

GEO Secretariat Review of the 2017 Work Programme Symposium

This Document is submitted to the Executive Committee for information.

DRAFT TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE 40TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee noted the Secretariat's analysis, views on future events, report and survey results of the 2017 Work Programme Symposium. The Committee acknowledged that there are different reasons and perspectives for holding Work Programme Symposia, particularly given the respective roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat and Programme Board. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat and Programme Board for organizing the 2017 Work Programme Symposium, and to the government of South Africa for hosting the event.

GEO Secretariat Review of the 2017 Work Programme Symposium

The GEO Work Plan / Work Programme Symposium (WPS) has been held annually since its inaugural session in 2010, Pretoria, South Africa. Traditionally, the Symposia have been organized solely by the Secretariat; however, the 2017 session represented the first time that the newly formed Programme Board also contributed to the design. Additionally, the 2017 session represented the first time the Symposium was linked to a major event such as the International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE). The intention was to both further raise visibility of GEO within the ISRSE community (following two of their past conferences – Stresa, Italy and Berlin, Germany where representation from the GEO community was high), as well as augment participation in the WPS with ISRSE attendees.

This document represents an assessment, from the Secretariat, on both positive and negative aspects of the 2017 WPS, held on 12-13 May 2017 in Pretoria. In general, the Secretariat's view was that the WPS was successful in terms of gaining a better understanding of global policy initiatives (UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Paris Agreement, and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction), their processes, and opportunities to support their attainment with Earth observations. It was also successful in demonstrating the impacts of regional Initiatives such as AfriGEOSS in supporting sustainable development. It was evident from presentations by several GEO Flagships and Initiatives that GEO has already begun serious efforts to support these policy initiatives.

Where the WPS was less successful was in setting goals and objectives that were realistic and achievable, given the WPS duration and levels of participation. Additionally, in some instances, the breakout sessions did not return the levels of actionable detail hoped for. Views on holding the WPS in conjunction with the ISRSE were mixed; in some instances it was felt the increased visibility given to GEO was very positive and fostered engagement in GEO activities, while others were less satisfied with the overall quality of the WPS given that it came at the tail end of a long week of meetings.

In more detail, among the more successful aspects:

- The agenda provided an interesting mix of keynote presentations and panel discussions, which allowed more dialogue and interaction than had been the case with past Symposia;
- The theme and objectives of the Symposium (i.e. 3+1) allowed for a focused discussion;
- Placing updates of various GEO Work Programme (GWP) activities in the context of the GEO engagement priorities clearly established that GEO is already responding to global policy mandates such as the SDGs, and provided a welcome change from the non-stop activity-by-activity reports of past Symposia;
- The keynote presentation on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the presentations from various GWP activities on the SDGs were informative and helped raise awareness of the priority with the GEO community;
- The keynote presentation on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was useful in providing a user perspective from a developing country (Uganda);
- The addition of AfriGEOSS as a focus area provided an opportunity for GEO to put the spotlight on Africa and to hear from the African community on ongoing activities and challenges. This further provided a platform for connections / collaboration to be made between the African community and international GEO community in a way that even Plenary has not been able to provide, due to the allocated time to both present and allow for technical discussions;

- The co-location with ISRSE provided an opportunity for GEO to reach a broader Earth observations (EO) scientific community and raise awareness about GEO and its activities. The ISRSE sessions were interesting and useful, and showcased GEO activities. The sessions further allowed for consultations to be held on some of the GEO activities with the broader EO community;
- Holding the WPS in conjunction with the ISRSE was practical in terms of promoting attendance at both, especially since ISRSE subject matter largely focused on applications of Earth observations (which was good for GEO in helping bridge the gap between observations and users). Additionally, with GEO talks in many of the sessions, ISRSE provided an opportunity to increase exposure for GEO Flagships and Initiatives; and
- The breakout session on monitoring and evaluation provided useful inputs on the proposed process and indicators.

