilize additional resources but also with understanding which kind of information is requested here, in particular concerning cash contributions

- a. Looking at other initiatives, some of them don't say anything about that while others list very specifically the amount of money contributed (basically generated in other projects)
- b. There seems to be a confusion to what extent existing projects etc. should be listed in that chapter and be treated as a contribution to the initiative (i.e. resources not particularly generated for the respective initiative)

2. Some people have not been happy with providing two separate documents (the summary and the application templates)

3. People were unsure about the general review process by PB and the associated deadlines (the general time line was not communicated)

- a. My guidance was that the final versions of the implementation plans should be ready before summer, but definitely before the last meeting of the PB in early September. Now it seems that PB would actually need all final proposals by end of May already (which will be a challenge for some...)