

Proposed Objectives for 2022 GEO Symposium

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

1 INTRODUCTION

The GEO Symposia have been the major events for the GEO Work Programme community to exchange information, share experience and foster collaboration. The target audience of the GEO Symposium has typically focused on the leads and participants of GEO Work Programme (GWP) activities; the sessions have therefore addressed issues thought to be of interest to this community.

The specific theme of the Symposium varies depending on the point within the three-year Work Programme cycle. At the third and last year of the current Work Programme cycle, it is assumed that the GEO Symposium 2022 will focus on planning the 2023-2025 GWP, based on previous Programme Board guidance.

2 FORMAT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The previous two GEO Symposia (2020 and 2021) were held in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant data confirmed that the virtual Symposia reached a much broader audience (by nearly a multiple of 10) than the earlier in-person Symposia. However, many participants indicated that they missed the greater potential for one-on-one and small group interactions which were highly valued. Surveys after both symposia found a dominant preference for a hybrid version for future Symposia, taking advantages of both formats – an in-person meeting for participants who are able and willing to travel, combined with online participation.

The recent trend in COVID-19 policies suggests the possibility of a hybrid symposium, though this is not assured. The Secretariat suggests that both options be kept open and leave it to the Symposium Subgroup to monitor the situation and decide on the format as necessary.

The total time availability for the hybrid and fully virtual options can be similar, although spread over more days for the fully virtual option:

- Hybrid symposium: 2-4 May 2022, 6 hours per day, 18 hours in total
- Fully virtual symposium: 2-6 May 2022, 3.5 hours per day, 17.5 hours in total

This would allow planning of sessions to proceed without having to decide on the format early in the process

3 OBJECTIVES FOR THE SYMPOSIUM

As mentioned above, the main focus for the 2022 GEO Symposium would be to support the development of the 2023-2025 GWP. Still, it is expected that there will also be time available to consider additional issues of relevance to the GWP community.

The Secretariat proposes the following objectives for the 2022 GEO Symposium:

- Provide opportunities for GWP activities to discuss and obtain feedback on their 2023-2025 Implementation Plans and to describe their key results and impact in 2020-2021;
- Promote collaboration among GWP activities, particularly on projects to demonstrate and test the potential for development of integrated services in support of key policy needs (“integrative projects”);
- Discuss the roles of the Foundational Task Working Groups in cross-GWP analysis, building connections with United Nations and other international organizations, and support of the GEO engagement priorities;
- Consult with the GWP community regarding the work of the Expert Advisory Group on GEOSS; and
- Share lessons learned and good practices developed by GWP activities, particularly in areas such as user engagement, capacity development, EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion), open knowledge, impact planning, and other topics.

This list is intended to provide a starting point for discussion. Programme Board members are welcome to add, remove, or revise objectives as needed.

4 SUBGROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Symposium will be jointly organized by the GEO Secretariat and a subgroup of the Programme Board. As required under the GEO Rules of Procedure, proposed terms of reference of this subgroup are provided as Annex A to this document.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Programme Board is requested to:

1. Confirm the period for the 2022 GEO Symposium as the first week of May 2022;
2. Approve the draft terms of reference for the Symposium Subgroup;
3. Approve, with or without amendments, the objectives of the 2022 GEO Symposium; and
4. Nominate (including self-nomination) members to the subgroup.

Annex A

Proposed Terms of Reference of the Symposium Subgroup

PURPOSE

The Symposium Subgroup is convened to work with the GEO Secretariat to plan and implement the 2022 GEO Symposium.

DUTIES

- Based on the guidance of the Programme Board, develop a programme for the 2022 GEO Symposium, including target audiences, topics to be addressed, and session formats, all of which will be described in a concept note.
- Identify and invite speakers, presenters, panellists, etc. to participate in the event, taking account of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion considerations such as gender, geography, and generation.
- Publicize the event to the identified target audiences.
- Serve as session coordinators, moderators, break-out group leaders, and/or note-takers during the event.
- Develop and implement tools to assess the success of the Symposium in achieving its intended outcomes.
- Identify lessons learned that may aid in the planning of future Symposia or other events.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Draft Symposium agenda (end of March)
- 2022 GEO Symposium (first week of May).
- Lessons learned report to Programme Board (PB-24).

MEMBERSHIP

Participation in the subgroup is open to all Programme Board member representatives (principals and alternates).

DURATION

The subgroup will be dissolved following presentation of its lessons-learned report to the Programme Board.