Where there is room for improvement:

- If the WPS is to be held in conjunction with other major events in the future, there needs to be a better allocation / split of the days between that event and the WPS. In this instance, starting the Symposium on a Friday after 4 full days of a conference meant that WPS attendance numbers dwindled on the fifth day, Saturday, due to tiredness and/or attractiveness of venue surroundings for sight-seeing excursions;
- Additionally, for future joint meetings involving the WPS, careful thought must be given to negotiating items such as marketing, communications, registration, and logistics of the two events such that both sides benefit. There was some concern that promotion of the events had not been handled equitably (website visibility);
- The WPS objectives were neither realistic nor achievable, nor could they be through any WPS no matter how well organized it would have been. More attainable objectives need to be set, with plans for achieving them;
- There were too many hands on the agenda. Although the PB's desire to shape the WPS for their needs is understandable, the process of getting to agreement didn't work well and the delay seems to have had a negative impact on the WPS (e.g. primarily through late distribution of information);
- It is not clear to the Secretariat that the WPS format is useful for the PB's work, as a body in and of itself. There are certainly intangible benefits derived from the community getting together for the PB, but not clear they need it for their deliberations;
- Information flow tended to be one-way: there was too much information out, and not enough discussion and dialogue. Some felt this was the PB and Secretariat talking to each other. Other kinds of events should be used for information out; the WPS should be an opportunity for a much more interactive event within the GEO community;
- There were too many presentations following the keynote speakers. A small panel discussion following the keynote presentations would have been beneficial, to allow discussion on points raised. Where they did occur, panel discussions should not have included additional PowerPoint presentations;
- The split between plenary sessions and smaller sessions was too weighted towards plenary sessions, and the plenary presentations were too long;
- The meeting was too short for the WPS itself, but too long when appended to the ISRSE week. The WPS would be better off as a stand-alone meeting;
- Although the focus on engagement priority areas was good, some felt the WPS should remain inclusive, maintaining a mechanism for reporting on the full GWP; and

- In many instances, the breakout sessions were not successful, and consequently the information coming back was too general to be of much use. This was mainly due to a lack of preparedness, and not having the right mix of individuals in the breakout sessions.

Comments on the Work Programme Symposium – Future Orientation (40th Executive Committee Document 11)

- For the Secretariat, there is a clear linkage between the WPS and the work of the Secretariat. That linkage includes building the GEO community, facilitating synergies and collaborations, coordinating, collating needs and gaps, consulting on current trends and future areas of focus, ensuring common understanding, and attracting new contributors. The Secretariat sees the Symposium as a critical coordination platform, one that cannot be substituted by Plenary or Plenary Side-Events, and wants to ensure that the face-to-face engagement with the GEO community is reinforced, rather than diminished, in order to secure the vitality of GEO;
- Each Symposium should strike a balance between WP optimization (addressing needs of the PB), and WP development (including opportunities for the community to interact and share ideas);
- Every meeting should address both PB needs and community needs, not just in alternating meetings. If a distinction is going to be made between Symposia intended for WP adjustments versus Symposia intended for development of a new WP, that distinction needs to be clearly articulated. Although it is true that the degree of change every three years will likely be larger than the annual changes, in practice much of the previous WP will continue from one period to the next. Thus, the rationale for completely different branding at particular stages will need to be made very clear;
- Holding the community building Symposia only once every four years, with none at all during the 2021 to 2025 WP period, is insufficient. If the intent is to optimize implementation of the WP, the WPS should continue to be held on an annual basis;
- The timing of WP development Symposia in relation to the Plenary meeting at which the WP would be approved varies considerably in the proposed schedule. For the 2020-2022 WP, it is 14 months ahead. For the 2023-2025 WP, it is 9 months ahead. For the 2026-2028 WP, it is 21 months ahead. Additionally, holding the 2018 Symposium in September, only 2 months before Plenary could both impact attendance, as well as divert Secretariat attention and limited resources;
- Similarly, shifting the timing of the Symposia from the typical April-May period to February means the WPS would fall fairly soon after Plenary, which also poses a constraint on available Secretariat resources;
- In reference to the proposed multi-annual meeting cycle, ISRSE, as well as others, attract GEO participants, and therefore, consideration needs to be given to the event(s) where the greatest benefit will accrue to GEO;
- The proposed name change to “The GEO Symposium” is reasonable, but the additional tag lines need more consultation. Combining this change with additional communications and rebranding efforts could generate increased interest; and
- Finally, although the Secretariat stands ready to offer advice or counsel with regional events, these are best viewed as regional responsibilities with leadership, goals, objectives and timing being established regionally, not globally. The annual regional Initiative meetings generally have a broader scope than simply connections with the WP, including increased Member engagement across the region and Plenary contributions.

