GROUP ON EARTH OBSERVATIONS

Rules of Procedure

Updated on 10 November 2016

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Rules of Procedure

1 DEFINITIONS

1.1 ***GEO:*** The intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations, established by the Resolution of the Third Earth Observation Summit in February of 2005, consisting of a Plenary, an Executive Committee, a Programme Board, and a Secretariat.

1.2 ***GEOSS:*** The Global Earth Observation System of Systems.

1.3 ***Strategic Plan:*** the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS*, endorsed by the GEO Mexico City Summit in November 2015.

1.4 ***Plenary:*** The GEO Plenary, the highest decision-making body of GEO, composed of Principals or their Alternates, representing GEO Members and Participating Organizations.

1.5 ***Principal:*** The primary designated representative, at the senior-official level, of a GEO Member or Participating Organization.

1.6 ***Principal Alternate:*** The alternate designated representative, at the senior-official level, of a GEO Member or Participating Organization.

1.7 ***Executive Committee:*** The GEO Executive Committee, composed of representatives from GEO Members Governments.

1.8 ***Secretariat:*** The GEO Secretariat.

1.9 ***Director:*** The Director of the GEO Secretariat.

1.10 ***Programme Board:*** The GEO Programme Board, composed of representatives of GEO Members and Participating Organizations.

1.11 ***GEO Work Programme:*** The primary instrument to plan and implement GEO activities

1.12 ***Task Force/Advisory Group:*** An ad hoc group of the Plenary or of the Executive Committee convened to address a specific topic for limited-time duration.

2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 Governance

- Plenary: The highest decision-making body of GEO is composed of Principals at the senior-official level, or their designated Alternates, representing GEO Members and Participating Organizations.
- Executive Committee: Provides the strategic leadership for GEO when the Plenary is not in session.
- Programme Board: supports the development and implementation of GEO activities by overseeing the establishment of the multi-year GEO Work Programmes.
- Secretariat: facilitates and supports GEO activities and it is accountable to Plenary and to Executive Committee.

Detailed descriptions are found in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

2.2 Implementation Mechanisms

GEO will implement its activities through four Implementation Mechanisms:

- GEO Community Activities, which allow GEO Community to cooperate flexibly in a bottom-up fashion and with a low initiation cost;
- GEO Initiatives, which allow Members and Participating Organizations to coordinate their actions and contributions towards a common objective within an agreed, yet flexible framework;
- GEO Flagships, which allow Members and Participating Organizations with a policy-relevant mandate to spin-up a dedicated operational service serving common needs and/or well-defined user groups; and.
- GEO Foundational Tasks, which allow GEO to implement selected, often enabling, tasks to achieve GEO Strategic Objectives, thus providing important support functions to Flagships, Initiatives, and Community Activities

These four mechanisms provide a framework, which is both flexible and open, enabling the broad and diverse GEO community to work together. Each of the mechanisms serves a different purpose in attaining GEO's Strategic Objectives, allowing activities of different scale and kind to be implemented. Full descriptions are contained in the Strategic Plan and in the Strategic Plan Reference Document.

2.3 The GEO Work Programme

A multi-annual GEO Work Programme, accepted by Plenary, will constitute the primary coordination and planning instrument to assist GEO with the selection and prioritization of its activities. The Work Programme defines the GEO Foundational Tasks as well as describes the plans of GEO Flagships and GEO Initiatives, according to their applicable planning documents, and of GEO Community Activities according to the information provided by the proposing entities.

Details on Work Programme definition and implementation are contained in the Strategic Plan and in the Strategic Plan Reference Document.

2.4 Ethical Standards

GEO is committed to uphold the highest standards of ethics, integrity, accountability and transparency across and throughout the community.

Members, Participating Organizations and the Secretariat Staff involved in GEO activities shall promote a working environment that values respect, fairness, courtesy, honesty, integrity and impartiality. In discharging their functions, all Secretariat Staff and secondees shall respect the requirements of the WMO (host organization) Staff Regulations, the WMO Code of Conduct, the WMO Fraud Prevention Policy and the UN Staff Rules. All GEO Members and Participating Organizations involved in GEO activities shall respect the obligations of the Secretariat in this regard, as well as abide by their respective national or organizational standards.

3 PLENARY

3.1 ***Membership and Participation:*** Membership in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is open to all Member States of the United Nations and to the European Commission. GEO welcomes, as Participating Organizations, intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations, development banks, foundations, non-governmental organizations, and not-for-profit associations of commercial entities with a mandate and/or interest in, or be a user of Earth observations, information or services – that is the full spectrum and/or value chain from data collection to use. GEO also invites other relevant entities to participate in its activities as Observers.

Annex A provides guidance for recognition as Participating Organization or as Observers.

3.2 ***Decisions:*** Plenary decisions will be made by consensus of GEO Members present.

3.3 ***Delegation of powers:*** The GEO Plenary may explicitly and formally delegate decision-making powers to other bodies of the GEO organizational structure and/or other subsidiary bodies as appropriate, in the interest of efficiency and expediency in the implementation of GEO activities.

3.4 ***GEO Co-Chairs:*** Four GEO Members will co-chair meetings of the Plenary and the Executive Committee. The composition of, and method of selection for, the Co-Chairs is provided in Rule 4.5. Between Executive Committee meetings, the Co-Chairs will act on behalf of the Executive Committee and Plenary to provide guidance to the Secretariat, and will report to the Executive Committee and Plenary on actions taken.

