

## Proposal for Foundational Tasks of the GEO Work Programme 2023-2025

*This document is submitted by the GEO Secretariat to the Programme Board for discussion.*

### 1 BACKGROUND

As outlined in the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025, Foundational Tasks are those activities that provide important support and enabling functions to Flagships, Initiatives, and Community Activities (now renamed as Pilot Initiatives) to allow GEO to achieve its Strategic Objectives. Foundational Tasks are coordinated by the GEO Secretariat and implemented by the GEO Secretariat with the GEO community. The scope of Foundational Tasks is therefore dependent on the resources of the GEO Secretariat, as reflected in the GEO Trust Fund.

Foundational Tasks have evolved through GEO Work Programme cycles since 2016, becoming simpler in structure, more focused on tasks and increasingly in alignment with the implementing environment and resources (see Annex 1). To illustrate, the 2016 Transitional Work Programme had 18 Foundational Tasks organized into four groups: GEOSS Development; GCI Operations; Community Development; and Secretariat Operations. The 2017-2019 Work Programme re-organized Foundational Tasks where Secretariat resources were most needed at the time. This resulted in 10 Foundational Tasks with 5 of them on data and infrastructure related activities, and the other 5 respectively on Capacity Development Coordination, User Needs and Gap Analysis, Communication and Engagement, Management and Support, and Monitoring and Evaluation. The 2020-2022 Work Programme implemented another optimization and included 5 Foundation Tasks: Engagement Priorities Coordination, GEOSS Data and Information Resources, GEOSS Platform Operation, GEO Work Programme Support, and Secretariat Operation.

Foundational Tasks were typically developed during the same period with Flagships, Initiatives and Pilot Initiatives. However, the development of the Foundational Tasks of the GEO Work Programme 2023-2025 was postponed to 2023 by the decision of the Programme Board at its 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting to reflect the input of several ongoing processes in GEO, including the review of GEOSS and Post-2025 Strategy conception.

In September 2022, the Secretariat consulted the Programme Board for their initial thoughts on the revision of the Foundational Tasks. Following the Board's guidance, this document presents an initial proposal for the Foundational Task structure to support the GEO Work Programme 2023-2025 for consultation with the Programme Board.

It's important to note that the 2020-2022 Foundational Tasks will continue to be implemented (see Section 3 below) while the 2023-2025 Foundational Tasks are being developed.

### 2 PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The proposed Foundational Tasks aim to focus on the functions that will support the GEO Work Programme as they accelerate their transition from providing research outputs to operational

services. The streamlined tasks will support a focused, user-centred and impact-driven GEO Work Programme that will contribute to GEO's position as the go-to entity for global Earth observation-based solutions.

Major points to highlight include:

- The GEO Work Programme Coordination task continues to focus on supporting the GEO Work Programme activities. The task will also aim to provide tools that will help Flagships, Initiatives and Pilot Initiatives in building their success. This core service provided by the Secretariat will also include the post-2025 incubator approach, which will build a more integrative and better-resourced Work Programme for delivery and impact.
- A single task 'Data and Knowledge Management' is constructed to streamline the operation and evolution of GEO infrastructures and their services, to fill the gap of most needed data including in situ data, to integrate technical and legal guidance on data and knowledge management for GEO Work Programme, and eventually to provide the open data and open knowledge that fit the needs of both the end-users.
- Recognizing the interrelated nature of engagement priorities, the task on Engagement Priorities will focus on supporting and connecting relevant global policy frameworks to a more integrated and operational GEO Work Programme.
- GEO Secretariat operations, as well as communications and resource mobilization are removed from Foundational Tasks as they are cross-cutting functions of the Secretariat servicing the entire GEO mission and not exclusively the GEO Work Programme. These are captured in the Secretariat Concept of Operations.

The major activities included in each of the proposed Foundational Tasks are described briefly:

#### **GEO Work Programme Coordination**

- GEO Work Programme Coordination
- GEO Work Programme Guidance Development and Uptake (including knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, capacity development, resource mobilization, communications, etc.)
- GEO Work Programme Post-2025 Incubators
- GEO Work Programme Progress and Impact Monitoring
- Advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness in GEO Work Programme, including through the Youth Community of Practices and the GEO Indigenous Alliance
- Capacity development for countries to use GEO Work Programme outputs

#### **Engagement Priority Coordination and Integration**

- Coordinating GEO's engagement with UN agencies and other organizations responsible for various components of the policy frameworks
- Identifying issues cutting across the various GEO Engagement Priorities (Climate Change, Sustainable Development, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Urban Resilience and Human Settlements) and facilitating integration among these priorities

#### **Data and Knowledge Management**

- Satellite Data Access and Use Coordination
- In Situ Data Access and Use Coordination
- Advancing Data Sharing and Management
- GEO Knowledge Hub and knowledge management

- GEO Infrastructure Evolution
- Modelling
- GEONETCAST

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION

As described in the background section, the Foundational Tasks have evolved to reflect the priorities of GEO and the GEO Work Programme at various stages.