Recommendation:

The Secretariat believes an annual event should be convened, separate from the more usual GEO governance meetings, to bring the “working” community together. An event such as the WPS strengthens linkages among technical people doing much of the work of GEO, particularly since some

do not attend Plenary as part of their national delegations. The WPS also provides the forum for the Secretariat to hear from, and interact directly with, this community in order to build the WP in a constructive and collaborative fashion.

ANNEX 1**2017 GEO WORK PROGRAMME SYMPOSIUM****12-13 MAY 2017****CSIR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE****TSHWANE, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA****SUMMARY REPORT****1 SESSION 1 GLOBAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND GEO**

Programme Board co-chair Ivan DeLoatch (USA) opened the Work Programme Symposium (WPS) by noting that the planning and format of this year's WPS represented a departure from previous years in that it involved input from the Programme Board (PB) and was responding to Plenary's mandate for GEO to focus on major global policy initiatives through its engagement priorities.

In her opening presentation, Secretariat Director Barbara Ryan traced the genesis for the GEO engagement priorities to the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS, and the Mexico City Ministerial Declaration. She observed the importance of raising awareness of activities of the GEO Work Programme (GWP) and the potential for addressing policy agendas at the national level to the Member governments, thereby reinforcing the linkages between activities of the GWP and global policy mandates. She noted that there are still challenges to be faced, such as improving access to data, issues related to interoperability, development of downstream services, and understanding the mechanisms to fully address policy agendas.

Phil Mjwara, GEO Principal from South Africa, highlighted the importance of regional coordination mechanisms, such as AfriGEOSS, which are capable of down-scaling global efforts to the regional level through leveraging national Earth observation capabilities and infrastructure investments. AfriGEOSS supports Earth observation data (satellite & in-situ) access and dissemination across Africa by identifying existing infrastructure and gaps, and recommending actions for the community to implement. Thus, AfriGEOSS is an appropriate vehicle for GEO to use to coordinate and respond to African institutional concerns, such as the African Union Space Policy and Strategy.

In the panel discussion that followed, the point was emphasized that GEO needs to be pragmatic about the work being done. Many Initiatives and Flagships of the GWP have a history that predates the GWP and engagement priorities, and the goal is not to call for a complete overhaul of these activities. Rather, the GWP update should simply mention how various activities are working together and finding synergies, addressing major global policy directives where relevant, and in some cases addressing gaps through new activities that may be identified. Also, recognizing the need to interact with the custodial agencies of the SDG indicators, the question was raised whether there are specific impediments indigenous to the African continent, to keep this from happening. Mr Mjwara responded by noting the importance of identifying partner countries with whom to work. South Africa will be chairing the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and as such, South Africa will be well-positioned to make proposals to Heads of State throughout the region.

2 SESSION 2A & B: EO SUPPORTING MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVES

The opening speech from Pali Lahohla (South African Statistician General) addressed particularly important topics including how the UN is relying on Statistical Agencies and UN Custodial Agencies for implementation of the SDG Indicator framework and collection of data by countries. He also stressed that efforts must be focused to achieve the sustainable and just society outcomes envisioned by the UN process for Africa and elsewhere.

The panel discussion moderated by Tim Haigh (European Environment Agency) revealed numerous processes in action and stressed examination of how to build coordinated efforts based on successes of GEO activities. The importance of regional activities was illustrated by the presentation and interventions of Derek Clarke (Head of the Mapping Agency for South Africa), a key participant in the UN and African GGIM processes. GEOGLAM success in Africa and elsewhere were shown to provide an opportunity to expand engagement with policy makers and support for SDG indicators. A question was raised regarding the criteria to render data-ready information useful, to which Mr Clarke responded that politicians need to be convinced that the products of science are not going to threaten their sovereignty, but rather will bring greater benefits especially since data collection by remote means is faster and less expensive than conducting household surveys.

