

Outcomes Document

Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting for the Seventh Edition of UNEP's Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) October 21, 2022

On October 21, 2022 the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group met to consider the following agenda items:

- Election of co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur to lead the IMAG.
- Process for development and approval of IMAG's work plan.
- Review of comments from the ad hoc open-ended meeting on key components of the draft scoping document.
- Discussion and advice on appropriate profiles for invited experts, authors and collaborating centres.
- Discussion and advice on an appropriate process for inviting experts, authors and collaborating centres to the next phases of GEO-7.
- Discussion and advice for other elements of Resolution 5/3.

On these agenda items, the meeting decided:

- To extend the production timeline for GEO-7 by an additional six months to give the authors time to produce the draft report;
- To revise the language in the Terms of Reference of the IMAG to match what is in the adopted Procedures Document;
- The role of the IMAG/MESAG during the authors meetings is to ensure the GEO report is meeting this policy relevance (IMAG) and scientific credibility (MESAG) criteria and that the findings are useful to governments;
- The timeline for the upcoming IMAG meetings should be sent out soon.
- The intergovernmental and expert review of the Second Order Draft (SOD) of the GEO-7 main report and the First Order Draft (FOD) SPM first order draft should happen at the same time. This is currently planned for the first quarter (Q1) of 2025;
- The second order draft of the SPM will be reviewed by the IMAG/MESAG, and a key group of authors at a drafting meeting. Following this meeting, the SPM will be in final draft form and should be sent to Member States for their review and input prior to the final ad hoc open-ended meeting to review and approve the SPM;
- The GEO-7 report and its SPM will be submitted for a endorsement at UNEA-7;
- The GEO-7 fellowship programme is being further enhanced with a Masters level course and, once finalized, it is set to begin in March 2023;
- It would be important to organize solutions pathways workshops at the beginning of the GEO-7 process.

Rapporteur	Signature
Ms. Leila Bendifallah	<i>Ms. Leila Bendifallah</i>

Meeting Summary

Election of officers to lead the IMAG

Following the introduction of all participants both face to face and online, the Secretariat began the meeting with the agenda on election of officers of the IMAG. There was an expression of interest from several experts on different roles of the IMAG bureau and the secretariat was pleased to announce five expressions of interest from experts for the roles of co-chair, vice-chair and rapporteur for the IMAG.

The Secretariat proposed to have Mr. Arthur Ejis (Netherlands) and Ms. Anna Mampye (South Africa) as co-chairs, and Mr. Miroslav Havránek (Czechia) as vice-chair. Ms. Rolenas Baereleo (Vanuatu) was proposed as vice-chair after the coffee break.

The elected rapporteur was Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas (Costa Rica), however, for the meeting of the day, Ms Leila Bendifallah (Algeria) was selected as rapporteur because of her physical participation. Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas will be taking over with the future IMAG meetings. The suggestions made by the Secretariat on this election of the officials were accepted at a “no objection” basis silence procedure.

Following the election of officers, the meeting was chaired by Ms. Anna Mampye and Mr. Miroslav Havránek. This meeting started with a roundtable introduction of the experts present in the room before moving to the experts online.

Recap of key components of the Scoping Meeting

The Secretariat then provided a brief summary of the outcomes from the four days of the scoping meeting. The scoping document currently has quite a lot of comments, however, over the four days, the Secretariat was able to go over the entire document collating the comments and reconciling some of them back into the document. On the final day of the scoping meeting, the more challenging issues were dealt with, and the solutions-focused and systems-based approach proposed for this particular GEO-7 was well received.

The Secretariat went over the scoping document, section by section to see if there were any final changes the experts wanted to make. Since the Secretariat was only able to produce two revised drafts, due to the large number of comments, an additional five days was granted by the Secretariat for experts to review the final cleaned up version of the document and provide comments via email. The Secretariat also mentioned that, in parallel to editing the document, the graphics will also be recreated. The document will then be cleaned up and sent out to experts for a 72-hour silence procedure, prior to adoption.

