



GROUP ON
EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO-VII

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GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan
Development Process and Schedule

Document 10

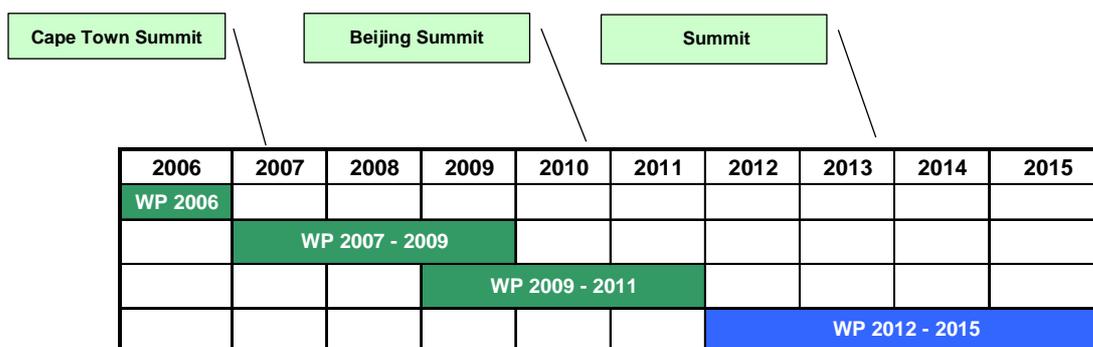
As accepted at GEO-VII.

GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan Development Process and Schedule

The preparation of the next GEO Work Plan will be an opportunity to build upon the achievements of 2005-2010 and the outcomes of the Beijing 2010 Ministerial Summit. It will also be a major challenge, driving GEO towards completion of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. The present document describes the proposed scope, process and schedule for developing the next Work Plan.

1 THE 2012-2015 WORK PLAN

A new Work Plan will be developed next year to succeed the 2009-2011 Work Plan. Among various time-period options, this new Work Plan will cover the 2012-2015 time-period. The proposed duration should optimize conditions for the preparation of the next GEO Ministerial Summit, with two years of implementation leading into the Summit (likely to be held in 2013, see figure), and no diversion related to a new Work Plan development the year of the Summit.



GEO Work Plan Past, Present and Future

The 2012-2015 Work Plan will take GEO to the end of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan and will, as such, fully address the Strategic Targets accepted by the GEO-VI Plenary. This will imply addressing a number of challenges such as the implementation of an operational and sustainable GEOSS Common Infrastructure offering full and open access to products and services across the nine Societal Benefit Areas. Observation systems also (including observing, modelling, information and dissemination systems) will have to become fully interoperable, turning into end-to-end systems that deliver tailored services to society. Completing the 10-Year Implementation Plan will also connote a new phase for GEO where user engagement, coordination and resource mobilization are taken to unprecedented levels.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GEOSS MID-TERM EVALUATION

An evaluation was performed in 2010 to assess GEOSS implementation at mid-term (see Document 6). Numerous GEO documents were analyzed, experts interviewed, and Work Plan Tasks examined. The evaluation eventually produced a number of recommendations for the future of GEOSS implementation, including:

- GEO must investigate alternative models for sustained resource commitments from Members and Participating Organizations which are necessary for current and future operations (*Recommendation 2*).
- GEOSS implementation in the short-term should be guided by an explicit approach linking activities and outputs of the GEO Work Plan to measurable, achievable objectives and Strategic Targets. This can be accomplished through adopting a logic model and performance measurement strategy (*Recommendation 3*).
- GEO should clarify its role as a supporting and enabling platform by facilitating and providing value through coordination among existing Earth observation systems and developing an information network system (*Recommendation 4*).
- GEO should act to improve its understanding, engagement, and responsiveness to the user community by: a) undertaking a detailed characterization of its current users in order to strengthen and expand the user base; and, b) increasing opportunities for dialogue with the user community to provide helpful feedback on a timely basis (*Recommendation 6*).
- GEO should conduct comprehensive observational and structural gap analyses as anticipated in the 10-Year Implementation Plan and Strategic Targets document (*Recommendation 7*).
- GEO should establish clear and consistent mechanisms for properly attributing contributions to eliminate the appearance of co-opting activities (*Recommendation 8*).