3 SESSION 2C: EO SUPPORTING MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVES: PARIS AGREEMENT AND SENDAI FRAMEWORK

3.1 Paris Agreement

Stephen Briggs (CEOS) gave a keynote talk on the role of Earth observations (EO) after COP 21. EO can support a great number of areas outlined in the Paris Agreement such as stocktaking methods, mitigation and adaptation measures, provision of basic science, data and indicators. In particular, the UNFCCC needs data, knowledge and observations to implement the Paris Agreement.

- The GEO Carbon and GHG Initiative, represented by Antonio Bombelli (CMCC - Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change), aims to support mitigation efforts by providing improved and comprehensive data on emissions. By 2030, it envisions a global observation system of carbon tracking and GHGs that provides comprehensive data for scientists and direct support for decision-making;
- Douglas Cripe (GEO Secretariat) presented the Oceans and Society: Blue Planet Initiative, which aims to provide marine information in support of the monitoring framework for SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life below Water), as well as other agreements such as the Multipurpose Marine Monitoring Mechanism (4M);
- Joel Botai presented the climate service activities of the South African Weather Service. The activities include the provision of value-added climate information for a variety of sectors, such as drought indicators, predictors and rainfall information which are being provided on a regular basis.

The panel discussion noted the importance of GEO's engagement with the UNFCCC. e.g. the involvement in the Earth Info Day at COP 22. It was recommended to continue the engagement with the UNFCCC Secretariat and the Parties of the Convention to ensure effective responses by the GWP. The next milestone is the organization of a GEO Side Event at COP 23. A longer discussion emerged around climate adaptation as a potential key area for GEO to contribute to. Adaptation requires a broad and integrative approach. GEO may be well positioned to deliver this due to its convening power and its ability to provide data across domains, plus the fact that others are not doing so. The data needs for adaptation are very broad and go beyond meteorological and climatological data. A multitude of existing activities across the GWP (e.g. population mapping) may contribute to climate adaptation. However, a systematic approach to streamline the various GEO activities in support of

adaptation is lacking. The role of GEO in climate adaptation, for example providing geospatial data at local levels, needs substantial further discussion.

3.2 Sendai Framework

Johnson Owaro (Agriculture and Food Security Coordinator, Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda) gave a keynote presentation on EO in support of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Framework is a 15-year (2015/2030) agreement which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders. He noted that Uganda is using EO and geospatial data in areas facing particular development challenges, such as for a refugee settlement, to support risk informed decision-making. This was a first for Uganda, and this approach is now being rolled-out to cover other areas, such as communities facing flood and landslide risks among others.

- Ivan Petiteville (ESA) explained how the GEO-DARMA (Data Access for Risk Management) was initially targeting Latin America, Africa and South & Southeast Asia as it worked to forge international, best-efforts partnerships to better implement the Sendai Framework through the increased use of remotely-sensed EO. Meanwhile, the GEOhazard Supersites and Natural Laboratories (GSNL) Initiative works to provide full, easy access to a variety of EO (remote and in-situ) to support disaster risk management for select, high-risk areas of the world in terms of natural disasters. Scientific results are communicated to authoritative bodies and other stakeholders to inform decision-making in disaster risk management activities;
- Peter Zeil (Chair, International Working Group for Satellite-based Emergency Mapping) noted that the work of the Global Partnership using Space Technology Applications for DRR (GP-STAR), sitting at the interface between science & technology and demands at the national level, aims to provide an inventory of available applications, conceptual guidance addressing national demands for the implementation of the Sendai Framework, as well as policy relevant advice;
- Thomas Kemperer (EC Joint Research Council) informed the audience that the Human Planet Initiative supports global policy processes with agreed, actionable and goal-driven metrics such as Global built-up information and population density.

In the panel discussion that followed, the point was made that GEO needs to determine how, at a practical level, all the work being done through the Initiatives and Flagships in support of global policy initiatives will be effectively communicated externally. There was a call for GEO to advocate changing the International Disasters Charter to account for impending disasters, not just disasters that have taken place. Also, ways in which GEO can support individual activities is through: the identification of relevant user community to engage with, including regional and national bodies, as well as the commercial sector; better leveraging of GEO Participating Organizations such as the World Bank; and focused, concise information conveyed to political masters to help them understand the value of GEO.

