

Draft Note on the development of the GEO Work Plan Symposium in the longer term

Background

The purpose of the note is to support the preparation of Programme Board (PB) meeting in May 2017 with a view to making a proposal to EXCOM in June. The PB has taken up the challenge to determine the purpose and priorities for the GEO Work Programme Symposium (WPS) in the longer term and to come forwards with proposals and recommendations. This note is based on the experience from 2016 and 2017 WPS, in particular the preparation for WPS 2017 where the PB has been involved. This note is written prior to WPS 2017 taking place in order to allow for preparation of the Programme Board meeting.

This note will be revised in early May based on inputs from the PB working group and based on the actual experience from 2017 WPS.

For the February 2017 meeting of the Programme Board, a background note was prepared which summarised the experiences with WPS since 2010 when an annual GEO WPS was introduced. The note from January 2017 is relevant to this discussion.

GEO Multi-annual Work Programming

The structure of multiannual work programming cycle has been changed for the second decade of GEO and is set out in the GEO Strategic plan reference document. Three multiannual work programmes are foreseen in the period 2017 - 2025

2016-2025 WORK PROGRAMMES

The GWP for 2016 represents a transitional GWP, serving as a bridge from the first 10 years of GEO (2005-2015) to the next ten years.

The subsequent GWPs will cover three-year time periods. This will allow implementing longer-term activities coherently. The following GWPs are:

1. GWP 2017-2019 – developed by the GEO Secretariat, in consultation with the GEO Community, together with the GEO Programme Board during 2016;
2. GWP 2020-2022 – developed by the GEO Secretariat in consultation with the GEO Community, together with the GEO Programme Board during 2018-19; and
3. GWP 2023-2025 – developed by the GEO Secretariat in consultation with the GEO Community, together with the GEO Programme Board during 2021-2022.

GEO may accept revisions of the multi-annual GWPs at the annual Plenary meeting, based upon recommendations of the GEO Programme Board.

The strategic plan reference document also sets out the work programme development cycle. It outlines that the Work Programme is proposed by the GEO Secretariat based on input from GEO Members, Participating Organizations, and the GEO Community. It strives to

optimally pursue the realization of the Strategic Objectives through implementation of GEO's Core Functions constrained by the identifiable resources. It is further developed by the **GEO Programme Board**, which

- ensures alignment with the priorities of GEO Members and Participating Organizations;
- identifies resource commitments by GEO Members and Participating Organizations; and
- provides recommendations to Plenary for approval, in accordance with the Implementation Mechanisms description.

Thus, the GWP implements a top-down mechanism towards the selection of GEO activities. (...)

From the 2017-2019 GWP onwards, the GEO Programme Board will be responsible for

- Guiding the GEO Secretariat in developing the GWP and ensuring that the knowledge and capacity of the GEO Community is used as appropriate; and
- Prioritizing the allocation of resources, aiming to ensure full implementation of GEO's Core Functions and optimally advancing the achievement of the GEO Strategic Objectives, while respecting the responsibilities of resource-providers.

Three Phases of development of the GEO Work Programme

The GWP is developed in three phases:

1. **An initiation phase** to collect input from the GEO Community, the GEO Members and Participating Organizations, as well as interested third parties, including from the private sector;
2. **A consolidation phase** to agree on the implementation actions among GEO Participating Organizations and Members and to identify the necessary resources; and
3. **An acceptance phase** to formally accept the GWP and commit the necessary resources.

Initiation phase

The aim of the **initiation phase** is for the GEO Secretariat to propose a draft GWP that

- implements all GEO Core Functions and advances GEOs Strategic Objectives;
- responds to the needs and interests of GEO Members and Participating Organizations;
- recognizes and builds on the capacities available in the GEO Community.

During the **initiation phase** the GEO Secretariat engages with specific stakeholders such as UN Programmes, Foundations, Treaties or Conventions, the GEO Community at large, and GEO Plenary delegations. The engagement process could be carried out through dedicated discussions, workshops, or consultation processes. The GEO Community can bring forward

new proposals or suggest modifications to ongoing activities. (Note that GEO Community Activities can be added at any time). Input should also be provided by relevant advisory boards.

The initiation phase concludes with presentation of a draft GWP by the GEO Secretariat.

Consolidation phase

The aim of the **consolidation phase** is to align the GWP with GEO (Member and Participating Organizations) priorities and available resources.