3.5 ***Meetings:*** The GEO Plenary will meet at least annually to (at a minimum) adopt the 3-year Work Programmes, their annual updates, and associated budget for the following year, and to review programmatic progress, budgets and financial situation, through reports from the Executive Committee, Programme Board and Secretariat.

3.6 ***Principal and Principal Alternate Designation:*** All GEO Members and Participating Organizations should designate, at the senior-official level, one GEO Principal and not more than two GEO Principal Alternates to represent that Member or Participating Organization in the Plenary, and to receive and submit all official communication to, and from, the Secretariat. A designated GEO Co-Chair will also serve as the GEO Principal on behalf of his or her respective GEO Member. GEO Principals are encouraged to attend each GEO Plenary, and do not serve in their individual institution's capacity but rather as representatives of their entire government or Participating Organization. GEO Principal and Principal Alternate designations, including complete and current contact information are the responsibility of the GEO Principal, and are to be provided to the Secretariat annually.

3.7 ***Official Delegations:*** The GEO Secretariat will issue a call for official delegation lists no later than eight calendar weeks prior to any Plenary meeting. The GEO Principal should submit an official delegation list to the GEO Secretariat no later than four calendar weeks prior to any Plenary meeting. Submission may also be forwarded by means of a Note Verbale to the Secretariat by the Government's Permanent Mission in Geneva. All official delegates should register with the GEO Secretariat no later than two calendar weeks before any Plenary meeting. A roster of registered official delegates will be made available to delegates arriving for the Plenary meeting. On-site registrants will not be included on this list, but included in the final official record of the meeting.

3.8 ***Documents:*** All documents for final decision by Plenary will be released by the Secretariat to GEO Principals for review no later than six calendar weeks in advance of the Plenary meeting where the documents will be formally considered. Documents originating outside the Secretariat should be provided to the Secretariat at least seven calendar weeks prior to the Plenary meeting. No documents may be considered unless circulated by the Secretariat to all GEO Principals.

3.9 ***Reports:*** The Secretariat will produce a draft summary of Plenary proceedings including decisions, actions, and timelines for completing actions, and disseminate it to GEO Principals no later than four calendar weeks following each Plenary meeting. Based on comments and corrections received, the Secretariat will prepare a draft report for distribution to the entire GEO community no later than eight calendar weeks following each Plenary meeting.

4 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4.1 ***Function:*** Ensure the efficient conduct of GEO business and provide strategic leadership between meetings of the Plenary.

4.2 ***Duties:*** Acting by consensus, the Executive Committee will:

a. Maintain the policy framework set by the GEO Plenary, within which the organization, including the Secretariat, will execute the strategy and advance the objectives set forth by the Plenary;

b. Facilitate the decisions of the Plenary by identifying and framing issues for appropriate Plenary action. The Executive Committee will conduct initial considerations and discussions of the issues, and subsequently develop papers and/or recommendations for discussion by Plenary. The basis for discussions at the Executive Committee, and subsequently by the Plenary, will be the reports of the GEO Programme Board, the Secretariat, and other Task Force or Advisory Groups of GEO that may be established by Plenary, as well as discussion topics introduced at the initiative of Members;

c. Oversee the effectiveness of GEO's governance and recommend revisions to the Rules of Procedure, as appropriate

d. Supervise the work of the Director and ensure that it is consistent with the direction received from Plenary;

e. Examine the annual budget in preparation for its presentation to Plenary;

f. Report in writing, at least annually, to GEO Plenary;

g. Authorize signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between organizations;

h. Act upon requests for recognition of Participating Organization and Observers and inform Plenary of their action;

i. Establish advisory groups to address specific topics as needed, and

j. Undertake such other tasks as may be delegated to the Executive Committee by the Plenary.

4.3 ***Membership:*** The Executive Committee members are a representative sub-set from the membership of the GEO Caucuses. The Executive Committee will consist of 16 GEO Members based on the following geographic distribution: Africa (3), Americas (3), Asia and Oceania (4), CIS (2), and Europe (4). Individuals serving on the Executive Committee do not serve in their individual capacity but as Member representatives.

4.4 ***Observers:*** Three (3) Participating Organizations, who are also members of the Programme Board, will be invited to participate as observers in the discussions of the Executive Committee.

4.5 ***Co-Chairs:*** Four Executive Committee Members will serve collectively as Co-Chairs of the Plenary and the Executive Committee, with two Co-Chairs representing developed countries andtwo Co-Chairs representing developing countries. One Co-Chair will serve as lead to guide the discussion for each meeting. The lead Co-Chair will rotate among the Co-Chairs as agreed by the Co-Chairs.

4.6 ***Selection:*** Executive Committee Members, including those Members serving as Co-Chairs, will be nominated through regional caucuses. Based on the conclusions of the regional caucuses and further consultations as necessary, the Director will present a slate of nominees, including those nominated to serve as Co-Chairs, to the Plenary for its approval. Upon approval, Executive Committee members will serve a term of up to two years. The process will be guided by the following principles: (1) preserving sufficient continuity in the Executive Committee's membership; (2) ensuring sufficient opportunity for participation of GEO Members in the Executive Committee by rotation; (3) preserving the balance of developed and developing countries at the level of the Co-chairs. If a Member chooses not to complete his or her term of service, then the regional caucus may select another Member to represent it in the Executive Committee to complete the remaining term of service.