The implementing models of Foundational Tasks have always been a combination of community-led and Secretariat-driven efforts. In the GEO Work Programme 2020-2022, Working Groups were set up to implement some of the Foundational Tasks which aimed to develop and implement action strategies in respective cross-cutting areas including Capacity Development, Climate Change, Data Sharing and Data Management, Disaster Risk Reduction as well as Resilient Cities and Human Settlements. Where the Programme Board identified gaps and cross-cutting issues, Subgroups such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness (EDI) Subgroup, Award Subgroup and Symposium Subgroup were convened. These Working Groups and Subgroups have all served as great networks for information exchange and strategy consultation.

It's also observed that Working Groups and Subgroups have varied models and experiences in terms of delivery of results. Taking the opportunity of the Foundational Task development process, it will be useful to review the Working Groups in-depth in order to evaluate how fit-for-purpose they are for the 2023-2025 Foundational Tasks structure and what are the optimized way to leverage the expertise of members of existing Working Groups. This is the proposed analysis process for the Working Groups (see document PB-25.05), which includes a 360-degree review to seek feedback from key stakeholders, including the GEO Working Group members, GEO Work Programme activity leads, Programme Board members, GEO Members, GEO Secretariat, etc.

The EDI Subgroup of the Programme Board has worked to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusivity are fully considered, addressed, and embedded within GEO activities and decisions. The Subgroup intends to review its achievements to-date and use that as a starting point to determine future directions and needs.

### 4 NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

- 7-8 February 2023 (25<sup>th</sup> PB): Programme Board consultation on the Foundational Task structure
- February-May 2023: Develop work plans of Foundational Tasks and conduct review of Working Groups
- 15-16 June 2023 (26<sup>th</sup> PB): Programme Board consultation on a detailed description of the Foundational Tasks and implementing models
- July 2023: ExCom consultation on Foundational Tasks
- September 2023 (27<sup>th</sup> PB): Programme Board approval of the Foundational Tasks
- 6-10 November (GEO-19 Plenary): Plenary endorsement of Foundational Tasks of the GEO Work Programme 2023-2025

## 5 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

In reviewing the proposed structure, Programme Board members are asked to consider the following questions:

- Are there any activities or functions which do not appear in the set of Foundational Tasks, but which clearly ought to be included (and which would be high priority for support from Trust Fund resources)?
- Is the proposed alignment of specific functions within the Foundational Tasks fit for purpose? Are there any functions that should be realigned elsewhere?
- Are there any activities or functions identified under the proposed Foundational Tasks that should not be undertaken or that would be better positioned elsewhere in the Work Programme?

Programme Board members are also asked to comment on the process and timelines to develop the Foundational Tasks.

## **Annex**

### **Foundational Tasks Evolution**

#### **1. FOUNDATIONAL TASKS IN GEO WORK PROGRAMME 2016**

##### **GEOSS Development and GCI Operations**

- Advancing GEOSS Data Sharing principles
- GCI Operations (including access to Knowledge)
- Global Observing and Information Systems (includes systems like WIGOS. GCOS; ... And reference datasets)
- GEONETCast Development and Operations
- GEOSS satellite Earth Observation Resources (includes advocacy for continuity)
- GEOSS non-space based Earth Observation Resources (includes inclusion of citizens' observatories) (includes advocacy for continuity)
- GCI Development (includes development of Data Management guidelines)
- SBAs process: Systematic determination of user needs / observational gaps
- Knowledge Base development
- Radio-frequency protection
- Communications Networks

##### **Community Development**

- Capacity Building coordination
- Reinforcing engagement at national and regional level (includes EO uptake for decision making)
- Assess the benefits from EOs and of their socio-economic value

##### **Secretariat Operations**

- Management and Support
- Communication and Engagement
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Resources Mobilization

#### **2. FOUNDATIONAL TASKS IN GEO WORK PROGRAMME 2017-2019**

##### **GEOSS Development and GCI Operations**

- Advancing GEOSS Data Sharing principles
- GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI) Operations
- GEOSS In-situ Earth Observation Resources
- GEOSS Satellite Earth Observation Resources
- GEONETCast Development and Operations
- User Needs and Gap Analysis

##### **Community Development**

- Capacity Building coordination

##### **Secretariat Operations**

- Management and Support

- Communication and Engagement
- Monitoring and Evaluation

### **3. FOUNDATIONAL TASKS IN GEO WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2022**

#### **GEO Engagement Priorities Coordination**

- GEO Engagement Priorities Coordination
- Commercial Sector Engagement
- Communications
- Resource Mobilization

#### **GEOSS Data, Information and Knowledge Resources**

- Satellite Observations
- In situ Observations
- Modelling
- Advancing GEOSS Data Sharing and Data Management Principles

#### **GEOSS Infrastructure Development**

- GEOSS Platform Operation
- Support GEO Community Data and Information Needs
- GEO Knowledge Hub Development
- GEONETCast Operation
- GEOSS Platform Documentation
- GEOSS Infrastructure Evolution

#### **GEO Work Programme Support**

- Programme Board Support
- GEO Work Programme Development
- GEO Work Programme Monitoring and Liaison
- GEO Work Programme Capacity Development

#### **GEO Secretariat Operations**

- Management of the GEO Trust Fund
- Management of Secretariat Human Resources
- Conference and Meeting Management
- Relations with GEO Members, Participating Organizations and GEO Associates
- Coordination of GEO Evaluations