

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/4

Jan. 6, 2019

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,  
November 28, 2019**

**Important Note:** In order to make our calls more efficient and effective, Steering Committee members are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each. Members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking, to minimize background noise.

The Steering Committee on the future of GEO met at its fourth virtual call to discuss the progress following the face to face meeting in Prague and plan next steps for future advancement of the process. Agenda items included:

- Update on the procurement process and work plan for the Future of GEO processes
- Discuss the feasibility assessment of the face-to-face consultations process discussed in Prague
- Discuss the project risk and contingencies
- Consider next steps for logistics of the March facilitated workshop
- Any other business

**On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:**

- The Committee should be alerted on the timings for the release of the bid package
- A generic invitation letter will be produced for Steering Committee members to obtain internal approvals for meetings. Members will still receive specific meeting invitation letters at a time nearer the meeting date for their visa application processes.
- The Secretariat will prepare a detailed proposal with locations and costings for the regional consultations and present it in the next committee call in mid-January. The note should be prepared and shared before the holiday period (around December 15<sup>th</sup> timeframe) for Committee members to consult and prepare for the discussions at the January virtual meeting.
- A standing item be established for future Steering Committee meetings where the Committee will review the project risks highlighted in item three (3) of this meeting to make sure that the project is on track and mitigation strategies can be implemented if necessary.
- Co-chairs, vice-chairs and the Secretariat will meet with Ryan Assiu (Trinidad and Tobago) on the possible dates of the first facilitated meeting of the Steering Committee. Following this meeting a Doodle Poll will be sent out by the Secretariat to determine the availability of Steering Committee members for this meeting.

<u>Rapporteur</u>	<u>Signature</u>
Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas	

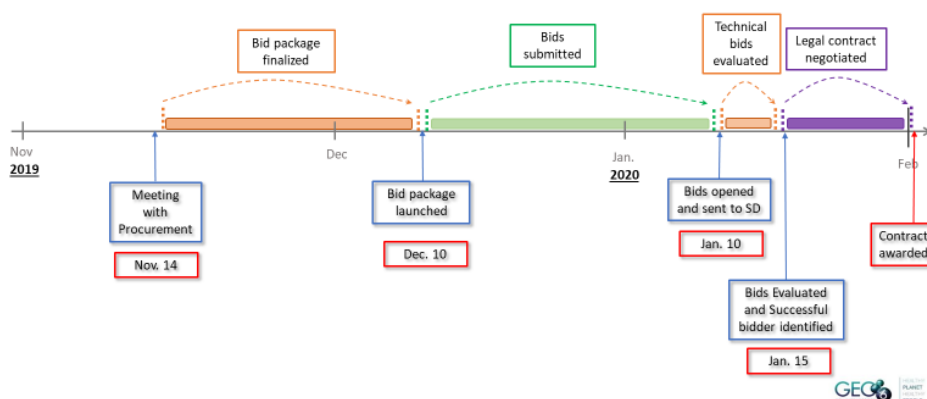
**Summary of the meeting**

The meeting was chaired by the both co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

**Update on the procurement process and work plan for the Future of GEO processes**

- The Secretariat has met with the procurement office in Nairobi and produced the expression of interest that has been circulated broadly through members of the Steering Committee, LinkedIn, the climate lists of IISD and permanent representatives in Nairobi. The Secretariat reiterated that this is a very important step because vendors who do not express interest will not be invited to present a proposal. This has been made very clear in the distribution of this notice.
- The Secretariat reminded Steering Committee members that the expression of interest expires December 6th 2019, a date which is approaching quickly. Potential vendors need to complete their basic information in a one-page form and send it to the procurement office in Nairobi.
- The Terms of Reference has been updated following the discussion in Prague and following the advice from the UNON procurement office. Details on qualifications and the ultimate results of service are still those specified in Prague. The timeline has also been updated to reflect a starting date of February 1st and the Secretariat is working towards this milestone. The bid package is ready, and the Secretariat expects UNON procurement to send it out to the bidders by the 10th of December 2019. Bids are expected to be returned by the 10th of January 2020 (see graphic below).