4.7 ***Decisions:*** Executive Committee decisions will be made by consensus of the GEO Members of the Executive Committee present.

4.8 ***Meetings:*** The GEO Executive Committee will meet at least annually and may hold additional meetings as agreed by the Executive Committee. ***Documents:*** The GEO Secretariat will prepare all documents for the Executive Committee's consideration and will release them to all GEO Members and Participating Organizations for information at least two calendar weeks prior to any Executive Committee meeting. The GEO Co-Chairs will approve draft Executive Committee agendas.

4.9 ***Reports:*** The Secretariat will release a preliminary report of Executive Committee proceedings to the Members of the Executive Committee within two calendar weeks and to the full GEO community no later than six calendar weeks following the Executive Committee meeting.

5 GEO PROGRAMME BOARD

5.1 ***Function:*** The GEO Programme Board supports the on-going development and implementation of the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016 – 2025: Implementing GEOSS* through multi-year GEO Work Programmes.

Specifically, the GEO Programme Board:

- Works to ensure the overall coherence and alignment of the GEO Work Progammes with GEO's Strategic Objectives and Core Functions;
- Works to align the scope and substance of tasks, GEO Initiatives and Flagships in the GEO Work Programme with the resources committed by Members and Participating Organizations;
- Supports and enables cross-cutting coordination and knowledge exchange, especially best practices; and
- Promotes GEO Work Programmes and engagement of stakeholders in their implementation.

5.2 ***Duties:*** The GEO Programme Board will:

a. Review the scope and substance of activities proposed for the multi-year GEO Work Programme;

b. Review the progress of GEO Foundational Tasks, Initiatives and Flagships;

c. Recommend GEO Work Programmes (GEO Initiatives, Flagships, and Foundational Tasks) for Plenary acceptance; including assessing whether resources committed are commensurate to the activities scoped for inclusion in the Work Programme;

d. Examine proposed Implementation Plans for GEO Initiatives and take decisions to accept new ones;

e. Provide high-level recommendations to the Executive Committee;

f. Nominate Participating Organization observers to the Executive Committee;

g. Establish sub-groups to address specific topics as needed; and

h. Undertake such other tasks as may be delegated to the Programme Board by the Executive Committee or the Plenary.

i.

5.3 ***Membership:*** The GEO Programme Board comprises persons serving as members[1] from GEO Members and from Participating Organisations who are appointed by the Plenary. The Secretariat will propose a slate of between 16 and 32 candidates to the Executive Committee, which will review all nominations and recommend a slate of Programme Board members for appointment by the Plenary. The Executive Committee will ensure that there is a balance in the membership of the Programme Board. Programme Board members and their alternates are expected to take a broad, comprehensive perspective of GEO, working constructively towards common objectives. A Call for Nominations will be issued by the GEO Secretariat at least 3 months prior to the end of the Programme Board members' term as defined in 5.4, and may be issued on an as needed basis when one or more vacancies occur during a term.

The GEO Programme Board will number no fewer than 16 and no more than 32 members. At least 40% of Programme Board members will be from GEO Members and at least 40% will be from Participating Organizations.

5.4 ***Term:*** The Programme Board will be active for the full duration of the GEO Strategic Plan 2016 – 2025: Implementing GEOSS.

[1] Each person on the Programme Board is a representative of a GEO Member or a GEO Participating Organization and a member of the Programme Board. The Programme Board co-chairs, working with Programme Board members, are Programme Board representatives.

5.4.1 Nominations – GEO Member and Participating Organization Principals nominate representatives to the Programme Board; therefore, nominations are made at the discretion of the Member or Participating Organization.

5.4.2 Nominations may include a single principal, or a principal and up to two alternates. Nominees are requested to provide a short biography with their nomination.

5.4.3 Length of Term – Programme Board members and their alternates serve simultaneously for up to three years. Programme Board members and their alternates may be re-nominated by their Principal.

5.4.4 To assure retention of knowledge and continuity on the Programme Board, nominations will be held annually for 1/3 of the Programme Board member positions.

5.4.5 To initiate the process defined in 5.4.3, at the beginning of the 2017, the Programme Board members, including co-chairs, will be assigned a term end date by lottery – either 2017, 2018 or 2019.

5.4.6 If a member has not participated in 3 consecutive Programme Board meetings and has not been active in sub-groups, their term can be terminated early by the Executive Committee on advice from Programme Board Co-chairs.

5.5 ***Alternate members:*** In the absence of the principal member, an alternate member may participate and vote on the member's behalf. If both the member and alternates attend a meeting, which can be desirable to promote continuity and additional input, they may participate in discussion as long as their input is coordinated. Alternates may be appointed by the Programme Board to participate in and / or co-chair sub-groups of the Programme Board.

5.6 ***Decision:*** The Programme Board works by consensus taking into account decisions taken previously in the Programme Board or in other GEO governance structures. In the spirit of GEO being open, inclusive and transparent, consensus is reached when there is no strong objection from a Programme Board member to the question before the Programme Board. In cases where strong objections are not able to be addressed (despite best endeavours), issues may be brought forward to the Executive Committee for resolution. At least 50% attendance is required for quorum. With repeated failure to reach quorum, the Programme Board co-chairs may request the Executive Committee to draw additional members from the list of proposed nominees to replace inactive Programme Board members, or call for additional nominations.

