

## **UK Comments and Observations on the Interim Report of the Post-2025 Working Group**

### **Presented to intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations Plenary on Wednesday 2 November**

The Interim Report of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Post-2025 Working Group was well-received. Given its publication on the GEO Week website ([Interim Report of the Post-2025 Working Group](#)) just 2 weeks ahead of GEO Week, allowing limited time for consultation with the UK GEO Community the UK welcomed, with thanks, the agreement of the GEO Secretariat and Executive Committee to allow written comments to be submitted by Friday 25 November.

The following provides observations of the UK Earth Observation (EO) community:

The UK has been pleased to be engaged with the GEO Post-2025 Working Group through the participation of Melanie Hutchinson (Earth Observations Partnerships, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in meetings and her role in presenting the Post-2025 Working Group and its interim report during the related Plenary session.

We recognise the report's assertions that the EO landscape has changed and that with more frequent/intense environmental challenges the need to access trusted EO information for timely action has never been greater, and the explosion of new players has transformed the business model of data generation, integration, and application. We also recognise that equitable access to and use of EO for decisions at the local, regional, and global level remains a challenge, and should remain at the forefront of GEO's mandate.

The UK is supportive of the initial considerations for shaping the GEO post-2025 strategy.

1. The UK supports increasing equitable access to EO. However, the UK recognises that managing and distributing data is a big task, raising further questions:
  - Who will pay for this?
  - How will GEO manage and distribute data?

Suggest GEO further explores the ways its membership/community can do this, not GEO itself and also considers collaboration with standards organisations, such as the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), to support FAIR data access.

2. For optimising the GEO Work Programme, the UK seeks clarity on what this would mean for existing flagships, initiatives, pilot initiatives, and community activities, noting that without reassurance about the direction of travel, uncertainty about the future of existing GEO Work might be harmful to progress and productivity.
3. The UK supports the consideration to create a truly inclusive global partnership with high accountability, transparency, and resource mobilisation under the 'Strengthening GEO governance' consideration. The UK seeks clarity on what is meant by 'major constituencies', for example, would this be defined by country population, GDP, vulnerability to climate change, etc, and whether there is a role for national GEOs in this consideration. The UK also seeks clarity on what is meant by GEO decision-making bodies.
4. The UK recognises the importance of resource mobilisation for the GEO Work Programme but takes a position that recognises the value of GEO being a voluntary organisation and would caution against a move to GEO being a paid-for membership organisation.
5. The UK encourages the post-2025 working group to consider the existing opportunities in the EO landscape where GEO communications and advocacy could be strengthened (for example,

the UK National EO Conference, the Advancing Earth Observation Forum, and the International Conference on EO and remote sensing). The UK suggests that the value for money of GEO hosting additional events/conferences compared to greater GEO involvement in existing events/conferences should be given due consideration. The UK also seeks clarity on who a 'State of Earth Observations Report' suggested to be published annually would be aimed at, considering the existing landscape of reports (e.g. IPCC), making sure that GEO finds its niche.