

Report of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Subgroup

This document is submitted by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Subgroup to the Programme Board for discussion.

1 INTRODUCTION

We last reported to Programme Board in March 2021. Since our last report, we (i) presented the GEO Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) statement to the Executive Committee and collected feedback from GEO’s community during a session at the June 2021 GEO Symposium and through the publication of a blog; (ii) organized a survey across working group members to capture information on how diversity is understood, valued and discussed in working groups; (iii) trialed a buddy scheme for new Programme Board members; (iv) contacted all GEO region representatives to establish good communication and discuss potential ways to work together on EDI issues; (v) collated and analyzed all EDI-relevant data collected by Secretariat during the GEO symposium; and (vi) developed a GEO EDI logo to be used at GEO events. Outputs from these activities are detailed below.

2 FEEDBACK ON THE EDI STATEMENT

The GEO EDI statement was approved by the GEO Executive Committee at its March 2021, with a call for community consultations.

On 21 June 2021, the EDI Subgroup, in collaboration with the Regional GEOs, held a parallel session (side event) during the 2021 GEO virtual symposium. The session aimed to engage (conscientize and solicit inputs) the community on the GEO EDI Statement, to get the community started and build momentum in the realization of EDI in GEO. To encourage participation the session was organized as a combination of a plenary and breakaway sessions. The breakaway sessions were organized according to the five pillars of the GEO EDI Statement and used an online tool for participants to capture their inputs in writing.



Figure 1: GEO EDI Framework

The session was attended by 48 people, including those already in the GEO community as well as new participants in GEO events. The integration of the communities made the experience of sharing and insights richer.

For each pillar, four questions were asked to frame the discussions:

- Describe in a word or two what the pillar means to you?
- How would you describe the action envisaged, are they appropriate and implementable?
- What other concrete actions would you like considered? What would you say is missing in the pillars?
- In your experience, what could be unintended consequences?

The main uptakes from the session were:

- People identified well with the five pillars.
- There was a general feeling that the actions articulated for each pillar are appropriate.
- Several people pointed out that EDI statements can rapidly become a politically correct way to pay lip services to EDI issues. As such, they called on EDI Subgroup to think about building trust in the community.
- People want to be able to engage, comment, and share their EDI experience within GEO.
- People want to be able to understand what roles are available in GEO, and how to access them - linking up to a need for transparency in terms of ways of engagement and available opportunities.
- Attendees were concerned with transparency, and progress monitoring.
- There was appetite for an EDI award (i.e., highlighting people in the community who make a difference in terms of diversity and inclusion).
- Several participants made positive comments about the use of Mentimeter tool to capture ideas, making the point that not everyone is comfortable taking the floor sharing ideas or disclose their identity when making an important point.
- There was a request for higher visibility of under-represented communities - which could for example be helped by stronger communication around local knowledge, local stories and local champions.
- We were reminded about the language barrier and were asked to consider actions around it.
- We were reminded about socio-economic barrier and how EDI agendas can unintentionally add pressure on countries/regions that are already struggling.
- Capacity building was cited as an important action to promote diversity and inclusion.

Further we had an opportunity to present the Subgroup's activities and findings from our baseline studies that guided the development of our EDI statement in a separate Side Event ("Taking action on gender and social inclusion in GEO initiatives") at the 2021 GEO Virtual Symposium. The session was looking at EDI integration by different programs across the world: GEO EDI subgroup, SERVIR Program, GEOGLOWS, GFOI, GEOGLAM, and GEOBON. The key outcome from this session was the recognition that inclusion is necessary for programs to identify solutions that work for all, acknowledging that different genders are bound to be affected by challenges differently. The session also recommended being aware that more often the gender and inclusion biases take place because we don't pay attention and are oblivious to them. It was recognized that EDI discussions within GEO brings an opportunity to highlight the importance of being inclusive and be proactive about it, whether this means inclusion in management or inclusion in participation.

The EDI Subgroup is considering how some of the above can be actioned as part of its action plan. As a start, the Subgroup, with assistance from the Secretariat, launched the [EDI blog](#) on the GEO website in July 2021.

3 WORKING GROUP SURVEY OUTCOMES

The survey was launched on 20 July 2021 and was intended to help the EDI Subgroup understand how EDI is considered in the functioning of GEO Working Groups. An individual email was sent to the 297 people registered with the Secretariat as being member of at least one WG. On 20 August, we closed the survey – at that point, we had received 52 answers (21.2% women, 78.8% men) from 6 regions (Europe: 50%; Asia: 15.4%; North America: 15.4%; Africa: 9.6%; South America: 7.7%; Oceania: 1.9%). We received no answer from CIS or from Central America and the Caribbean Islands. 69.2% of the respondents described themselves as senior professional, while 28.8% as mid-career professionals. We had one response from someone identifying as retired (1.9%), and no response from people identifying as early career professional or student. Responses were well distributed among the 4 GEO working groups (Data WG: 25% (N=1 woman and 12 men); Climate Change WG: 28.8% (N=4 women and 11 men); Capacity Development WG: 17.3% (N=2 women and 7 men); Disaster Risk reduction WG: 28.8% (N=4 women and 11 men)).

The main uptakes from this survey were:

- A majority of respondents see their working group composition as being representative of the level of diversity in the sector. 59.6% thought that the diversity level in their WG matches expected levels in the sector; while 19.2% thought that the diversity level in their Working Group is below expected levels in the sector. 7.7% thought that the diversity level in their Working Group is above expected levels in the sector, while 11.5% had no opinion/didn't know.
- Most people value diversity but can't easily provide examples where being diverse is beneficial. 82.7% of all respondents thought that better outcomes come with a more diverse working group. However, 9.6% thought that diversity only plays a small role in shaping achievements, and 3.8% thought there was no relationship between diversity and achievements. 21.2% of all respondents were unsure about how diversity may have impacted their Working Group, while 7.7% thought that diversity had no impact on the Working Group achievements.
- Members from the same Working Group have different perceptions of what is happening in their Working Group. For example, some respondents in a given Working Group described it as not very diverse while other respondents described it as diverse.
- Two out of five respondents would like to see action related to geographic diversity, generational diversity and/or gender diversity. 23.1% of the respondents however believe their Working Group is fine the way they are, and 21.2% believe actions would be great, but not a priority.
- People have fears about actions aimed at increasing diversity. These fears include (i) compromising expertise and achievements over representation and (ii) hampering decision making with diversity making decision process slower.

4 BUDDY SCHEME

This spring/summer, we trialed a buddy scheme whereby new Programme Board members are paired with more experienced ones. The idea behind this initiative is to enhance new Programme Board members' experience at the Programme Board by hopefully making them feel more

connected, while providing them with easier access to institutional knowledge. Thanks to the Secretariat, we identified three new Programme Board members who we thought could be interested by a buddy scheme; two of them confirmed they were interested and were buddied with experienced Programme Board members in early June. We contacted participants for feedback ahead of the September's Programme Board meeting but only received a reply from one of the more experienced Programme Board members (feedback which was very positive). We are hoping to receive more feedback in the coming weeks.

5 GEO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE ENGAGEMENT

To extend our understanding of EDI issues across GEO, before the summer break the EDI Working Group wrote to contacts at the four regional GEOs: AfriGEO; AmeriGEO; AOGEO; and EuroGEO. We explained that we had some initial thoughts about EDI in GEO, especially with respect to gender, geography and career stage, that we would like to discuss with them. We also provided links to videos on EDI branding, philosophy, assessment, and examples on AfriGEO and Indigenous people, as well as the GEO EDI Statement. But, most importantly, we said that we wanted to hear from them about their experiences and any EDI issues that affect their initiatives directly.

Now that the summer break is over, we have begun a series of meetings with them to explore their experiences of EDI and see whether the issues that we have identified resonate with them in any way. By doing this, we hope to take the temperature of EDI across GEO's communities, understand better where we are up to at the moment and use this to help decide the next steps for EDI in GEO. Our findings will be reported back in the next report.

6 2021 GEO VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM: EDI DATA ANALYSIS

The Secretariat collected EDI information during the registration process. 931 entries were analyzed: 52% from people identifying as a man, 35% from people identifying as a woman, 2% from people identifying as non-binary; 11% of the respondents did not want to disclose their gender.

There were some differences in geographic representation, with 35% of people who registered to the symposium indicating their GEO region of residence as the European region; 28% as the Americas; 25% as Asia-Oceania; 10% as Africa; and 0.4% as CIS. Information collected on nationality closely matched information on residence.

The majority of registrations were from mid-career and senior professional (68%); students made up 8% of the registrations, while early career professionals made up 17%. 1% of the registrations were from retired professionals, while 6% did not want to disclose their career stage. Similarly, the majority of registrations came from people aged 30 to 49 (51%); 14% of the registrations were from people 20 to 29, 17% from people 50 to 59, 9% from people 60 to 69 and 2% from people 70 to 79. 7% of people registering to the symposium did not want to disclose their age bracket.

7 HIGHLIGHTING EDI THROUGH TARGETED BRANDING

To highlight the importance of EDI in GEO, the subgroup developed a logo (see Figure 2 below).

The inspiration of this logo was to provide a distinct and easily recognizable complement to the GEO logo and branding that celebrates EDI throughout the GEO community. The GEO EDI logo uses a combination of solid orange and subtle yellow gradient, with an orange “equal” sign inscribed in the “E” and yellow arrow (containing a triangle evoking a Greek delta, the symbol of change) pushing forward into the “O” to indicate that the efforts of GEO EDI are to advance



Figure 2: GEO EDI Logo

equality and diversity for (Earth) observations. Color suggestions are based on two factors: 1) complimenting existing GEO branding using color theory, and 2) color psychology symbolism.

To highlight EDI at GEO events, the GEO EDI subgroup will invite sessions that embody the spirit of the “five pillars” of GEO EDI to display and feature the EDI logo in event programs, promotions, and other materials when a session fulfills specific EDI criteria. For an event, or session in an event, to be branded with the new EDI logo in 2021, it will require to be diverse in:

1. Geography: Include presenters/panelists/participants from multiple countries and institutes, preferably with a diverse representation of geoscientists and inclusive of regions or countries historically under-represented in GEO.
2. Generation: Have presenters/panelists/participants from different career stages.
3. Gender expression: Include presenters/panelists/participants that represent more than one form of gender identity.

Any session, panel, or other event that fulfills all three criteria will be eligible (and encouraged) to display the new GEO EDI logo.