

GEO Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative Program Board Review Panel
Webex Meeting
Wednesday, May 9, 2018
0800 EDT (GMT-4)
Meeting Notes

Proposed Discussion Topics

1. Brief Review of Policy Context and Initiative Development
2. Brief Review of Components of Initiative
3. Review Panel Comments & Discussion
4. Initiative Anticipated Process to GEO Plenary October
5. Recruitment of Interim Co-chairs
6. Review Panel Next Steps

The call participants were Bill Sonntag and Amos Kabobah. Regrets were received from UNCCD during the hour after an unavoidable conflict and technical difficulties only allowed them to join the webex after the call ended at half past the hour.

Given the one-on-one nature of the call the first two elements of the topic list above were dispensed with.

Amos Kabobah provided the following comments on the text and the Initiative:

- The regional aspect of the Initiative needs to be highlighted – workshops and training for geographical regions will help make sure that individual country ministries participate constructively;
- A more detailed Timeframe For Action during the Initiative is need. It was noted that this might be a very good task for the Interim Implementation Committee to work on between now and October Plenary– on schedule highlight timeline for initiative;
- More specific Communications improving knowledge and understanding of the Initiative should be developed. It was noted that a series of blog posts for the GEO Website should be organized and attention drawn to the new Community Activity page now posted. It was again noted that this could be a task for the Interim Implementation Committee.
- In a brief comment, Dr. Kabobah noted that the text of the Implementation plan as circulated (v14) did not require significant editing in current form.

Initiative Anticipated Process to October Plenary

An invitation email message to GEO Member Countries and select Participating Organizations to participate in the Interim Implementation Committee will go out over Executive Director Barbara Ryan's signature in the next day or two. The distribution list is in part drawn from those that have expressed an interest, provided specific description of contributed activities to date.

At the same time, a difference message to select Participating Organizations with Commercial Sector members will be sent by Barbara/the Secretariat emphasizing interest in Commercial Sector engagement in the Interim committee and the Initiative in general.

Both messages note that the Interim Implementation Committee will meet electronically at least once a month with other calls as needed and interim periods will be occupied by document review and deliberation on specific actions items and organization for the Initiative.

Each of the messages include an invitation to join a face-to-face adhoc organizing meeting the week of the GEO Symposium in Geneva scheduled for the morning of June 13th at the WMO.

It was suggested that the activities of the Programme Board LDN Review Panel will be accomplished via email from this point. The Review Panel is requested to provide written comments on the Implementation Plan by Wednesday, May 16th Close of Business New York time addressed to William Sonntag wsonntag@geosec.org and Douglas Cripe dcripe@geosec.org with a copy to Amos Kabobah at amos.kabobah@uenr.edu.gh

General topics for Review Panel comments discussed included: how the Initiative will integrate with other elements of the GEO Work Programme; management metrics; communications.

This week, the GEO Secretariat was contacted by a representative of ISRIC World Soil Information informing GEO of their intent with co-sponsorship of GIZ to mount a workshop in September in Bonn on LDN Mapping concentrating on giving the opportunity for engagement from the developing world. This contributed effort can become both an element of Initiative development and an illustration of how the GEO Initiative can be a catalyst for action. As it develops, this workshop should be an element of discussion at the GEO Symposium meeting on June 13th.

Recruitment of Interim Co-Chairs

It was noted by the Secretariat that designation/identification of Interim Co-chairs for the period to the GEO Plenary would be helpful to progress and provide champions within the GEO membership. The Secretariat will consult as appropriate with likely and willing candidates. Advice is welcome on this point.

Review Panel Next Steps

Once again, the Review Panel is requested to provide written comments on the Implementation Plan by Wednesday, May 16th Close of Business New York time addressed to William Sonntag wsonntag@geosec.org and Douglas Cripe dcripe@geosec.org with a copy to Amos Kabobah at amos.kabobah@uenr.edu.gh

Any further group deliberations will be at the discretion of the chair and the panel members. An informal discussion during the week of the GEO Symposium could be advisable.