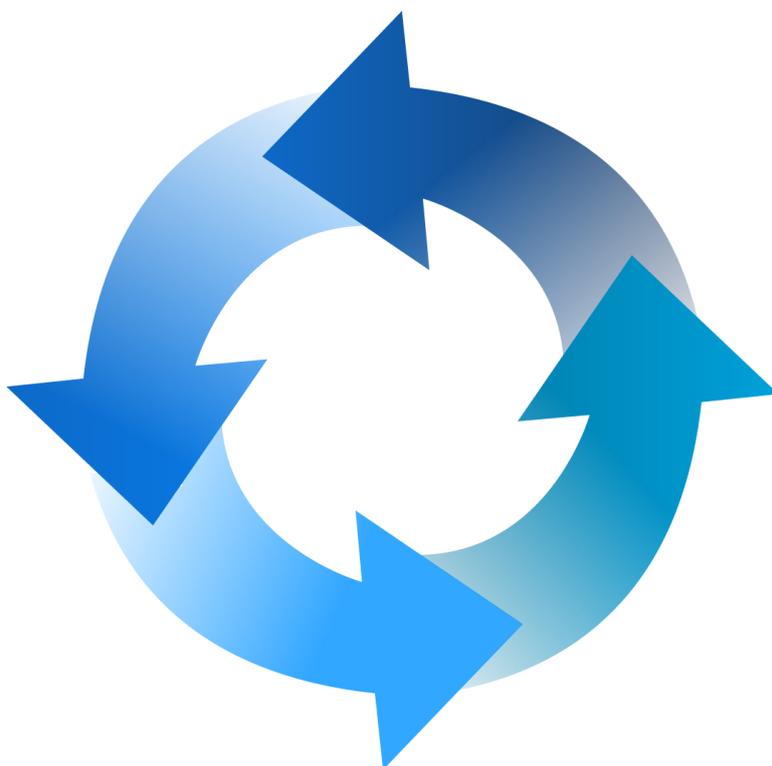
During the consolidation phase the GEO Programme Board, supported by the GEO Secretariat, will discuss all GEO Foundational Tasks included in the draft GWP and actively help to make necessary resources available that will enable their implementation. Discussions with potential contributors and the stakeholders active in the activity's implementation will be held during this phase to adjust the activity's content until it can realistically be implemented with resources available.

The consolidation phase concludes with a formal recommendation of the draft GWP for Plenary acceptance.

Acceptance phase

The aim of the **acceptance phase** is to achieve formal acceptance of the GWP and commitment of the resources made available by GEO Members.

During the acceptance phase the GEO Secretariat supports GEO delegations in preparing their commitments at Plenary through, for example, providing complementary material and reporting updates on expected resource commitments.



Purpose of the WPS in relation to other GEO events and fora:

Plenary

Plenary is the primary decision making body for GEO. The GWP and new flagships are presented for acceptance by **GEO Plenary**. By accepting a new GEO Flagship, GEO supports the Flagship's objectives and commits and/or acknowledges the resources specified in the Implementation Plan. Recent years have seen an extension of the plenary meetings to also including significant focus on the content of GEO work as well as panel discussions. A range of side events have developed including some focussed on addressing specific issues. In accepting the GWP, GEO:

- **Accepts** that the GEO Foundational Tasks should be implemented with the resources indicated; and
- **Takes note** that the GEO Flagships, GEO Initiatives and GEO Community Activities are expected to be implemented with the corresponding indicative resources.

From this it can be deduced:

- (i) That the acceptance phase of a new GWP ends with decisions at plenary
- (ii) that time is needed prior to the event itself to secure support for commitments to be made a plenary.
- (iii) the consolidation phase needs to be concluding 2 - 4 months prior to plenary.

Development of regional GEOSS meetings

At the same time, as the discussions in PB in February 2017 noted, regional GEOSS implementation and coordination meetings are strengthening. EuroGEOSS, Afrigeoss, Amerigeoss and AOGEOSS, are well known, but also others are notable. The Work Programme needs to be made relevant for the GEO regions, and it is important the regional priorities also feed into the development of the GEO Work Programme. It seems logical that GEO regional fora (as well as other stakeholder dialogue platforms) should be engaged in particular during the initiation phase of a new GEO Work Programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

The WPS needs to have a clear standard function in relation to the WP programmatic cycle, not be overly focussed on reporting, deliver useful outputs for strengthening GEO work programme, and bring practical benefits to the community who are participating (ia. help secure resourcing). Criteria for successful WPS :

- Distinct from Plenary and regional GEO meetings in terms of process, timing and content.