4 SESSION 3: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Recommendations from each of the Breakout Sessions for consideration by the Programme Board included:

4.1 Breakout Group 1: Addressing Gaps

- Need to improve corporate & community body of knowledge. Valuable to learn from things that have been done successfully. Need mechanisms to facilitate exchange of information methods, process & outputs created;
- There is a gap in relation to making existing things that work (such as some Initiatives and Flagships) bigger in order to achieve the expectations in Strategic Implementation Plan;
- Little use and some risks to making a big inventory of gaps. Has to be policy driven in terms of gap analysis, not just scientific gaps. Gap analysis that is in focus here is in terms of gap in activity in relation to GEO objectives and priorities;
- Any process around gaps should be connected with users / real clients and companies;
- There is a gap around outreach & communication. Need to showing opportunities & values to external audiences & also for new members / POs. GEO should market explanatory documents better & provide introductory engagement steps for new members / PO easier (as currently very opaque);
- Need to make typology of users more explicit in Initiatives & Flagships so that users can easily understand "What is it for me?";
- Need to address structural gaps through clustering when there are several related activities or when scientific community only addressing part of issue. "Climate adaptation" is a good example as there are many potential activities and data across the WP that could contribute to adaptation but a systematic approach / integration of the various efforts is missing.

4.2 Breakout Group 2: Monitoring WP Implementation

- Implementation of the proposed indicator on GEO activities supporting SDG Targets and Indicators should be advanced to Phase 1;
- Detailed guidance should be provided in advance to leads in Flagships and Initiatives to ensure comparability of data, especially for the estimation of value of contributions;
- Should also track contributions made possible because of GEO;
- Access to the data collected should be provided to GEO participants via an online tool, as these data will be useful to the activities themselves;
- The capacity building data collection should identify the countries of participants in capacity building activities;
- Where relevant, brokering or automatic data extraction should be used to obtain data from existing databases;
- These recommendations will be implemented in Phase 1 to the extent feasible within the existing timelines.

4.3 Breakout Group 3: GCI / DSP / DMP

- Acknowledgement of past achievements in developing Data Sharing and Data Management Principles, and common infrastructure focused on search, discovery and access;
- Recognition that we need to be more user driven and focused e.g. by linking better to priorities given by Plenary (SDG, Paris climate change agreement, Sendai framework for disaster risk management) and GEO initiatives and flagships;

- Emergence of GEO regional implementations is an opportunity to link better to national and local needs. This needs to be reflected in the evolution of the architecture and governance (relationships among regional nodes);
- New actors and business models in EO data collection and consumption (private sector, Internet of Things, the general public), which means:
 - Greater emphasis from accessing data, to analytics and information products (answers to questions) i.e. from data search and discovery to linking data, analytics, and processing on platforms > interoperability of platforms becomes an issue;
 - Multidimensional data cubes as organising principles from business analytics increasingly adopted for EO;
 - GEOSS-EVOLVE will present a document reflecting these trends and summarizing the view of the group and identifying directions for future work of the Initiative to be included in the revised GWP for 2017-2019.

4.4 Breakout Group 4: Regional Initiatives

- Regional initiatives can provide a mechanism to demonstrate the capability and value of GEOSS at the regional and national levels in supporting the 3 priority/focus areas;
- There are potential synergies across the regional activities that could be enhanced by sharing best practices and common approaches;
- Regional activities and their tasks should be identified, organized and highlighted in the 2017-2019 GWP;
- Establish and align a working arrangement between the flagships, foundational tasks, thematic areas, regional initiatives, etc. i.e., conference calls, quarterly tag-ups, information exchange;
- Call for use cases for – SDGs, Climate and Disaster to demonstrate the abilities of regional initiatives.

5 SESSION 4: PANEL DISCUSSION – NEXT STEPS

The final panel discussion ranged across a variety of topics and steps to take, from engaging the commercial sector, to using the GWP to highlight the added-value of GEO with respect to policy frameworks, to GEO's actual participation in global policy frameworks, to cultivating strategic connections to promote uptake of EO and monitoring policy framework progress.

