Outcomes of GEO Symposium 2023

PB-26: 15-16 June 2023
Geneva, Switzerland

W. Chu
GEO Secretariat
GEO Family Reunion

- 150 in-person participants; 50 online participants
- 61 speakers: 10 Africa, 10 America, 12 Asia-Oceania, 14 Europe, 15 International
- 24 GWP activities
- 11 Sessions
Session 1: Opening

• Set the scene of the symposium – a major stop toward Post-2025 strategy and the Ministerial Summit in Cape Town
• Inspiration from AI for Good: how do we harness transformative technologies to achieve GEO’s mission and vision
• A pitch on the ODK Workshop - Open data and open knowledge continues as a backbone in GEO’s future direction
Factors that contribute to equity for GEO post-2025:

- **Political will, global thinking** (leaving no one behind), a user-based approach and connecting with the UN System are necessary.
- The integration and synthesis of data from all knowledge bases (scientific, social economic, indigenous, citizen science) are crucial for effective program development and effective decision making.
- Manage expectations of what is achievable with Earth intelligence, our "niche" and value proposition for GEO needs to be very clear and complementary.
- Acknowledge and support the **people** behind GEO WP activities, empower their **agency** and capabilities to see equity values enacted and embodied in the GEO WP.
- Engagement and utilization of youth as catalysts for transformative impact and economic transformation, esp. in regions with young growing populations, while considering mechanisms to engage them in dialogues and decision-making processes.
- Recognition and respect for Indigenous **Data Sovereignty** and the **GEO Indigenous Alliance** as well as dedicated funding mechanism for the GEO Indigenous Alliance is necessary to ensure meaningful collaboration and benefit sharing; whilst considering their knowledge inputs, protecting their interests, culture and environment.
- Enable meaningful private sector / small business involvement.
- Capacity building, knowledge retention and knowledge exchange are essential to access and utilize Earth observation data.
Session 3: Ministerial Update

GEO Week 2023
#TheEarthTalks

Day 1
Flash talks workshops
OPEN

Day 2
Showcase sessions
OPEN

Day 3
GEO Plenary sessions
OPEN

Day 4
GEO Plenary sessions and business
DELEGATES ONLY

Day 5
Ministerial Summit Adoption of Ministerial Declaration on GEO Post-2025
DELEGATES ONLY
Session 4: Thematic Session 1: Biodiversity and Climate


2. Atlas has been endorsed by CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC; GEO community offered critical reflections about possible redundancies, technical feasibility, and approach.

3. Importance of GEO’s convening power: the benefit of the Atlas lies in the process and not just the product, to compile different ecosystem atlases is monumental effort for tracking ecosystems.

4. Importance of user engagement and technical needs assessment building on GWP activities’ experience: the users and uses of the Atlas will drive its design.

5. Atlas needs to leverage existing initiatives, create innovative collaborations, and be an inclusive effort considering marginalized communities such as indigenous peoples, the global south, and other communities on the ground.

6. The process, mechanics and the communication around the Atlas need to be given more consideration.
Session 5: Operational Services via GEO Work Program

- Relevant
- Reliable
- Accessible

User Engagement
Operational Setting
Evaluation & Quality Control
Long-term Sustainability

WORKSHOPS

- Hackathons

COURSES & MENTORING

CLPs

NFMS
Operational systems embedded within national institutions.

United Nations Climate Change

GREEN CLIMATE FUND

FOREST CARBON PARTNERSHIP

The LEAF Coalition

VERRA

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Forest Observation Initiative

National policy & decision making etc.
Session 6: Flash Talks: Enablers for scaling the impact of the GEO Work Programme

- Six flashtalks on impact presented; impact design focuses on long-term achievements (societal changes) instead of short-term actions and deliverables
- The (under development) Capacity Development Toolkit will support GEO's impact-driven way of working
- Focus on designing, achieving and demonstrating impact is key for reporting, accountability and resource mobilization
- Co-design, end-user needs assessment and stakeholder engagement are crucial for defining the long-term impact of GEO's GWP activities
- Time allocation and resource availabilities to achieve and measure the impact of the GWP activities is challenging due to the voluntary work of the GWP participants
- The need exists to showcase the socio-economic and/or environmental impact (changes in society) of the GWP activities during the ministerial
Session 7: Early Warning for All

- There is a huge political momentum for this new global initiative launched by UNSG at COP27
- GEO is an important supporting implementing partner, supporting Pillar 1 and 2
- Lead agencies reply on GEO to help achieve its ambitious goal in the tight timeframe available
- There are already a lot of great work by the GWP activities (e.g. GEOGLAM, DIAS, GEOGloWS, Cloud Credit Programme, POs., HPI) in the 30 initial focus countries to be leveraged and scaled up
- WGs & CoP (e.g. Data WG, CapD WG/National GEO, Indigenous GEO) and H&H incubator also have a lot to offer
- Need to create synergies and complementarities among GWP activities and with other EW4ALL implementing partners
- Sustainability is a critical issue
Session 8: Urban Resilience

- First opportunity to present the Global Heat Resilience incubator concept to the wider GEO community.

- Audience provided some useful reflections around the need to demonstrate the added-value of this initiative, working with partners to establish demand for the service, linking with existing services i.e., Copernicus Climate Hub.

- GEO and WMO co-presented the incubator highlighting the commitment to date in advancing the project concept, and alignment with the EW4ALL global initiative.

- Next steps were set-out including identifying partners, developing the technical concept, further socialising the concept a relevant events, working towards a convening meeting in Q1 of 2024.

- Six flash-talks were given to elaborate on various design considerations, existing initiatives.
Session 9: Interactive Dialogue on strengthening the operating model of GEO for Post-2025

How can the operating model of GEO be made fit-for-purpose?

• GEO to ensure quality and standards, for example on interoperability (standards for data sharing). GEO to become the benchmark-setter for EO, akin to IPCC and IPBES.

• The five points on the operating model in the draft GEO Post-2025 strategy are all important and interconnected.

• Monitoring and evaluation GEO’s work: Working towards tangible measures of success to increase accountability with a combination of voluntary approach and framework metrics.

• Building GEO as a brand requires good products and communication (increase visibility) Prioritizing the GEO Work Programme will help to focus and improve with demonstrating impact.

• Opportunities for overcoming barriers are multilingualism, funding, better cooperation/partnership and integration; We need to evolve the current operating model and build on our strengths
Session 10: Mobilizing resources for the GEO Work Programme

• Success stories and challenges in RM presented by 4 GWP activities; RM approaches presented by GEOSEC

• What resources: funding, data, mentorship...

• Resources for what: operationalization; user engagement; diversity and inclusion; basic infrastructures; scientific capacity; multiliguisim; opportunity for participation...

• How:
  • Ask the GEO principals to identify national funding lines targeted to the GEO initiatives, either acting in their country or elsewhere
  • Establish a funding platform to match possible donors with the needs from the GEO initiatives, at different levels, from institutional to crowd funding
  • Streamline a procedure for GEO initiatives to submit funding requests to international donors
  • Connect the initiatives with the regional GEOs to identify additional in-kind resources at the regional scale

• Debate: Are our GWP well-resourced? Is GEO well-positioned to mobilize resources for GWP?
Session 11: Closing

11.1. Going forward, what excites you about Post-2025 GEO?
- Local level Empowerment
- Youth action
- Real intelligence
- Out of the box
- GEO Indigenous Alliance
- Earth Intelligence
- Sustainability
- Synergies
- Youth4EO
- Partnership
- Integration
- National GEOs
- Impact
- Equity
- Operational
- Land
- Role
- Open data, open knowledge
- Representation
- Regional Impact
- Positive attitude
- Staying relevant
- Inclusivity
- Urgency
- Geo2village impact
- Geo brand
- Open knowledge
- Kofi
- Diversity
- Actionable
- Maturation
- Open
- Knowledge
- Useful
- Agency
- Community
- Engagement
- Impact
- Engagement

11.2. In one word, summarize your experience of the GEO Symposium 2023. What stands out the most to you?
- Informative
- Networking
- Money
- Global Village
- Daring
- New
- Passion
- Community
- Geofamily
- ODK
- Meeting
- Knowledge
- Representative
- Money
- Representation
- Overload
- Engagement
-设施建设
- Big donors not caring
- Open discussion
- Representatives
- Earth Intelligence
- Impact
- Innovation
- Open
- Money
- Global Village
- Daring
- New
- Passion
- Community
- Geofamily
- ODK
- Meeting
- Knowledge
- Representative
- Money
- Open discussion