The Secretariat also provided a brief presentation on the digitization of GEO-7. This included the creation of an online peer review platform, the links to the data sources in the World Environment Situation Room (WESR), the author’s collaboration platform as well as the

mapping and graphing platform. The digital transformation of GEO will also include a revamp of the GEO website, to create a more browsable version of the website to make it a much more resource-focused page. The IMAG members appreciated the work from the Secretariat but some experts expressed concerns on the level of detail in the comments on the current scoping document. It was agreed that the scoping document should give some flexibility for the authors to manoeuvre and develop their narrative.

Discussion on the revised timeline

Two versions of the timeline were created based on the comments at the end of the ad hoc open-ended meetings. The first timeline was to produce the GEO-7 and Summary for Policy Makers by February 2025. The second timeline was to produce the GEO-7 and Summary for Policy Makers in October 2025, giving an additional six to eight months of production time with the anticipation to seek the endorsement of the GEO-7 in February or March 2026 UNEA.

The Secretariat requested feedback or interventions from IMAG experts. The main comments were:

- It's reasonable to have a timeline that gives additional time for the authors to do the writing. The extra six months could ensure that the First Order Draft is a higher quality document
- As part of the revised timeline, there should be clarification of when the IMAG will meet in person, including the locations, as this was not clarified in the timeline presented by the Secretariat. Secretariat should prepare the calendars for the IMAG and MESAG meetings
- What are the budget implications of the extension of the timeline?

The Secretariat responded that the:

- The timeline for the upcoming meetings will be sent out shortly, considering all the input received here and from the co-chairs of the assessment. As the current timeline shows, the IMAG would meet at the first authors meeting, the third authors meeting and that there will be a final meeting for the finalization of the Second Order Draft (SOD) of the SPM where the authors, IMAG and MESAG would meet
- The extension of the timeline does affect the budget, because of increased staff costs and increased amounts of stipends for the co-chairs and authors. A new budget will be produced and provided in the draft scoping document.

After several discussions of the timeline, the Secretariat provided a final overview of the suggestions to the second version of the timeline. The timeline will need to be updated with the exact meeting dates but this longer timeline is in generally agreed by the IMAG.

As planned in the timeline, the IMAG and MESAG would have an opportunity to provide their inputs into the Second Order Draft of the SPM. IMAG experts suggested that it may be best to provide their inputs after the First Order Draft alongside the peer review period. The Secretariat noted that these inputs can be provided during the monthly IMAG calls. Through these calls, IMAG can provide advice to the authors.

The meeting then discussed the roles of the IMAG/MESAG with respect to the authors and the peer review processes. The Secretariat indicated that the role of the IMAG which is to ensure that the GEO report is policy relevant and that the findings are useful to

governments. At the different IMAG face to face meeting, authors would provide overviews of where the chapters are and how comments from peer reviews would be taken into account.

The meeting then reviewed the role of the IMAG/MESAG in the meeting with the authors to finalize the Second Order Draft of the SPM. The secretariat responded by stating that in the previous process, the High-Level Group (HLG) and the chairs of the Scientific Advisory Panel participated in the SPM draft review meeting. In this meeting, each section of the draft SPM was reviewed and presented by the authors where high level comments were received from the IMAG. The Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) co-chairs ensured there was no undue influence during the meeting.

Following the interventions from the experts, the Secretariat requested for agreement on the new timeline. Clarification on the dates for the IMAG and MESAG meetings were given. The Secretariat will work towards setting up dates for the IMAG face to face meetings. The new timeline proposed by the Secretariat was broadly agreed by the IMAG experts.

Discussion and Approval of IMAGs Terms of Reference and proposed work plan

The terms of reference for the IMAG were then discussed with the Secretariat providing an overview of the draft work plan and terms of reference for the IMAG. Tasks in the Terms of Reference included:

- To assist the Executive Director and provide advice in the implementation of UNEA 5/3 Resolution on the Future of GEO as well as the preparation of the 7th edition of the Global Environment Outlook;
- Provide advice on the preparation of an intergovernmental multi stakeholder meeting on procedures;
- Provide advice on the conduct of the nomination and selection process for external experts who will contribute to the GEO process, including members of the advisory groups, authors, Fellows, peer reviewers and review editors;
- Ensure that the GEO process draws from evidence of peer reviewed literature in different languages;
- Provide guidance on establishing a Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) responsible for overseeing the scientific integrity of the GEO process;
- Provide advice on the development of a flexible multiyear work plan and time bound budget setting out a programming activities such as assessments, support services, ... etc.

