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18 April 2024

**GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary,
April 9 2024**

The Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) met for its tenth virtual call to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Review and feedback on the draft IMAG Mid-stream review document.
2. Review and feedback on the new GEO-7 timeline.
3. Review and approval of the Supporting Services workplan.
4. Any other Business.

On these agenda items the IMAG decided:

- That the Secretariat update IMAG on the closing of the funding gap for GEO-7.
- That the Secretariat include; outreach and awareness raising and the challenge of achieving balance across geographic regions as ongoing challenges in the IMAG Mid-stream review draft document.
- That the Secretariat include the efforts of the IMAG in encouraging the participation of experts from the Eastern European region in the GEO-7 process.
- That the Secretariat employ new strategies to engage experts from the Eastern European region including establishing new partnerships in the region.
- That the Secretariat include the various side events at UNEA-6 and author's meeting under the Outreach and Awareness Raising principle in the IMAG Mid-Stream Review.
- To have a discussion on a youth focused publication at a future date.
- To provide feedback on the draft IMAG Mid-stream review document by 23rd of April 2024, close of business Nairobi time.
- The IMAG bureau will discuss the comments received from IMAG members on the Mid Stream Review Draft document.
- That the Secretariat finalize the IMAG Mid-stream Review draft document for approval at the next IMAG call.
- To approve the Supporting Services Workplan with the understanding that it's an ongoing program and not a project.
- That the Secretariat will update the budget table to reflect in kind contributions and the timeline table on the support for policymaking and knowledge generation to continue through to the end of the GEO project in the Supporting Services workplan.
- That the Secretariat documents the prioritization process in implementing the Supporting Services Workplan.
- That the Secretariat will circulate revised timelines of the GEO-7 process to be discussed in the IMAG 11th call or the IMAG 12th call.
- That the Secretariat updates IMAG on the location of the 3rd Author's meeting.
- That the Secretariat sends out the call for the next IMAG meeting.

Rapporteur	Signature
Ana Julieta Calvo Obando	

Summary of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by the co-chair of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG).

Review and feedback on the draft IMAG mid-stream review document.

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the draft IMAG mid-stream review document. The Secretariat explained that the two main elements that the document looked at was the terms of reference of the IMAG and the [GEO procedures document](#). It was noted that the IMAG had provided advice in conducting the nomination and selection processes, nomination and selection of MESAG and GEO-7 authors, identification of intergovernmental defined needs and terms for its support for capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking and also on the development of a flexible multiyear workplan and time bound budget. Lastly, the IMAG had also interacted with assessment authors and the MESAG through regular meetings.

It was noted that the GEO principles outlined in the draft document had been respected and that challenges related to closing the budget gap had also been included at the end of the document. The Secretariat explained that the current funding gap was at 6 million USD as there were more authors participating in the GEO-7 process than expected. The Secretariat noted that the overall conclusion was that IMAG had fulfilled its mandate and allocated relevant tasks to the Secretariat to help implement the GEO-7 process thus it was considered a positive assessment.

IMAG inquired if the issue of the budget gap would need to be revisited by IMAG. The Secretariat explained that there are resource mobilization strategies that are underway through conversations with various Member States such as China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait and other governments. The Secretariat also noted that the GEO-7 had also received several contributions from the governments of Germany, Netherlands, Canada and Italy and was expecting a significant internal contribution from UNEP core funding and therefore the Secretariat was optimistic that the funding gap will be closed. IMAG also noted the possibility of funding from carbon credits to which the Secretariat replied that they would check on whether credits are eligible to fund programmatic activities. It was agreed that updates on closing of the funding gap and related budget issues will be shared by the Secretariat later.

IMAG noted that the GEO principle on outreach and awareness should include the titles of the side events that happen during the authors meetings to give members a summary of the key points that were discussed at those side events. Outreach and awareness raising was also noted as a key ongoing challenge in the GEO process but also ensuring visibility of outreach and awareness when discussing the supporting services workplan. The Secretariat replied that outreach and awareness raising is a challenge in the GEO process and a strong strategy is needed.

