

## Tasks and responsibilities of experts and focal points

### 1. Coordinating lead authors

#### *Function:*

To assume overall responsibility for establishing writing teams for their relevant sections and to ensure scientific credibility and technical accuracy of the content they are responsible for.

#### *Comment:*

Coordinating lead authors have the overall responsibility of ensuring that major sections and/or chapters of a report are completed to a high standard and are completed and delivered to the report co-chairs in a timely manner and conform to any overall standards of style set for the document.

Coordinating lead authors play a leading role in ensuring that any cross-cutting scientific, technical or socioeconomic issues of significance to more than one section of a report are addressed in a complete and coherent manner and reflect the latest information available. The skills and resources required of coordinating lead authors are similar to those required of lead authors together with the additional organizational skills needed to coordinate a section, or sections, of a report. All coordinating lead authors will be acknowledged in the reports.

#### Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- take the overall responsibility for coordinating and drafting sections to given deadlines, actively participate in the GEO process and work closely with the Secretariat staff to provide oversight of the content;
- lead authors meetings to deliver first drafts for each section of the report;
- ensure that manuscripts are completed to a high standard, collated and delivered to the Co-chairs and Secretariat in a timely manner and conform to the guidelines for scientific credibility;
- ensure that all review comments are dealt with according to specific guidelines;
- develop text that is scientifically, technically and socio-economically sound incorporating contributions by a wide variety of experts;
- ensure that any crosscutting scientific or technical issues, which may involve several sections of the GEO are addressed in a complete and coherent manner;
- contribute to preparing intermediate technical papers as required; and
- take responsibility for referring any scientific credibility issues, such as uncertainties and use of grey literature, to the MESAG, when such issues cannot be dealt with within the writing teams.

### 2. Lead authors

#### *Function:*

To assume responsibility for the production of designated sections or parts of chapters that respond to the work programme of the GEO on the basis of the best scientific, technical and socioeconomic information available.

*Comment:*

Lead authors typically work in small groups under a Coordinating Lead Author and are responsible for ensuring that the various components of their sections are put together on time, are of a uniformly high quality and conform to any overall standards of style set for the document.

Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- actively participate in the GEO and play a lead role in drafting and revising the designated section of the GEO report
- identify, collect and synthesize relevant material drawn from available peer-reviewed literature, the WESR, and other knowledge sources as appropriate;
- record expert views which cannot be reconciled with a consensus view, but which are nonetheless scientifically or technically valid;
- take account of expert and government review comments when revising text and record how comments have been dealt with;
- identify data gaps on specific topics in consultation with the data and indicators working group
- ensure that the various components of the section are brought together on time, are of uniformly high quality and conform to the guidelines for scientific credibility; and
- work closely with the Coordinating Lead Authors to prepare text.

### **3. Contributing authors**

*Function:*

To prepare technical information in the form of text, graphs or data for inclusion by the lead authors/ Coordinating lead authors in the relevant section or part of a chapter.

*Comment:*

Input from a wide range of contributors is key to the success of GEO assessments.

Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- Contribute expertise and drafted material for a designated section of the GEO report, as requested by a Lead Author or a Coordinating Lead Author;
- Identify, collect and synthesize relevant material drawn from available peer-reviewed literature and other knowledge sources as appropriate;
- Record expert views which cannot be reconciled with a consensus view but which are nonetheless scientifically or technically valid and consult on how to possibly integrate or note these views with the Lead Author and Coordinating Lead Author;
- Take account of expert and government review comments when revising text and clearly record how comments have been dealt with;
- Ensure that the various components of the section being drafted are brought together on time, are of uniformly high quality and conform to the guidelines for scientific credibility;

### **4. Review editors**

*Function:*

To assist the GEO secretariat and advisory bodies in identifying reviewers for the expert review process, ensure that all substantive expert and government review comments are afforded appropriate consideration, advise lead authors on how to handle contentious or controversial issues and ensure that genuine controversies are adequately reflected in the text of the report concerned.