- Clear sense of purpose which can be flexed by is to some degree consistent over time
- Sufficient secretariat and programme board resourcing to prepare
- Sufficient advance warning
- Critical mass of participants
- Added value for GEO governance, GEO community and participants.
- Provides an opportunity for feedback on its own function.

A WPS type event is needed in advance of development of a new GEO Work Programme.

In the Work Programme preparation cycle there is a need to create an articulation between the Programme Board and the regional GEO meetings, so that the regional GEO meetings can feed their priorities into the WP development and the Programme Board can bring guidance and structure and connect activities. Each WPS should be prepared through preceding regional GEO meetings as well as meetings focused on identifying priorities and addressing specific issues. Active participation of PB members and PB co-chairs as well as GEOsec should be foreseen.

If acceptance and commitment finalisation discussions are allowed 4 months prior to plenary (P-4months), and plenaries take place in October, then a WPS should be foreseen around P-10 months, ie there is a need for a WPS early in the year during which a new WP is adopted or late in the year preceding the year of adoption of the WP. Regional GEO meetings with a focus on work programme initiation should take place around P-12months, ie Sept – Nov based on a sketch of strategic challenges to be addressed and priorities outlined at EXCOM's march or july meeting (P- 15 or P-18).

A meeting in relation to WP monitoring and evaluation may be useful, however this should probably be held separately from the WPS cycle.

Outreach and engagement: Clear from lessons from engagement strategy and IPWG that outreach also needed part of cycle of events. Whilst the WPS is a fora at which users and providers can meet the event is probably more geared towards dialogues subsequent to engagement when a working relationship is already established.

The benefits from placing the WPS back to back with other non GEO fora (Ex ISPRS in 2017) are inconclusive. Suggests that bringing GEO presentations and community exhibits into other processes and events is valuable and useful outreach, back to back. Less clear.

Annex timelines and interactions across the multi-annual cycle

Year	GEO WP prep activity	GEO WP implementation	GEO Strategic plan activity	Plenary / Ministerial Summit decision	Proposed Work programming event / forum
2016	Prep WP 2017 - 2019	Transitional WP		P	SP and WP comm
2017	Refine WP with plenary priorities	GEO WP 2017 - 2019		P	WPS refine + connect to regional GEOSS.
2018	WP 2020 – 2022 initiation			P	None, M&E, outreach, WP initiation. Regional GEO prep meeting
2019	WP 2020 – 2022 consolidation & acceptance		Evaluation?	M – Evaluation? and WP 2020 - 2022	WPS early in year (consolidation)
2020			GEO WP 2020 - 2022		P
2021	WP 2023 – 2025 initiation			P	WP initiation - Regional GEO prep meeting
2022	WP 2023 – 2025 consolidation & acceptance			P WP 2023 - 2025	WPS early in year (consolidation)
2023		GEO WP 2023 - 2025	SP prep FW setup	P	
2024			SP prep & Evaluation?	P SP FW / guidance	
2025	WP 2026 – 2030 prep			M New SP agreed	

Annex 2 Outline agenda and terms of reference for Work Plan Symposia – based on SP ref document

Background note for Programme Board to prepare and refine Concept for GEO Work Programme Symposium (Proposed May 2017 South Africa)

Symposium: (in ancient Greece and Rome) a convivial meeting, usually following a dinner, for drinking and intellectual conversation. (Dictionary.com)

Introduction

The landscape within which the GEO Work Programme Symposium is set has changed significantly since its inception in 2010. Notably, in the same timeframe as the development and acceptance of the 2025 Strategic plan:

- The Programme Board has replaced the Implementation Boards and GEO Committees.
 - No longer the need to synchronize disparate bodies working on different parts of the WP.
- A number of regional fora have sprung up and have been strengthened (e.g. GEOSS Asia-Pacific Symposium, AmeriGEOSS, AfriGEOSS, and GEO HLWG and GEO European Projects Workshop (featuring progress and implementation of WP activities, coordination and GEO concerns promoted)
 - No longer the same drivers and need for a pan-WP Symposium since these items are being discussed regionally.
- Advances in GCI and GEOSS Portal are happening on a different timescale than once per year.
 - Not necessary to wait until the WPS to make major announcements.

In 2017, a key question is, what is the *raison d'être* for a Work Programme Symposium, both for 2017 but also for the longer term? What are the key issues for discussion that cannot be accommodated by the regional fora, or Plenary meetings, ones that merit a 2-day symposium (and in May 2017 will draw the right people all the way to South Africa)?

At its first meeting in 2017 the Programme Board will take a number of decisions about its plan of work for 2017 – 2018 and also how it will input to GEO processes. Part of its interactions need to be with the GEO community. The WPS provides a potential event and milestone to communicate with parts of the GEO community and to obtain inputs to PB deliberations and decisions.

For this reason, PB members are asked before the PB meeting to think about the context of the WPS and explore various ideas that have been captured in a series of poll questions to enable the co-chairs to cluster perspectives and structure the discussion during the meeting. The intention is to create a concept for the WPS in 2017 and a longer term positioning of WPS in annual cycle of GEO as input to EXCOM meeting (deadline 8th Feb). See poll at:

Context of Work Programme Symposia

The Work Plan/Programme Symposia (WPS) have been held annually since 2010, usually in Geneva, in the April-May timeframe right before the Work Plan was circulated to GEO Principals for review. The WPS were held initially in conjunction with meetings of the then four GEO Committees (User Interface, Science & Technology, Architecture & Data and Capacity Building). Later, the Implementation Boards (Institutions & Development, Infrastructure and Societal Benefits) met in conjunction with the WPS.

Detailed objectives for each of the WPS may be found in the attached annexes. Briefly, objectives that frequently appeared:

- Foster WP implementation (through awareness raising, information sharing, networking, etc.).

- Review progress, consolidate activities, improve coordination, reduce redundancies, find synergies, and promote “cross-fertilization”.
- Promote GEOSS Data Sharing and Management Principles.
- Assess whether Strategic Targets were being met.
- Highlight advances in GCI and GEOSS Portal.
- Identify gaps and obstacles (of any nature: observations, resources, etc).
- Identify role for Communities of Practice.
- Promote linkages with SDGs, Sendai Framework and other international agendas.

Perhaps the focus should now be more outward rather than inward. This would illustrate GEO’s relevance to the community, while providing the Programme Board with a ‘temperature check’ on the pertinence of the Work Programme as a whole.

Suggested theme for 2017: **GEO’s Work Programme: Delivering Value.**

Sessions could be organized around providing select examples of how GEO is making a difference, with demonstrations of:

- How GEO is responding to the Mexico City Ministerial Declaration.
- How GEOSS is being used by decision makers (at multiple levels: policy, government, regionally, resource managers, etc.)
- How GEO is supporting achievement of major policy initiatives, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, etc.
- How GEO is working with the commercial sector (examples of Public-Private Partnerships, linking to commercial EO catalogues, and ...?).

Each of these examples should also touch upon key components of the Strategic Plan:

- How GEO is addressing its three Strategic Objectives: Advocate, Engage, and Deliver.
- How activities are aligned with GEO Core Functions.

A special session could be devoted to these kinds of examples happening under AfriGEOSS given the location of the event.

The WPS needs to connect to PB related functions and duties - the cycle of progress reporting (linked to M&E) and modifying the WP. It also needs to enable connections between top-down policy drivers and bottom up community proposals, such as in 2017 on SDGs. Lastly the wps needs to appeal to the participants from the GEO community, without whom success cannot be achieved.

ANNEX A

GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2010

17-19 May 2010

Pretoria, South Africa

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Symposium are to:

- Foster the Work Plan Implementation across and within GEOSS areas;
- Develop practical recommendations for the 2011 Work Plan Update;
- Identify achievements that could be presented at Beijing Ministerial Summit Exhibition; and
- Initiate reflections and discussions in preparation of the GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan.

In order to structure the presentations, discussions and syntheses throughout the meeting, participants are encouraged to:

- Identify common inputs, outputs or methodologies across (sub)tasks;
- Explore complementarities across (sub)tasks;
- Identify options for better connecting existing systems (observing, modeling, information) and/or the outputs of those systems (data, products, information);
- Launch practical actions for fostering new and existing interactions across (sub)tasks;
- Evaluate the extent to which existing products, tools, systems and services are already registered in the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI); identify obstacles to registration and options to overcome these obstacles;
- Evaluate the extent to which data and information are already shared within GEO; identify obstacles to data-sharing and options to overcome these obstacles;
- Identify (sub)task components related to Capacity Building, Science and Technology, and User engagement. Strengthen connections with Committees and Communities of Practice;
- Improve Overarching Task and sub-task descriptions/contents;
- Suggest mergers of relevant sub-tasks to improve coordination/reduce duplication;
- Identify opportunities for the Beijing Ministerial Summit Exhibition.

ANNEX B

2nd WPS: 4-6 May 2011, Geneva

Objectives:

The Symposium will play a key role in the development of the 2012-2015 Work Plan, ensuring that Strategic Targets are fully addressed, gaps and missing Tasks are clearly identified, and synergies across GEOSS areas are built upon. The Symposium will be integral to the technical review, which will involve broad consultation and eventually lead to Version 1 of the 2012-2015 Work Plan (to be submitted for official review on 1 September).

The 2012-2015 Work Plan should address three main objectives: (i) the implementation of an operational and sustainable GEOSS offering full and open access and including interoperable observing, modelling and dissemination systems; (ii) the development of information products and end-to-end services tailored to serve society's needs across the nine Societal Benefit Areas; and (iii) the reinforcement of coordination, user engagement and resource mobilization.

In addition, the Symposium will provide, as in 2010, numerous opportunities to highlight progress, exchange information, and foster coordination across the whole Work Plan. This cross-fertilization will directly contribute to GEOSS implementation on a number of fronts including data sharing and registration of data, tools and services in the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI).

ANNEX C

“Building Synergies Across the GEO Work Plan”

GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2012
30 April – 2 May 2012, GEO Secretariat,
7bis avenue de la Paix,
Geneva, Switzerland

APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES

The 2012 Work Plan Symposium will focus on the cross-fertilization of the new Work Plan Tasks – bringing together Leads and contributors from all GEOSS areas as well as members of the new Implementation Boards. The Symposium will provide numerous opportunities to exchange information and highlight progress. Gaps and issues will also be extensively discussed, and actions to fill these gaps identified.

The Symposium will be aligned with the three parts of the 2012-2015 Work Plan, namely:

- (i) “Infrastructure” – focusing on the physical components of an operational and sustainable GEOSS, including interoperable observing, modelling and dissemination systems
- (ii) “Institutions and Development” – focusing on data sharing, resource mobilization, capacity development, user engagement, and science and technology integration
- (iii) “Information for Societal Benefits” – focusing on information, tools, and services in support of decision-making across the nine Societal Benefit Areas

Key objectives include:

- (a) Identifying cross-cutting issues and building synergies across Tasks
- (b) Guiding and accelerating Work Plan implementation
- (c) Supporting progress assessment towards the GEOSS 2015 Strategic Targets
- (d) Collectively addressing issues and gaps
- (e) Developing practical recommendations for the 2013 Work Plan update

ANNEX D

GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2013

4–6 June 2013, GEO Secretariat,

7bis avenue de la Paix,

Geneva, Switzerland

APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES

The 2013 Work Plan Symposium will focus on the advancement of the Sprint to Summit initiative. development of activities and demonstrators the Sprint to Summit activities and demonstrators. cross-cutting showcases for the GEO-X Plenary and 2014 Ministerial Summit. The Sprint to Summit initiative, managed by the GEO Implementation Boards, will integrate and combine outputs from multiple Societal Benefit Areas thereby demonstrating the GEO added value and relevance to users, decision-makers and society at large. The Sprint to Summit will also give credit to GEO Members and Participating Organizations and visibility to the numerous contributions to GEOSS implementation.

Moreover the Symposium will use the showcases as federating themes and integrators to foster synergies across the Work Plan and accelerate GEOSS implementation. Leads and contributors from all GEOSS areas will be invited to highlight progress and propose contributions and improvements to the showcases interacting with the members of the Implementation Boards. In this context, gaps and issues will also be discussed.