On engaging the commercial sector (CS), it was agreed that the CS is relevant for many domains that coincide with the Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs) and thus the CS has a key role to play in the provision of downstream services, since governments generally do not have the wherewithal to do so. Additionally, there would be value in having the CS participate in the WPS since they have access to a multitude of users. The need to especially engage with reinsurance and transportation agencies was noted. Another point was it is essential to understand what the value proposition is for engaging the CS in GEO, and vice-versa. This value proposition must be clearly articulated and communicated, and several propositions were identified such as increased brand visibility in GEO activities; the value of data sharing infrastructure that can be created by the CS; the "honest-broker" role that GEO can play in providing access to EO for the benefit of society; the long-term exploitation platform that GEO can provide for the CS; and GEO's capacity to address interoperability issues. A final suggestion was that GEO should consider convening a CS forum that brings together diverse stakeholders to help define new services and products, particularly those that might support global policy frameworks.

In terms of leveraging the GWP for supporting global policy frameworks, in addition to the upcoming work of the PB to identify more specifically how Initiatives and Flagships can/should be responding to

the engagement priority areas, the suggestion was made that an emphasis on supporting the provision of Essential Variables (EVs), tailored to individual initiatives, would work to increase GEO's relevancy to global mandates. The GWP also needs to communicate that it contains data and information essential to global policy frameworks, and what the pipelines are that can feed that data and information into the appropriate portion of those frameworks. Webinars were identified as a means that would help the community understand the UN engagement techniques adopted and advocated by the EO4SDGs Initiative. Another suggestion was that GEO should look for ways to increase efficiency through connecting and tackling indicators together. Finally, regional initiatives such as AfriGEOSS were affirmed as a good mechanism to find commonalities and complementarity, build trust, use common methods, and avoid duplication.

As for GEO's participation in global policy frameworks, it was noted that GEO has a seat in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) Working Group on Geospatial Information within the United Nations Global Geospatial Information management (UNGGIM) process. This, along with the activities of the EO4SDGs Initiative, should facilitate identification of the appropriate custodial agencies and national statistical agencies with which GEO Principals can coordinate, in the quest to provide complementary EO information for measuring progress towards the SDGs at the national level.

With respect to cultivating strategic relationships, it was mentioned that GEO had featured prominently in many of the 37th International Symposium for Remote Sensing of the Environment (ISRSE) sessions, which was very positive for socializing the work of GEO across EO communities. Otherwise, it was noted that international financial aid institutions were absent from the current WPS, and these should be invited to participate in the future. A suggestion was that GEO might want to consider seconding an individual full-time to a financial institute such as the World Bank. With respect to African participation in GEO activities, it was observed that a rationalization based on Communication, Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration was essential to forge effective partnerships to avoid duplication, rivalries and unnecessary expenses, which again pointed to the importance of regional GEO initiatives such as AfriGEOSS.

ANNEX 2

2017 WORK PROGRAMME SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS



Work Programme Symposium 2017 Participant Survey Results



Description of the Survey

- The survey was designed following the completion of the Symposium.
- Survey questions were informed by those used in previous Plenary and Symposium surveys but were not identical.
 - Questions in previous surveys varied from year to year.
- There were 37 distinct questions, grouped as follows:
 - Participation in various sessions and breakout groups (yes/no) [15 questions]
 - Whether the sessions met expectations (5-pointscale) [11]
 - Whether various aspects of the event met expectations (5-pointscale) [9]
 - Whether the Symposium should be held outside of Geneva and in conjunction with other events (3 to 5 options) [3]
- The survey was anonymous and was completed by respondents online.
- A link to the survey was emailed to all registered participants (excluding GEO Secretariat staff) on May 19, which was 6 days following the Symposium.
 - A reminder email was sent on May 30.
- The total number of respondents was 10, out of a total of 74 participants (13.5% response rate).
 - Response rates for event participant surveys usually range from 10 to 30%.

