

Draft Terms of Reference for the Sustainable Earth Observations Subgroup

This document is submitted to the Program Board for decision.

1 SCOPE

Integrated in-situ and satellite observing systems could improve knowledge and predictability of globally integrated Earth systems for sustainable development and lead to enhanced socio-economic benefits. In the GEO 2017-2019 Work Programme, two foundational tasks “GEOSS Satellite Earth Observation Resources” and “GEOSS In-situ Earth Observation Resources” are established in order to ensure the long-term availability of the sustained, coordinated, comprehensive Earth observation data that is a critical component of GEOSS and a key enabler of current and future GEO Community Activities, Initiatives and Flagships. At the 8th GEO Programme Board meeting, it was noted that the GEO Work Programme does not adequately address the global coordination of in-situ observations, nor the integrated coordination of in-situ and remotely-sensed observations. The Sustainable Earth Observation (SEO) Subgroup was set up to assess the foundational tasks identified above, to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of observing systems for GEO’s activities over the past decade and to clarify the challenges in coordination of in-situ observations as well as in integrating in-situ and satellite observations toward coordinated observation systems in the future to implement GEOSS.

The Programme Board will regularly monitor and review the activities of the SEO Subgroup.

2 DUTIES

The Subgroup will:

- Assess the progress in the satellite and in situ earth observation foundational tasks, including with respect to supporting GEO’s engagement priorities of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Describe key challenges related to the sustainability and integration of satellite and in situ observing systems.
- Develop options for addressing the identified challenges.

3 DELIVERABLES

The subgroup will prepare a document summarizing the results of its work as described in the section on Duties. A draft of this document will be provided for discussion by the Programme Board at its 14th meeting (June 2019) and a final version will be provided to Programme Board for decision at its 15th meeting (September 2019). If approved, the document would be sent to the GEO Executive Committee for possible consideration by the GEO-XVI Plenary and/or the 2019 Ministerial.

4 MEMBERSHIP

The following Programme Board Members have expressed interest in participating in the SEO Subgroup: Australia (Jonathon Ross), Canada (Cathy Nielsen), Japan (Osamu Ochiai), UK (Stuart Marsh), COSPAR (David Halpern), IOC (Albert Fischer), IAG (Richard Gross, Allison Craddock).

Any serving member of Programme Board is invited to join this Subgroup; additional calls for participation will be held.

5 TERM

The SEO Subgroup will be active until terminated by the Programme Board.

6 MEETINGS

The Subgroup will meet at various times through teleconferencing.

7 LEADERSHIP

The Subgroup will be chaired by David Halpern (COSPAR).

8 REPORTING

The Subgroup will report on work plan progress and deliverables to each Programme Board meeting.

9 SUPPORT AND COORDINATION

The GEO Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Subgroup and will ensure facilitation of contacts with GEO Work Programme activities, and the wider GEO community as needed.

10 RELATED ACTIVITIES IN WORK PROGRAMME

GEOSS Satellite Earth Observation Resources Foundational Task
(<http://www.earthobservations.org/activity.php?id=135>)

GEOSS In-Situ Earth Observation Resources Foundational Task
(<http://www.earthobservations.org/activity.php?id=134>)