5.7 ***Meetings:*** The Programme Board meets physically at least twice per annum. Meetings are generally held at the GEO Secretariat for convenience. Other meetings, including through electronic means, may be convened by the Programme Board or sub-group co-chairs. Meeting documents will be available at least four weeks prior to a meeting to allow the required national/internal consultation processes to occur.

5.8 ***Leadership:*** The Programme Board will elect by vote (see Annex F) three Programme Board members to serve as co-chairs. At least one co-chair should come from a GEO Member and one from Participating Organization nominees. Co-chairs serve for a term of up to three years and may be renewed.

5.9 ***Reporting:*** The Programme Board will post a report on the GEO website within two weeks of each meeting held, including a list of all participants and key outcomes. In addition, Programme Board co-chairs will report to the Plenary, and will also deliver regular progress reports to the Executive Committee.

5.10 ***Funding:*** Each Programme Board member and alternates will be responsible for their own costs connected with participation in Programme Board activities. In specific, exceptional circumstances, participation in Programme Board activities may be supported from the GEO Trust Fund, subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources, and agreement of the Executive Committee.

5.11 ***Support and Coordination:*** The Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Programme Board. The activities of the Programme Board will be closely coordinated with the Secretariat and other GEO entities to maintain consistency with the approved GEO Strategic Plan, and to maximize the effectiveness of GEO and the implementation of GEOSS.

6 GEO SECRETARIAT

6.1 ***Function:*** The Secretariat, led by the Director, will facilitate and support all GEO activities. The Secretariat will primarily consist of co-located, well-qualified staff.

6.1 ***Secretariat Director:*** GEO Secretariat Director Terms of Reference and Recruiting Procedures are defined in Annex B

6.2 ***Duties:*** The Secretariat will:

a. Prepare and submit, for Plenary approval, the necessary documentation for the efficient and effective functioning of GEO, including programmatic, budgetary and financial reports;

b. Initiate the development of the GEO Work Programmes and support the Programme Board with Work Programme finalization;

c. Support the implementation of the GEO Work Programme, including playing a central role in supporting and implementing the Foundational Tasks and performing sound execution of budget expenditure;

d. Pursue activities to identify and secure funds for GEO activities and Secretariat operations in accordance with the direction of GEO;

e. Identify staffing and other resources necessary to support the GEO Work Programmes, develop indicators for Secretariat performance, and report to the Executive Committee and Plenary on Secretariat performance against indicators;

f. Facilitate overall cooperation and liaise with GEO Members and Participating Organizations, and other programmes and bodies as appropriate to support the work of GEO, with particular emphasis on existing systems and Earth observation coordination mechanisms;

g. Oversee the implementation of the GEO engagement and communication strategy as outlined in the Strategic Plan and in the Strategic Plan Reference document; specific criteria for engaging the private sector in the GEOSS implementation are defined in Annex C;

h. Inform Plenary and the Executive Committee of current and planned specific engagement activities in line with the agreed GEO Engagement and Communication Strategy.

i. Initiate and support the GEO Monitoring and Evaluation activities, including performing annual Monitoring, as outlined in the Strategic Plan Reference Document;

j. Compile an annual Progress Report on all activities, drawing on available reports of the GEO Flagships, GEO Initiatives, GEO Foundational Tasks and, to the best of its knowledge, of GEO Community Activities, here included execution of annual budget expenditures;

k. Organize, prepare, and support meetings and other work of the GEO Plenary, Executive Committee, and Programme Board and Task Forces/Advisory groups, as appropriate;

l. Organize GEOSS user and other GEO Community fora as required in coordination with the Programme Board as appropriate;

m. Conduct the day-to-day administrative activities of the Secretariat; and

n. Carry out additional duties as required by the GEO Plenary or Executive Committee.

7 GEO TASK FORCES

7.1 ***Purpose and Function:*** The GEO Plenary and the Executive Committee may establish Task Forces to address aspects of GEO Strategic Plan implementation and provide a mechanism for GEO Members and Participating Organizations to engage fully in the work of GEO..

7.2 ***Duration and Terms of Reference:*** The Plenary and the Executive Committee may establish and develop terms of reference for Task Forces, ensuring consistency with the Organizational Structure and Implementation arrangements defined in Chapter 2 and defining duration and expected outputs. Once established, their Terms of Reference are appended to these Rules of Procedure.

7.3 ***Funding:*** Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from Task Forces activities will be borne by the Member or Participating Organization that incurs them, and will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.

7.4 ***Support and Coordination:*** The Secretariat will provide administrative support to Task as stipulated in their Terms of Reference.

8 GEO RESOURCES, TRUST FUND AND FINANCES

8.1 ***GEO resources:*** Contributions may be in-kind or cash, and may be designated for GEO implementation activities, in accordance with the Implementation Mechanisms where resources committed are commensurate with the type of action; or for the GEO Trust Fund, administered by the GEO Secretariat and supporting, as decided by Plenary, the GEO Foundational Tasks, specifically-earmarked GEO Flagships, and the operations of the GEO Secretariat.

