Annex

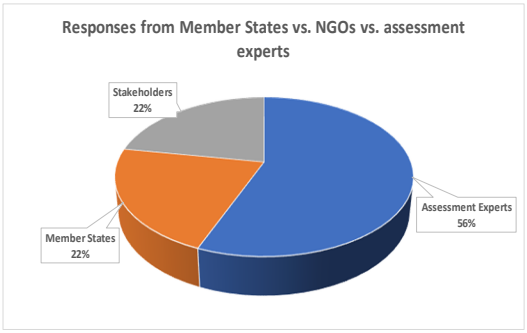
Analysis of consultation process results

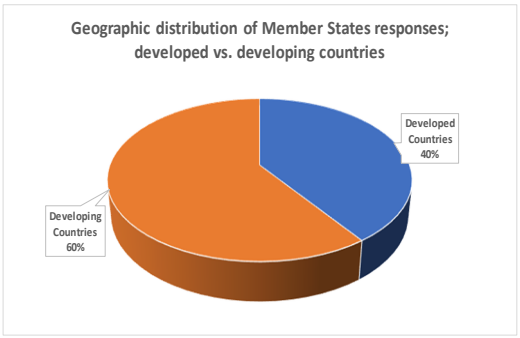
Following is a summary of the key results of the month-long consultation on the future of the *GEO* process. The analysis was prepared to inform the deliberations of the Steering Committee on the future of *GEO* at its November 2020 workshop.

A. Diversity of responses

The consultation ran from 9 September through 9 October 2020. It was supported by a background document prepared by an independent consultant and a co-chairs' discussion document prepared by the co-chairs of the Steering Committee and commented on by its members. Because of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the entire consultation occurred online. Seven orientation webinars were held to help participants better understand the context and purpose of the consultation and the tools used (mainly the questionnaire).

More than 150 people participated in the webinars, more than 400 questionnaires were completed, and more than 50 consolidated responses and 350 independent responses were provided. The secretariat encouraged responses from a wide range of countries and experts, sending four reminders during the consultation.



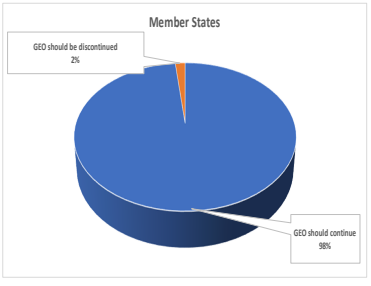


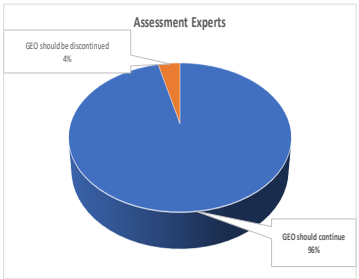
It should also be noted that many of the responses from Member States and stakeholders were consolidated responses, thus representing the views of many more respondents.

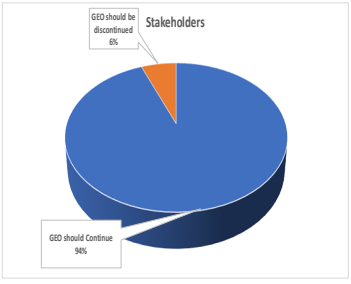
B. Clear signals

Certain results from the consultation show a very strong preference for one direction over another.

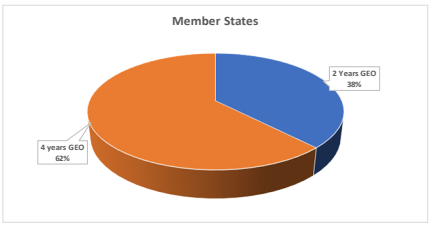
Those consulted largely thought that the *GEO* process should continue.

