

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/9

May 27, 2020

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,
May 19, 2020**

Important Note: In order to make our calls more efficient and effective, Steering Committee members are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each. Members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking, to minimize background noise.

The Steering Committee on the Future of GEO met at its ninth virtual call to discuss progress and plan next steps for the advancement of the process. Agenda items included:

1. Discuss the timeline options that allow the Steering Committee to review the Options Paper draft before the start of the consultation process
2. Discuss and input on the building blocks paper drafted by the Consultancy team aimed to input into the design of the GEO integrated options.
3. Any Other Business

On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:

- Option B, that allows for a two-rounds review by the Steering Committee, is appropriate for the review and signoff of the options paper before the consultation process.
- The Secretariat will create a table for this option and include an initial period for Co-chairs and Secretariat review of the options document before circulating it to the full Steering Committee as per the details presented in this option.
- The planned signoff call will be changed to a virtual no objection basis procedure for the Steering Committee to signoff the document before the start of the broad consultation process.
- The Options Paper approved by the Steering Committee should present options for UNEA that are anchored with solid analysis.
- The Steering Committee will continue to send the consultant written comments on the building blocks document up to 22nd May 2020.
- The Steering Committee will have an agenda item on the broader consultation process in its next planning call June 10th 2020. The Consultancy team will share documents on the broad consultation plan on week in advance of the call, for consideration and discussion during the call.
- The Steering Committee should decide on the key dates and milestones for the broad virtual consultation on the Options Paper, to ensure sufficient time for the Steering Committee to prepare their recommendations for the Annual CPR Sub-committee meeting.

Rapporteur	Signature
Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas	

Summary of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by the co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

The meeting started with greetings from the head of the GEO Programme. He updated the Steering Committee on the progress he is making towards his full recovery and thanked the Committee for advancing the process in his absence. He will be working two days in a week on doctor's advice until he is fully recovered. The Steering Committee was pleased to have him on the call and wished him full recovery.

Discussion on timeline options that allow Steering Committee members to review the draft Options Paper before the start of the broad consultation process

The Secretariat presented three options to the Steering Committee, for the late May to end of June review process, to discuss the best modality for their review. These included the two initial options that had been circulated to the Committee in advance and one additional option that had been developed after feedback from some Steering Committee members;

Option A

- The Consultancy team will circulate the draft list of elements of the options to the Steering Committee for their review on May 15th. The Committee is expected to submit inputs by May 20th. The planning Steering Committee call will be on 19th May where the Committee can also share their inputs on the draft list of elements and the possible configuration of the GEO options.
- The Consultant will send the first draft of the options paper to the Secretariat and co-chairs of the Steering Committee on May 27 and receive feedback from the Secretariat and co-chairs by June 1st.
- Revision of the first draft of the options paper will be done by the Consultants and sent to the full Steering Committee on June 4 for review.
- The Steering Committee planning meeting scheduled for June 10th 2020 will be used for signoff of the options paper
- Final changes by the Consultants will then be done for signoff by the co-chairs on June 12th
- The draft options paper will then be released for consultations on June 15

Extended Option A; After inputs from some Committee members

- The Consultancy team will circulate the draft list of elements of the options to the Steering Committee for their review on May 15th. The Committee is expected to submit inputs by May 22nd. The planning Steering Committee call will be on 19th May where the Committee can also share their inputs on the draft list of elements and the possible configuration of the GEO options.
- The Consultant will send the first draft of the options paper to the Secretariat and co-chairs of the Steering Committee on May 27 and receive feedback from the Secretariat and Co-chairs by June 1st.

- Revision of the first draft of the options paper will be done by the Consultants and sent to the full Steering Committee on June 4 for review.
- The Steering Committee planning meeting scheduled for June 10th will be used for planning on the Consultation process and an additional meeting organized on June 17th 2020 for signoff of the options paper
- Final changes by the Consultants will then be done for signoff by the co-chairs on June 22nd
- The draft options paper will then be released for consultations on June 25th

Option B

This option offers an extra round of consideration by the Steering Committee of the draft options paper if needed before the global consultation. In this option;

- The Steering Committee would receive and review the draft and their first round of comments discussed on the planned Monthly call on 10 June
- Consultants would revise the options paper considering the Committee's written comments and discussions on the 10th June call for another consideration by the Secretariat and co-chairs on 15 June.
- Comments from the Secretariat and co-chairs will be sent to the Consultants on 16 June and a final revised draft sent to the full Committee for consideration on 17th June 2020.
- A full Steering Committee call will be organized on June 24th for the full committee sign off on the draft options paper for the global consultation.
- Final changes by the Consultants will be made for signoff by co-chairs on June 26th
- Draft options paper will be released for consultations from June 29th 2020

The Steering Committee asked for the justification for circulating the draft first to the co-chairs before involving the full Committee. The arrangement on first sharing all documents with co-chairs of the Committee was first agreed at the start of the process. This arrangement ensures that the Steering Committee receives documents after a first review from the co-chairs to reduce the time needed for their consideration.

The Steering Committee sought confirmation from the consultant on whether the days stipulated in the options above will be enough for the team to turn around the document in time for the start of consultations. The Consultant noted that the timeline is tight in general but extending the timeline further will affect the quality and quantity of the consultation inputs especially with summer holidays coming up in some regions. The consultant will work with the Steering Committee's decision to ensure its implementation.

On this issue the Steering Committee highlighted the need to have a look at the draft more than once before their signoff. This modality is possible with Option B. An adjustment to the option to allow for the initial Secretariat and co-chairs review from 27th May before sharing with the full Steering Committee will ensure the option fulfils earlier arrangements of the Committee. The Steering Committee signoff meeting planned for June 24th will be changed to a virtual no-objection approval procedure in order to save time in the process.