Based on this terms of reference, the IMAG experts requested clarification on the role of the Coordination Group that has been established in the GEO procedures. The Secretariat responded that the Coordination Group would meet when enough Co-chairs are together physically or virtually, and also when a sufficient number of priority issues needed to be discussed. IMAG members then asked how many times would the Coordination Group meet. The Secretariat responded that the number is still to be defined, as this would depend on how the work advances. The suggestion is to have the coordination group meet at least once every three months, virtually.

The IMAG members and the GEO-7 co-chairs then raised the issue of author gap filling, what the process would be and how it should be done. From an overview of the processes

used for previous GEOs, the gap filling processes doesn't only rely on government nominations. The suggestion for this GEO-7 process would be to discuss the need for additional authors to complement the initial author teams and submit this list of new authors for the IMAG and MESAG validation. Following these discussions, the IMAG requested that the Secretariat revise its Terms of Reference and proposed work plan.

Discussion and advice on appropriate profiles for invited experts, authors and collaborating centres

IMAG members requested further clarification on how the call for collaborating centres would be organized. The Secretariat responded that in the previous GEOs UNEP engaged with research institutes around the world for the production of GEOs 1 to 3. The Steering Committee on the Future of GEO recognized the value in re-engaging with these collaborating centres because of their specific technical expertise. The Steering Committee also recommended that GEO could have Technical Support Units, which are collaborating centres, but they are funded by their own Governments. The call for collaborating centres and Technical Support units should be not only be for the production of GEO-7, but also for delivery of the Supporting Services (Capacity Building, Knowledge Generation and Support for Policymaking) in the Regions.

On the selection of experts, the IMAG members suggested to have a group of younger scientists involved in the GEO process as well. The Secretariat requested IMAG members to reach out to different experts within their networks and the Secretariat will reach out to Member States, stakeholder groups and the broader GEO group of experts.

Discussion and advice on implementing key components of the revised GEO-7 scoping document

On this agenda item, the Secretariat noted that the scoping document is not yet adopted. Key issues remain on the annotated outline, which will be used to define the type of expertise needed in each chapter for the call for authors. Other areas of expertise needed in GEO-7 include solutions pathways and the type of modelling and scenarios that areas are needed. To ensure the call for authors captures the right types of expertise, the Secretariat suggested to have a workshop on the methodology for developing solutions pathways and one for the outlooks and scenarios.

It would be best to have the methodology workshops at the beginning of the process, so that the findings can be used to select authors.

IMAG members also discussed the types of data sources, data types, and whether or not data chapters are needed in GEO-7. The secretariat explained that the GEO-7 will likely link to the different live data sources available as part of its digital transformation.

The IMAG also discussed that authors may need to create bridging text in the report to ensure their narrative is logical and coherent. IMAG members accepted this but that there is a need to ensure transparency within the Scoping Document. The Secretariat clarified that

this bridging text wouldn't be considered as chapters. The IMAG agreed that there is a need for flexibility for the authors to express themselves since the scoping document is a guideline for the authors. Upon concluding this agenda item, the Secretariat announced that the Procedures Document has now been adopted, after the 72-hour silence procedure was completed with no objections.

Discussion and advice on appropriate profiles for invited experts, authors and collaborating centres.

The Secretariat began this agenda item by stating that the call for the MESAG will be issued soon, and that the invitation would come from UNEPs Executive Director. The letters for inviting the authors, review editors and reviewers will be signed by the assessment co-chairs as well. Awareness raising of this call for authors and experts could be done through Member States, IMAG, ... etc.

