

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, 10 November 2022
14:00 – 17:00 (GMT+3)
Conference Room 2, United Nations Office at Nairobi
Hybrid meeting

Agenda item 3: Update on outcomes from recent meetings to prepare GEO-7 and next steps.

**Background Note for the Sub-Committee Meeting of Committee of Permanent Representatives
10 November 2022**

This background document has been developed by the Secretariat to inform the Committee of Permanent Representatives on overall progress made in the implementation of UNEA resolution 5/3: Future of the Global Environment Outlook. More specifically, it includes detailed information on the following aspects of the GEO-7 process:

- Update on the outcomes of the first open ended expert meeting on GEO-7 (19-22 September), which focused on procedural matters
- Update on the outcome of the second open ended expert meeting on GEO-7 (17 -20 October, in person/hybrid, in Nairobi) which focused on the scoping of GEO-7.
- Update on the first meeting (21 October, in person, in Nairobi) of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (IMAG), meant to advise the ED on the policy relevance of the GEO-7 process.
- Outline a roadmap and present planned next steps after the September and October meetings, including the nomination processes for the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG), the authors and the collaborating centers.

Member States are invited to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the further of implementation of this resolution.

Progress made in implementation of UNEA resolution 5/3 on the Future of the Global Environment Outlook and next steps

Following the briefing on the implementation of [UNEA resolution 5/3 Future of the Global Environment Outlook](#) to the Committee of Permanent Representatives provided at its meeting of the subcommittee on 29 September 2022, the two inaugural open ended meetings of the GEO-7 as well as the first meeting of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) have taken place. The procedures to be used for conducting the GEO-7 have now been reviewed and adopted by the participants to the first open-ended meeting and the process for adoption of the scoping document, discussed at the second open-ended meeting, is being finalized. Next steps have been agreed upon by the open-ended meetings and guidance has been received from the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group.

Ad hoc open-ended Meeting for the Assessment Procedures and Supporting Functions of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO)

The experts nominated by Member States for the ad hoc open-ended meetings of the seventh Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) met virtually (4 sessions of 3 hours each) to review and adopt the assessment procedures document. The meeting was held virtually from 19-22 September 2022. 145 participants connected online.

Following introductions by the Secretariat of the proposed Bureau members, the meeting elected its officials and formed a full Bureau of 2 Co-chairs, 2 Vice-chairs and a Rapporteur. The Co-chairs of the Adhoc Open-ended Meeting on the Assessment Procedures and Supporting Functions of GEO-7 then proceed to lead the discussions. Over the four sessions, key items that were formalized in the procedures document included:

- The Terms of Reference for the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG), which are now contained in the procedures document..
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- The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will receive advice from the IMAG and MESAG in their specific areas of responsibilities.
- The IMAG is encouraged to seek advice from the MESAG and the co-chairs and vice-chairs of the assessment, when needed.
- The IMAG and MESAG should not be involved in the drafting of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM).
- A section on Outreach and Awareness Raising was added to the procedures document.
- A flow chart of the relationship between different groups in the GEO process was also added to the procedures document, to ensure clear roles and responsibilities.
- Following the definitions agreed in the procedures document, GEO assessment reports should be accepted without line-by-line or section-by-section review.
- Technical documents, such as the procedures document, or process documents, such as the scoping document, should be adopted through a section-by-section review process.
- SPMs prepared for each GEO assessment report should be approved through a line-by-line review process.

Following these decisions the Secretariat provided an information item on how it proposes to identify intergovernmentally defined needs and terms for capacity building, knowledge generation and

support for policy making. These needs will be identified through a collaborative process within the UNEP Secretariat that will produce a capacity development benchmarking study.

At the end of the meeting the revised GEO procedures document was adopted on a provisional basis and submitted to meeting participants for final adoption through a 72-hour silence procedure. The procedures document was finally adopted on Oct. 27, 2022 and will be used throughout the GEO-7 process.

The meeting also welcomed the co-chairs and vice-chairs of the GEO-7 assessment report appointed by UNEP's Executive Director.