The Steering Committee therefore decided to approve option B for the review and approval of the Options Paper for consultation. The Secretariat will create a tabular format for option B and add a short review by Co-chairs and Secretariat before the start of full 10-day review by the Steering Committee.

Discussion and input on the building blocks paper drafted by the Consultancy team aimed to input into the design of the GEO integrated options.

The consultant presented the draft building blocks document and explained in detail the different aspects of the elements to be used in the development of the integrated options for a future GEO. It was highlighted that the mapping papers requested by some of the Steering Committee members were still in development and will be shared with the full Committee later. They should however only be used as tools for assessing the building blocks.

The Steering Committee highlighted the need to carefully consider the Terms of Reference of the Committee to ensure that the request from the consultancy team is within its mandate. There is need for the analysis in the Options Paper to be solid to ensure that the decision at UNEA-5 on this resolution is well informed. The Steering Committee also enquired on the number of integrated options that the consultant was considering while highlighting the need for the path of a future GEO to be daring. The Steering Committee also reminded the consultant of the need to keep in mind other processes happening now like the chemicals and waste process, that is seeking to establish its own science-policy platform. Such processes should be evaluated for their on implications on a future GEO. The Committee further noted that the draft building blocks document had both first and second order issues and it will be important to consider a stepwise approach in evaluating them since one building block may logically lead to the other. This will also help to only focus on issues within UNEP's mandate.

On this issue the Steering Committee was grateful for the Consultant's flexibility in involving them more in the crafting of the Options Paper and would continue to send the Consultant written comments up to Friday 22nd May 2020.

Any other business

Introduction on designing of the Future of GEO consultation process

Gillian Martin Mehers from the consultancy team introduced the planned virtual webinars aimed to be used during the consultation process. This was done as an information point to the Steering Committee. The Consultants will share documents and other material related to this issue for the Steering Committee's consideration and discussion on 10th June 2020. The Secretariat will also discuss with the consultants on the best way to distribute the draft and other consultation materials to Member States since the Secretariat has a procedure on distributing material to such audiences.

Steering Committee meeting planned for the period August 15th to September 4th, 2020

Salla Rantala highlighted the need to have all Steering Committee meetings scheduled well in advance for the Committee's proper planning. It was noted that the scheduling of the second workshop of the Steering Committee should be considered towards the end of the proposed period (August 15th to September 4th, 2020) to allow Steering Committee members to consult internally before the workshop. The Secretariat will produce a table with all key milestones and meeting dates for the Future of GEO process.

Having no other issues for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 17h37min (EAT time)

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting and share the link to the recording of the call.
- The Secretariat will create a tabular version of the option agreed on by the Steering Committee (option B) for ease of understanding.
- The Secretariat will prepare a simple table of the timeline in the detailed work plan document highlighting key milestones and meeting dates in the process
- The Steering Committee will continue to send their comments (if any) on the draft elements document by the consultancy team up to 22nd May 2020.
- The Consultant will produce and share documents related to webinars planned during the consultation process for discussion and consideration at the next Steering Committee meeting.
- The Secretariat will send doodles for all meetings that are yet to be decided on to ensure early planning by the Steering Committee. This will also ensure the Committee is ready for their second workshop.

List of Participants

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Keisuke (alternate)	Takahashi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Suzan	Alajjawi	Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain	Bahrain
Toral	Patel-Weynand	US Forest Service	USA
Salla	Rantala	Finnish Environment Institute	Finland
Mira	Zovko	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Croatia
Nino	Gokhelashvili	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	Georgia
Rafael	Monge Vargas	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica
Claudia	Kabel	German Environment Agency	Germany
Marcel	Kok	Environment Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands
Gillian	Martin Mehers	Future of GEO Consultant	Consultant
Dr. Laszlo	Pinter	Future of GEO Consultant	Consultant
Apsara	Mendis	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Sri Lanka
Ivar Andreas	Baste	Norwegian Environment Agency	Norway
Huang	Yi	Peking University	China
Mery	Harutyunyan	Ministry of Environment	Armenia
Ivana	Stojanovic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Montenegro
Ambinintsoa Lucie	Noasilalaonomenjanahary	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Madagascar
Charles	Lange	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Kenya
Marcos	Serrano	Ministry of Environment Chile	Chile
Mona	Westergaard	Ministry of Environment and Food	Denmark
Andrew	Stott	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-UK	United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
Garry	Kass	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-UK	United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
Shanna (alternate)	Emmanuel	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Anna	Mampye	Ministry of Environment	South Africa

Apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Ouedraogo	Desire	Ministry of Environment, green economy and climate change	Burkina Faso
Nadia	Chenouf	Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energy	Algeria
Christine Okae	Asare	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Ghana
James	Mathew	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Government of India	India
Aliya	Shalabekova	Ministry of Energy	Kazakhstan
Jock	Martin	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Paul (alternate)	Lucas	Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands
Celso	Moretti	Agricultural Research Corporation	Brazil
Carlos (Alternate)	Cordero Vega	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica

Kazuhiko	Takeuchi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Isaac	Dladla	Eswatini Environment Authority	Swaziland
Najib	Saab	Arab Forum for Environment & Development (AFED)	Lebanon
Chatchai	Intatha	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand	Thailand
Keri (alternate)	Holland	US Department of State	USA
Jerome	Sebadduka Lugumira	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Uganda
Marek	Haliniak	Ministry of the Environment, Poland	Poland
Cathy (alternate)	Maguire	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Teshia	Jn Baptiste	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Ryan	Assiu	Environmental Management Authority	Trinidad and Tobago
Sebastian	Jan Konig	Swiss Federal Office for the Environment,	Switzerland
Narges	Saffar	International Affairs & Conventions Center, Department of Environment	Iran (Islamic Republic of)