

Outcome of the Joint Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and Review Editors Meeting, 7-11 October 2018

The Joint Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and Review Editors Meeting of the Sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), was held from 7-11 October 2018 at the Cairo Marriot Hotel in Egypt with the gracious support of the Egyptian Ministry of Environment and CEDARE. On the first day of the meeting, opening remarks were made by Permanent Undersecretary for Environmental Quality from the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, Dr. Mona Kamal, Dr. Ahmed Abdelrehim, Director of CEDARE, Mr. Pierre Boileau, Head of the Sixth Global Environment Outlook Secretariat, UN Environment and by the Sixth Global Environment Outlook Co-chair Prof. Joyeeta Gupta.

The first two days of the meeting saw the review editors meet to deliberate on their objectives while the last three days of the meeting, the review editors were joined by the members of the Scientific Advisory Panel. There was a total of 67 participants including, co-chairs of GEO-6, participants from the Egyptian Ministry of Environment and staff members from CEDARE.

The Review Editors met to produce a technical analysis of the entire review editing process for the Sixth Global Environment Outlook. The objectives of the Review Editors meeting were to;

- Highlight main issues and comments raised by governments and main stakeholders in the first, second and third order reviews;
- Assess the extent to which review comments were dealt with during the final technical review and the intergovernmental review;
- Prepare a third order draft (TOD) Review Editor's report of the sixth Global Environment Outlook for presentation to the Scientific Advisory Panel;
- Inform the Scientific Advisory Panel on the rigour and management of the peer review workflows for the sixth Global Environment Outlook; and
- Identify improvements in the future Global Environment Outlook assessments regarding the process of peer review, including the work of the review editors.

During the meeting, the Review Editors decided that the role of the Review Editors was to assess how well the review comments had been addressed by the authors and although there may have been some areas of the text that they might have wished to comment on, they should only bring issues of significant errors to the attention of the Secretariat. The Review editors also agreed that proper categorization of the comments allow for more thorough analysis of the results and additional functionality needed to be added to the Review Editors Analytical Database (READ) to allow queries for country-level peer review comments. This would allow for responses to specific countries who wish to know how their comments were dealt with by the authors.



Some of the Review Editors



The Review Editors shared the main issues raised by reviewers from review by governments and main stakeholders in the first, second and third order reviews. An in-depth assessment of the extent to which review comments were dealt with (by authors) during the final technical and the intergovernmental review of the GEO-6 chapters was done and a draft report for each chapter was sent to the Lead review editors team. A third order draft (TOD) Review Editor's report for the sixth Global Environment Outlook was developed and three key outcomes of the report per chapter presented to the Scientific Advisory Panel. The final report of the TOD review editors report is with the Lead Review Editors for finalization and submission. A discussion with the Scientific Advisory Panel on the rigor and management of the peer review workflows for the sixth Global Environment Outlook enabled informed judgement by the Panel on assessing the criteria.

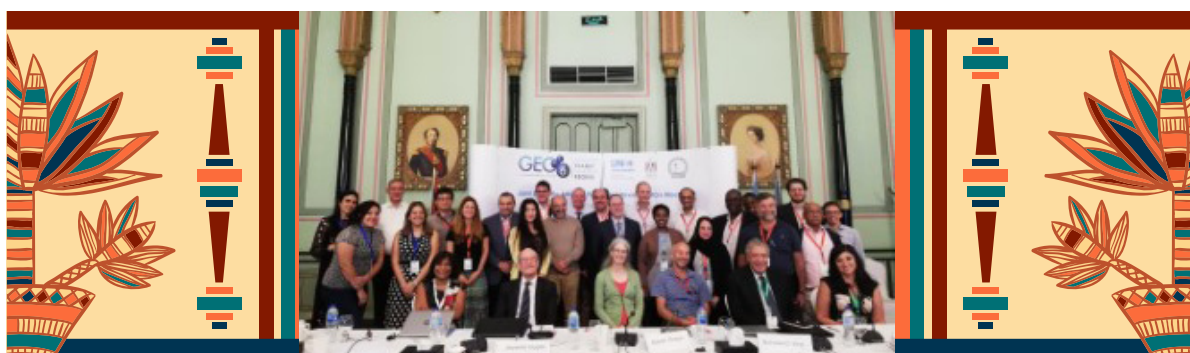
The Scientific Advisory Panel began their meeting on 9 October, where opening remarks were made by the Egyptian Ministry of Environment representative Dr. Manal Tantawy, CEDARE Director H.E. Dr. Nadia Makram Ebeid, GEO-6 co-chair Paul W. Ekins, SAP co-chairs Nicholas King and Sarah Green, and Edoardo Zandri of UN Environment.

The objectives of the Scientific Advisory Panel Meeting were to provide guidance to the Review Editor's team on controversial issues, presentation of findings, messages and key conclusions, arising from the Third Order Review. The Panel also commented on the robustness of the peer review process and recommended improvements for the remaining GEO-6 peer review processes. Another main objective of the Panel meeting was to ensure the scientific credibility of the GEO-6 process by establishing the effectiveness of addressing the recommendations and decisions of the Panel by the secretariat and experts as well as evaluating the scientific integrity of GEO-6 process.



The Panel fully discussed the excellent work of the Review Editors and expressed their intent to review some of the specific issues that were mentioned in the Review Editor's presentations. The Panel fully endorsed the scientific credibility of the GEO-6 process. The Panel also discussed options on to how to contribute to the development of the concept for the future of the Global Environment Outlook.

The positive results of the meeting stem from effective collaboration among all participants towards the scientific credibility approval. The Secretariat presented all the criteria for decision making on the scientific integrity of the sixth Global Environment Outlook and provided the supporting information in response to key questions under each criterion. The SAP then broke-up into working groups to develop their draft responses, explaining their evaluation and approval of the Global Environment Outlook process and its scientific integrity. These responses were then reviewed upon by the whole Panel working group in plenary sessions. All opinions were negotiated and then confirmed by The Panel into an evaluation letter that was sent to the Chief Scientist of UN Environment. The closing ceremony was led by the co-chairs of the Scientific Advisory Panel who showed great appreciation to the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, all the secretariat staff, CEDARE staff and the review editors on their support for the successful meeting.



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Outcome of the First face-face meeting of the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue

Several assessments of the state of the global environment will be produced in 2019. To address the issue of coherence among the many assessments the Secretariats and co-chairs of these major assessments have agreed to share their mandate, missions, procedures and work plans and work towards a narrative that will identify the coherence and complementarity among these assessments and, where there may be a lack of coherence, develop approaches to try to increase coherence thus the need for a first face to face meeting. The Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue held their meeting in Paris on 19 October 2018 to do the following:

- Produce a revised draft of the coherence narrative to be shared with UN Environment Member States
- Discuss the future of the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue
- Establish new objectives for the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Global Environment Outlook, Global Sustainable Development Report, International Resource Panel, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group I, II and III as well as representation from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

On these issues, the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue decided that the different assessments have many common objectives and therefore seeking synergies and areas for possible collaboration is within the mandate of each assessment. The Dialogue is also convened under the mandate of UN Environment's Chief Scientist, who has a responsibility to convene the science community for various purposes. It was made clear that the Dialogue has no intention of interfering with any of the processes of individual assessments or their governance.

Many synergies are already being exploited in the different assessment policies through; (a) sharing of authors and experts across the assessments, (b) sharing of peer review drafts with other assessment experts, and (c) sharing of different tools and literature across assessments.

The Secretariats of the different assessments were tasked to redraft the narrative document according to the revised guidance provided by the group. This narrative document should be presented as an Information Document at the upcoming fourth UN Environment Assembly in March 2019.

The Dialogue decided to rename the group the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue from its previous name Global Assessment Coherence Group and its membership will remain within the main UN-sponsored independent, expert-led assessments. Two other assessments will be invited to participate, namely the Global Biodiversity Outlook and the World Oceans Assessment and future meetings will only include the co-chairs of the major assessments and their supporting Secretariats.

The next face-to-face meeting of the Adhoc Global Assessment Dialogue could possibly happen at the fourth edition of the UN Environment Assembly. This Dialogue group could also work to issue a collective statement about the global environment at an opportune time such as the World Environment Day in 2019. Possible areas of collaboration for the group could include: Scientific coherence, data sets, glossaries, scenarios and outreach, since work is already being undertaken by some assessments in those areas.