8.2 ***Trust Fund Establishment:*** The ad hoc Group on Earth Observations at its sixth session (Brussels, Belgium 14-15 February 2005) decided to enter into a Standing Arrangement between GEO and

the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which arranges for the GEO Secretariat to be located at the WMO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In order to provide for a mechanism for GEO to support the GEO Secretariat and other GEO activities as approved by the GEO Plenary, GEO also agreed to undertake steps to create a GEO-WMO Trust Fund to support the work of GEO. (See GEO-WMO Trust Fund Terms of Reference, Annex D).

8.3 ***Finances:*** The Work Programme and associated annual budget produced by the Secretariat will detail all operating expenses for the coming year, and will contain provisions for monitoring and execution of the budget throughout the year. Indicative budgets shall also be provided for a further two years. The Secretariat will report at each Executive Committee and Plenary meeting on the progress of budget execution, including income and expenditures. In case of sensible variations on the income, priorities for the expenditure of GEO funds will be devoted to cover approved Secretariat staff salaries and benefits. The Executive Committee will provide guidance on the priorities on the Foundational Tasks so that the Secretariat can revise the plans for the year and produce a revised version of the budget.

8.4 ***Solvency and Audit:*** The Secretariat shall maintain solvency at all times. No expenditure may be authorized in the absence of available funds. Notwithstanding the principle of a single external auditor of WMO, GEO may engage independent financial reviews of the GEO budget against expenditures.

8.5 ***Revenue Continuity:*** GEO Members and Participating Organizations will endeavour to provide assured multi-year revenue for the Secretariat to maintain approved staff levels and continuity of Secretariat operations, subject to the budget systems and cycles of GEO Members and Participating Organizations. Additional contributions may be earmarked for specific purposes and special projects.

8.6 ***Surplus Funds:*** Surplus funds remaining in the GEO Trust Fund at the end of the calendar year will be transferred to the Working Capital Fund (WCF) (capped at 1M CHF) and then made available for the following year unless otherwise restricted by the donor. In the event the GEO Trust Fund is dissolved, any remaining funds will be dispersed under the terms of the GEO Trust Fund Terms of Reference.

Terms of Reference and Rules for the Trust Fund are detailed in Annex D.

9 EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENT

9.1 ***Effective Date:*** These Rules of Procedure will take effect immediately upon adoption.

9.2 ***Amendment:*** These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Plenary at any meeting. Proposals to amend these rules of procedure should be submitted to the Secretariat at least eight calendar weeks prior to the Plenary meeting at which the amendment will be considered.

ANNEX A: Draft Guidance for Recognition of New GEO Participating Organizations and Observers

Entities requesting official recognition as a GEO Participating Organization or Observer will be considered based on the following guidelines:

1 Membership in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is open to all member States of the United Nations and to the European Commission. GEO welcomes, as Participating Organizations, intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations, development banks, foundations, non-governmental organizations, and not-for-profit associations of commercial entities with a mandate and/or interest in, or be a user of Earth observations, information or services – that is the full spectrum and/or value chain from data collection to use. Acceptance is subject to approval by Executive Committee.

2 The difference between Participating Organization and Observer Status is largely based on the level of involvement in GEO. Participating Organizations are eligible to serve on the Programme Board, and may join any of the Working Groups or Task Forces that coordinate and conduct GEO's work. Observers, on the other hand, may only attend Plenaries to observe and monitor GEO proceedings. Acceptance of Observers is also subject to approval by Executive Committee.

3 The Participating Organization applicant must identify their proposed contribution to GEO, including, but not limited to, involvement in the GEO Work Programme, and/or the function performed by the organization that would benefit the broader GEO community. Examples include capacity building, data sharing, programme development, training and education, and communication and outreach. Applicants must endorse the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS. Independent recognition of sub-programmes or subgroups of currently recognized Participation Organizations are generally discouraged from seeking independent recognition. Generally, the parent organization is considered sufficient. In selected instances, and if a compelling argument is presented as to why separate participation is being sought, applications will be considered.

4 Joint programmes (programmes established under the auspices of two or more recognized Participating Organizations) may be designated by the Executive Committee as a separate Participating Organization or Observer.

5 The Executive Committee will consider applications received and reviewed by the Secretariat and make the final decision on the approval of the requests for Participating Organization and Observer status according to the above criteria. The Executive Committee, supported by the Secretariat, may make direct contact with POs to encourage active participation..

6 The Plenary will recognize Participating Organizations and Observers at its earliest session.

ANNEX A - Appendix 1: Participating Organizations

Note to Organizations Requesting Recognition as a Participating Organization in GEO

GEO welcomes, as Participating Organizations, intergovernmental, international and regional organizations, development banks, foundations, non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit associations of commercial entities with a mandate or interest in, or be a user of Earth observations, information, and/or services – that is the full spectrum and/or value chain from data collection to use.

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is coordinating efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). It is a partnership of governments and Participating Organizations that provides a flexible action-oriented framework for developing new activities, tasks, initiatives, and partnerships across GEO's Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs).

Opportunities and benefits of joining GEO include: fostering partnerships (new contacts and collaborations); launching regional and/or global initiatives; providing access to data (making more data available on an "open data" basis); increasing numbers and diversity of users of Earth observations; building capacity throughout the world; increasing visibility and high-level support for sustained Earth observations and leveraging funding for activities nationally, regionally and globally. The procedure to join GEO is as follows:

To be recognized as a Participating Organization of GEO, entities must send a letter to the GEO Secretariat, requesting formal recognition as a GEO Participating Organization. This letter must identify the proposed contributions to GEO, including, but not limited to, involvement in the GEO Work Programme, and/or the function performed by the organization that would benefit the broader GEO community. Examples include capacity building, data sharing, programme development, training and education, and communication and outreach. Applicants must endorse the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS*. The Strategic Plan can be found at: http://www.earthobservations.org/index.html

The GEO Executive Committee will act upon requests for recognition received by the Secretariat and will annually inform Plenary of their actions.