The main discussion focused on what information should be included in the letters of invitation to nominate and how the process for nomination should be executed. It was agreed that:

- Detailed information should be added in the letters including time commitment, including travel and any financial implications;
- An annex should be included with the description of the different roles (Coordinating Lead author, Lead author, Contributing author);
- The key dates and timelines for each of the authors meetings should be included in the letters;
- The letter should indicate that the authors are not representing either their government or organization, they are working in their own individual capacity;
- A note should be sent to Member States describing the nomination process;
- To confirm the nomination, a letter of support from the nominating institutions or individual will be required;
- The letters should not be sent out to individual authors, however, the Secretariat can encourage certain authors to make sure they submit their nominations.

The IMAG co-chair then invited experts to give any additional advice on the process of author nomination, which included: The authentication of the nomination letters, in case of multiple affiliations, would need to be handled by the Secretariat to authenticate if the person nominated is indeed the person invited. The Secretariat will need to agree on the approach of evaluating the letters.

Following these interventions, the co-chair closed the meeting thanking the Secretariat for a well-organized meeting. Having no other business, the meeting was closed at 17h15 (EAT).

Annex 1: Participants List

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation	Participation
Thomas	Chali	Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management in Tanzania	Tanzania	African Group	In person
Jerome	Lugumira Sebadduka	Natural Resources Management Specialist (Soils and Land Use), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Uganda	Uganda	African Group	In person
Dr. Leila	Bendifallah	Professor, M'hamed Bougara University, Algeria	Algeria	African Group	In person
Anna	Mampye	Director: State of Environment Information in the Branch, ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	South Africa	African Group	In person
Toghrull	Feyziyev	Advisor, International cooperation division of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group	In person
Miroslav	Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Czechia	Eastern European Group	In person
Silvio	Albuquerque e Silva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP; Embassy of Brazil in Kenya	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group	In person
Claudia	Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Germany	Western European Group	In person
Christina	Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	Western European Group	In person
Toral	Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	United States	Western European Group	In person
Mohamed	Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Egypt	Science and Technology	In person
Ruth	Viola Spencer	Member to the National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for Antigua and Barbuda	Antigua and Barbuda	Women	In person
Djatougbe	Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization	In person
Zahra	Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Jordan	Children and youth	In person
Prem	Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples	In person
Yi	Huang	Professor, School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, China	China	Asia and the Pacific Group	online
Rolenas	Baereleo	Principal Officer, Biodiversity and Conservation; Department of Environmental protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Asia and the Pacific Group	online
Takashi	Otsuka	Director of Knowledge and Communications, Strategic Management Office, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan	Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group	online
Meri	Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern European Group	online
Marek	Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Poland	Eastern European Group	online

Gillian	Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Trinidad & Tobago	Latin American and Caribbean Group	Online
Neyra	Herrera		Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group	online
Rafael	Monge	Director - National Center of Environmental Information (CENIGA) Ministry of Environment and Energy; Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group	online
Arthur	EIJS	Policy coordinator Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Land Use - Ministry of Infrastructure & water management, department of International Affairs	Netherlands	Western European Group	online
Salla	Rantala	Development Manager, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Finland	Western European Group	online
Keri	Holland	Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Environmental Quality in the Bureau of Oceans, International and Scientific Affairs at the U.S. Department of State	United States	Western European Group	Online
Fabian	Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Germany	Science and Technology	online
Denise Filip	Filip	On behalf of Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray who is Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	India	Business and industry	online

Apologies

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Modibo	Sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	Mali	African Group
Thuraya	AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA-Oman	Oman	Asia and the Pacific Group
Maha	Maayta	Director of the Policy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Jordan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Dušica	Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Kenset	Amaury Rosales Riveiro	Coordinator, Information Unit, Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Environment and Resources Natural Resources (MARN)	Guatemala	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Marisol	Dimas		Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Margarita	Guerra		Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Lisa	Eriksson	Policy evaluation and analysis; Sustainable Development Department; Swedish Environmental protection agency	Sweden	Western European Group
Jan-Gustav	Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Norway	Non-governmental organization
Ingrid	Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities

Merylene	Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups
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