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February 22, 2024

GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary, February 15 2024

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

1. Review and feedback on GEO supporting services workplan.
2. IK & LK update and proposed approach for the organization of IK & LK Dialogues.
3. Proposal for a mid-stream review of the GEO-7 process by IMAG.
4. Any other Business.

On these agenda items the IMAG decided:

- To move the details on the results and analysis of the supporting services survey from the supporting services workplan to a supporting document.
- The supporting services workplan should broaden the list of key stakeholders to cover religious leaders and youth as well as scientists and national expert bodies.
- To provide feedback on the Supporting Services workplan by 8th of March 2024, close of business Nairobi time.
- To inform the Secretariat on any financial pledges to support the GEO Supporting Services work and the GEO-7 IK & LK process.
- That the secretariat confirms with the facilitators of the IK & LK dialogues whether IMAG observers are welcome to the first IK & LK dialogues.
- That the Secretariat circulates the list of the nominated Indigenous Peoples that were selected during the call for nominations.
- That the Secretariat updates IMAG over the course of the implementation of the IK & LK dialogues.
- That the Secretariat prepares a document for the Mid-stream review of the IMAG based on the operating principles in the GEO procedures document.
- That the Secretariat shares the draft mid-stream review document of the IMAG to the IMAG bureau before sharing widely with the rest of IMAG.
- The next IMAG meeting will be on 19 March 2024.

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 of GEO supporting services workplan.

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the supporting services workplan. The Secretariat explained that the workplan delves into how GEO can provide supporting services in the areas of capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking. The main elements of capacity building would focus on the 'training of trainers' and ensuring that the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) Methodology training is well embedded to ensure different experts around the world can conduct their own integrated environmental assessments or State of the Environment and Outlook reports. The expectation is to have up to ten countries conduct their own IEAs over the next three years with Malawi being one of the first efforts in this area. In addition, the Secretariat also mentioned that a master's level education course made up of 11 modules is being piloted by UNEP, together with Peking University, in early March with several experts in the GEO process participating. The initial pilot will be delivered to the GEO fellows and some students from Peking University who will then provide feedback to improve the course material.

On Knowledge generation, it was noted that the Ad hoc Global Assessments Dialogue (AGAD) brings different assessment processes together, especially UN led assessment processes, to try and find synergies across the different assessments. The Secretariat highlighted the plan to conduct another ten AGAD discussions to ensure collaborative links across the different assessment processes such as the IPCC, GEO, IRP etc. The Secretariat also noted the initiation of a program to help countries produce National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which are mandated under the UNFCCC. The GEO process, through the collaborating centres would develop new guidance and tools for developing national adaptation plans.

On support for policymaking, a set of seminar materials on how to incorporate science into policy decision making would be developed through GEO collaborating centres with the expectation of delivering ten of these science to policy seminars over the next three years. These science to policy seminars will ideally be delivered upon invitation from a Member State, with sufficient participation of government officials, to try and explain the GEO scientific findings in the policy context of that country. The overall budget for the supporting services work plan was about \$2.66 million.

IMAG inquired if there will be scope to have training with religious leaders and youth for capacity building to integrate into their community work and if the stakeholders could be broadened to include scientists and national expert bodies as they play a vital role in translating and interpreting the messages of global assessments into their national contexts, and in some cases even have institutional mandates to provide policy advice. The Secretariat explained that capacity building efforts are focused on building capacities for countries to conduct their own integrated environmental assessments. However, IMAG noted that capacity building should go beyond developing capacity to undertake integrated environmental assessments at national and regional levels. It should also be about better understanding the scientific analysis contained in the assessments and using that information to develop policies. In that respect major groups such as religious leaders and other players such as scientists and national expert bodies could be within the scope of the workplan as they have a role in knowledge creation and in the translation of scientific data into actual policy proposals.

IMAG also inquired as to how regional partners are included in the training seminars and the Secretariat mentioned that the supporting services would be delivered by partners such as the GEO collaborating centres and UNEP regional offices. IMAG also noted that countries are aware of the major environmental challenges that they are facing, therefore, to enhance the potential impact of the science to policy seminars, the content should be tailored to the local context and focused on the solutions and policy responses. The Secretariat replied that the GEO-7 is developing solution pathways and the seminars to be created will focus more on the solutions and will be adapted to the regional context or the national context where the seminar is delivered.

IMAG noted that the initial discussion on the supporting services workplan is to allow for a first round of feedback and IMAG members were welcomed to provide written comments back to the Secretariat by 8th March close of business Nairobi time. IMAG members were also welcomed to make any financial pledges to contribute to the supporting services work. The Secretariat will continue to finalise the document for adoption in the next IMAG meeting.

IK & LK update and proposed approach for the organization of IK & LK Dialogues

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the status of the IK & LK work in GEO-7. The Secretariat explained that different task force members, acting as lead authors in the process, and the upcoming dialogues with Indigenous knowledge holders, would provide the foundation for the IK & LK analysis in GEO-7. A call for nomination of Indigenous knowledge holders was issued in mid-December 2023 and from this call 83 Indigenous knowledge holders expressed interest to participate in the dialogues. The first dialogue is likely to be virtual towards the later part of March (26th to the 28th) with about 30 participants while the second dialogue could be in person in Mexico. The first two dialogues will be used to incorporate IK and LK into the GEO-7 second order draft while the third dialogue, planned for October 2024 will look at any missing elements of the Indigenous knowledge and Local Knowledge narrative that should be included in the report. The fourth and final dialogue will happen at the end of the GEO-7 process and will focus on giving back to the IK & LK community. The Secretariat explained that another important element of the IK & LK work prescribed in the IPBES methodology would be to issue a call for submissions of Indigenous knowledge and process those submissions so that they can be incorporated as new knowledge into GEO-7. The process would start in May and Indigenous Peoples would be welcomed to make those submissions. The Secretariat also noted that resource mobilization efforts to fund the IK & LK work were still ongoing.