**Procurement for Future of GEO Project**



**The Future of GEO work plan;**

- The work plan is now updated with the input received from the Prague meeting indicating the two additional facilitated workshops and the revised timeline for the development of the options document. The Secretariat noted that, though Sebastian Jan Konig has indicated that the first facilitated workshop is in early April, the secretariat is in consultation with Ryan

Assiu from Trinidad and Tobago to host this meeting in March and the timing of the last facilitated workshop would be held in early October, perhaps just prior to the Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives planned for October 19-23 2020. This means the options document and consultations must be completed before this October 19<sup>th</sup> deadline. This will enable finalization of the options document in late 2020 and presentation at UNEA 5 in February 2021.

- The Secretariat updated that the first facilitated workshop for the Steering Committee would likely be in Trinidad and Tobago. Ryan Assiu is advancing with talks with his Minister's office on hosting the Steering Committee meeting.
- The Steering Committee noted the agreement from the Prague meeting that the version of the options paper that will be presented at the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in October 2020 will be a near final draft, however the timeline in the work plan is still showing a period for incorporating comments after the CPR presentation. The Secretariat noted that this timeline will depend on the review comments received on the options during the consultations and there may be suggestions for some final additions or changes to the document. The Secretariat clarified that this will not affect the recommendation from the options paper that will be presented to the Annual Subcommittee meeting.
- The Secretariat also noted that the second facilitated workshop is not yet confirmed because we have not identified a location. However, Nairobi is the likely location, but costs are high for this location.
- Some members of the Steering Committee requested that the Secretariat provide a generic invitation letter that outlines the planned Steering Committee meetings so that approvals can be obtained from their Minister's office to attend these meetings. This would speed up approval and enable effective participation in future meetings. The Secretariat agreed that it is possible to write a generic letter of this type for Steering Committee member's internal approvals but also highlighted that members will still receive specific meeting invitation letters at a time nearer the meeting date, for their visa approval processes.

### **Discussion on the feasibility assessment for the face-to-face consultations process for the Future of GEO options paper**

The co-chair reviewed the discussion in Prague on this item where the Secretariat was tasked with assessing the feasibility of holding consultation meetings in tandem (front to back or back to back) with UNEA-5 preparatory meetings, and report back to the Steering Committee.

On this the Secretariat briefed that it had consulted with every region and;

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** the regional preparatory meeting for UNEA-5 is planned for Barbados in November 2020. The timing of this meeting doesn't work well with the timeline of the Future of GEO process if the committee intends to present something that is fairly final to the Annual Subcommittee meeting of the CPR. Barbados is also a very expensive location to hold a meeting of this kind. Colleagues in the region recommended that we have a meeting in perhaps a cheaper location, with Bogota, Colombia as an initial suggestion. They also suggested that the small island developing states from the Caribbean region prefer to have their own consultation meeting because their issues are

different from those of South American countries; This is an important consideration, but also has cost implications.

- **North America;** The suggestion from the regional office is to have the consultation meeting in Washington D.C. at the UNEP offices, with Canada traveling to the meeting location. This would allow a larger participation from the U.S. government. The main costs for this meeting will be the travel of the Secretariat and co-chairs to that location.
- **Europe;** The proposal is to have the meeting at the European Council (The Working Party on International Environmental Issues) which could host the consultations for Western European countries. There is no planned pre-UNEA consultation meeting because these preparatory consultations normally happen through the Working Party. For the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the recommendation is either to ask the countries to participate in the Brussels meeting or to conduct it in an easily accessible location, such as Istanbul.
- **Africa;** Nairobi is a fall back location for the consultations with African countries, although Nairobi is a very expensive location. The suggestion is to have a cheaper location host this meeting. The regional office does not know when the UNEA-5 preparatory meeting will happen in 2020 (There is no set date yet). Therefore, planning a bespoke meeting earlier is a safer option.
- **West Asia;** The regional office doesn't yet have the dates for the UNEA-5 preparatory consultations in 2020, but planning a bespoke meeting in Bahrain with the help of Suzan (the Steering Committee co-chair) in collaboration with UNEP's regional office, should be fairly inexpensively. Suzan confirmed this is very possible and easy to do in West Asia because they have the facilities, but it is important to plan well ahead of time.
- **Asia Pacific;** The UNEA-5 preparatory meeting is planned for Korea in the second week of September. The planning for this meeting is complex, and it will likely be difficult to plan something during the UNEA-5 preparatory meeting, because their agenda is already set. Planning a bespoke session before or after could also be problematic because of the need to extend the travel of the UNEA-5 preparatory meeting participants. The preference from the Asia Pacific office is to plan a consultation in Bangkok where countries from Central Asia could also be included. The expectation is that this type of meeting could be reasonably inexpensive.

Following the discussions with regional offices, it appears the only region where the consultation meeting could happen in September, before the Annual Subcommittee of the CPR, is the Asia Pacific region. However, because their preparations are already advanced with the Korean Government, it would be difficult to piggyback a consultation on to this UNEA-5 preparatory meeting.

- All other regions have proposed a unique one-off meeting for these consultations and the Secretariat will return to the Steering Committee with a detailed table of the specific dates and locations for the proposed meetings, along with anticipated costing.
- The Steering Committee asked whether there is a need to follow the UNEP regional groupings since this is affecting the costs for the meetings. The Secretariat responded that, as much as UN regional groupings were used to constitute the Steering Committee, as

directed by the UNEA-4 mandate, it is difficult to group Asia Pacific and West Asia together during consultations (as is done in the UN regional groupings), since each of these regions has unique characteristics that may affect the outcome of the consultations.

- The Steering Committee therefore agreed that the Secretariat will prepare a detailed table and present it to the next Committee call in mid-January. The note will be prepared and shared before the holiday period for committee members to consult and prepare for the discussions in January.

### **Discussion on project risks and contingencies**

The Secretariat briefed on the project risks identified in the work plan. The five risk areas identified also have mitigation strategies;

- The Secretariat highlighted that the procurement process is on track and all processes were being monitored to ensure a vendor is in place for 1<sup>st</sup> February. If this timing is met, the timeline for the preparation of the options paper should not be compromised, another identified risk in the process. A mapping of major events that may clash with the consultations is being developed to ensure that the process is not affected by other major processes, during April to June especially. The budget for the consultancy has already been secured so this should not be a risk for the process. The major risk for the project, however, is that the budget for the consultations may not materialize. Once the costing of all the options for the regional consultations is completed the total budget for these consultations will be known and compared with available funds to assess this risk.
- On this item the Steering Committee decided that the analysis of project risks will be a standing item on the agenda of future meetings and calls.

### **Consideration of next steps for logistics of the March facilitated workshop**

- The Secretariat briefed that it had discussed the two-day facilitated workshop with Ryan Assiu (Committee member from Trinidad and Tobago) for either the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March or 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The initial plan was that the Secretariat would conduct a Doodle poll with these four dates for members to indicate their availability. These dates were proposed by Ryan Assiu as the best dates for the meeting since the meeting facilities may be fully booked at other times. Steering Committee members agreed that it was important for the Secretariat, co-chairs and vice-chairs to have a discussion with Ryan Assiu to first assess the possibility of moving the meeting dates to ensure the consultant has made enough progress on the options paper so that the facilitated meeting will be fruitful.
- Steering Committee members felt there is a risk that the consultant's work may not start on 1<sup>st</sup> February and therefore some additional time should be allowed before the facilitated workshop to ensure a quality outcome. The Secretariat proposed a call with Ryan Assiu to see if there is some flexibility with the proposed dates of the facilitated workshop. Co-chairs and vice-chairs were invited to participate in this call.

