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May 19, 2023

**GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary,
May 16, 2023**

The Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) met for its sixth virtual call to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Review and advice on the supporting services survey
2. Update on the proposal for the selection of Collaborating Centres
3. Update on the GEO-7 policy questions
4. Update on the selection of additional authors
5. Update on the GEO-7 Sub Regional Classification
6. Any other business

On these agenda items the IMAG decided:

- IMAG members are invited to provide additional comments on the GEO-7 policy questions and the supporting services survey by 24th of May 2023 close of business Nairobi time.
- The Secretariat will separate the two in one questions in the supporting services survey before circulating it.
- The Secretariat should assess the different knowledge generation efforts across UNEP before launching into development of new efforts.
- In the opening paragraphs of the supporting services survey, the Secretariat should include the rationale for what can be offered by GEO in terms of supporting services and also describe in more detail what is meant by supporting services in the GEO context.
- Include in the supporting services survey a discussion of the aspect of the co-creation approach to stress the two-way approach for providing these services.
- For collaborating centres, the Secretariat should not over structure their contributions, since supporting services are cross cutting and collaborating centres could contribute wherever they can.
- Include the guidance provided by IMAG on the continuous scanning for additional opportunities and possible collaborations, ensuring that the engagement of collaborating centres is a continuous process, instead of a one-off call for proposals.
- The Secretariat should move ahead with the next steps in the engagement of the selected collaborating centres.
- The policy questions should include discussion of a 'whole of society' approach to avoid unfair or skewed socioeconomic impacts across countries.
- The GEO-7 policy questions can be revisited as authors start drafting and these may need more guidance from IMAG.
- Additional authors can be approached to fill specific gaps, either because authors drop out or specific expertise turns out to be lacking in the drafting process.
- The IPBES sub regional classification is transparent and provides a sensible approach for the sub regional analysis for GEO-7.
- The Secretariat should include information and events that are relevant for IMAG when sharing meeting documents.
- The next IMAG meeting will be a joint meeting with MESAG in the week of 19th June.

Rapporteur	Signature
Rafael Monge	

Summary of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by the co-chairs of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG).

Review and advice on the supporting services survey

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the Supporting Services Survey. The survey has been modified to allow quantification of some of the results from the survey through a bullet point and a multiple-choice format, with an ‘Other’ box at the end where respondents can provide written responses. This could help in producing informative pie charts or bar graphs on the responses. The survey is organized as per the three categories of supporting services, namely: capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking.

IMAG noted that some of the questions in the survey are two questions in one and it may be best to separate them. On Knowledge generation, it was noted that it would be good to assess the different knowledge generation efforts already being undertaken by UNEP, before launching into development of new GEO-related undertakings. It should also be possible to disaggregate responses from Member States and government stakeholders. The Secretariat noted that respondents are asked to identify if they were Member State or from the Major Groups and Stakeholder category at the beginning of the survey. For Capacity Building, IMAG noted that the preparation for implementation challenges should be separated from the challenges of getting to the point of implementation.

IMAG also noted that the survey should acknowledge the limitations of the GEO programme in offering supporting services. Respondents should be able to state their preference in the multiple-choice questions. This can be done by offering a ranking of choices for particular questions. More context on what is meant by Supporting services should also be provided at the beginning of the survey.

IMAG suggested that mention should be made that supporting services can go beyond the GEO-7 preparation period and that supporting services should follow the GEO co-creation approach. The survey should acknowledge the two-way approach of the supporting services, including improving the national capacity of countries to undertake national assessments but also understanding the outputs of the (sub) regional and global assessments.

IMAG also suggested differentiating between needs, priorities, or new ideas in the survey. New ideas or best practices in providing capacity development could be a focus of the survey questions. IMAG also suggested the survey questions could follow the theory of change for GEO and the survey feedback could be a process of learning for the next round of GEO. The current theory of change for supporting services is quite generic and the survey would help focus that theory of change.

The IMAG decided that more written feedback could be shared with the Secretariat by 24th of May 2023 close of Business Nairobi time.

Update on the proposal for the selection of Collaborating Centres

The proposal for the selection of collaborating centres was updated following guidance provided by the IMAG where it was requested that all the five areas of interest indicated in the call for nominations for collaborating centres are covered. The Secretariat gave a brief explanation for the selection of the fifteen centres, mentioning the ones that GEO has already engaged with as well as annexes that describe the full list and the chosen institutions one that assesses how the profile of the chosen institutions align with the topics of the chapters in GEO-7.

IMAG noted that the Secretariat should not over-structure the areas of collaboration with these institutions since the supporting services are cross cutting across all chapters in the report and that collaborating centres can contribute to many areas. Also, the document on collaborating centres should include the previous guidance provided by IMAG about conducting a continuous scanning of possible collaborations with other institutions.

The IMAG agreed on the Collaborating Centres approach and the Secretariat will move ahead with the next steps for their engagement.

Update on the GEO-7 policy questions

A briefing was provided on changes made to the GEO-7 policy questions following the submissions of IMAG comments. These changes included additional text on confidence statements and additional policy questions for chapters 9 and 10. Clarifications were also included on the sources of information for the five systemic chapters in the solutions pathways section of the report.

IMAG noted that transformation of these systems is important at the national level but the concept of multi-level governance and a whole of society approach is crucial since transformative action is required at all levels. The Secretariat noted these areas are likely to be covered by the 'Governance' lever covered under Chapter 9 of the report and will be covered accordingly. IMAG also noted that it would be important to include what can be done when we have unfair or skewed socioeconomic impacts distributed differently across countries. IMAG agreed that the Secretariat would formulate the aspect of whole society approach and include the uneven or skewed question in the policy questions. It was noted that the policy questions can be revisited once authors start drafting as they may need more guidance from IMAG.

