

Inception Meeting of Global Environment Outlook (GEO) for Cities

The inception meeting of GEO for Cities took place in Arendal, Norway from 13-14 May 2019. The Co-Chairs and Advisory Committee of GEO for Cities met to prepare a draft annotated outline of GEO for Cities and to confirm a draft work plan, including overview and context, timeline, anticipated impact, anticipated outcomes, project design and risks mitigation measures as well as to suggest prospective authors from different institutions, considering gender and geographic balance.

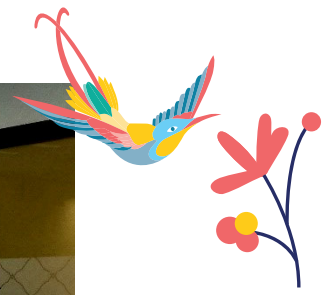


Diego Martino and Julie Greenwalt, Co-Chairs of the GEO for Cities making a presentation during the meeting

The Co-Chairs of GEO for Cities, Diego Martino and Julie Greenwalt gave a warm welcome and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. A vote of thanks was given to Grid Arendal for hosting the meeting. The UN Environment secretariat then made a presentation on the findings of the [sixth Global Environment Outlook \(GEO-6\)](#) including drivers of environmental change, state of the environment, outlook for the future, changing the pathway we are on, the way forward and emphasis was placed on transformative policies which should be the key point in for GEO for Cities. Following this presentation, the Co-Chairs made a speech on urban components from GEO-6 showing the audience what environmental issues in GEO-6 are relevant to cities. Air and freshwater were highlighted as key issues, other issues such as biodiversity will also be discussed in GEO for Cities but will require more information.

The Co-Chairs and Advisory Committee decided:

- The theme of GEO for Cities will be 'Healthy Cities, Healthy People';
- The GEO for Cities launch is planned to take place in October 2020 during the Convention on Biological Diversity in China;
- The Secretariat should revise the timeline accordingly;
- The Secretariat should make an author list including all the nominations recommended and share with Advisory Committee for further suggestion;
- The Advisory Committee will be included in the internal review period;
- More outreaches should be considered in the following year during the process;
- The next call meeting with all the Advisory Committee could happen on the second week of June;
- The next face-to-face meeting involving all the Advisory committee members will be the second authors meeting in February 2020.



Pierre Boileau head of the Global Environment Outlook giving the GEO-6 presentation

The group emphasized that the target audience should be clear, although local government plays the main role in city issues, national governments could also be considered. Also, it was agreed that GEO for Cities should be different from other assessments. More information could be built on biodiversity issues since most assessments focus more on climate change. Planetary boundaries, infrastructure development, changes in social behaviours, economic growth, inequality are all the drivers of environmental issues in cities and could be added to supplement GEO-6. Thereafter, the Co-Chairs led a brainstorming discussion on target audiences, approach and scope/niche to move the process forward.



Participants at the Inception Meeting

The participants then spent the afternoon focusing on drafting the annotated outline. It was agreed that the GEO-6 findings would form the basis on certain issues while developing GEO for cities. A big discussion focused on regional uniqueness and how to deal with typology issues. The idea of having an independent chapter talking about regional uniqueness was let go since the definition is quite different. For the pathway to healthy cities, the Secretariat proposed focus on the 3 systems which are food, energy and waste just as the main GEO-6 report had done. The Advisory Committee suggested that water system should be added as well.



Participants of the GEO for Cities Meeting

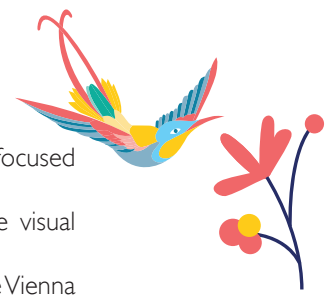
The group then gave some comments on outreach and timeline. The Advisory Committee suggested that GEO for Cities could be launched on October 2020 during Convention on Biodiversity Diversity (CBD) and the timeline would extend a little bit longer following this schedule. The first authors meeting would move to late August 2019 to have more time for choosing authors. It was agreed that Advisory Committee would be involved in the internal review period and join the second authors meeting. The Secretariat will address all the comments and share the revised timeline after the meeting.

Third face-to-face GEO for Youth Authors' Meeting

The GEO for Youth authors met face to face for their final meeting in Vienna from 15 to 17 May 2019 to further develop the drafts of the GEO for Youth report. Pierre Boileau, Head of Global Environment Outlook provided welcome to the participants and introduced the new participants, the illustrators, Joseph Schmidt-Klingenberg and Sebastian Obermeyer and the videographer, Oliver Umpierre. After the opening remarks, presentations were provided by Pierre Boileau, Head of GEO, on logistics and timeline, the Co-chairs, on general comments and a way forward and representatives from each chapter about the achievements since the February Nairobi meeting, meeting objectives and a plan on how to achieve those objectives.



Group Photo of GEO for Youth Participants



The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Reduce the amount of text in each chapter to about 5000 words, in order to ensure a concise and focused product.
- Advance the chapters to their second order draft stage, including completing infographics with the visual authors, videos and other multimedia elements with the videographer.
- Develop a work plan for ensuring that the second order draft is fully completed by 3 weeks following the Vienna meeting in order to prepare the second external review process.
- Collaborate with other authors and the co-chairs to ensure links are made across the chapters to create a coherent narrative for the report.
- Produce the initial draft of the Introduction and Executive Summary for the whole report (1000 words)
- Finalize the review grids from the previous review period.

The GEO for Youth text was modified to include some observations from the co-chairs and the Secretariat such as; Chapter 1 will reference the sixth Global Environment Outlook a bit more, to ensure the link with the GEO is clear to readers. Chapter 2 will also reference the GEO a bit more to keep the link with the business as usual and target seeking scenarios chapters in the main report. These references will strengthen the foundation for the need to move towards a more sustainable future. Chapter 3 will develop a 'life choices' section to inform youth about the impacts of their more one-off choices (e.g. where they live, how they move around) and how they can make more sustainable choices. Chapter 3 will also increase the citation of existing literature on the impact of these different day-to-day sustainability actions and life choices, so that credibility of the recommendations in the report is strengthened. Chapter 3 will also create linking text to the annex on citizen science, indicating that one of actions that youth can take is to help monitor the state of our environment. Chapter 4 will strengthen the analytical portions of the jobs of the future sections by linking it to the green jobs analysis conducted by the International Labour Organization.



Plenary in session

During the meeting all authors contributed their top 5 messages to the co-chairs so that they may complete the draft of the Executive Summary for the report. The co-chairs completed a working version of the Introduction of the report. It will be added to the second-order draft prior to the review period and will 'set the stage' for the chapters of the main report. The co-chairs will also produce a short Conclusion for the review process.



Chapter 1 Authors deliberating

The Head of GEO, Pierre Boileau provided a presentation about the [findings of GEO-6](#). Franklin Odhiambo from the Secretariat provided some guidance and findings on the review process and requested the chapter team to submit their completed review grid by the end of the day. He pointed out that the authors are allowed to reject comments, but it is important that every decision is justified as the grids will be reviewed by review editors. Every comment must be addressed, either accepted or rejected. Editorial

comments will be dealt with later by professional editors. The second external review period began on the 12th of June. The authors were invited to suggest more reviewers to add to the previous list.

At the end of the meeting, each chapter team provided a presentation on the progress achieved during the meeting. The illustrators presented their first draft of the visuals, requesting the authors to provide their feedback in the upcoming week. All authors and co-chairs then filled out a satisfaction survey. The meeting was then closed by Pierre Boileau with a presentation of the agenda for the next three weeks and a round of acknowledgements and Q&A.

The review draft (s) of the Global Environment Outlook for Youth report is now open for review. They can be accessed at:

Link: <https://environmentlive.unep.org/geoyouth/>

Click [here](#) for more photos from the meeting.



New GEO Team Member: Brice Bogna

Brice is presently a sophomore at Houghton University, New York, USA, studying International Studies as his major with a minor in communications. He sees himself working in organizations providing aid to populations in need and supporting the furtherance of governance in fragile situations, as well as organizations that work to better the environment. He grew up in several different countries such as America, Guinea, Burundi and Kenya all of which exposed him to different cultures and life experiences. He has a strong interest in working with people of different cultures and believes in what the United Nations is doing globally in its efforts to impact the world positively through global partnerships and development. In view of his keen interest in the work of the United Nations he wanted to take part in its collective efforts to join a team such as the GEO and UN Environment that strives to inform policymakers, citizens, private sectors and local governments about the need to take care of the environment.

His hobbies are writing poetry, listening to music and playing football. He plays football for his university in 3rd division.