Further key findings and comments from the GEOSS Mid-Term Evaluation regarding the Work Plan progress and implementation include:

- GEOSS implementation has created a path to enable full and open data-sharing and lowered discussion barriers (*Key Finding 5*).
- Stakeholders perceive that architecture developed by GEO does not yet meet their needs for data, information, and tools (*Key Finding 9*).
- Work Plan Overarching Tasks should align with GEOSS Strategic Targets. The Evaluation Team found that the current GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan was largely aligned with GEOSS Strategic Targets, with only two Strategic Target outcomes identified as not being addressed by current Work Plan Tasks (*pp.6-7*).
- A current effort by Japan to create a tool that shows links between sub-tasks, Overarching Tasks, and Strategic Targets seems promising. Such a tool could help achieve transparency in the implementation approach for the Earth observation community (*p.8*).
- To enable structural gap identification, the GEOSS implementation approach should be transparent in how sub-tasks, Overarching Tasks, and Strategic Targets contribute to achieving the vision of GEOSS (*p.9*).
- Stakeholders would like to see a reinvigorated priority given to: 1) an increased focus on the end-user of GEOSS information, 2) more coordination between Members and Participating Organizations at the Societal Benefit Area and Task level, and 3) the development of a sustainable funding and resource model to support the GEOSS initiative (*p.10*).

The recommendations from the GEOSS Mid-Term Evaluation should be used as guidelines for the development of the next Work Plan. They point to fundamental issues such as user engagement, coordination, resource mobilization, data sharing and GEOSS architecture development. They also emphasize the need for an explicit approach linking Strategic Targets to Work Plan outputs and activities, to detect implementation gaps and track returns on investments. This should encourage the GEO community to refine and improve the GEOSS logic model introduced in 2008 (see Fig.2, GEO-V Document 11) and implemented through the Task Sheets since then.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM

The first Work Plan Symposium was held on 17-19 May 2010 in Pretoria, South Africa, gathering over 80 participants from 30 GEO Members and Participating Organizations. The Symposium presented an opportunity for Task contributors and Committee members to exchange preliminary ideas on the development of the 2012-2015 Work Plan. Key recommendations made at this Symposium include:

- The development of the next Work Plan should involve the entire GEO community and aim at aligning Overarching Tasks and sub-tasks with Strategic Targets.
- People should be invited to “think outside the box” and make proposals for a Work Plan primarily aimed at achieving the Strategic Targets. In this context, one could think of giving “implementation priority” to selected Tasks deemed essential to reach specific Targets.
- The coordination role of Overarching Tasks should be improved.

The Symposium participants also discussed the future of the GEO 2010 Baseline Initiative and agreed that it should become an integral part of the 2012-2015 Work Plan. The purpose of the Initiative is to assemble consistent, validated, interoperable 2010 datasets of Earth observations and derived products. The Initiative will result in a snapshot of the Earth and provide a point of reference for ongoing monitoring. In line with the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, it will also support mandates of international agreements, as well as serve the research community, decision-makers and the public.

4 FURTHER GUIDELINES

As mentioned above, the recommendations from the GEOSS Mid-Term Evaluation and Work Plan Symposium should be taken as general guidelines for the development of the 2012-2015 Work Plan. In addition, more specific guidelines may be considered that build upon the experience of the 2009-2011 Work Plan. These include:

- Fully address the Strategic Targets
- Foster the development of GEOSS information (products, services)
- Ensure the delivery of societal benefits through the GEOSS Common Infrastructure
- Enhance data sharing (full and open access) and data distribution
- Build upon synergies across Societal Benefit Areas and cross-cutting areas
- Improve the coordination of activities at both, sub-task and Overarching-Task level
- Ensure the continuity of relevant activities
- Realize the potential of Communities of Practice and Committees.

Based on all these recommendations and findings, guidelines for the development of the 2012-2015 Work Plan will be refined over the next two months, taking into account suggestions and comments from the GEO-VII Plenary. The Work Plan development process will then be launched, as outlined in the schedule below.

5 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR 2011

- Dec-Feb The entire GEO community is invited to make proposals for the 2012-2015 Work Plan, following guidelines and recommendations (see above). In particular, Committees and Communities of Practice are invited to provide insight in their respective areas.
- March Version 0 of the 2012-2015 Work Plan is prepared by the GEO Secretariat based on proposals from the GEO community.
- April **Work Plan V0** is submitted to the entire GEO community for *technical review*, and to the Executive Committee.
- May A Work Plan Symposium is organized to discuss V0 among Task contributors, Committees and Communities of Practice. The focus will be on developing synergies across the various areas of the Work Plan.
- June Work Plan V1 is prepared by the GEO Secretariat based on technical comments received from the GEO community, suggestions made over the 2011 Work Plan Symposium, and recommendations made by the Executive Committee.
- July **Work Plan V1** is submitted to GEO Principals for *official review*.
- September Work Plan V2 is prepared by the GEO Secretariat based on official comments received from GEO Principals. **Work Plan V2** is submitted to Plenary for “acceptance as a living document”.