The IMAG decided that more written feedback could be shared with the Secretariat by 24th May close of business Nairobi time. The Secretariat will share a version of the document for commenting that will contain the additional comments made during the call.

Update on the selection of additional authors

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the status of the authors following the gap-filling exercise. Orientation sessions for the new cohort of authors had been organized and the Secretariat noted the many positive responses from those invited into the process. Key authors for the lifestyles, governance and shocks section as well as for the pressures section had confirmed their participation to the process and gaps in the regional and sub regional chapters had also been filled accordingly.

It was highlighted that some authors who had been nominated for lead author roles later requested for less demanding roles such as those of contributing authors. The gender balance and the geographic balance was mentioned to be much more improved.

The Secretariat pointed out that there was a good representation of US based authors in the author teams but there had been no official nominations made by the US government to which it was pointed out that there would be some reaching out to receive those. The Secretariat however clarified that this did not mean that the nomination process for authors was still officially open but additional authors could be approached to fill specific gaps. The Contributing author role could be used in this regard.

IMAG expressed appreciation that their advice on the gap filling exercise had been followed and that additional authors can be approached to fill specific gaps, either because authors drop out or specific expertise turns out to be lacking in the drafting process.

Update on the GEO-7 Sub Regional Classification

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the rationale for the use of the IPBES sub regions for analysis in the report especially for the state of the environment and outlook regional chapters.

IMAG inquired how GEO-7 would build on previous assessments given the different regions used for previous assessments. The Secretariat responded that the six UNEP regions used in the GEO-6 regional assessment are aligned with the IPBES sub regions and the UN regions. IMAG noted that the sub regions were a reasonable solution given the diverse nature of the 5 UN regions but where the report shows trend or comparability over time, it will be important to try to maintain consistency. Authors should have flexibility on how they would like to work on each regional/ sub regional grouping either by treating them individually or clustering them where need be.

The Secretariat explained that the scoping document was reviewed and approved by Member States to ensure agreement on what is covered in the report and at what level of detail.

IMAG took note of the proposal by the to use the IPBES sub regional classification and agreed that it provides a sensible approach for the sub regional analysis for GEO-7.

Any other business

- A briefing was provided on the funding provided by the Government of China that will fund a second set of workshops for the Solutions Pathways authors and the Modelling and Scenarios authors which will be hosted by Tongji University in Shanghai from 4-7 September 2023. This will enable those authors to finalize their zero order drafts.
- The Secretariat mentioned that it will send out a doodle for the joint IMAG and MESAG meeting for the week of 19th June.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 17h33 (EAT).

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- The Secretariat will share a doodle for the joint IMAG and MESAG meeting.
- The Secretariat will share a revised version of the GEO-7 policy questions for comment.
- IMAG members to send feedback on the GEO-7 policy questions by 24th of May 2023 close of business Nairobi time.
- IMAG members to send feedback on the supporting services survey by 24th of May 2023 close of business Nairobi time.
- The Secretariat to broadcast the revised supporting services survey in the month of June to allow for responses.

List of Participants

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr. Leila BENDIFALLAH	Professor, M'hamed Bougara University, Algeria	Algeria	African Group
Ms. Anna Mampye	Director: State of Environment Information in the Branch, ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	South Africa	African Group
Mr. Takashi Otsuka	Director of Knowledge and Communications, Strategic Management Office, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan	Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Ms. Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	Western European Group
Dr. Marek Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Poland	Eastern European Group
Mr. Rafael Monge	Director - National Center of Environmental Information (CENIGA) Ministry of Environment and Energy; Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr. Arthur EIJS	Policy coordinator Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Land Use - Ministry of Infrastructure & water management, department of International Affairs	Netherlands	Western European Group
Ms. Yi Huang	Professor, School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, China	China	Asia and the Pacific Group
Ms. Claudia Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Germany	Western European Group
Mrs. Dušica Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Mr. Miroslav Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Czechia	Eastern European Group
Ms. Gillian Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Trinidad & Tobago	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr. Toral Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	United States	Western European Group
Ms. Neyra Herrera	Chief of Environmental Statistics; ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr. Lisa Eriksson (Alternate)	Policy evaluation and analysis; Sustainable Development Department; Swedish Environmental protection agency	Sweden	Western European Group
Names	Gender	Nationality	Major Group
Ms. Ruth Viola Spencer	Chair, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas(MEPA) Trust	Antigua and Barbuda	Women
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization
Mr. Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples
Dr. Fabian Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Germany	Science and Technology

Apologies

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr. Modibo sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	Mali	African Group

*Alternates to the relevant IMAG members are indicated.

Dr. Salla Rantala	Development Manager, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Finland	Western European Group
Dr. Jerome Lugumira Sebadduka	Natural Resources Management Specialist (Soils and Land Use), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Uganda	Uganda	African Group
Dr. Thuraya AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA- Oman	Oman	Asia and the Pacific Group
Dr. Keri Holland (Alternate)	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
Mrs. Rolenas Baereleo	Principal Officer, Biodiversity and Conservation; Department of Environmental protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mr. Silvio Albuquerque e Silva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP; Embassy of Brazil in Kenya	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Alexandra Gurgel Valente da Costa (Alternate)	Environment Analyst, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mrs. Maha Maayta	Director of the Policy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Jordan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mr. Toghrul Feyziyev	Advisor, International cooperation division of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group
Mr. 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
Ms. Margarita Guerra (Alternate)	Ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr. Thomas Chali	Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management in Tanzania	Tanzania	African Group
Ms. Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern European Group
Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Major Group
Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Norway	Non-governmental organization
Mr. Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray	Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	India	Business and industry
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Egypt	Science and Technology
Ms. Zahra Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Jordan	Children and youth