

Report of the Programme Board

1 Mandate

As described in the GEO Rules of Procedure, the Programme Board's function is to support the ongoing development and implementation of the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025 through multi-year GEO Work Programmes (GWPs). Specifically, the Programme Board:

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

2 Summary of Activities in 2018

Since the GEO-XIV Plenary, Programme Board has been active in fulfilling its mandate. The Programme Board met three times during 2018. Key highlights of each of these meetings are provided below.

2.1 8th Programme Board Meeting: 31 January–1 February 2018

- Reviewed the results of its Paris Agreement subgroup and SDG subgroup.
- Created a Sendai Framework subgroup to ensure that the GWP responds robustly to the Sendai Framework, building on work already underway in GEO with the UN-GGIM and the UNISDR.

- Created an Outreach to Regional GEOSS Initiatives (RGI) subgroup to look at alignment of the RGIs to GEO engagement priorities, identify gaps, improve communications among RGIs, and build closer linkages between the RGIs and global Initiatives and Flagships.
- Reviewed results from GWP monitoring conducted by the Secretariat. Created a Work Programme Monitoring subgroup to guide future development of monitoring efforts.
- Discussed the timing and topics for the 2018 GEO Symposium, suggesting it be held together with the GEO Climate Workshop and the 9th Programme Board meeting.
- Discussed commercial sector engagement in the GWP.
- Reviewed results of a survey of stakeholders regarding coordination of in situ observations. Created a Sustainable Earth Observations subgroup to assess the support for both space-based and in situ Earth observations resources by the Foundational Tasks.
- Adopted a more flexible “rolling” review policy for new or revised Initiatives and Flagships.
- Reviewed the observations presented to the 41st Executive Committee meeting by Mr Tim Haigh, former Programme Board co-chair.

2.2 9th Programme Board Meeting: 14-15 June 2018

- Discussed the recommendations of the review team for the GEO Land Degradation Neutrality (GEO LDN) Initiative and approved the GEO LDN Implementation Plan.
- Received a report from the RGI subgroup and discussed questions that were raised.
- Reviewed progress on SDG engagement, noting a need for improved communications with GWP activities and for GEO to engage more broadly with socio-economic data and information.
- Discussed impressions of the GEO Climate Workshop and the need for better coordination of climate activities in the GWP, as well as planning for the second climate workshop which will focus on external stakeholders.
- Reviewed progress in the Sendai Framework subgroup, noting linkages that were being formed with the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction, the International Charter Space and Major Disasters and non-governmental organizations active on this topic.
- Discussed the emerging priorities on urban resilience and ecosystem accounting and the potential implications for the GWP.
- Discussed a presentation by the new GEO Secretariat Director on his vision for a Results-Oriented GEOSS.

- Reviewed a proposal from the Work Programme Monitoring subgroup regarding a monitoring strategy based on a “maturity model” approach.

2.3 10th Programme Board Meeting: 5-6 September 2018

- Reviewed recommendations from the RGI subgroup and agreed on a proposal for presentation to the Executive Committee and the GEO-XV Plenary.
- Discussed the process for development of a strategy for a Results-Oriented GEOSS, including opportunities for Programme Board engagement and the working relationship between the Programme Board and the Expert Advisory Group. The Programme Board expressed their view that implementation of recommendations coming out of the Expert Advisory Group process, in particular those affecting infrastructure, should become part of the GWP.
- Reviewed the draft update to the 2017–2019 GWP, as well as the recommendations of Programme Board teams that reviewed the Implementation Plans for Arctic GEOSS and GEO CRADLE.
- Received reports from the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, Sustainable Earth Observations, and Work Programme Monitoring subgroups and provided guidance back to each of the subgroups.
- Discussed in detail the process and timeline for development of the 2020–2022 GWP.

3 An Example of the Programme Board in Action: Regional GEOSS Initiatives

An example of the role of Programme Board in identifying issues and developing proposals for Executive Committee consideration can be seen in the process that led to the proposal on Regional Groups on Earth Observations (Regional GEOs) that is being presented to the GEO-XV Plenary.

Questions about the role of Regional GEOSS Initiatives (RGIs) were initially raised at the 2017 Work Programme Symposium in Pretoria. Presentations at the Symposium showed that there was much work happening in the RGIs that was not reflected in the GWP, and that there was not always synergy between the RGIs and some thematic GWP activities addressing similar issues. In response, the Programme Board created a subgroup to look into these issues and to improve communications, both among the RGIs and between the RGIs and the other GWP activities.

The four Caucus-based RGIs gave presentations on their activities to the 2018 GEO Symposium. This was following by discussion about their similarities and differences and how to find the right balance between regional autonomy while ensuring that they are aligned with the GEO Strategic Plan, GEO principles, and the GEO engagement priorities.

The Programme Board subgroup, with assistance of the Secretariat, then organized a set of presentations from RGI representatives to Executive Committee at its July meeting and provided some initial observations from the subgroup, as well as a request for Executive Committee direction on certain key issues.

Following the July Executive Committee meeting, the subgroup prepared a discussion paper for the full Programme Board, laying out a series of options and recommendations. At its September meeting, the Programme Board discussed the discussion paper and agreed on a recommended path forward, which is reflected in the document distributed to Plenary.

This example is provided as an illustration of the evolving way in which issues may arise and get dealt with in the various GEO governance components. It demonstrates, in Programme Board's view, an appropriate division of responsibility between Programme Board and its subgroups in bringing questions to GEO's attention and developing options. It also shows the critical role of Executive Committee in providing clear, timely strategic guidance, while maintaining Plenary's role as the ultimate decision-making body in GEO.

4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2020-2022 GEO WORK PROGRAMME

At its 10th meeting, the Programme Board launched the process for developing the next three-year GWP. While the beginning of the next GWP period is still over a year away, there are many steps required to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current GWP, call for and receive proposals from GEO Members and Participating Organizations for new and revised GWP activities, and to review and shape the proposals into a strong and coherent Work Programme.

The key steps in the process are as follows:

Programme Board initial reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the current GWP and identification of the new directions for the next GWP.	GEO Week 2018
Delivery of key messages to the GEO-XV Plenary regarding the development process and new directions for the GWP.	GEO-XV Plenary
Call to GEO Principals for new or revised GWP activities and/or contributions that will support the new directions.	late November 2018 (for submission by end of January 2019)
Programme Board begins drafting new GWP (12 th meeting).	late January / early February
Review of new and revised Flagship and Initiative Implementation Plans.	February – March
Programme Board discusses results of reviews and prepares a complete draft GWP for consultation (13 th meeting).	mid- to late March
First draft GWP circulated to GEO community for comment.	late April
GEO Symposium discussion on draft GWP.	week of 20 May
Programme Board discusses feedback from Symposium and consultations (14 th meeting).	mid-June
Second draft GWP completed and circulated to GEO Principals	early July (comments due late August)
Programme Board discusses comments from GEO Principals and makes final changes (15 th meeting) prior to distribution of the proposed 2020-2022 GWP for decision at the GEO-XVI Plenary.	September

Specific dates of Programme Board meetings are being determined in consultation with Programme Board members and the Secretariat. These dates also need to be coordinated with the Expert Advisory Group that is developing the Strategy for a Results-Oriented GEOSS, as requested by Executive Committee.

The schedule is intended to provide the maximum opportunity for consultation and discussion of the new Work Programme with a GEO Members, Participating Organizations and other contributors and participants. While this does limit the time available for preparation of initial proposals, Programme Board believes this to be a reasonable limitation given that many of the activities in the existing GWP are likely to continue into the next (although, perhaps, with some revision and rethinking), and that there will be time for dialogue and adaptation of the original proposals as the process unfolds.

As we near the launch of the new GWP development process, the Programme Board requests all GEO Members and Participating Organizations to begin considering their new and continuing contributions.