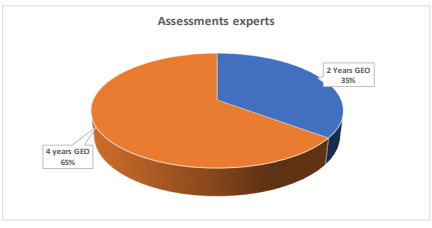


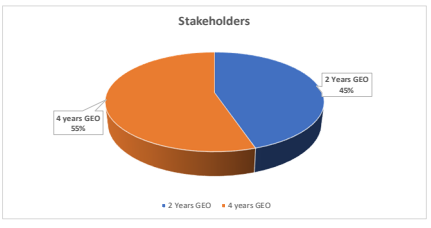




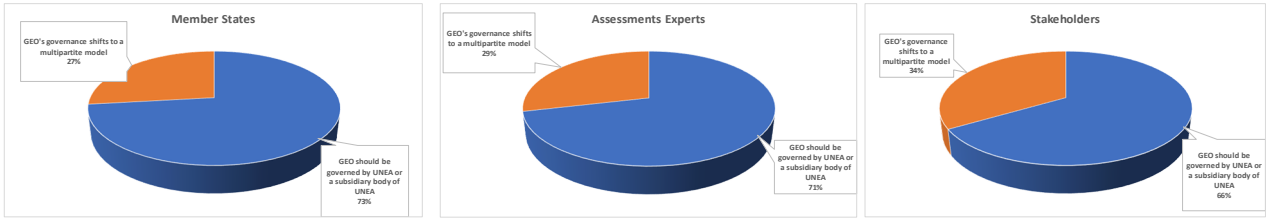
Those consulted largely thought that the *GEO* report should be produced on a four-year cycle.



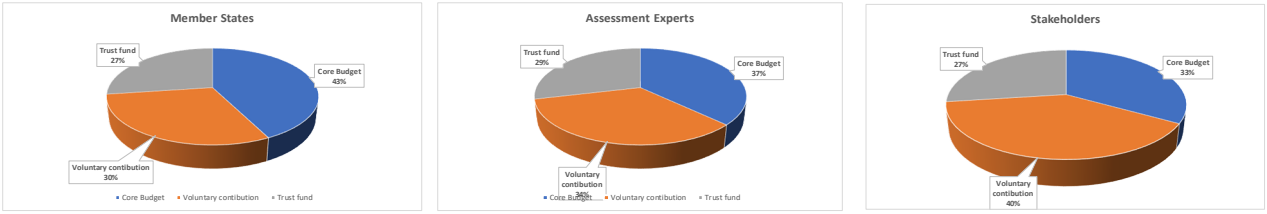




Those consulted largely thought that the *GEO* process should be governed by the Environment Assembly or a subsidiary body of the Assembly.



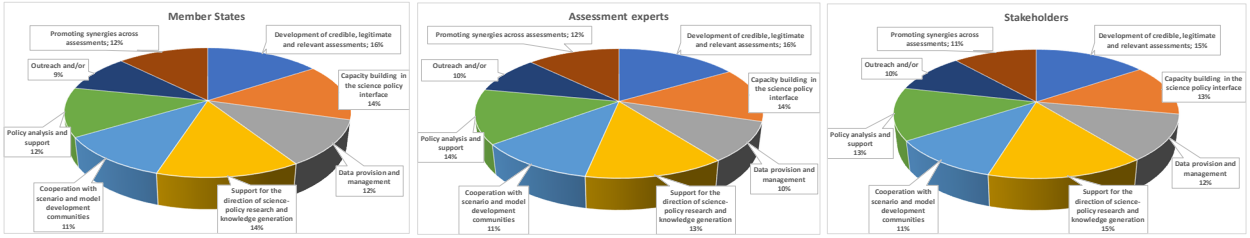
Those consulted largely thought that *GEO* should be financed by core funds and voluntary contributions.



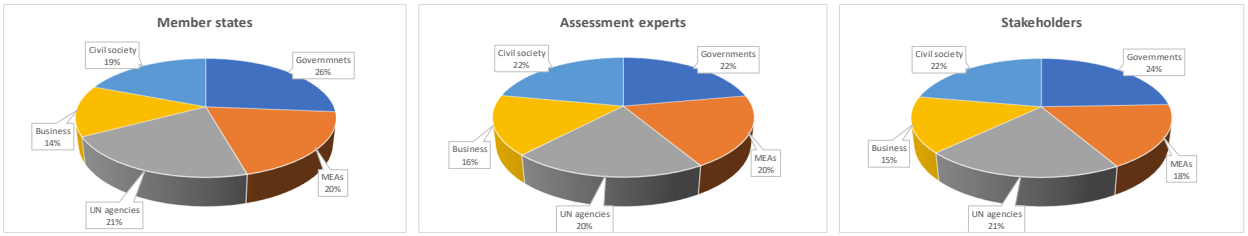
C. Strong signals

Other results from the consultation show a preference for a particular direction or collection of directions.