IMAG also noted the low participation of experts from the Eastern Europe (EE) region despite efforts made to contact experts in the region to be involved in the process. The Secretariat acknowledged the efforts made by IMAG members from the region to try and raise awareness of the GEO process in the region noting that the region has been underrepresented historically in not only GEO assessments but IPBES and IPCC assessments as well. A new strategy is required to ensure that various academic networks are informed about the process. IMAG noted that the document should reflect how IMAG has tried to address this particular issue of regional representation from EE region and suggested that more GEO partners in the region would need to be found. The Secretariat noted that the GEO resolution requires a balance among the five UN regions for invited experts and in the First Order Draft peer review process, fewer experts were invited to review due to the small number of EE reviewers compared to the other regions. The Secretariat suggested that at the end of the assessment it would worth finding out whether it is most appropriate to assess the geographic balance based on the number of experts

involved from across the five regions or go back to using the following groupings: developed economies, developing economies and economies in transition.

IMAG inquired on the involvement of the students from universities and whether they would be involved in the entire process of the report as their voices are also important and whether various languages will be used. The Secretariat noted that the GEO fellows program has existed for several years in the GEO process and the fellows are involved in the whole length of the process supporting authors on various tasks and the current cycle of GEO-7 has 43 fellows. It was further noted that in previous GEO cycles there was a [youth focused publication](#) explaining the findings of the GEO to the youth and what it means in their context and given the time frame of producing the GEO is about three years as the [GEO Resolution](#) calls for a GEO after every four years, it will not be feasible to produce the a youth focused report in a year as there will be no time and budget for it. It was agreed that the discussion on a youth focused publication could be an element of discussion for IMAG at a future date.

IMAG welcomed the draft Mid-stream review document noting that it was a good draft that outlined what the IMAG has achieved so far. IMAG suggested that members share their comments and suggestions for the document by 23rd April 2024. This would allow any input provided by IMAG to be considered by the IMAG bureau and thereafter finalization with the Secretariat before the next call where the document will be proposed for approval.

Review and feedback on the new GEO-7 timeline

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the new timeline for GEO-7. The Secretariat explained that when the GEO-7 process began, the co-chairs of IMAG and MESAG requested that the GEO-7 meetings be scheduled in advance to allow for proper planning and there was a schedule of meetings till February 2026 when GEO-7 would be launched. However, during UNEA- 6 it was decided to move the date of UNEA-7 forward from February 2026 to December 2025. This has therefore necessitated the Secretariat to look at the meeting dates in 2025 to find out if the various meeting dates and their locations are still feasible. It was highlighted that negotiation of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and approval meeting that was planned for early 2026 would now move to September 2025 (29 September to 3 October being tentative dates) for the approved SPM and the main report to be presented in December 2025. The third authors' meeting planned for 2-6 September 2024 that includes in person meetings for MESAG and IMAG (3-5 September 2024) would remain as is.

IMAG inquired if the authors would be able to meet the new deadlines given the changes in the timeline. The Secretariat explained that the challenge with the new timeline would perhaps be on the production of the main report as when the SPM would need to be sent out just prior to the SPM negotiation is September, the embargoed main report would need to accompany it to be able to maintain line of sight. However, the Secretariat noted that they would work hard to ensure that the professional layout, the quality control, and the editing is done in a timely fashion so that the report is ready for distribution in preparation for the negotiation of the SPM.

IMAG noted the update on the revised timeline and welcomed the production of the smaller three-month timelines which will indicate the key deliverables and decision process including the production of the main report so that IMAG can see where the challenges are and where guidance or help will be needed. It was agreed that the next IMAG call or the one after would discuss those timelines.

Review and approval of the supporting Services Workplan.

The Secretariat noted that IMAG had provided inputs to the draft Supporting Services workplan and showed how the comments have been incorporated into the workplan. It was noted that some of the comments

received were about delivery of the Supporting Services to local NGOs and faith-based groups and at the sub national level for cities, and that they had now been included noting that the delivery will be dependent on the availability of funding and the capability of the collaborating centers to work at the sub national level. It was highlighted that the Science Policy Seminars will be modular to allow for flexible delivery as this would be based on the needs of the countries or participants that would be involved in those seminars. The Secretariat also noted the learnings and experience of delivering a training on Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) at the national level which in this case was the difficulty of conducting virtual meetings. It was however noted that organising a training with a few attendees flying in from Nairobi and neighbouring countries will not be a highly expensive endeavour.

The Secretariat noted that the main goal in the process of preparing the document is to respect the clause in the GEO Resolution “intergovernmentally defined needs and terms should be identified for the provision of support for capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking”. The Supporting Services survey that was sent out to Member States and various institutions provided a rich collection of information that helped develop the workplan. It was noted that the delivery of the supporting services is an ongoing process that doesn’t end with the production of a GEO but simply switches to the new findings of the latest GEO thus making it a program rather than a project.

