

Programme Board Terms of Reference¹

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:

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

2 DUTIES

The GEO Programme Board will:

1. Review and further develop the scope and substance of activities proposed for the multi-year GEO Work Programme;
2. Review the progress of GEO Foundational Tasks, Initiatives and Flagships;
3. Recommend the 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;
4. Examine proposed Implementation Plans for GEO Initiatives and take decisions to accept new ones;
5. Provide high-level recommendations to the Executive Committee;
6. Nominate Participating Organization observers to the Executive Committee;
7. Establish sub-groups to address specific topics as needed; and
8. Undertake such other tasks as may be delegated to the Programme Board by the Executive Committee or the Plenary.

3 MEMBERSHIP

The GEO Programme Board comprises persons serving as members² from GEO Members and from Participating Organizations who are appointed by the Plenary. The Secretariat will propose a slate of

¹ Excerpted from the GEO Rules of Procedure, Section 5 and Annex F, as updated on 26 October 2017.

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 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.

4 TERM

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

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;

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 nominations;

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;

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;

4.5 To initiate the process defined in 4.4, at the beginning of 2017, the Programme Board members, including co-chairs, will be assigned a term end date by lottery - either 2017, 2018 or 2019.

4.5 If a member has not participated in 2 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 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 the 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.

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

² 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.

be addressed (despite best endeavors), issues may be brought forward to the Executive Committee for resolution. 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.

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.

8 LEADERSHIP

The Programme Board will elect by vote (see Annex A) 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.

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.

10 FUNDING

Each Programme Board member and alternates will be responsible for their own costs associated 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.

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.

Annex A

Programme Board Co-Chair Voting Procedure

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

1. Vacant Programme Board co-chair positions will be filled at the next Programme Board meeting, as the first order of business;
2. Programme Board members will be invited to submit to the current co-chairs (or to the GEO Secretariat Director if all co-chair positions are vacant) nominations for a vacant position. Consistent with the Terms of Reference Section 7, these nominations should be made at least four weeks prior to a Board meeting;
3. To ensure compliance with Section 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;
4. Nominees will be invited to make a three-minute statement about their candidacy. Other members present may then ask questions;
5. 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;
6. A secret ballot will then be conducted. If multiple co-chair vacancies exist, voting will be conducted for each vacancy in sequential rounds;
7. Each member will be allocated one vote for each round of voting. A nominating member may vote for themselves;
8. For each round of voting, votes will then be tallied. The nominee with the most votes who represents an organization which, consistent with Section 7, eligible to fill the vacancy will be selected;
9. 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 7.

The voting process will be overseen by the GEO Secretariat.