A letter of interest and online application should be sent to:

The Secretariat Director
GEO Secretariat
7, bis avenue de la Paix,
Case postale 2300
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

ANNEX A - Appendix 2: Observers in GEO

Note to Organizations Requesting Recognition as Observer

GEO welcomes, as Observers, intergovernmental, international and regional organizations, development banks, foundations, non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit associations of commercial entities with a mandate or interest in, or being a user of Earth observations, information, and/or services – that is, the entire spectrum or value-chain from data collection to use.

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is coordinating efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). It is a voluntary partnership of governments and Participating Organizations that provides a flexible action-oriented framework for developing new activities, tasks, initiatives, and partnerships across GEO's Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs).

Opportunities and benefits of joining GEO include: fostering partnerships (new contacts and collaborations); launching regional and/or global initiatives; providing access to data (making more data available on an "open data" basis); increasing numbers and diversity of users of Earth observations; building capacity throughout the world; increasing visibility and high-level support for sustained Earth observations and leveraging funding for activities nationally, regionally and globally.

The procedure to join GEO is as follows:

To be recognized as an Observer of GEO, entities must send a letter to the GEO Secretariat, requesting formal recognition as an Observer, and a completed application, acknowledging that you are familiar with the Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS. The Strategic Plan can be found at: http://www.earthobservations.org/index.html

The GEO Executive Committee will act upon requests for recognition received by the Secretariat, and will annually inform Plenary of their actions.

A letter of interest, acknowledging familiarity with the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS* should be sent to:

The Secretariat Director
GEO Secretariat
7, bis avenue de la Paix,
Case postale 2300
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

ANNEX A - Appendix 3: Members, Participating Organizations, Observers (based on GEO founding documents)

Category	Pre-requisite	Request for status	Approve	Participation in Plenary	Participation in Executive Committee	Participation in Programme Board & WGs	Contribution to Work Programme	Contribution to the GEO Trust fund
Members	Member States of the United Nations + the European Commission	Membership and Participation is contingent upon formal endorsement of Implementation Plan.	N/A	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Participating Organizations	Intergovernmental, international and regional organizations, development banks, foundations, non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit associations of commercial entities with a mandate or interest in, or being a user of Earth observations, information, and/or services.	Membership and Participation is contingent upon formal Endorsement of the Implementation Plan.	Executive Committe	YES	If member of, and nominated by, Programme Board	YES	YES	YES
Observers	Member States of the United Nations + Intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations	Provide a letter of request, stating the rationale for the request	N/A for Countries	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Private sector entities	TBD	TBD	TBD	Invitation only	NO	NO	YES	YES

ANNEX B: GEO Secretariat Director Terms of Reference and Recruiting Procedures

Authority

1. GEO Rules of Procedure 3.3 establish the authority of the Plenary to delegate authority to the Executive Committee, including that pertaining to the supervision of the GEO Director.

   3.2 ***Duties:*** Acting by consensus, the Executive Committee will:

   b. Supervise the work of the Director and ensure that it is consistent with the direction received by the Plenary;

   h. Undertake other such tasks as may be delegated to the Executive Committee by the Plenary.

2. The Group on Earth Observations at its first session (Geneva, Switzerland 3-4 May 2005) created the Executive Committee and authorized the Executive Committee to recruit and select the Director and approve interim staff, including secondments. GEO also agreed that the WMO Secretary-General will appoint the Director as a WMO staff member.

3. The Third Plenary Meeting of the Group on Earth Observations (Bonn, Germany 28-29 November 2006) noted that the GEO Secretariat was to remain being filled by its Director and staff. GEO affirmed delegation of authority to the Executive Committee to ensure continuity of Secretariat operations and functioning.

4. The Standing Arrangement between WMO and GEO states that the GEO Secretariat Director is selected by, and under the management authority, of GEO while under the administrative authority of the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It does not detail the process of recruitment, selection, renewal, or term of the Director. It does provide language affirming the applicability of WMO Staff and Financial Regulations.

Procedures

- The Director may serve a maximum of three three-year terms[2];
- Allowing sufficient time, the Executive Committee shall establish a selection panel (the Panel) to oversee the selection of the Director. The Panel shall be open to all Members of the Executive Committee;
- The Panel may recommend to the Executive Committee to re-appoint the incumbent Director for a second term without further competition. The Executive Committee should approve such a recommendation through unanimous consent, no less than nine months before the end of a Director's term;

[2] Current WMO procedures limit positions below DG to a 2-year term; an exception to this limit has been established with respect to the GEO Secretariat Director position.

- If the Panel recommends opening the selection process to competition, then the Panel will oversee the announcement of the position, the review of the candidates, the interview process and the ultimate selection and recommendation to the Executive Committee;
- A Director who wishes to serve a third term shall take part in the open competition;
- The final decision of the Executive Committee on the selection of the Director will be made no less than six months before the end of a Director's term and passed to the WMO Secretary General for formal appointment;
- In the event that the post of Director becomes vacant before the term expires, the Executive Committee will appoint an Acting Director, whose term of office shall not extend beyond the tenure of the incumbent Director.