It was also decided that the October ad hoc open-ended meeting will follow these provisionally adopted procedures to conduct a section-by-section review of the scoping document.

The final procedures document can be found [here](#).

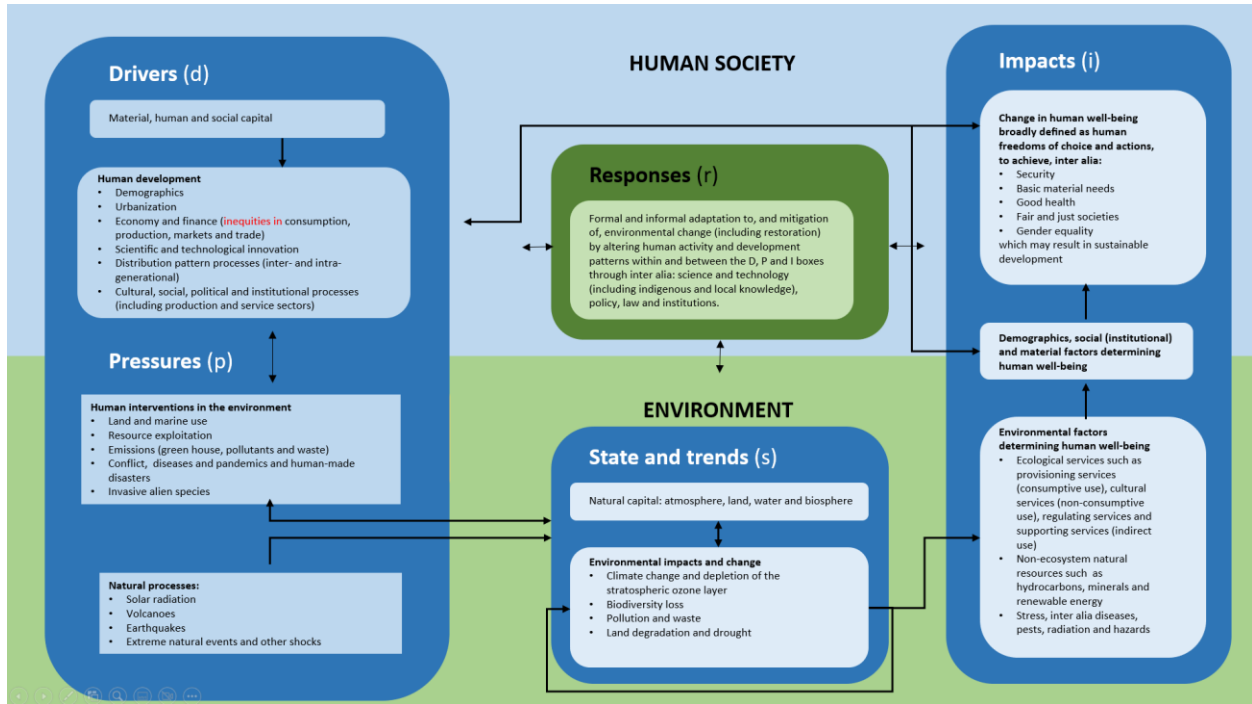
Ad-hoc Open-Ended Meeting on the scoping of GEO-7

This second ad-hoc open-ended meeting took place in Nairobi in hybrid format from 17-20 October 2022. The meeting considered the entire draft scoping document and was complemented by three expert dialogues on transformation energy and food systems as well as transformations towards circularity, as well as an information item on the digital transformation of GEO. Key decisions taken by the meeting included:

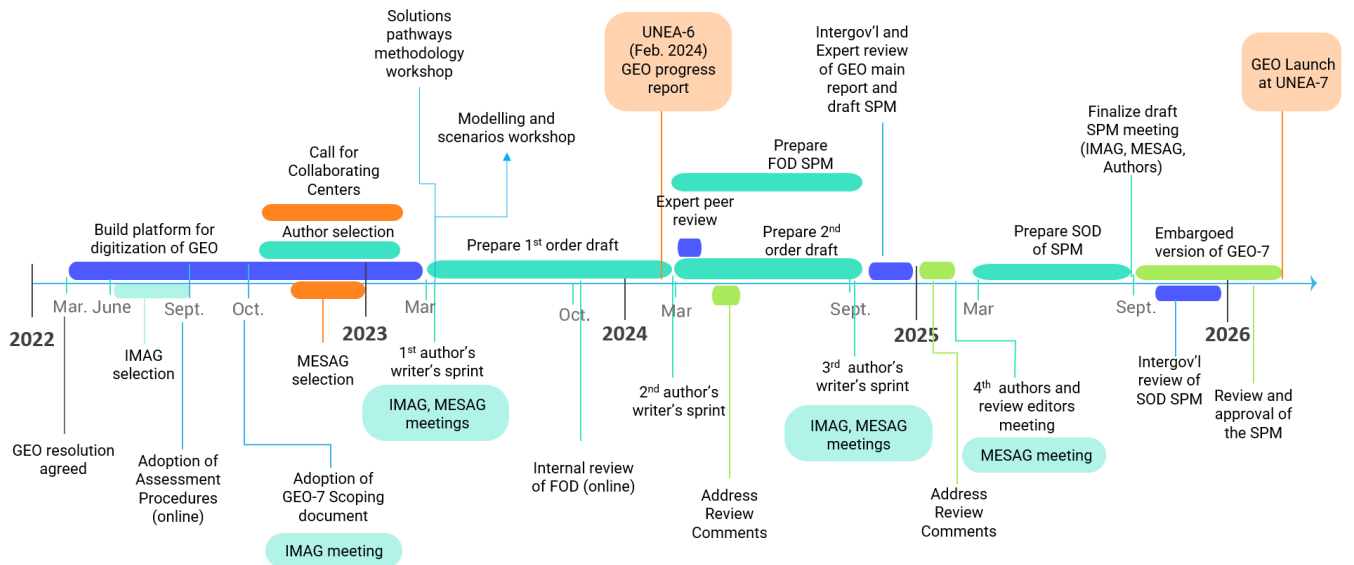
- The DPSIR framework should be adapted for use in innovative GEO-7. An updated graphic was produced by the Secretariat for this purpose. The drivers now include population/demographics; economic and financial; urbanization; science and technology; cultural, social (including, but not limited to: inequity, gender, values, lifestyles); political and institutions; and shocks such as pandemics, disasters and conflict.
- The GEO-7 will develop solutions pathways for a) economic and financial models, b) energy systems, c) food systems, d) circularity, d) environmental systems;
- The assessment will include an outlooks section which will a) assess different scenarios, including the target-seeking scenarios and their socio-economic implications, b) present pathways for countries with different economic, resource and environmental situations and c) assess the likely regional implications of the different solutions pathways.
- GEO-7 will include regional specificities, but the way to implement this is still to be discussed. Two regionally-focused chapters were proposed to be added in the state of the environment chapters and the outlook chapters.
- There will be four chapters on the current state of key natural systems (Air, Land and soils, Oceans and coasts and Freshwater).
- Methodology chapters for the solutions pathways and the outlooks would be needed to ensure the scientific credibility of these approaches. These methodologies could be placed in annexes of the GEO-7 report.
- The Secretariat will provide different budget scenarios to be considered.
- The Secretariat will prepare an updated version of the workplan and timeline that will add at least 6 months of development time for the GEO-7 assessment.
- Due to the large number of comments, the draft scoping document will not be approved provisionally at the end of the meeting. Rather, the Secretariat will share a revised draft after the meeting, allowing a 5-day window to provide additional comments via email;

- Following the 5 days, a revised version of the document will be sent out for a 72-hour silence procedure for adoption;

Updated DPSIR framework:



Updated timeline



IMAG = Intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder advisory group, MESAG = Multidisciplinary expert scientific advisory group, SPM = Summary for policy makers, FOD= First order draft, SOD = Second order draft, AHOM = Adhoc Open-ended Meeting

The first face to face meeting of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG)

On October 21st, the IMAG met in hybrid form. 15 participants were in Nairobi, while 13 connected online.

Following introductions and housekeeping announcements from the UNEP Secretariat, the meeting elected its officials, including 2 Co-chairs, 1 Vice-chair and a Rapporteur. The second Vice-chair was elected later in the meeting to ensure appropriate gender balance and geographic balance across all 5 UN regions. The meeting then proceeded to discuss and decide upon the following issues:

- The timeline of GEO-7 should be extended by an additional six months to give the authors sufficient time to produce the first order draft report.
- It would be important to organize solutions pathways workshops at the beginning of the GEO-7 process to ensure the scientific credibility of these approaches.
- A timetable for upcoming meetings will be developed by the Secretariat and shared with the IMAG and Co-chairs of the assessment shortly.
- The Terms of Reference in the work plan of the IMAG should be revised to match what is in the GEO Procedures Document.
- The role of the IMAG during the authors meetings is to ensure the GEO report is meeting the policy relevance criterion and that the findings are useful to governments.
- The main intergovernmental and expert review of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) first order draft will be reviewed at the same time by governments and experts, in the first quarter (Q1) of 2025.
- The second order draft of the SPM will be reviewed by authors, the IMAG and MESAG before it goes to the Member States for their input.
- The call for collaborating centres and Technical Support Units will not only support the production of GEO-7, but also contribute to the delivery of the Supporting Services from Resolution EA.5/3, including: capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking in the regions.
- The invitation letters for experts should include key dates of authors meetings, descriptions of the different roles of authors (Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, Contributing Authors) and the estimated time commitment.
- The letters should indicate that the authors are working in their own individual capacity and not representing their institution or their government.
- The request for nomination letters should be sent to Member States, stakeholders and institutions, but the secretariat can encourage certain experts to submit their nominations.
- A note should be sent to all Member States describing the nomination process.

The membership list of the IMAG can be found [here](#).

Expected next steps of the GEO-7 Process

Launch of the nomination process for the Multidisciplinary and Experts Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG)

In accordance with the resolution EA.5/3 and with the advice of the IMAG, the call for the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) has been issued by UNEP's Executive Director. The call is open until Dec. 15 and Member States, stakeholders and institutions have been requested to nominate individuals with the appropriate expertise.

Once all nominations have been received the Secretariat will make a proposal to ensure disciplinary and gender balance as well as balanced geographical representation across the five United Nations regions.

Representative from Member States, stakeholders and institutions are invited to share their nominations with the Secretariat. Nominations no later than 15 December 2022, through [the nomination portal](#).

Plans for the nomination process of the collaborating centers and the authors

The anticipated adoption of the scoping document in the coming weeks should allow the Secretariat to initiate a call for expressions of interest from institutions that wish to act as collaborating centers or technical support units to support a specific area of the GEO process. GEO collaborating centres or technical support units are expected to form a strong assessment partnership at the core of the process and help build capacity at various levels. This strategic collaboration on GEO will help ensure the relevance of its findings and its enhanced impact.

The scoping document and the advice of the IMAG and co-chairs of the assessment will help establish the profiles of expertise required for GEO-7, following the annotated outline included in the scoping document. This will allow the Secretariat to initiate the nomination process for the authors, which is expected to run from the end of November 2022, to 15 January 2023.

The Secretariat is currently working on preparing invitation letters for both the authors and collaborating centers. Once the nomination processes start, Member States will be informed and the letters will be shared with a variety of groups and networks, to ensure the geographical, gender and expertise balance of the authors teams. From these nominations, a group of authors will be selected to attend a first GEO-7 author's meeting, tentatively planned to take place from 13-17 March 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand.

From the call for collaborating centres, the Secretariat will select organizations that have the required expertise and interest to partner with UNEP during the production of GEO-7. Member States will be kept informed of any outreach to institutions in their countries in this regard.

For more information on any of these points, please reach out to pierre.boileau@un.org .