

Proposed Concept for the 2020 GEO Symposium

This document is submitted by the Secretariat to the Programme Board for decision.

1 INTRODUCTION

The GEO Symposium has been the main forum for contributors of the GEO Work Programme to meet, discuss and foster collaboration. Several times during the course of 2019, the Programme Board discussed the topic of how to make the GEO Symposium more effective and beneficial for all the Work Programme activities. A consensus was reached on having a different priority theme for each symposium during the three-year Work Programme cycle, as well as setting up a GEO Symposium subgroup to work closely with the GEO Secretariat in organizing the Symposium.

The aim of this document is to support the discussion on the framework of the 2020 GEO Symposium and the initiation of the GEO Symposium Subgroup. A draft terms of reference for the subgroup is appended in Annex A.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SYMPOSIUM

As mentioned above, the GEO Symposium will have a different priority theme each year. While the 2019 GEO Symposium put an emphasis on the development of the GEO Work Programme 2020-2022, it is proposed to have the 2020 GEO Symposium focus on capacity development for the Work Programme activities to advance their implementation. Leadership and contributors of Work Programme activities will share experiences as well as identify knowledge, technologies and resources which are vital to the success of the activities.

Meanwhile, it will be helpful to keep some common topics throughout the three-year Work Programme cycle, such as fostering collaboration among GWP activities, identifying Earth observation gaps and so on.

The following are suggested as some potential expected objectives for the 2020 Symposium:

- Improved coordination and synergy among Work Programme activities in engaging UN organizations, international treaties and conventions, particularly for the GEO engagement priorities;
- Increased understanding of, and interest in, using the GEO Knowledge Hub as a means of sharing data, information and knowledge in an open science manner;
- Identified opportunities for the Work Programme activities to explore and use advanced technologies including cloud computing, machine learning and so on;
- Increased understanding of data ethics issues in the context of open Earth observations data and knowledge;
- Experience shared on novel ways of fundraising for Work Programme activities
- Continued identification of duplication and areas of collaboration among Work Programme activities; and

- Continued identification of any key gaps including in situ observations, engagement of user groups and so on.

3 STRUCTURE OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium will be a three-day event to be held on 16th-18th June 2020 with the Programme Board meeting taking place back-to-back on 15th and 19th June 2020.

With four 90-minute sessions planned on each day, there will be a total of 18 hours to address the proposed objectives. Based on feedbacks to the previous symposia, it's critical to find a balance between presentations and interactive sessions to satisfy diversified motivations of Symposium participants. Around 3-5 interactive sessions are recommended subject to the further development of the Symposium agenda.

With regard to presentations, Work Programme activities are recommended to focus on one of the objectives instead of reporting on the overall progress of the activities.

4 NEXT STEPS

Should the proposed approach be approved, it is suggested that nomination for the Symposium subgroup membership be opened. This will be extended to members not present at the meeting via an email by the Secretariat following the meeting.

The overall timeline is listed as following:

- 10 February, Secretariat to send 'save the date' email to the GEO Work Programme community
- Mid-February to mid-June, the Symposium Subgroup to have biweekly teleconferences, with an initial teleconference taking place in mid-February
- Mid-March, Secretariat to circulate the Draft Agenda Version 1, calling for speakers
- Mid-April, Secretariat to circulate of Draft Agenda Version 2, with speakers identified
- 16-18 June, the 2020 GEO Symposium

ANNEX A

GEO SYMPOSIUM SUBGROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The GEO Symposium Subgroup is convened to work with the GEO Secretariat to organize and implement the annual GEO Symposium.

DUTIES

In collaboration with the GEO Secretariat, the Subgroup will:

- Define the theme and main objectives of the GEO Symposium;
- Develop the agenda of the GEO Symposium;
- Identify and contact the potential speakers of the Symposium; and
- Play an active role in operating the Symposium, including moderating sessions.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Subgroup is open to Principal and Alternate Programme Board members.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

- A lead will be selected at the initial meeting to coordinate the work of the subgroup.
- The subgroup will work mainly through teleconferences and emails. During the Symposium planning phase, the subgroup meets regularly by teleconferenced.
- The GEO Secretariat provides administrative support to the subgroup.

DURATION

These Terms of Reference will remain in effect for the period of the 2020-2022 GEO Work Programme. They may be revised with the approval of the GEO Programme Board.