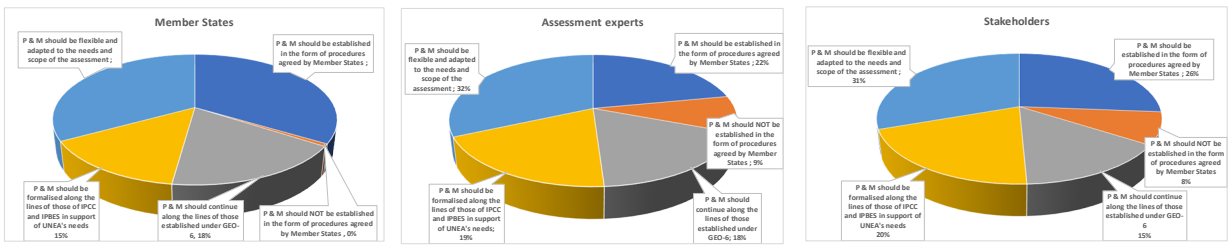
Those consulted thought that the *GEO* process should continue to produce assessments but should expand its work more into capacity-building and policy support.



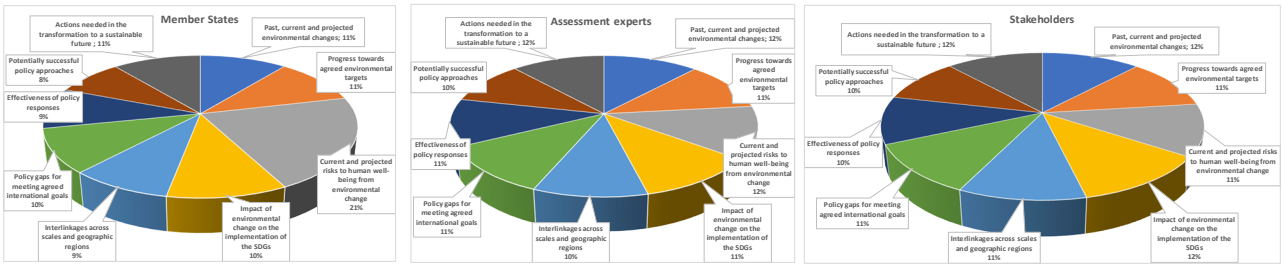
Those consulted thought that *GEO* should continue to include a broad range of Member States and experts in the production of its assessments.



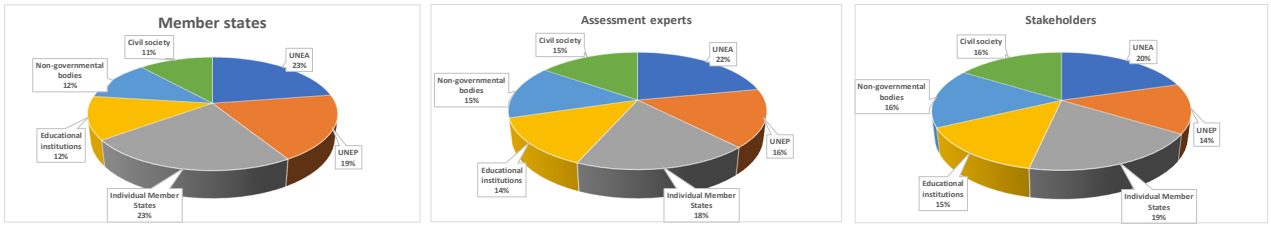
Those consulted largely said that *GEO* procedures and methods should be agreed on by Member States.



Those consulted largely said that *GEO* should mainly assess environmental changes, progress towards environmental targets and effectiveness of policy responses.



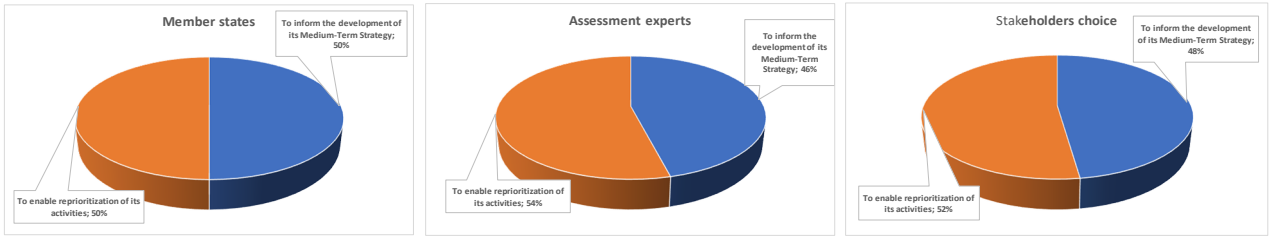
Those consulted said that *GEO* outputs should be used mainly by the Environment Assembly, UNEP and Member States.