The Symposium will be structured around five showcases:

- (iv) One showcase building on “Infrastructure” Tasks and overseen by the Infrastructure Board
- (v) One showcase building on “Institutions and Development” Tasks and overseen by the Institutions and Development Board
- (vi) Three showcases building on “Societal Benefits” Tasks and overseen by the Societal Benefits Board

Symposium objectives will include:

- (f) Developing cross-cutting showcases for the Ministerial Summit and GEO-X Plenary
- (g) Building synergies across Tasks and accelerating GEOSS implementation
- (h) Informing the Work Plan community of recent outputs and activities
- (i) Developing practical recommendations for the 2014 Work Plan update (Task descriptions and contents)
- (j) Collectively addressing issues and gaps
- (k) Improving Component Sheet contents

ANNEX E

GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2014 28-30 April 2014, GEO Secretariat, 7bis avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland

OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

Accelerate Work Plan implementation towards GEOSS 2015 Strategic Targets

Prepare for the next phase of GEOSS implementation

Specific Objectives

- Build on GEO initiatives to better meet information needs for decision-making and -planning. Strengthen ongoing global/regional initiatives and explore opportunities for new ones
- Improve data discovery and access through the GEOSS Portal – building on the new versions of the Portal and Discovery & Access Broker (e.g. through user feedbacks and contributions of new resources)
- Enhance GEOSS usefulness (e.g. through showcases and development of new applications and information products)
- Clarify the role of, and relationship with, Community Portals
- Inform and advance the development of GEOSS Data Management Principles and the implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles
- Better realize the potential of citizen-science and Big Data in GEOSS implementation
- Refine requirements for observations and information (e.g. for adaptation purposes) within and across Societal Benefit areas, with a view to the post-2015 agenda
- Discuss a systematic approach to define, and coordinate records of, variables needed across Societal Benefit Areas. This could rely on the development of “Essential Variables” building on related initiatives for Climate, Biodiversity, and Oceans
- Identify current and future in-situ priorities, and explore ideas for addressing these
- Inform the process for developing the next GEOSS Implementation Plan
- Build on linkages with other international agendas e.g. Sustainable Development Goals
- Explore opportunities with the private sector
- Identify lessons-learned from previous GEO Work Plans and related management
- Develop practical recommendations for the 2015 Work Plan update (Task descriptions and contents)
- Foster regional (caucus) interactions

ANNEX F

GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2015
5-7 May 2015, GEO Secretariat, Room A
7bis avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland

General Objectives

- Assess the progress of the current tasks and the achievements for the first GEO decade 2005-2015
- Involve new communities (ref. to new proposed SBAs)
- Discuss how to better exploit recognized GEO linkages with the post-2015 global development agenda, e.g., Sustainable Development Goals
- Discuss how the GEO Community (including new stakeholders) should be organized to support the new GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025
- Discuss current gaps in GEO's activities and make a preliminary identification of activities to be implemented in the next decade
- Discuss and consolidate a preliminary draft of a transitional Work Programme for 2016, developed in accordance with the IPWG guidelines.

ANNEX G

GEO WORK PROGRAMME SYMPOSIUM 2016 2-4 May 2016, GEO Secretariat, 7bis avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this first Work Programme Symposium is to engage the GEO Community in the implementation of the new GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS (GE0 2016-2025 SP).

The Symposium will, therefore:

- Reflect on the GE0 2016-2025 SP, on its targets and on the implications on the activities that GEO should put in place;
- Ensure a common understanding of the new arrangements defined by the Strategic Plan (Programme Board, Monitoring and Evaluation, Implementation Mechanisms, role of the Secretariat);
- Ensure a common understanding of what are the links among different processes (GEOSS development and operations, users' needs, knowledge base development, SBAs etc....) and how the Community should plan its involvement;
- Strengthen the participation of the users to the GEO activities;
- Review the approach for GEOSS development (requirements, functional performances, architecture) and provide clear inputs for its further implementation;
- Discuss the content of the GEO Work Programme 2017-2019 and provide clear inputs (technical and programmatic) for its development;
- Strengthen the involvement of current stakeholders and involve new ones identified in the GEO 2016-2025 SP;
- Provide the opportunity to consolidate GEO activities at Global and/or Regional level and explore opportunities for new ones;
- Explore opportunities with the private sector;
- Foster regional (caucus) interactions and discuss the opportunities linked to strengthen GEO action at the regional level; and
- Explore opportunities for new global/regional initiatives.