

Outcomes Document

Joint Meeting of the Intergovernmental and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) of the Seventh Edition of UNEP's Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) June 20, 2023

On June 20, 2023, the Intergovernmental and Multistakeholder Advisory Group and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group met to consider the following agenda items:

- GEO-7 Communication and Outreach
- GEO-7 Digitization: Presentations on the collaborative workspace, the Global Environment Outlook Review Editing Analytical Database (GEO-READ), glossary tool and presentation of GEO-7 in a digital format.
- Review of the new sub-regional country list
- GEO-7 Process Updates: Oral presentation from the Secretariat on the coordination group meeting, the June Author's meeting and upcoming zero order draft deadline, September workshop and budget updates as well as an update on the guidance to be developed for GEO-7 experts on Large Language Models (LLMs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.
- AOB

On these agenda items, the meeting decided:

- IMAG and MESAG to receive future updates on communication and outreach at important milestones of the GEO-7 process.
- To hold joint IMAG and MESAG meetings for updates from the assessment co-chairs and/or the authors when reporting on recent progress, for example results from future author meetings, workshops, or similar.
- To take note of the new regional and sub regional countries/territories list based on the UN Cartographic Service's M49 Standard. A detailed presentation of the updated list will be presented in the September meetings of the IMAG and MESAG to consider any issues reported by authors.
- To share the new regional and sub regional countries/territories list with the GEO-7 authors to have them start drafting.
- MESAG will review and approve the newly developed guidance on use of AI tools and issue guidance to authors.

MESAG Rapporteur	Signature
Mr. Gian Delgado	

IMAG Rapporteur	Signature
Mr. Rafael Monge	

Meeting Summary June 20, 2023

GEO-7 Communication and Outreach

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on GEO communication and outreach with an overview of the efforts made on GEO-6 and expectations for GEO-7. The GEO-7 resolution describes science-policy seminars and other communication, and outreach activities are described in the GEO Procedures document. The UNEP Communications Division Director presented an overview of the communication plan for GEO-7 which started with efforts to raise awareness that the GEO-7 process is beginning. Later, once key messages become available, the Communications Director indicated that a communication strategy will be co-created to be fit for GEO-7.

The advisory bodies inquired who would be involved in the co-creation of the communications strategy and how stakeholders would be involved. They also inquired which audiences would be engaged in the communication strategy and how the communication strategy would be informed by lessons learnt from other assessments, including IPCC and IPBES including any plan for languages in communication and outreach.

The Communications Director responded that the key audience includes scientists, particularly during production, then policy makers later. The Communications Director also emphasized the need for a key datapoint with media potential to be used as a main message (IPBES million species example) which will impact the success of the outreach and communications. Additionally, the publication is mandated to be available in all 6 UN languages, preferably also including Portuguese and Kiswahili, however translations are resource dependent. The secretariat emphasized that the GEO-6 publication was made available in all 6 languages, with the Summary for Policymakers available in an additional four languages.

The advisory groups noted that using networks of science journalists to support outreach and dissemination would be important and encouraged the Secretariat to engage young people, possibly through creative avenues and alternative networks such as artists and musicians while also making use of social media for outreach purposes.

The Secretariat responded by emphasizing that UNEP has a strong network of journalists and at times uses specific alliances of journalists with science and environmental science expertise and this will be used for the launch of GEO-7. Additionally, the Secretariat mentioned the use of social media and its success during World Environment Day which received 200 million views. UNEP has a social media presence across 8 languages with 30 different platforms and has influencers within the UN Goodwill Ambassadors network. The Secretariat also highlighted the collaboration with UNEP regional offices for communication and outreach to improve sub-regional and regional outreach. Interactions with GEO-7 experts and GEO collaborating centers was mentioned as a form of ongoing co-creation and the Secretariat mentioned they would welcome any more specific advice to reach key stakeholders.

The IMAG Co-Chair thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and the IMAG and MESAG members for their questions and welcomed future updates on communication and outreach at important milestones of the GEO-7 process.

GEO-7 Digitization

The MESAG Co-chair welcomed presentations on GEO-7 digitization from key experts supporting the Secretariat in the development of key technical tools to support the GEO-7 process.

Collaborative workspace

Experts from Grid Arendal provided a briefing on the GEO-7 collaborative workspace which the authors are using to draft the assessment and the Secretariat and Co-chairs use to track progress and support the ongoing work. The workspace is built on the Microsoft backbone and allows users to view all chapters, with permissions to specific chapters dedicated to the experts working on that chapter and the Secretariat liaison for that specific chapter. The workspace also

includes MS Teams for chats between experts and expert teams as well as posts internal to each chapter. Statistics on how the platform is used by experts is shared as an annex to this call summary.

A MESAG member highlighted version control as a possible issue during shared drafting to which the technical experts explained the version control abilities in the system through MS Word. The Secretariat also explained that the authors received training with a dedicated orientation session on the topic of version control and that the technical experts were present in person at the first meeting in Bangkok to provide support and additional guidance. Additionally, there's a working online user guide to support the authors in managing the online workspace and a helpdesk email to provide technical support.

The Global Environment Outlook Review Editing Analytical Database (GEO-READ)

An expert from the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) provided a briefing on the review tool beginning with an overview of the development and history of the tool using lessons learned from GEO-6 review process and other assessment processes. The expert also explained the pilot testing with other assessments. The expert presented the system to show the possible user abilities for IMAG and MESAG members during reviews.

A MESAG member noted that not all reviewers and experts will want to use potentially complicated online systems to which an assessment co-chair responded that the tool is very simple to use and helps the review processes by having all the comments and author responses in one database.

Glossary tool

The Secretariat presented the glossary tool by walking through some example definitions and how the authors can comment and debate terms for finalization.

A question on when the definitions would be made public was posed by the MESAG, and the Secretariat responded that this would only happen after the terms are finalized after the publication of GEO-7. A MESAG member asked about the source of the terms and references used for the glossary tool. The Secretariat responded that the definitions have been populated using the GEO-6 definitions and that this is an added value of the tool because there's the ability to bring in definitions of terms from other assessments.

A MESAG member asked if authors are notified when definitions change during the GEO-7 process. The Secretariat responded that there's a 'watch' feature that allows authors interested in key terms to follow the debate on those terms, and the alert feature sends alerts to authors when terms they have 'watched' or 'bookmarked' are edited.

GEO-7 in a digital format

Technical experts from GRID Arendal provided examples of digital reports to demonstrate possible options for a digital GEO-7, mentioning that the digital report would be compatible with mobile devices and have various interactives such as infographics and videos. The briefing also described how artificial intelligence and specifically large language models may support the GEO-7 in a digital format. A chat-like platform was shown which will respond to user queries based on information that it's fed, for example the GEO-7 report. The example shared used information solely from the GEO-6 report to demonstrate the chat capabilities with references.

Review of the new sub-regional country list

The Secretariat provided an updated briefing on the proposal of the sub-regional country list. The Secretariat shared that the previous proposal was to use the IPBES sub regions in the GEO-7 sub-regional analysis, but that there were various small islands and other countries missing from the list. To avoid disputed territories and issues with a disorganized approach, the Secretariat spoke with the UN Cartographic Services for a recommended approach which is to

use the M49 Standard which is used to develop country area codes internationally. The Secretariat noted that there were still some sensitive countries and territories, so the new document based on the UN Cartographic Service recommendation will be shared with both advisory bodies for comment and review. The Secretariat recommended presenting in detail the proposal in September to the advisory groups for their review, however, in the meantime to share the preliminary list with the authors for their use.

The IMAG Co-Chair suggested that both advisory bodies take note of the preliminary list and agree to send this list to the authors so that it can be used for the drafting and that the advisory groups invite authors to present possible issues with the list for consideration. The advisory group meetings in September could have a more detailed discussion on the list and consider any issues reported by authors.

GEO-7 Process Updates

Coordination Group May meeting outcomes

The Secretariat shared the agenda items discussed in the Coordination Group meeting including: an update on the GEO-7 progress, preparations for the authors collaboration meetings taking place online from Monday 26 to Thursday 29 June 2023, and the September modelling and solutions pathways workshops that will include authors working in the solutions pathways and outlooks chapters that will take place in Shanghai, China from Monday 4 to Thursday 7 September 2023.

June Author's online collaboration meetings

The Secretariat shared that the agendas for the online collaboration meetings are available to all IMAG and MESAG members and that the meetings are meant to share chapter updates across GEO-7 and discuss cross-cutting issues.

September workshop

The Secretariat explained that the second workshop for the modelling and solutions pathways teams will be hosted in person from 4 to 7 September 2023 in Shanghai, China. The workshop will invite about 75 experts to participate in a writing sprint for the zero-order draft in advance of the internal review.

Budget updates

The Secretariat shared the recent contributions from China of 500,000 USD which will help support the Shanghai workshop in September. However, the additional experts in the author teams have raised the costs for in person meetings, which leaves a budget gap of about 3 million USD.