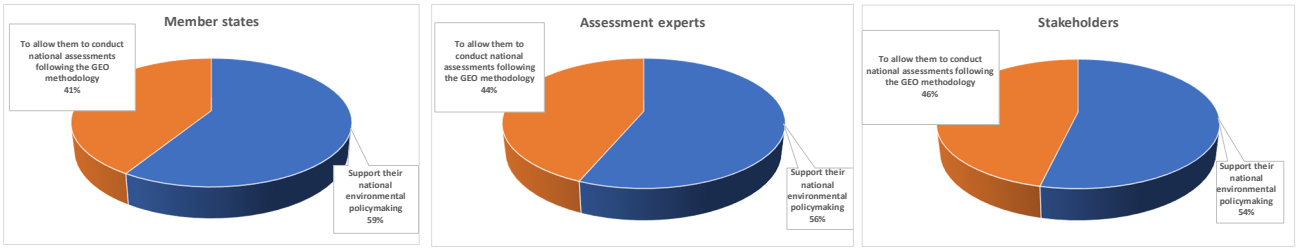
D. Mixed signals

Some responses from those consulted did not give clear direction.

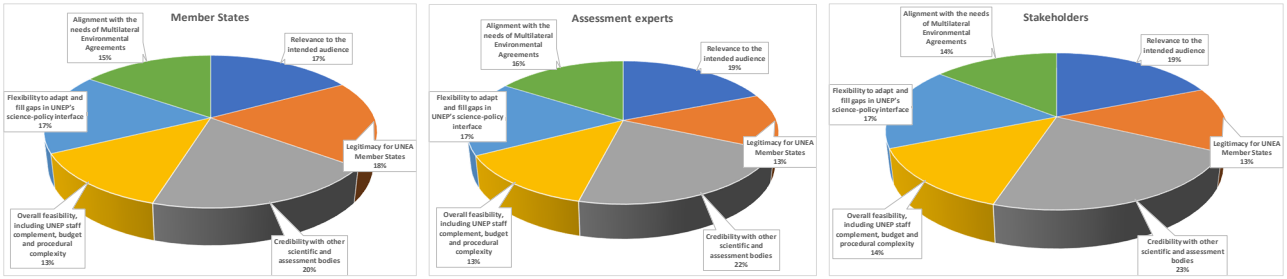
Those consulted did not provide clear guidance on how UNEP should use *GEO* outputs.



Those consulted indicated that Member States could use *GEO* outputs for a variety of purposes.



Those consulted largely said that the decision-making criteria proposed by the Steering Committee were appropriate.



E. Other suggestions

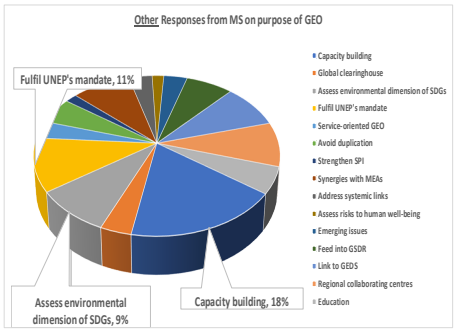
As part of the consultation process, participants were invited to offer additional ideas and suggestions in writing. These written responses were analysed and condensed into "short-form" categories for presentation here. The analysis was conducted for the three groups of respondents: Member States, stakeholders and assessment experts.

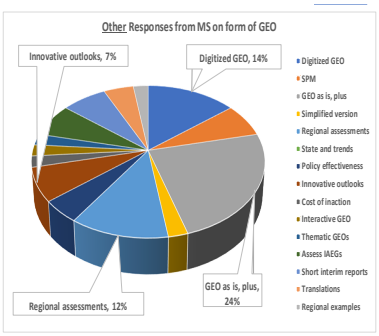
Member States

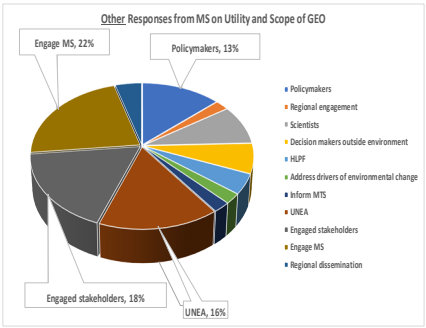
Member States proposed that the purpose of *GEO* could be expanded into capacity-building but should continue to fulfil the mandate of UNEP and assess the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Member States were of the view that the format of *GEO* should be retained, with the addition of elements such as more digitization and regional assessments and more innovative outlooks.