IMAG inquired as to why the third workstream on support for policymaking ends in 2026 while other workstreams move into 2027 and beyond. IMAG also inquired if the budget presented in the workplan needs updating to show Norway’s contribution to the Malawi pilot and what the actual budget gap is. The Secretariat noted that the two tables in the workplan would need to be updated to indicate in kind contributions for the Malawi project as the Norwegian government was contributing to the Malawi project through one of their collaborating centres. The Secretariat explained that with regards to resource mobilization, there are continuing conversations with various governments about providing funding for the supporting services and also for the assessment process.

IMAG noted the need to keep the spending and the funding of the actual assessment separate from the Supporting Services and the interim time between when the assessment is completed and the preparatory work required ahead of the next assessment separate from the main assessment itself as there is a deliverable associated with GEO-7 that goes back to request in the GEO resolution. The Secretariat noted that the workplan for the Supporting Services is separate as the funding needed for supporting services is identified separately from the assessment process. It was also highlighted that during the scoping meeting the funding gap was 4 million USD as it was estimated 120 authors would be involved in the process but there are currently 280 authors involved in the process due to the solution focus of the assessment and the current gaps is at 6 million USD. The Secretariat explained that the budget identified in the Supporting Services Workplan is separate from the \$13 USD million for producing the GEO-7 assessment. IMAG noted the need for clarity on the budget for the Supporting Services and the assessment in meetings where GEO is discussed as there seems to be some confusion in some circles.

IMAG also inquired on plan b should there not be 6 million USD additional funds and what would happen if the report is not ready by UNEA-7 to which the Secretariat replied that the current focus is on executing three large meetings planned for September 2024, and the 4th authors meeting in 2025 and the SPM negotiation meeting in 2025 as they are essential to the production of key documents in the GEO-7 process. It was explained that if there is a shortage of funding, it is likely that outreach efforts will be cut down as well as activities such as state of the environment reporting that might be requested in certain countries as the funding will move directly to the assessment process. However, it was noted that there is enough funding to hold those three meetings and that not delivering at UNEA-7 is not an option and adjustments would be made where needed to meet the UNEA-7 target.

IMAG welcomed the document and noted that indeed the Supporting Services is an ongoing program

and to implement the work plan there needs to be a way to document the prioritization process in terms of the needs from Member State for as much the work will be dependent on financial resources there's need to document how we are prioritizing the support to be given in terms of the needs identified. IMAG suggested that the revised GEO-7 timeline and challenges with the timeline be a joint discussion item with the MESAG in the September meeting so that there's clear advice on prioritization.

Any other business

Update on the first IK & LK dialogue: The Secretariat provided a briefing on the first Indigenous Knowledge & Local Knowledge (IK & LK) dialogue of 25-27 March 2024. The GEO-7 Scoping document requested for incorporation of IK & LK and the GEO is making significant efforts to replicate similar dialogues conducted by IPBES as part of the process of gathering Indigenous Knowledge. There are three further planned dialogues, and the initial dialogue was virtual due to funding constraints. The Secretariat noted that there were some technical challenges with the 'Interactio' virtual platform that was used and there have been learnings from that platform. However, the actual obtaining of the Indigenous Knowledge and strategy for incorporation for the knowledge went very well. The next two dialogues of IK & LK would be in person as there have been contributions from the Government of Canada. The Second dialogue is planned to be held in Mexico and the third dialogue is planned for October in Thailand.

UNEA-6 Side events: The Secretariat provided an update on the various side events that GEO was involved in during UNEA-6 to raise awareness on the GEO-7 process. One of the events was 'Tackling the triple Planetary Crisis' which was organized together with a number of science to policy processes such as IPBES, IPCC, IRP and GEO-7. There was also a youth event on the margins of the Youth Environment Assembly that spoke to the engagement of youth in the Science Policy Interface. In that event, the Secretariat highlighted the GEO fellowship programme and the Master's Course that is currently being developed. The Secretariat also presented GEO-7 at a Major Groups and Stakeholders event between the Open-ended CPR and the main UNEA-6 event and this also included Secretariat participation at a dinner hosted by the UNEP Business and Industry Major Group to raise the GEO profile among that major group. Lastly, one of the GEO-7 Assessment Co-chairs participated in the 'What's Cooking Report' side event that was focused on food systems. IMAG inquired as to why some of the UNEA-6 side events were not broadcasted online to which the Secretariat noted that the organisation of side events at UNEA consists of online events and in person only side events. The Secretariat however noted that there were newsletters that summarized those particular side events and those would be circulated to members. IMAG also noted that such events on Outreach and Awareness Raising should be included in the Mid-Stream Review Document.