- Steering Committee members noted that virtual participation for the facilitated workshop should be available. The Secretariat responded that it will ensure virtual participation through GoTo meetings and will also request that potential vendors have experience and capacity to facilitate meetings with both physical and virtual participants. This will be a useful skill for the process.

### **Any other business**

- The Secretariat noted that the Future of GEO consultation meeting in Asia-Pacific is proposed to be in the third week of September, after the regional UNEA-5 preparatory meeting. The Secretariat will also be working to determine the best way to include the Central Asian countries and whether there will be a need for Russian simultaneous interpretation.
- Having no other issues for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 16h02min (Nairobi time)

### **Action items**

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting and share the link to the recording of the call.
- The Secretariat will alert the committee on the timing for the release of the bid package
- The Secretariat will organize a call with Ryan Assui, co-chairs and vice-chairs on the flexibility of possible meeting dates before sending a Doodle poll for members to participate.
- The Secretariat will prepare a proposal with locations and costings for the regional consultations in 2020, before Dec 15<sup>th</sup> and share this with the Committee for discussion at the mid-January call.
- The Secretariat will prepare a generic letter for use by Steering Committee members for internal approvals to attend meetings. Members will still receive specific meeting invitation letters at a time nearer the meeting, for their visa application processes.

## List of Participants

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Chatchai	Intatha	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand	Thailand
Ambinintsoa Lucie	Noasilalaonomenjanahary	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Madagascar
Anna	Mampye	Ministry of Environment	South Africa
Cathy (alternate)	Maguire	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Mona	Westergaard	Ministry of Environment and Food	Denmark
Keisuke (alternate)	Takahashi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Kazuhiko	Takeuchi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Najib	Saab	Arab Forum for Environment & Development (AFED)	Lebanon
Suzan	Alajjawi	Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain	Bahrain
Narges	Saffar	International Affairs & Conventions Center, Department of Environment	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Lukas	Pokorny	Ministry of Environment	Czech Republic
Marcos	Serrano	Ministry of Environment Chile	Chile
Toral	Patel-Weynand	US Forest Service	USA
Ivar Andreas	Baste	Norwegian Environment Agency	Norway
Salla	Rantala	Finnish Environment Institute	Finland
Marcel	Kok	Environment Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands
Huang	Yi	Peking University	China

## Apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Ouedraogo	Desire	Ministry of Environment, green economy and climate change	Burkina Faso
Isaac	Dladla	Eswatini Environment Authority	Swaziland
Nadia	Chenouf	Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energy	Algeria
Christine Okae	Asare	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Ghana
James	Mathew	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Government of India	India
Aliya	Shalabekova	Ministry of Energy	Kazakhstan
Mery	Harutyunyan	Ministry of Environment	Armenia
Jock	Martin	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Mira	Zovko	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Croatia
Ivana	Stojanovic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Montenegro
Shanna (alternate)	Emmanuel	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Keri (alternate)	Holland	US Department of State	USA
Charles	Lange	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Kenya
Jerome	Sebadduka Lugumira	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Uganda
Apsara	Mendis	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Sri Lanka
Marek	Haliniak	Ministry of the Environment, Poland	Poland
Nino	Gokhelaashvili	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	Georgia
Teshia	Jn Baptiste	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Rafael	Monge Vargas	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica
Ryan	Assiu	Environmental Management Authority	Trinidad and Tobago
Celso	Moretti	Agricultural Research Corporation	Brazil
Andrew	Stott	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-	United Kingdom and Northern Ireland

		UK	
Sebastian	Jan Konig	Swiss Federal Office for the Environment,	Switzerland
Claudia	Kabel	German Environment Agency	Germany
Paul (alternate)	Lucas	Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands