

France : GEO Strategy post 2025

- 1- The first priority of this strategy must be to reaffirm **support for international agreements as priorities for engagement** : the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and resilient cities. The addition of more cross-cutting themes, such as biodiversity, ocean and water cycle as well as ecosystems with transversal support needed such as wetlands and glaciers will have to be considered as possible new priorities of action.
- 2- These objectives must be supported by an **open and free data policy** in order to make applications and services open and free for the whole GEO community. GEO could build on the Copernicus model, which provides for the availability of data and knowledge on EU-funded platforms such as WekEO and the Copernicus Data Access Service. In this perspective, the connection between a **GEO platform funded by governments** and the GEO knowledge hub, which facilitates capacity building between members and towards the youth, must also be consolidated.
- 3- However, we also need to acknowledge that open data policies are not sufficient to make these data used in practice by society. In this perspective, GEO should strengthen its ambition as **building bridges between EO science and society**. GEO would especially involve encouraging thorough learning efforts in a two-way process: on the one hand, encouraging the EO community to learn about potential users' communities to better figure out whether and how EO data could be useful for them; on the other hand, encouraging the EO community to further train these users' communities so that they become increasingly autonomous in using data. GEO could also support the emergence of a reference framework, giving further visibility to components that appear critical to build and sustain operational EO-based products and services in a long-term perspective, e.g. co-design, setting up adequate business plans, leveraging cloud computing capacities, etc.
- 4- In this perspective of further bridging Earth Observation science and society, **greater diversity and inclusiveness** should be a core value of GEO, in developing countries in particular. The involvement of young men and women is key in this process. It could include building up dedicated training initiatives, mentorship programmes, enhancing the visibility of early career opportunities, facilitating international career paths across several organizations of different countries.
A second axis of integration is the possibility of using **several working languages** in GEO, as language is also a source of exclusion. As an instance, France wants to support greater participation of countries of the South and of the French-speaking world in GEO. As we have done before, France can provide concrete support for this approach.
In this spirit, we also want the Southern countries to gain sovereignty over their environmental data distribution platform.

- 5- Regarding the sources of contributions to GEO, the **in-kind contribution** of GEO member states should be better valorized in order to give a new impulse to the exchange of competences, to the research and training support between member states. In this vein, the **Copernicus program**, which provides the GEO community with a huge set of high-quality data and information on the globe, should be given its due value. It represents a source of inspiration for the GEO community and is one of the major in-kind contribution of Europe to GEO.
- 6- The **framework for private sector** intervention needs to be well defined. GEO can provide this framework with the support of governments. There are legal risks associated with this intervention and potential conflicts of interest. A preliminary study is therefore necessary to assess these risks and plan how to protect against them. On this basis, an ethical charter and a legal commitment could be defined.
We must ensure that the growing involvement of the private sector remains under the control of the intergovernmental governance of GEO.
- 7- GEO's independence must be guaranteed. **GEO must remain a government-led group**, an essential point of its governance that must not be changed or challenged. GEO serves governments and must remain so.