Organization of the 3rd Author Meeting: The Secretariat provided an update on the third author's meeting that will run from 2-6 September 2024. It was noted that IMAG and MESAG will attend the meeting from the 3-5 September and authors will have the opportunity to provide the advisory bodies with reports on their progress and where guidance is needed. It was highlighted that the location had received a positive security assessment from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and logistical arrangements were ongoing. The Secretariat noted that indeed the situation could change, especially given the security situation and that the meeting rooms in Nairobi have been booked as a backup option. IMAG inquired if the deadline for booking of hotel rooms as had been communicated in a survey was binding to which the Secretariat replied that it was not binding, and that a new deadline for booking of hotel rooms (third week of July) will be communicated. The Secretariat explained that the deadline was to enable the two main hotels to provide special rates to the meeting participants. The special rates include breakfast and lunch for 140 USD a night and the requirement for early bookings is to guarantee the special rates and those

who would book after the July 21st deadline would book using the regular rate of approximately 210 USD a night. IMAG also inquired on the arrangements for Visas if the meeting was then to be held in Nairobi and to which the Secretariat replied that the decision on the location for the meeting will be made by the end of the month to allow enough time for participants to address visa issues. It was also noted that the DSA includes a stipend for incidentals and any travel for visa appointments should be covered by that stipend.

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- IMAG members will send feedback to the Secretariat on the IMAG Mid-Stream Review by 23rd of April 2024, close of business Nairobi time.
- The Secretariat will update IMAG on the location of the 3rd Author's meeting.
- The Secretariat will circulate the summaries of the various side events that GEO-7 participated in.
- The IMAG Bureau will discuss the comments received from IMAG members on the Mid Stream Review Draft document.

List of Participants

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr. Leila Bendifallah	Professor, M'hamed Bougara University, Algeria	Algeria	African Group
Ms. Anna Mampye	Director: State of Environment Information in the Branch, Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	South Africa	African Group
Mrs. Dušica Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Mr. Takashi Otsuka	Director of Knowledge and Communications, Strategic Management Office, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan	Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Ms. Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	Western European Group
Dr. Marek Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Poland	Eastern European Group
Ms. Claudia Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Germany	Western European Group
Dr. Jerome Lugumira Sebadduka	Natural Resources Management Specialist (Soils and Land Use), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Uganda	Uganda	African Group
Eng. Julieta Calvo	National Center for Geoenvironmental Information, Ministry of Environment and Energy; Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr. Thuraya AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA-Oman	Oman	Asia and the Pacific Group
Dr. Salla Rantala	Development Manager, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Finland	Western European Group
Mr. Arthur EIJS	Policy coordinator Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Land Use - Ministry of Infrastructure & water management, department of International Affairs	Netherlands	Western European Group
Mr. Miroslav Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Czechia	Eastern European Group
Ms. Gillian Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Trinidad & Tobago	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr. Toral Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	United States	Western European Group
Ms. Neyra Herrera	Chief of Environmental Statistics; ministry of environment-Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Yi Huang	Professor, School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, China	China	Asia and the Pacific Group
Dr. Lisa Eriksson (Alternate)	Senior Advisor, Transport Analysis, and the Department for Outlook and Policy	Sweden	Western European Group
Ms. Margarita Guerra (Alternate)	Ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern European Group
Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Major Group
Ms. Ruth Viola Spencer	Chair, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas(MEPA) Trust	Antigua and Barbuda	Women
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Egypt	Science and Technology
Dr. Fabian Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Germany	Science and Technology

Apologies

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr. Modibo sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	Mali	African 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	United States	Western European Group
Mrs. Rolenas Baereleo	Principal Officer, Biodiversity and Conservation; Department of Environmental protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mr. Silvio Albuquerque e Silva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP; Embassy of Brazil in Kenya	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Alexandra Gurgel Valente da Costa (Alternate)	Environment Analyst, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mrs. Maha Maayta	Director of the Policy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	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	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group
Mr. Thomas Chali	Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management in Tanzania	Tanzania	African Group
Mr. Kenset Amaury Rosales Riveiro	Coordinator, Information Unit, Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Environment and Resources Natural Resources (MARN)	Guatemala	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr. Carlos Cordero Vega (Alternate)	Director of the Planning Secretariat of the Environment and Energy Sector, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Major Group
Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Norway	Non-governmental organization
Mr. Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray	Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	India	Business and industry
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization
Ms. Zahra Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Jordan	Children and youth
Mr. Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities