

DRAFT AGENDA

Group on Earth Observations Seventeenth Plenary Session – GEO-17 GEO Week 2021 Anchor Sessions 23-24 November 2021

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

12:00 – 13:00 Session 1: Opening Session

- 1.1 **Welcome from Lead Co-Chair**
 - European Commission Co-Chair
- 1.2 **Opening Remarks (Prerecorded)**
 - Co-Chairs from China, South Africa and USA
 - GEO Secretariat Director
- 1.3 **Welcome new Members, Participating Organizations and Associates**
- 1.4 **Approval of Agenda**
- 1.6 **Opening Keynote Presentation**
 - European Commission Co-Chair
- 1.7 **Mid-term Evaluation Report and Management Response**
 - MTE Team
 - ExCom Member

Session 1 documents:

GEO-17-1.3: Draft Agenda (for decision)

GEO-16-1.5: Draft Report of GEO-16 (for decision, circulation of document in advance of meeting)

GEO-17-1.7a: Mid Term Evaluation (for discussion)

GEO-17-1.7b: Executive Committee Response to the 2021 GEO Mid-Term Evaluation Report (for decision)

Session 1 Documents for Information:

GEO-17-1.3-Inf-01: New Members, Participating Organizations and Associates

13:00 – 13:50 Session 2: GEO Work Programme activities and contributions to global policy frameworks

- 2.1 This session aims to showcase activities in GEO Work Programme (GWP) that are closely linked to policy agendas, notably those that have reached a significant level of maturity, as well as identifying the ones that have high potential to reach such recognition. GEO's priority engagement areas include the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Recently the New Urban Agenda was recognized as a fourth GEO engagement priority and more generally GEO work programme activities also address other major policy frameworks of international importance, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Minamata

Convention on Mercury, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The success of GEO activities providing key services to these frameworks depends on significant support from Members (funding, dedicated teams, GEO Secretariat support), the existence of an active user community, as well as operational data and services. Growth and success in this area, as well as the potential to create impact depends on continued investments, including by GEO Members.

Candidate activities:

- GEOGLoWS;
- GOS4M;
- GSNL;
- GEO Wetlands.

Session outcomes and recommendations

Linked to GEO Mid-Term Evaluation Findings 5, 6, 7.

Call to GEO Principals to provide links to appropriate national government agencies to benefit from the achievements of these and other GWP activities. This can be similar to the twinning programme planned by the Climate Change Working Group relating to outreach for COP26.

Session 2 Documents for Information:

GEO-17-2-Inf-01: GEO Highlights Report

Wednesday, 24 November 2021

12:00 – 14:00

Session 3: Engaging the GEO Community

The overarching theme of Session 3 is to showcase GEO’s efforts to promote the science-policy interface by engaging various stakeholders including policymakers and users in the GEO Community. The session starts with a panel discussion by the Regional GEOs, which provides the regional and national perspectives. It is followed by a series of presentations on the ongoing efforts by GEO’s three thematic working groups: Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reductions and Capacity Building. The last item is the proposal for the fourth engagement priority: Resilient Cities and Human Settlements.

3.1

Regional GEOs

This section will be a panel discussion of the representatives of Regional GEOs. They will share their needs, best practices, lessons learned and ideas for future collaboration, as well as their efforts to engage national level operational agencies such as statistical agencies, agriculture, forestry, and water.

3.2

GEO Working Groups (CC, DRR, CD)

This session will cover notable outcomes and key plans for GEO’s work in the areas of climate action, disaster risk reduction, and capacity development. It will include the visualization of the ongoing cross-Working Group mapping of the GEO Work Programme, as well as the outcomes of the GEO Climate Policy and Finance workshop, and an overview of the EO risk toolkit by the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group.

3.3

Fourth Engagement Priority - Resilient Cities and Human Settlements

Following the presentation of the guest speaker from the City of Athens, the Urban Resilience Sub Group will present GEO’s strategy for this fourth engagement priority for its formal endorsement by Plenary.

Session outcomes and recommendations

- Linked to GEO Mid-Term Evaluation Finding 5, 6, 9, 11
- Regional GEO’s to contact additional agencies
- Adoption of Fourth Engagement Priority. Following presentations to Programme Board and the Executive Committee, a proposal will be made to adopt Urban Resilience and the New Urban Agenda, as the engagement priority topic and the policy driver.

Session 3 Documents

GEO-17-3.3: Resilient Cities and Human Settlements Engagement Plan (for decision)

Session 3 Documents for Information

GEO-17-3-Inf-01: Climate Action

GEO-17-3-Inf-02: Disaster Risk Reduction

GEO-17-3-Inf-03: Capacity Development

Thursday, 25 November 2021

12:00 – 14:00

Session 4: Bridging the Digital Divide with Data, Tools and Knowledge

4.1

Bridging the Digital Divide with Data, Tools and Knowledge

This session will build on GEO’s longstanding efforts to promote full and open access to Earth observation data in accordance with GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, to empower GEO Members to use Earth observations for informed decision making. Four GEO activities will serve as use cases to demonstrate the importance of ensuring all enabling conditions for achieving this vision – accelerated by the adoption of a culture of open knowledge through implementation of Data Sharing Principles (including links to FAIR and CARE) and Data Management Principles, achieving legal interoperability among data licenses used by major providers of open data, development of analysis-ready data, and producing results in a reproducible format. These use cases will also demonstrate good practice regarding in situ data sharing (substantiating Data WG’s in situ data strategy) and use of the GEO Knowledge Hub and cloud services as means of providing access to data, information, and knowledge across the world to bridge the digital divide and promote global equity.

Candidate activities:

- GWIS;
- Digital Earth Africa;
- GEO Mountains;
- India Data Cube

4.2 **Open Knowledge Statement**

Session outcomes and recommendations

GEO Mid-Term Evaluation Findings 8, 12.
 Call to GEO Principals to build open knowledge into their national data programmes, including endorsement of GEO Open Knowledge Statement and support to the GKH.

Session 4 Document

GEO-17-4.1: GEO Statement on Open Knowledge (for decision)

Session 4 Documents for Information

Friday, 26 November 2021

12:00 – 14:00 Session 5: Looking Ahead

- 5.1 **Finance and Budget**
 2020 Financial Statement and Audit Report (WMO)
 2022 GEO Trust Fund Budget
 GEO Pledge Campaign:
 Review of 2021 and launch of 2022
- 5.2 **GEO Awards and GEO Art Competition Results**
- 5.3 **GEO Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement**
- 5.4 **GEO Work Programme 2023-2025**
- 5.5 **Programme Board Members 2022**
- 5.6 **Executive Committee Members 2022**
- 5.7 **Review of GEO Week 2021 and next steps**
- 5.8 **Announcement of GEO Week 2022**

Session 5 Documents

GEO-17-5.1a: 2020 Financial Statement and Audit Report (for decision)

GEO-17-5.1b: 2022 GEO Trust Fund Budget (for decision)

GEO-17-5.3: GEO Equality, Diversity & Inclusion statement (for decision)

Session 5 Documents for Information

GEO 17-5-Inf-01: Report of the Programme Board

Group on Earth Observations GEO Week 2021 Anchor Sessions

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

14:00 – 15:50 **Anchor Session One: Integrated implementation of GEO work programme activities**

GEO Members are faced with complex policy challenges, including the use of Earth observations to act on the GEO engagement priorities represented by the UN 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework. We must reach 2030 in a more sustained, adapted and secure world to the global environmental and societal challenges but more change is required to meet these goals and targets in such a short time. To add to this worrying situation, the pledge for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development was slowed down by the immediate need for a transformative recovery post-COVID. As such, we are now looking more closely at the connections between the SDGs, climate adaptation and DRR goals and targets. This is to take advantage of the synergistic relations, limit possible trade-offs and accelerate transformational change.

- World Economic Forum (WEF);
- GEOGLoWs;
- e-shape;
- GEOGLAM.

Session outcomes and recommendations

Invite stakeholders to recognize the importance and value of interactions and synergies across the SDGs, including the usefulness for government agencies.

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

16:00 – 17:50 **Anchor Session Two: Climate Action**

The COP26 UN Climate Change Conference marks another significant step since the historic Paris Agreement which committed countries to strengthening actions to combat climate change and limit the global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. However, analyses show that governments are not currently on track to meet such targets. More than ever, the spotlight is on how to mobilize the trillions needed to tackle the urgent climate crisis and enable transformative climate action towards a resilient, net-zero carbon world by 2050. Both the public and private sectors have a role to play in accelerating the ecological and economic transition. This session will investigate how Earth observations can be used to strengthen spending decisions by governments and international financial institutions on climate-friendly investments especially in critical nexus areas addressing the needs and potential of developing countries, as well as to manage climate risks and seize climate opportunities by companies and financial firms.

- Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, NOAA, USA;
- Head of Geospatial at Bloomberg LP;
- GCF / UNFCCC+NAP;
- SOFF, WMO (on GBON initiative).

Session outcomes and recommendations

Invite stakeholders to engage in a new workstream exploring the role of Earth observations in support of finance for climate action.

Wednesday, 24 November 2021**10:00 – 11:50 Anchor Session Three: Climate and Ocean**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has explained that the ocean is inextricably linked to our climate and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has also initiated a dialogue on the ocean and climate change to consider how to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action in this context.

Rising air temperatures due to increases in atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations are causing ice sheets across Greenland and Antarctica, as well as glaciers on land, to melt. These influxes of additional freshwater, along with thermal expansion, are leading to rising sea levels. Other impacts of climate change on the oceans include rises in temperature and acidity, and decreases in oxygen, constituting risks to marine biodiversity, fisheries, and ecosystems, and their functions and services for humans. Further, the oceans are capable of acting as a natural reservoir of large amounts of CO₂ through physical and biological mechanisms, thus serving as a sink for carbon and mitigating the full effects of increased greenhouse gas emissions. Earth observations have a role to play in monitoring and reporting on these activities under global policy agreements. This session will investigate what/how GWP activities are best positioned to provide input to country efforts to develop ocean/marine-conscious climate action, with particular focus on climate adaptation measures.

- Special Envoy for the Ocean;
- UNFCCC Secretariat – elevating ocean element in adaptation planning;
- PICT member, Digital Earth Pacific - marine biology / fisheries;
- Ocean inputs to NAPs - coastal impact and adaptation (Blue Planet);
- IOC Ocean Decade.

Session outcomes and recommendations

Invite stakeholders to engage the national maritime services and examine feasibility of GWP activities to develop practical guidance (policy briefs and technical guidance) for NAPs on the ocean/marine element...

Wednesday, 24 November 2021**14:00 – 15:50 Anchor Session Four: Resilient Cities and Human Settlements**

A fourth engagement priority has been proposed relating to urban resilience, in the context of sustainable urbanisation. Many people around the world are moving to cities to seek employment, shelter and increasingly more, food or subsistence. Through EO4SDG and in collaboration with other urban activities from the GWP and with UN-Habitat, SDG11 (safe and resilient cities and communities) and the New Urban Agenda have been addressed through an EO toolkit. Several other GEO activities are developing tools to address urbanization issues (monitoring heat and health, nature-based solutions to greening cities, etc.). The first invited speaker leads cities and human settlements globally on sustainable urbanisation.

- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat);
- EO4SDG: EO Toolkit for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, User Perspective, Abu Dhabi, UAE;

- Greening cities, Armenia GEO;
- Monitoring Heat and Health/EO4Health;
- Urban network perspective, ICLEI.

Session outcomes and recommendations

Invite stakeholders to support the Urban Resilience Engagement Plan and work with cities and human settlements as appropriate.

Thursday, 25 November 2021

14:00 – 15:50 Anchor Session Five: Nature Based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) have been described as a method to tackle disaster risk reduction, climate change and long-term sustainable development. Indeed, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates that global benefits in ecosystem services from NbS focused on climate are US \$170 billion. NbS covers broad aspects ranging from storing carbon to mitigate climate change to maintaining mangroves to provide additional protection during storms. The first invited speaker leads the UN Convention on Biological Diversity who have stated that climate change and biodiversity loss are inseparable threats to humankind and must be addressed together and that NbS offer immediate and cost-effective benefits to both mitigate climate change and to adapt to its unavoidable effects.

- UN CBD;
- GEOBON;
- GEO LDN;
- EO4EA;
- GEO Indigenous Alliance.

Session outcomes and recommendations

Invite stakeholders to support Nature Based Solutions activities in the GEO Work Programme.