Member States said that the main users of *GEO* should be the Environment Assembly, Member States, policymakers in general and stakeholders.



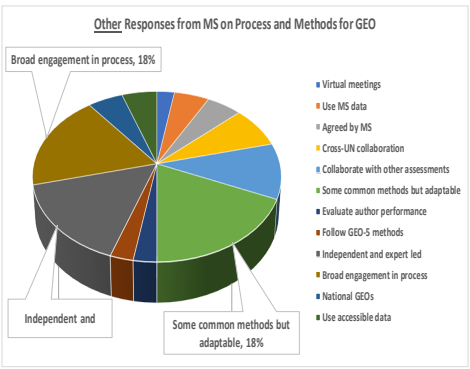


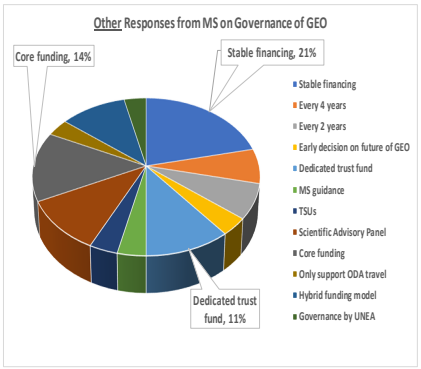


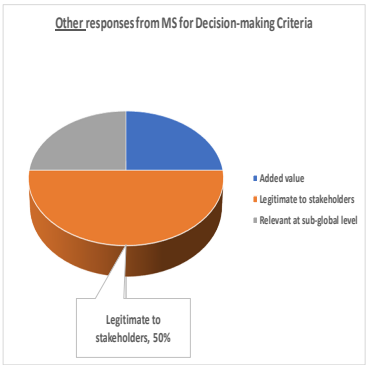
Member States also expressed the view that *GEO* processes and methods should be common with other assessment processes but also be adaptable to the objectives of a particular edition of *GEO*. There was widespread agreement that *GEO* should remain independent and expert-led, with broad engagement by many groups.

Member States also said that financing for *GEO* should be stable and come mainly from core funding and a dedicated trust fund (a hybrid funding model).

Finally, Member States said that some additional criteria should be used by the Steering Committee for decision-making, including legitimacy for stakeholders, added value and the relevance of *GEO* assessment findings at a sub-global level.





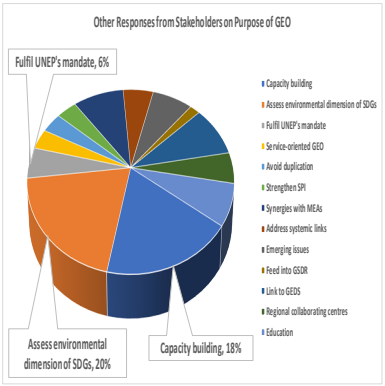


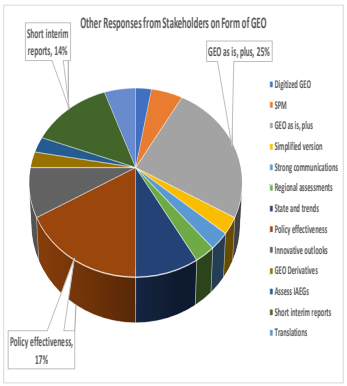
Stakeholders

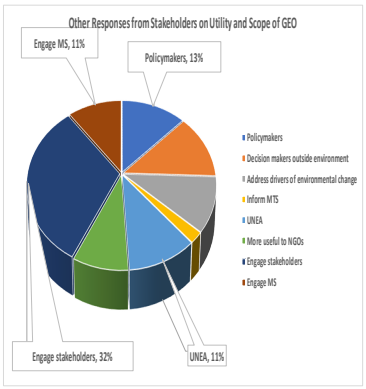
Like Member States, stakeholders said that the purpose of *GEO* should be expanded to capacity-building and should continue to include assessment of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

They said that *GEO* should retain its current format, supplemented by shorter interim reports and a greater focus on policy effectiveness.

Stakeholders also said that *GEO* should be designed to engage, and be relevant for, stakeholders as well as Member States, policymakers and the Environment Assembly.