ANNEX C: Engaging the Private Sector in the Implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)

Guidelines

Introduction

Since the establishment of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), the GEO community has recognized the value of engaging the private sector in the development and utilisation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). This stems from an understanding that both the public and private sector benefit from increased data sharing and the exploitation of integrated Earth observations for the provision of societal benefits.

The following guidelines have been developed to encourage further private sector engagement in GEOSS, while preserving the public good dimension of GEOSS and the principle of full and open data exchange.

Guidelines

1. When partnering with private sector entities, the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, as set out in the Strategic Plan, will be followed;
2. GEO Members and Participating Organizations are encouraged to invite private sector entities to participate in the implementation of GEOSS through the GEO Work Programme, establishing appropriate arrangements in accordance with the established procedures of their individual organizations, including public-private partnerships;
3. When engaging with the private sector, GEO Members and Participating Organizations will respect their mandates and established procedures regarding transparency and competition in contracting;
4. GEO Members and Participating Organizations are encouraged to develop and organize private sector engagement events at the regional and national levels;
5. Private sector engagement in the implementation of the GEO Work Programme will be managed primarily by individual GEO Members and Participating Organizations, according to the established procedures of those GEO Members and Participating Organizations;
6. The GEO Secretariat is encouraged to organize international forums, or expositions, in collaboration with the private sector, for example in conjunction with the GEO Plenary and the GEO Work Programme Symposium, and to facilitate dialogue among private sector entities and the GEO Work Programme participants;
7. The GEO Secretariat may negotiate terms and conditions based on the guidance provided by the GEO Executive Committee, and subject to the Executive Committee's review, under which private sector entities may make contributions to GEO.

ANNEX D: GEO-WMO Trust Fund

Terms of Reference and Rules

Introduction and Purpose of the Fund

1 The Fifty-Sixth Session of the WMO Executive Council in its Resolution 9 (EC-LVI) authorized the WMO Secretary General to confirm to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) strong support for the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS) concept; to work closely with his counterpoints in the other Earth-observing United Nations agencies and programmes to ensure an effectively coordinated United Nations system role in the implementation of GEOSS; and to indicate WMO readiness to host the GEO Secretariat;

2 The ad hoc Group on Earth Observations at its sixth session (Brussels, Belgium 14-15 February 2005) finalized the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation plan. At the sixth session, GEO agreed to enter into a Standing Arrangement between GEO and WMO and to arrange for a GEO Secretariat to be located at WMO. In order to provide for a mechanism for GEO to fund the GEO Secretariat and GEO activities, GEO also agreed to undertake steps to create a GEO-WMO Trust Fund to support the work of GEO/GEOSS. The Third Earth Observation Summit (Brussels, Belgium 16 February 2005) established the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and endorsed the GEOSS Ten-Year Implementation Plan, and instructed GEO to take those steps necessary to implement GEOSS in accordance with its implementation plan;

3 The primary purpose of the GEO-WMO Trust Fund will be to support the direct and indirect costs of GEO/GEOSS and its Secretariat as well as related GEO activities. The full cost of the GEO Secretariat contains direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are those directly attributable to the GEO Secretariat, such as salaries of GEO Secretariat staff, travel expenses by GEO Secretariat staff, cost of equipment used by GEO Secretariat staff. The direct costs of the GEO Secretariat shall be covered by GEO. Indirect costs are those incurred by WMO for the provision of administrative services to GEO. As a principle, WMO shall not charge GEO for the total indirect costs, but rather for the incremental costs only. The incremental costs of administrative services provided by WMO to GEO shall be identified in a Service Level Arrangement to be concluded between GEO and WMO;

4 The GEO-WMO Trust Fund will also be used to accomplish GEO/GEOSS objectives and goals through the preparation of necessary studies, reports and relevant materials, the use of consultants to assist the GEO Secretariat, and other activities relevant to the GEO/GEOSS as approved by the GEO Plenary;

5 The Trust Fund will be established from voluntary cash contributions from GEO Members, Participating Organizations and other Entities involved in Earth observations, grants, donations, funds deposited for specific purposes, hereafter referred to as deposits, and other contributions. Contributions shall be normally made in Swiss Francs or any other convertible currency;

Administration of the Fund

1 Financial arrangements for administration of the Fund are specified in: (1) the GEO-WMO Standing Arrangement; (2) the WMO Financial Rules and Regulations; (3) delegations of responsibility from the Secretary-General to the GEO Director;

2 The accounting of the expenditures of the Fund shall be as provided for in paragraph 6 above, including any other directly identifiable charges related to the administration of the Fund. No additional programme support cost charges will be incurred. The interest accrued from any investment of the principal of the Fund will constitute an income to the Fund;

3 The Fund shall be maintained on a continuous basis and amounts standing to the credit of the Fund at the end of any annual period shall remain in the Fund for use in the subsequent period;

4 Financial reports on the Fund will be made in Swiss Francs. The United Nations rate of exchange prevailing on the date of the transaction or report will apply for the conversion into Swiss Francs of contributions or income received and payments made or charges incurred in any other currency. The GEO Director shall submit a financial report, annually, to Trust Fund contributors, to the GEO Executive Committee, and report to Plenary on the overall use of the Fund;

5 External audit will be conducted as provided for in the WMO Financial Regulations;

6 At the closure of the Fund, any cash balance of the Fund will be returned to the contributors, based on the ratio of their contribution to the total fund in the immediately preceding year.

Procedures for the utilization of the Fund

1 The utilization of the Fund shall be based upon a general budget prepared by the GEO Secretariat for each calendar year and approved by the Plenary in the preceding year and will reflect contributions pledged at, or before, that Plenary meeting. These contributions will be referred to as "pledged contributions."

2 Subsequent contributions pledged and received during the calendar year will be referred to as "additional contributions" and will be reported in the quarterly financial update;

3 In the event that all pledged contributions are received, additional contributions, unless otherwise specified by the donor, will be carried forward to the budget for the following calendar year;

4 In the event that some portion of the pledged contributions is not received by the Secretariat within the calendar year, the Secretariat will use additional contributions to maintain a balanced budget, and will report this adjustment in the final annual report of resources and expenditures;

5 If the donor requires its additional contribution be used to finance specific additional activities within the current calendar year, the Secretariat will produce a revised budget including these activities, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Plenary. For all specific activities, the Secretariat will provide to the donor a detailed statement of expenditure incurred in undertaking the activity;

6 The Secretariat will operate under the approved budget for the calendar year;

7 Day-to-day spending decisions shall be by the GEO Secretariat Director;

8 The GEO Director will not enter into any financial commitments unless he/she has received the funds required.

Legal responsibilities

1 Under no circumstances will the Fund be made liable to pay and/or reimburse any taxes on emoluments or honorarium, or any customs and import duties, value added taxes or similar charges. If applicable, these will be payable by the beneficiaries of the support provided.

ANNEX E: Budget Working Group

Terms of Reference and Rules

1 Purpose

1.1 The Budget Working Group will provide relevant and timely advice to the Executive Committeeregarding the budget and resourcing of the GEO Secretariat.

2 Objectives

2.1 To provide general direction on budget formulation, taking into account standards followed by similar international initiatives;

2.2 To provide overall guidance on the management of the GEO Trust Fund;

2.3 To assess the resourcing strategy and associated budget for alignment with GEO strategic objectives, and identify potential risks;

2.4 To review formulation of the operating budget, including preliminary (indicative) budgets for each of the next two years;

2.5 Provide timely advice on the presentation of the operating budget for adoption at Plenary.

3 Membership

2.6 Working Group members serve at the will of their organizations and, therefore, their tenure on the Working Group will be determined by their GEO Principal;

2.7 Organizations, through the GEO Principal, are invited – on a rolling basis – to nominate asingle representative to the Working Group;

2.8 Membership to the Working Group is open to Participating Organizations that contribute to the GEO Trust Fund with either Cash Contributions or In-kind contributions, as long as these contributions are listed within the GEO Secretariat Budget.

4 Approach and function

2.9 Review and provide advice to the Executive Committee, on the progress of budget execution, including income and expenditure, on an annual basis. This may include, as appropriate and at the request of the Executive Committee, negotiations of budget projections and requests, and suggestions on appropriate ways and means to realize projections;

2.10 In collaboration with the Secretariat, annually review the resourcing strategy and preliminary budget for presentation at Plenary;

2.11 In collaboration with the Secretariat, as necessary, determine a strategy for optimizing the allocation of the Secretariat resources on the basis of prioritization of Foundational Tasks and, as applicable, other established Work Programme requirements;

2.12 Provide feedback and advice to the Secretariat and the Executive Committee, regarding the efforts to identify, mobilize and secure resources from existing and new sources in order to meet the short-term and long-term financial commitments and strategic resourcing plan of the GEO Secretariat.

ANNEX F: Programme Board co-chair

Voting Procedure

The following voting procedure will apply to the Programme Board co-chair selection process:

- Vacant Programme Board co-chair positions will be filled at the next Programme Board meeting, as the first order of business;
- Programme Board members will be invited to provide to the current co-chairs (or to the Secretariat Director if all co-chair positions are vacant) nominations for a vacant position. Consistent with the Terms of References (Section 5.7), these nominations should be made at least four weeks prior to a Board meeting;
- To ensure compliance with Section 5.8, nominations may only be submitted by either a Member or Participating Organization, and only members from the relevant type of organization will be eligible for nomination;
- Nominees will be invited to make a three-minute statement about their candidacy. Other members present may then ask questions;
- Before a ballot begins, the number of voters will be clarified and announced. All Programme Board members may vote for all co-chair positions, without distinction of their provenance, either GEO Member or Participating Organization;
- A secret ballot will then be conducted. If multiple co-chair vacancies exist, voting will be conducted for each vacancy in sequential rounds;
- Each member will be allocated one vote for each round of voting. A nominating member may vote for themselves;
- For each round of voting, votes will then be tallied. The nominee with the most votes who represents an organization which, consistent with Section 5.8, is eligible to fill the vacancy will be selected; and
- Where the number of votes is tied for a particular vacant position, a tie-breaker round of voting will be undertaken. If three rounds of voting results in a tie, then a member of the GEO Secretariat will flip a coin to decide. The tie-breaking procedure will not be necessary if there are multiple vacant co-chair positions and all tied nominees can be appointed to vacant positions in a manner consistent with Section 5.8.

The voting process will be overseen by the Secretariat.