

## Draft Naming Guidelines for GEO Work Programme Activities

*This document is submitted to the Program Board for decision.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

At its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in June 2019, the GEO Programme Board requested that the GEO Secretariat propose guidelines for the naming of GEO Work Programme (GWP) activities (that is, GEO Flagships, Initiatives, Community Activities, Regional GEOs, and Foundational Tasks). This discussion paper is intended to identify the key considerations in developing such guidelines and to propose a possible initial set.

### 2 CONSIDERATIONS

- Activity names provide one of the first entry points for those interested in GEO to discover the activities in the GWP. As such, they need to clearly convey information to a broad range of readers, for many of whom English is not their first language.
- Since 2016, GEO has used short names (some of which are acronyms) as convenient tools to refer to GWP activities. These short names replace the alpha-numeric codes used in the previous Work Plans (e.g. “GFOI” is used now instead of “SB-03” for the Global Forest Observation Task/Initiative). These short names are typically easier for both internal and external users to remember than alpha-numeric codes. They are also useful for diagrams, charts and other graphic presentations of the GWP where the full names would be cumbersome.
- With the introduction of the categories of Flagships, Initiatives and Community Activities, it is desirable to have consistency in names even as activities may transition from one category to another. This permits activities to retain and build their individual brands and enables the GEO community to find activities easily and to understand changes to the GWP over time.
- Many GWP activities have been started as projects or programmes prior to their inclusion in the GWP and thus may have pre-existing names and other branding. Unless there are important overriding considerations, it is desirable that they be allowed to keep their original names and branding as this is likely to facilitate their affiliation with GEO.
- The inclusion of “GEO” in the name of the activity has generally been considered to be positive, since this expands recognition of the GEO brand and helps to connect the services provided by GWP activities to GEO as an entity. However, this use may also imply endorsement of the actions and outputs of the activity, over which GEO as a whole has little or no control or oversight.

### 3 PROPOSED GUIDELINES

#### 3.1 Full Names

Proposed Guideline	Rationale
<b>DO</b> clearly identify the primary focus of the activity and, if relevant, its scope (e.g., global or within a specific region).	Aids in reader comprehension without having to refer to other text.
<b>DO</b> use fewer than 80 characters, including spaces.	Avoids overly-long names and facilitates standardization of formatting of GEO documents.
<b>AVOID</b> including technical or specialized vocabulary in the name.	Intended to maximize the ability of readers of GEO documents to understand the intent of the activity.
<b>AVOID</b> including acronyms within the full name, with the exception of “GEO”.	Avoids the need to refer elsewhere for the meaning of the acronym.
<b>AVOID</b> including the terms “Flagship”, “Initiative” or “Community Activity”.	Permits retention of the name in the event the activity changes categories within the GWP.
<b>AVOID</b> using the term “Global” in the name unless the scale of resources, participants and capability extends to multiple continents.	

#### 3.2 Short Names

Proposed Guideline	Rationale
<b>DO</b> use short names that are easily pronounceable.	Assists in verbal references to the activity.
<b>DO</b> use names with a maximum of 20 characters, including spaces.	Compromise between intelligibility and brevity. The name may be long enough to include several words, but still short enough to be included in a diagram or chart without taking excessive space.
<b>DO</b> use all capital letters.	Use of all capitals is easier to read in contexts where space is constrained and the typeface may be small.
<b>DO</b> give a sense of the nature of the activity. The short name does not necessarily need to be an acronym of the long name.	While acronyms can, over time, form useful mnemonics, use of key words may be more intuitive for unfamiliar readers. For example, the short name “EO4HEALTH” provides a clearer sense of the domain in which the activity operates than does a pure acronym.
<b>AVOID</b> using special characters, including hyphens.	Avoidance of special characters, as well as sub- or super-scripts, improves legibility and consistency.

#### 3.3 Use of the terms “GEO” and “GEOSS”

Proposed Guideline	Rationale
<b>DO</b> use “GEO” in the full name and/or short name of GEO Flagships and Initiatives (not mandatory).	Assists in building recognition of the GEO brand and in expanding awareness of the breadth and impact of GWP activities, while allowing for flexibility where inclusion of GEO in the name does not work well or there is other established branding.

Proposed Guideline	Rationale
<p><b>AVOID</b> using “GEOSS” in the full name and/or short name of any GEO Flagship, Initiative or Community Activity.</p>	<p>Since “GEOSS” refers to a global system of systems, the use of GEOSS in any particular regional or domain context is inappropriate. With the recent renaming of the Regional GEOs, the same rationale should be applied to other GWP activities using GEOSS in their name.</p>
<p><b>AVOID</b> using “GEO” in the full name and/or short name of Community Activities.</p>	<p>Many GEO Community Activities are either early-stage demonstrations/pilots or are existing programmes of GEO Members/POs. While it may be advantageous to include these activities in the GWP, their relatively loose affiliation with GEO and their lower level of documentation and scrutiny as compared to GEO Initiatives and Flagships suggests that the use of the GEO branding may be inappropriate due to the implication of endorsement of these activities. While adoption of this guideline would detract from the continuity of naming as activities mature, it may be possible to add “GEO” to the name, at least in some cases, on the activity’s acceptance by the Programme Board as a GEO Initiative or Flagship. This would also serve, to some degree, as a way to provide additional recognition for the Initiatives and Flagships.</p>

#### 4 RECOMMENDATION

The Secretariat recommends that the Programme Board approve the naming guidelines for implementation in version 3 of the 2020-2022 GEO Work Programme.