IMAG inquired if it would be possible for observers from the IMAG to attend the IK & LK dialogue to which the Secretariat replied that they would have to first speak to the facilitators who will be conducting the dialogue to see if observers are welcome, since the process of gathering Indigenous knowledge is a collaborative process of information and knowledge sharing. IMAG also emphasized the limitations of virtual meetings which could hamper the dialogues and it was noted that while face to face meetings are better, budget restrictions have necessitated a virtual meeting. The Secretariat also mentioned that IPBES did conduct virtual dialogues during the pandemic, and they were taking lessons learnt from IPBES facilitators. IMAG inquired if the new dates for the March dialogue would change the logistics for the meeting and noted that there is a possibility of more money to support the IK & LK work. The Secretariat welcomed the possibility of more funds to support the IK & LK work and noted the new dates for the March dialogue would allow for more time to organize the logistics especially for simultaneous interpretation for the sessions.

IMAG inquired about the role of local knowledge holders and their involvement in the dialogues to which the Secretariat replied that some guidance had been provided on collecting Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge separately as Indigenous knowledge holders have been involved in these processes for a longer time. Both groups would participate in the dialogues, but they would have their own breakout groups.

The IMAG co-chair welcomed the update on the IK & LK work and reminded members that their role is to oversee that sufficient attention is paid to the issue of Indigenous knowledge and that efforts are undertaken to incorporate it into the GEO-7 process. IMAG noted that an observer role for the IMAG in the dialogues would be useful and that the Secretariat should look into it.

Proposal for a mid-stream review of the GEO-7 process by the IMAG.

The IMAG co-chair introduced the proposal for a mid-stream review of the GEO-7 process by IMAG, noting that it would be important to take stock of the progress IMAG has made in their terms of reference as at the end of the GEO-7 process, they would need to validate the process. The co-chair noted that the Secretariat will prepare a brief document on what IMAG has achieved and IMAG members were welcomed to provide feedback on specific elements or priorities that the Secretariat should focus on. It was further noted that the IMAG Bureau would be given a chance to review the draft and make sure that the reports of the IMAG meetings are added to the document before submission for discussion in IMAG.

The Secretariat noted that IMAG could potentially consider the GEO operational principles that were outlined in the [GEO Procedures document](#) that was approved in September 2022.

IMAG welcomed the proposal and noted that the mid-stream review document should indeed focus on the GEO principles while also identifying the main outputs for IMAG and what IMAG would need to focus on in the second half of the process. IMAG suggested that members share their suggestions for the mid-stream review exercise and elements to be included in that document by 23rd February 2024. This would allow any input provided by IMAG to be considered by the Secretariat while preparing the document for IMAG's discussion in the next call.

Any other business

Update on GEO-7 Second Author Meeting: The Secretariat provided a briefing on the second author's meeting that took place in Vienna from 15-19 January 2024. The meeting was attended by 205 authors and the author teams worked to produce the first order draft. It was noted that the Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge task force, the Climate Change and Adaptation task group as well as the Behavioral Social and Cultural task group had face to face meetings with the authors for the first time and there were various collaborative meetings on how to integrate these elements into their drafts.

Update on status of FOD and peer review process: The Secretariat provided an update on the status of the first order drafts for the expert peer review process. It was mentioned that author teams worked with the Secretariat to prepare their chapters for upload to the GEO READ platform for the review. 234 reviewers were selected from the pool of review applications to review the First Order Draft based on expertise, geographic and gender balance. UNEP internal reviewers as well as MESAG members were also invited to conduct a technical review totaling up the reviewers for the First Order Draft to above 300. The review started on the 12th of February and will run to the 31st of March 2024.

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 third authors meeting will be crucial in ensuring the 'how' part of the report ends up in the 2nd order draft. The meeting is likely to be held in the Dead Sea area of Jordan, but the Secretariat noted that they had booked rooms in the UN Nairobi campus as a backup should the security situation change. IMAG inquired if the author meeting will have a hybrid option to which the Secretariat replied that all the meetings have hybrid facilities to ensure virtual participation. IMAG inquired if there is a cut-off date for the decision on where the meeting will be to which the Secretariat replied that mid-May would be the likely cutoff date for that decision.

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- IMAG members will send feedback to the Secretariat on the Supporting Services workplan by 8th of March 2024, close of business Nairobi time.
- IMAG members will inform the Secretariat on any financial pledges to support the GEO Supporting Services and the GEO-7 IK & LK process.
- The Secretariat will confirm with the facilitators of the IK & LK dialogues whether IMAG members are welcome as observers to the dialogues.
- The Secretariat will circulate the list of the nominated Indigenous Peoples selected during the call for nominations.
- The Secretariat will prepare a document for the Mid-stream review of the IMAG to share with the IMAG bureau before sharing widely with the rest of IMAG.

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
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. 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
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
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
Mr. Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities

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
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. Alexandra Gurgel Valente da Costa (Alternate)	Environment Analyst, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Ms. Neyra Herrera	Chief of Environmental Statistics; ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	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
Ms. Claudia Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Germany	Western European Group
Ms. Gillian Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Trinidad & Tobago	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
Ms. Margarita Guerra (Alternate)	Ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	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
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Egypt	Science and Technology
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization
Dr. Fabian Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Germany	Science and Technology
Ms. Zahra Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Jordan	Children and youth