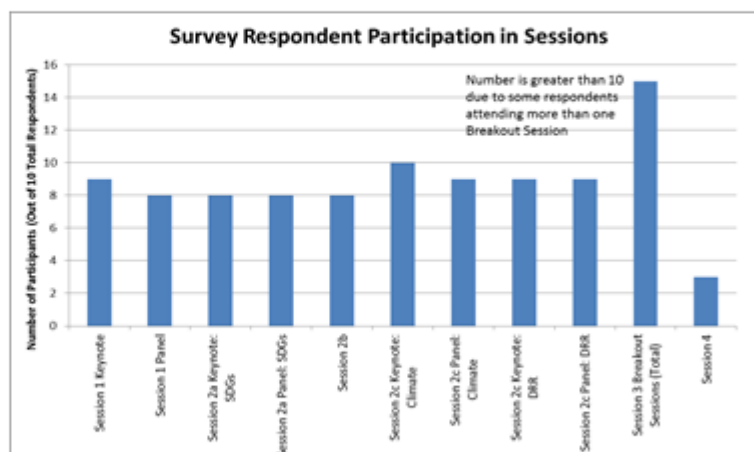


Participation Across Sessions

Participation was fairly consistent across the sessions, even though individual participants came and went.

The exception was the final session of the second day, as many participants left early to catch flights.

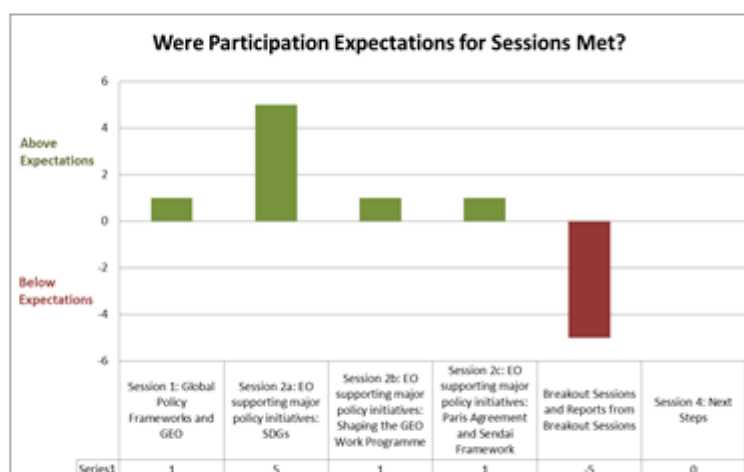
Participation in break-out sessions is higher than number of respondents as some participants attended more than one session.



Satisfaction with Sessions

Participant expectations were exceeded in all of the sessions dealing with the Engagement Priorities, but most notably for session 2a on SDGs.

In contrast, there was broad dissatisfaction with the break-out sessions.



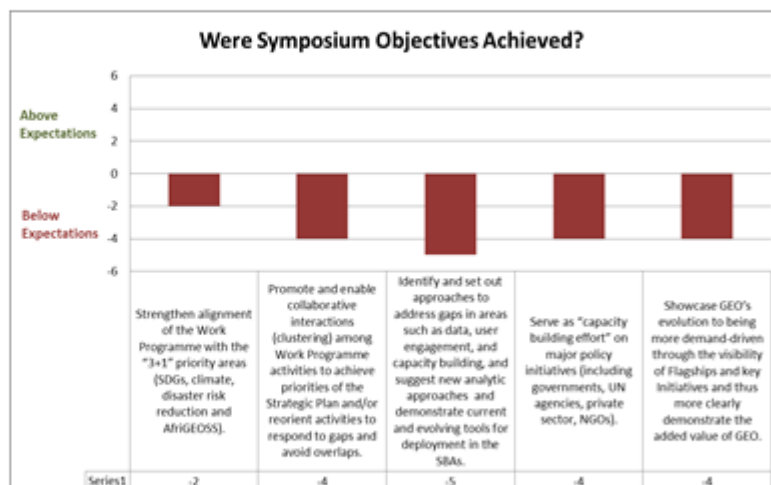
"The Panel discussions should be preceded by asking the audience for feedback first; summarizing this feedback and adding the issues to the panel discussion. Panel discussion was too much between [sic] the panel members and not enough audience participation allowed."



Achievement of Symposium Objectives

There was a general perception that the objectives of the Symposium were not achieved.

While still below expectations, the objective of strengthening Work Programme Alignment with the Engagement Priorities scored best, while the objective of addressing gaps scored worst in terms of meeting expectations.



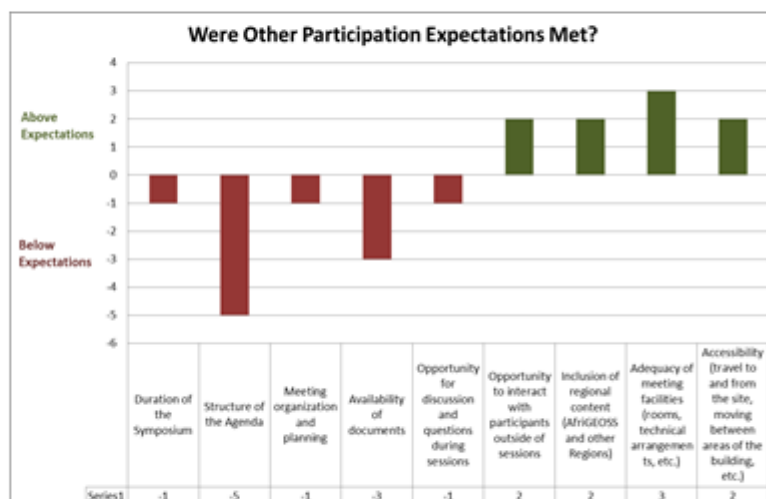
"It is essential to clearly define the role of the WPS in the [GEO Work Programme] process, and shape the WPS Agenda and target audience accordingly. Otherwise it will continue to cause confusion and frustration."



Satisfaction with Other Aspects of the Symposium

Participant expectations were exceeded on opportunities to interact, inclusion of regional content, adequacy of facilities and accessibility of the venue.

Expectations were not met mainly with regard to the structure of the agenda and availability of documents.

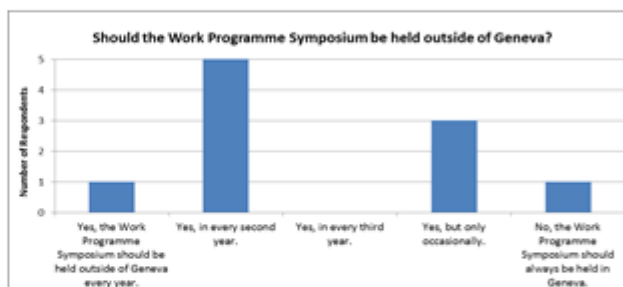




Organization of Future Symposia

Most respondents thought that Work Programme Symposia should be held outside of Geneva, at least occasionally. The most common response was to hold it outside of Geneva every second year.

A majority of respondents also thought it was a good idea to host future Symposia in conjunction with ISRSE or other events.



Other Comments from Respondents

"It was great to have the opportunity to engage in discussions with those who participated in the session."

"Was disappointed with GEO leadership/secretariat's progress on [the] Work [Programme] since Mexico 2015."

"WPSs should be better oriented towards the external world. This WP was too much self-centered..."

"There was no good structure in the Agenda nor enough clarity and preparation of the intended outcomes and target participants. Discussions were held on very different levels. Having it attached with ISRSE makes participation arbitrary."

"Overall, it was too general considerations, lacking concrete future actions"

"Show how all the communities of practice, initiatives and flagships form a bigger whole than the sum of the parts."

"Was a great meeting."

"It is not very clear to me how the WPS is shaping the Work Programme or what the feedback loops between the different management bodies of GEO (Secretariat, ExCom, Programme Board), the different implementation mechanisms and the overall strategic goals are. This also makes it difficult to understand the role and functioning of the WPS as, at least for me, there is no clearly visible path on how the Symposium feeds into the other processes besides personal note taking of Secretariat staff. The outcomes of those meetings are often not very clear."

"The usual place should be Geneva. This saves a lot of money of the GEOSEC, as WPS requires full attention of almost all GEOSEC officers. Occasionally, there might be good reasons for having it somewhere else."

Work Plan/Programme Symposia Participation:

- 2010: 77 (Pretoria);
- 2011: 133;
- 2012: 129;
- 2013: 116;
- 2014: 104;
- 2015: 122;
- 2016: 162 (of which 16 private sector); and
- 2017: 70 (Pretoria)