

Comments from Germany on Plenary Agenda Item 3.3 GEO Road to Post-2025: Interim Report of Post-2025 WG, Document GEO-18-4.1

General comments:

- We would like to thank the Working Group for its interim report.
- For us there is no doubt that the need for GEO persists, and so GEO must go on and continue to improve the availability and facilitate access and use of Earth Observations globally. GEO had considerable success in the past and it needs to build on this in the future. This is true both with respect to the GEO Flagship and other promising initiatives and the infrastructure.
- We miss an introductory statement on basic principles of GEO (addressing user needs, free and open data and knowledge sharing, etc.).

Specific comments on some points of the document:

On GEO “Value Proposition“ and “Optimizing GEO Work Programme”:

- We support the proposal to sharpen the GEO value proposition. One important element should be to focus more on fewer activities, building on existing well functioning GEO initiatives, that will then have more impact. The Incubator process launched with the new GWP 2023-25 is a good starting point.
- To ensure complementarity with others, deep consultation is needed with the major international players, such as WMO, FAO, UNFCCC....

On „Increase Equitable Access to Earth Observations“:

- Priority should be given to improve the access to in-situ data. We regard this as more important than working on improving access to commercial high resolution satellite data.
- With respect to satellite data, the priority should remain to be on the use of public free and open data, which still is not exploited as much as it could be by many users. More activity is needed in user oriented access, capacity building, training, tools and guidance.
- The approach of GEO negotiating commercial high resolution satellite data licences for EO data that otherwise would not be accessible for development countries, is interesting. However, this would need to be regarded in the context of existing public free and open data, as additional gap filling for well defined and specific purposes. Transparency in any process on this would be a prerequisite. Moreover, such an approach must not undermine the GEO data sharing principles.
- An impartial GEO governed data infrastructure is regarded as very important also in the future. This infrastructure should be more user oriented and friendly, should support much more the access to in-situ data, and deliver tools, knowledge and accuracy assessments more efficiently.

On „Strengthening GEO Governance“ and “Mobilizing New Donors”:

- Overall, the interim report puts too much focus on non-governmental actors, both with respect to needs and contributions. Intergovernmental cooperation should continue to be at the heart of GEO. This must be reflected by its financing and governance also in future.

- Better cooperation with non-governmental actors, including the private sector, is welcomed for closing well identified gaps. Mobilizing new donors and tapping into innovative funding, however, should not be seen as a primary objective in itself, as the report seems to suggest.

On “Strengthening Communications and Advocacy”:

- The establishment of a flagship event and an annual report on the „State of global Earth Observations“ is an interesting idea, but could overlap with or duplicate existing reports and events, if not thoroughly defined. If this idea is further elaborated, we propose first to analyse the gap it should address, its design and placing within the international relevant landscape. However, better visibility of all GEO flagship initiatives during yearly GEO Weeks would be welcomed.