*Comment:*

In general, there will be two review editors per chapter, including its executive summary. In order to carry out the tasks allocated to them, review editors will need to have a broad understanding of the wider scientific, technical and socioeconomic issues being addressed. The workload for review editors will be particularly heavy during the final stages of report preparation, including attending meetings at which writing teams consider the results of the review rounds. Review editors are not actively engaged in drafting reports and may not serve as reviewers for text that they have been involved in writing. Review Editors will be selected through the nomination and engagement process by the MESAG in consultation with the GEO Secretariat prior to the first round of peer-review. Although responsibility for the final text of a report remains with the relevant coordinating lead authors and lead authors, review editors will need to ensure that where significant differences of opinion on scientific issues remain, such differences are described in an annex to the report. Review editors must submit written reports to the MESAG and, where appropriate, will be requested to attend meetings convened by the MESAG to communicate their findings from the review process. The names of all review editors will be acknowledged in the reports.

Terms of reference for GEO Review Editor

The primary role of the Review Editors is to ensure that all substantive expert and government review comments are afforded appropriate consideration by the Writing Teams. Review Editors are not intended to be additional reviewers of the content, but rather provide quality assurance and oversight on the review process itself.

Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- Provide oversight on the review process of designated sections;
- Ensure all substantive review comments are afforded appropriate consideration;
- Prepare written summaries of the most significant issues raised by reviewers;
- On a case-by-case basis, as requested by the Secretariat, carefully monitor and review the use and consideration of grey literature including the integration of local and indigenous knowledge sources;
- Be available to provide responses to the MESAG when requested, on the review process; and prepare final reports to the MESAG and GEO Secretariat.

**5. Expert reviewers**

*Function:*

To comment on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific, technical and socioeconomic content and the overall balance between the scientific, technical and socioeconomic aspects of the drafts.

*Comment:*

Expert reviewers comment on text according to their knowledge and experience. The names of all expert reviewers will be acknowledged in the reports. Consensus does not imply a single view but can incorporate a range of views based on the evidence.

Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- Suggest specific remedies for identified shortcomings of the draft report.
- Point out other priority, emerging and cross-cutting issues or evidence which may not have been highlighted but would be considered a serious omission if these were left out of the final report, and include details of appropriate sources/references.

- Point out any errors, inconsistencies and/or contradictions of facts/data within and across different sections/chapters.
- Indicate any information which you consider might be moved to another Chapter
- Indicate any information which you consider might be particularly appropriate for graphical presentation rather than as text.
- Indicate any information which you consider might be better placed in a box rather than in the main text (and vice versa).
- Indicate any information which you consider might be moved to the technical annex of the chapter.
- Point out non-essential material that could be deleted, with explanations, if appropriate, about why a change needs to be made.
- Indicate where additional referencing/citing or cross-referencing between sections is needed.
- Provide additional source documents (with full reference details) information and data, including boxes and other illustrations to enrich the chapters or to fill data gaps or update existing data, if necessary.
- Provide suggestions for alternative boxes and illustrations.

## **6. GEO Fellows**

### *Function:*

To support author teams/ Working Groups in research, visualization of data, addressing review comments, citations management and writing when assigned. They also comment on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific content.

### *Comment:*

Fellows are selected through the nomination and engagement process. They are connected to and engage with one or more Working Groups and participate in the writing teams.

The following criteria is taken into account in nominating and selecting GEO-6 Fellows

- at least three years of documented professional experience, including assessment-work at the regional and/or global level;
- ability to assess and synthesize technical material rapidly;
- good writing skills in English and/or other UN languages;
- excellent interpersonal and organizational skills;
- ability to use the ICT platform and tools effectively.

### Key roles and responsibilities (Terms of Reference):

- Research for specific sections of the global assessment, assisting authors where needed.
- When required, write components of specific sections of the document.
- Advise authors on data and information sources that had been missed by the authors, to improve the use of data and indicators and help ensure data integrity.

- Assist through the technical and intergovernmental review process of the global assessment document as well as on the verification of data and information sources used by the authors.
- Verify and improve the use of citations and references contained in the global assessment and support review editors in their assessment of how review comments were dealt with.
- Identify key events or opportunities to be considered by the Secretariat to promote the global assessment, including providing outreach material.

## **7. Government and Stakeholders**

### *Function:*

To prepare and update the list of national experts required to assist in the implementation of the GEO's work programme, and to arrange for the provision of integrated comments on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific, technical and/or socioeconomic content and the overall balance between scientific, technical and/or socioeconomic aspects of the drafts.

### *Comment:*

Government review will typically be carried out among a number of departments and ministries. For administrative convenience, each Government and stakeholder should designate one focal point for all GEO activities, providing full contact information of the focal point to the secretariat and notifying the secretariat of any changes in the information. Focal points should liaise with the secretariat regarding the logistics of the review processes