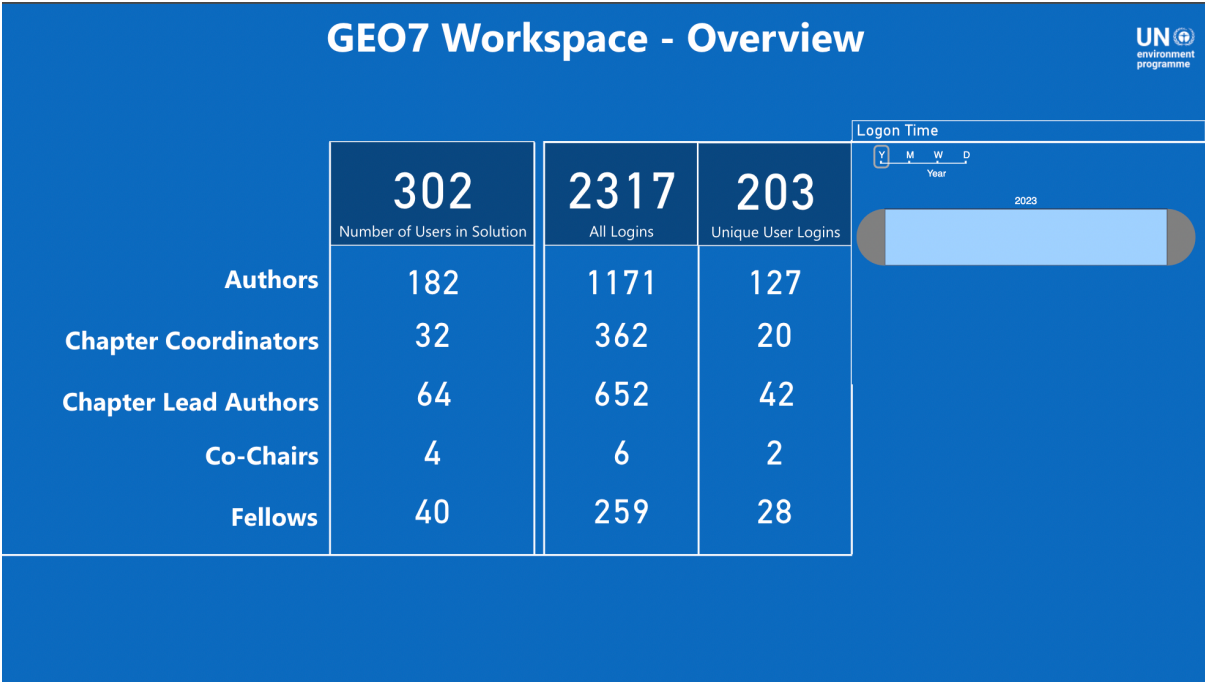
Guidance to be developed on use of AI tools

The Secretariat explained that guidance will be developed, approved by the MESAG and distributed to the authors. All GEO-7 experts are expected to sign the confidentiality, declaration of conflict of interest and granting of copyright form which explains "UNEP requires text, research, and graphics be solely drafted by the contributors."

Any Other Business

- Members of both advisory groups were informed of the departure of the IMAG Rapporteur who will be leaving his position to pursue a one-year academic program.
- Members of the advisory groups raised the importance of scheduling the next monthly meetings of the two advisory bodies in good time to allow enough participation.

Annex 1: GEO-7 Workspace



IMAG Participants		
Names	Affiliation	Region(s) of Representation
Dr. Leila BENDIFALLAH	Professor, M'hamed Bougara University, Algeria	African Group
Ms. Anna Mampye	Director: State of Environment Information in the Branch, ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	African Group
Ms. Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Western European Group
Dr. Marek Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Eastern European Group
Mr. Rafael Monge	Director - National Center of Environmental Information (CENIGA) Ministry of Environment and Energy; 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	Western European Group
Ms. Claudia Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Western European Group
Mr. Miroslav Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Eastern European Group
Ms. Gillian Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Neyra Herrera	Chief of Environmental Statistics; ministry of environment- Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr. Lisa Eriksson (Alternate)	Senior Advisor, Transport Analysis, and the Department for Outlook and Policy.	Western European Group
Dr. Jerome Lugumira Sebadduka	Natural Resources Management Specialist (Soils and Land Use), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Uganda	African Group
Dr. Salla Rantala	Development Manager, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Western European Group
Ms. Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Eastern European Group
Names	Gender	Major Group
Ms. Ruth Viola Spencer	Chair, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas (MEPA) Trust	Women
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	Faith-based groups
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	Local authorities
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Non-governmental organization
Mr. Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Indigenous peoples
Dr. Fabian Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Science and Technology

IMAG Apologies		
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Dr. Modibo sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	African Group
Mr. Takashi Otsuka	Director of Knowledge and Communications, Strategic Management Office, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Ms. Yi Huang	Professor, School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, China	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mrs. Dušica Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Dr. Toral Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	Western European Group
Dr. Thuraya AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA- 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	Western European Group
Mrs. Rolenas Baereleo	Principal Officer, Biodiversity and Conservation; Department of Environmental protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mr. Silvio Albuquerque e Silva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP; Embassy of Brazil in Kenya	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Alexandra Gurgel Valente da Costa (Alternate)	Environment Analyst, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mrs. Maha Maayta	Director of the Policy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, The Hashemite Kingdom of 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	Eastern European Group
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Ms. Margarita Guerra(Alternate)	Ministry of environment- Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
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Names	Affiliation	Major Group
Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Non-governmental organization
Mr. Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray	Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	Business and industry
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Science and Technology
Ms. Zahra Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Children and youth

MESAG Participants

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Dr Eric Davidson	University of Maryland	Western European Group
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Ms Tatiana Kuznetsova	Federal Service for the Supervision of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation	Eastern European Group
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Dr. Amal Mouferrih	Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development	African Group
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MESAG Apologies

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Dr. Nicholas King	Wilderness Foundation Africa	African Group
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