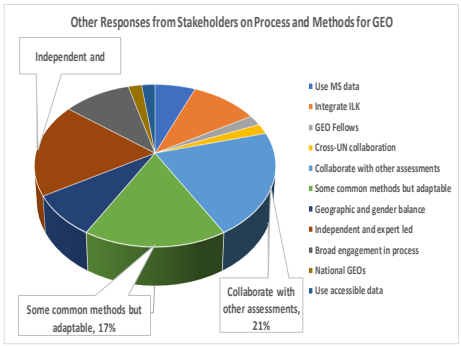


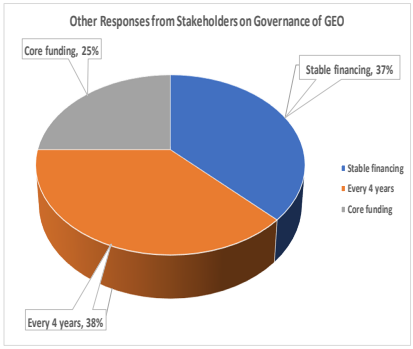


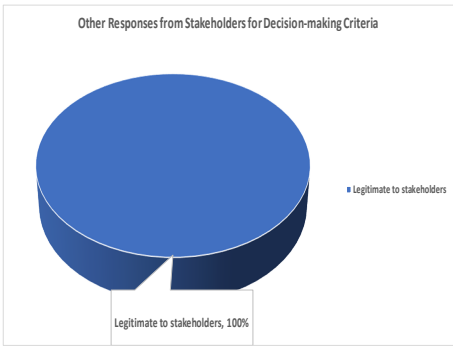
Stakeholders expressed the view that *GEO* process and methods could be improved by greater collaboration with other assessments. Methods should be common but adaptable, and the process should continue to be independent and expert-led.

They said that editions of *GEO* should be produced on a standardized four-year cycle, supported by stable financing, mainly from core funding.

Finally, stakeholders said that the decision-making criteria of the Steering Committee should be expanded to include the legitimacy of *GEO* for stakeholders.





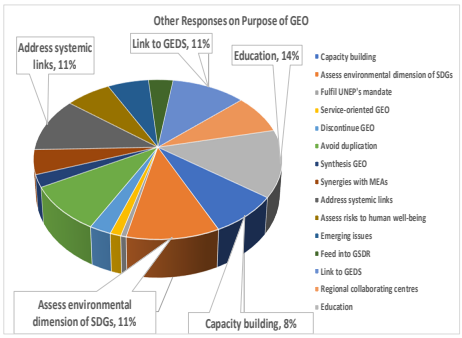


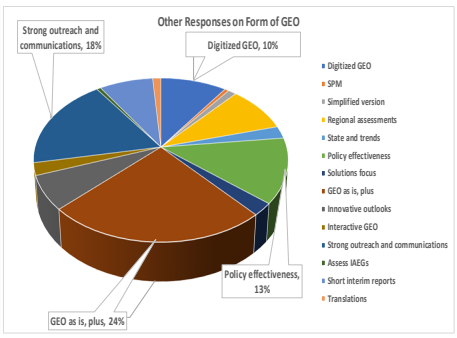
Assessment experts

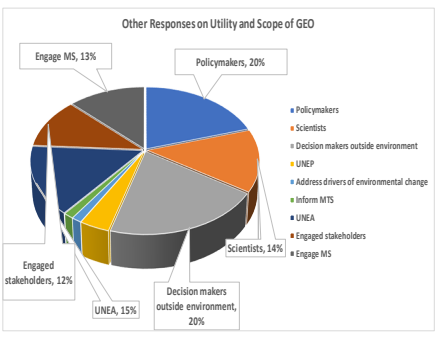
Assessment experts said that the main purpose of *GEO* should be to assess the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing systemic links and education. They supported links with the Global Environmental Data Strategy and capacity-building as other purposes of *GEO*.

Regarding the format of *GEO*, assessment experts supported the "*Global Environment Outlook* as is, plus…" model, with the addition of a focus on policy effectiveness and digitized delivery supported by a strong outreach and communications strategy.

Assessment experts said that *GEO* should be used mainly by policymakers and Member States, and also by decision-makers outside the environmental field, by the Environment Assembly for decision-making, and by engaged stakeholders.







Assessment experts also said that the *GEO* process and methods should be independent and expert-led and that, while having some methods in common with other assessment processes was useful, these should be adaptable to the *GEO* process. They said that *GEO* should continue to have a broad engagement process and focus on helping countries produce national environment outlooks.

Regarding the governance of the *GEO* process, assessment experts said that producing a new edition every two years was feasible provided stable financing was available.

Finally, assessment experts said that the Steering Committee on the future of *GEO* should include "credibility with the scientific community" as one of its decision-making criteria when determining the future of the process.