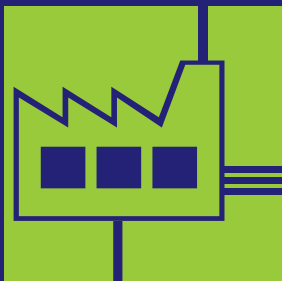
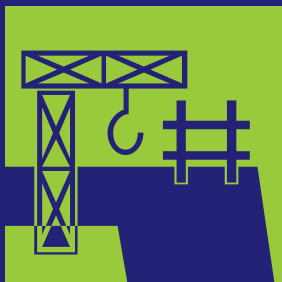
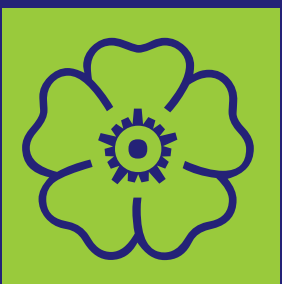
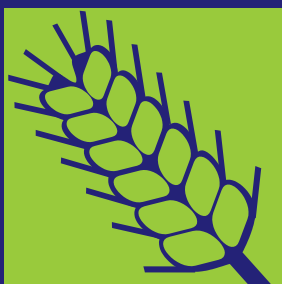
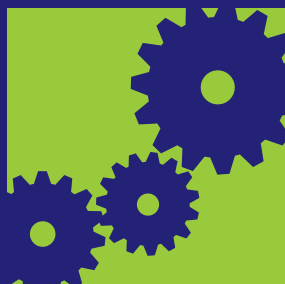


Findings of the GEO-4 Self Assessment Survey



IUCN
The World Conservation Union



FINDINGS *of the*
GEO-4 SELF ASSESSMENT SURVEY

IUCN
The World Conservation Union



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We sincerely hope the results of the self assessment will contribute to strengthening current and future GEO processes and more broadly UNEP's work in general.

Nancy MacPherson, Special Adviser
IUCN Performance Assessment

Courtney L. Malloy and Harold N. Urman
Vital Research, LLC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the commitment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to ongoing monitoring and evaluating of the effectiveness and influence of its work, a self assessment process was commissioned by the team responsible for the fourth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4) in 2005 for the purpose of capturing the lessons from participants of the GEO-4 process for the ongoing management of GEO and the future planning of GEO assessment processes and products.

Managed and implemented by the IUCN Performance Assessment Adviser with Vital Research LLC, a specialist survey firm, the self assessment process sought to:

1. Obtain feedback from experts, partners and stakeholders on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and value added of the GEO-4 assessment process
2. Provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on:
 - Performance and functioning of the Working Group process
 - The extent to which objectives were met and results achieved
 - Management and leadership of the GEO-4 process
 - Motivation and satisfaction of GEO-4 participants
 - Value added of GEO-4

Approximately half of the estimated total participants in the Working Groups responded to the self assessment survey and interviews over a period of one and a half years. Representative responses were obtained from all UNEP's regions and GEO-4 Working Groups. In total 167 responses were collected. The data from the self assessment show a consistent pattern of issues and themes over time pertaining to both the operational management of the GEO-4 process and to the longer term value and benefits of GEO-4.

Key Findings and Main Messages

- The self assessment revealed many positive attributes of the GEO-4 process, and a number of key areas in which improvements are needed.
- The majority of participants found the GEO-4 process effective in delivering a high quality, independent, credible, scientifically based, policy relevant product. They were generally satisfied with their working group experience and reported that the GEO-4 experience had enriched their professional work and put them in a stronger position to support the work of UNEP. A strong majority indicated that GEO-4 was worth their time and effort and that they would be willing to contribute their time and expertise to GEO again. More than half indicate that the GEO-4 experience has led to other collaborations and partnerships.
- A third of participants reported that GEO performs better than other assessment processes because of such factors as good methodologies, interdisciplinary team work and diverse exchanges across boundaries. Many reported GEO to be more cost effective than other large assessment processes despite some inefficiencies in managing the process. A key finding on the value added of GEO was that it has spawned many assessments and products at regional, national and cities level. No other global assessment process has achieved this level of engagement and utility and ripple effect.
- At the same time, participants called for significant improvements in the clarity, expectations, roles and responsibilities in managing the process and in engaging other parts of UNEP and key partners and policy audiences in the private sector and development community.

Main Messages

- GEO is a credible, scientifically based product with significant reach across regions largely because of the strength, breadth and motivation of its stakeholder process.
- Most participants are satisfied and motivated to be part of the GEO-4 process and are willing to contribute their time and expertise to future GEO processes.
- The catalytic and value added effect that GEO has had on individuals and institutions is significant and should not be underestimated.
- The platform for capacity building created through GEO-4 has a real and potentially higher value and than is currently recognized or utilized by UNEP.
- The GEO-4 process has expanded and strengthened the constituency not only for assessment but for the work of UNEP itself.
- Some participants are frustrated by internal inefficiencies in the management and administration of the GEO-4 process.
- The GEO process can be significantly improved and strengthened by paying greater attention to the clarity of roles, responsibilities, intended results and target audiences and more efficient cross organizational management of the process.
- The policy, private sector and development aspects of GEO need special attention and significant strengthening.
- The self assessment observations provide the GEO-4 Team with a rich and compelling basis to re-examine and strengthen the GEO model, its role and purpose, structure, management and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

This Report presents a summary of the findings of a self assessment survey of the participants of the fourth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4). Commissioned by the GEO-4 Team in 2005 the survey was managed and implemented by the IUCN Performance Assessment Adviser with Vital Research LLC, a specialist survey firm.

The findings of this Survey are intended to feed into the GEO management process for the planning of future GEO processes and products and in general to the work of the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

The objectives of the Survey were to:

1. Obtain feedback from experts, partners and stakeholders on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the GEO-4 assessment process.
2. Provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on:
 - The performance and functioning of the Working Group process
 - The extent to which objectives were met and results achieved
 - The management and leadership of the GEO-4 process
 - The motivation and satisfaction of GEO-4 participants
 - The value added of GEO-4.
3. Provide suggestions to the GEO-4 management team and DEWA for future GEO processes and products.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

The Survey was commissioned by the GEO-4 Team in the Division of Early Warning and Assessment of UNEP. Managed by the IUCN Performance Assessment Adviser and implemented with Vital Research LLC, a firm specializing in surveys and research, the survey was designed through a consultative process with the GEO-4 Team to best determine the categories of feedback that would be most useful. The Head of the GEO-4 Team approved the final survey questions and format.

The survey questions were drawn from a sample of best practice surveys on stakeholder feedback¹, customer satisfaction surveys, and on the content of the previous GEO User Study² conducted by Universal Management Group and the SWOT Analysis of GEO³.

Vital Research provided overall advice to the Performance Assessment Adviser on the design of the Survey, hosted the confidential Survey online and provided data management, data analysis and reporting support.

¹ GlobeScan and Mackenzie 2005. Oxfam Stakeholder Survey.

² UNEP (2004). *Global Environment Outlook: User Profile and Impact Study*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. <http://new.unep.org/GEO-UserProfileandImpactStudy.pdf>

³ UNEP (2004). *Global Environment Outlook (GEO). SWOT Analysis and Evaluation of the GEO-3 Process from the Perspective of GEO Collaborating Centres*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. <http://www.unep.org/GEO/pdfs/SWOT.pdf>

Data Collection

Data were collected between September 2006 and December 2007. Using the survey questions in Annex 1 multiple means were used to provide participants with opportunities to provide feedback. An invitation email was sent to all participants with an electronic questionnaire and link to an online survey hosted by Vital Research, LLC. Participants were invited to fill out the survey online or return a Word file document. Interviews were held at key GEO events such as the Authors meeting in Cairo (November 2006) and the Multi stakeholder meeting in Nairobi (September 2007) and telephone interviews were conducted. The objective of the data collection was to make the means of providing feedback as efficient and easy as possible for participants while maintaining a standard set of questions.

There were ten Working Groups, one for each chapter, and three cross cutting Working Groups. Responses were obtained from 167 participants in the Working Groups largely from Working Group members and Collaborating Organizations representatives.

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

This Report presents a summary of the overall findings for all participants of all Working Groups for each survey item of the questionnaire's nine sections (see Annex 1 for survey questionnaire). Selected results by Working Group are provided in the findings where they vary significantly or where they are of specific interest.

FINDING 1 - PARTICIPANT PROFILE INFORMATION

Findings

Profile of respondents

- Responses were representative of all Working Groups and all GEO Regions
- Gender balance – 60.9% male and 39.1% female

Figure 1: Profile of respondents by Working Group

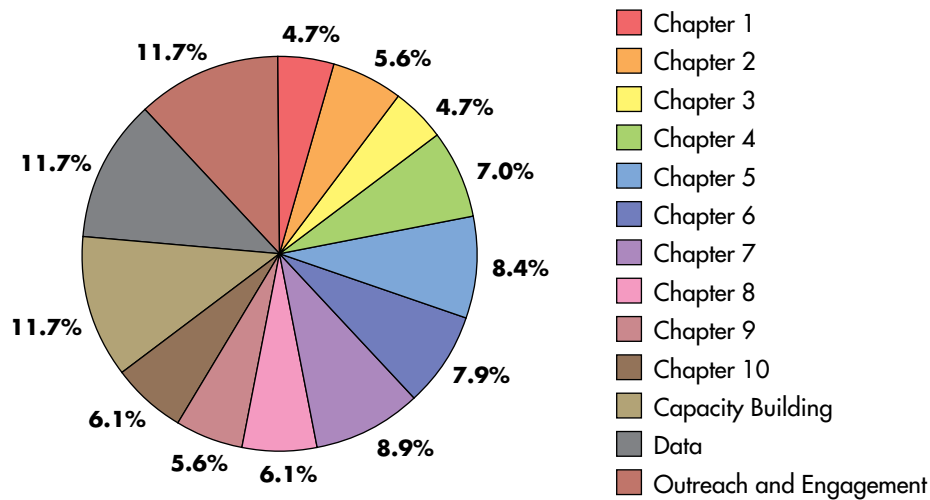


Figure 2: Profile of respondents by region

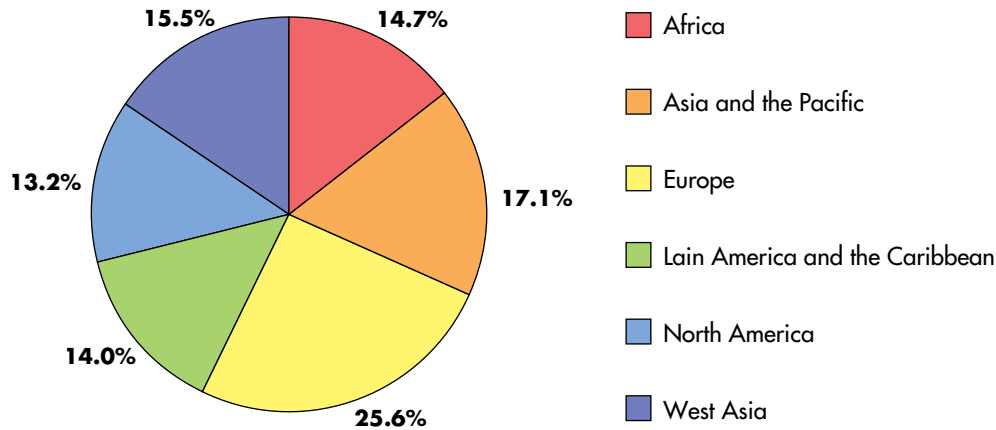
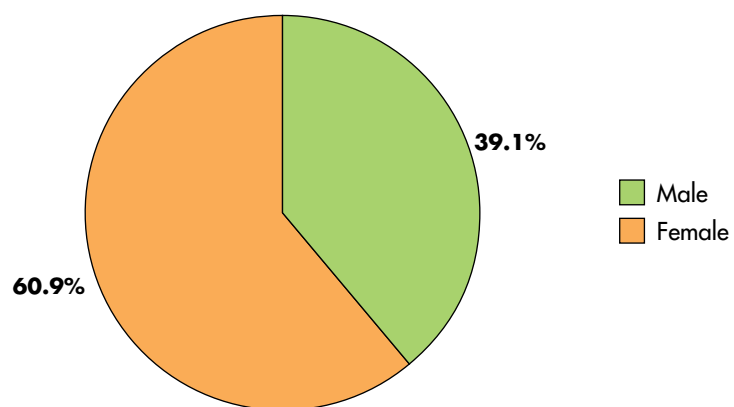


Figure 3: Profile of respondents by gender



FINDING 2 - FAMILIARITY OF RESPONDENTS WITH UNEP AND GEO

Participants were asked how familiar they were with UNEP's mandate, Programme and various GEO reports. The purpose of the set of questions was to see whether the GEO process was engaging participants outside of the normal reach of UNEP programming. They were also asked how much they used the GEO reports before joining GEO-4, and to describe their main purpose in joining the GEO-4 process.

Findings

Familiarity with GEO and with UNEP

- ✓ Most participants are very or somewhat familiar with UNEP's mandate and its Programme.
- ✓ Almost two-thirds were very or somewhat familiar with GEO before they became involved in GEO-4.
- ✓ Fifty percent had used the main GEO report previously, while slightly fewer participants had used the Year Book Series.

Main purpose in joining GEO-4

- Interact, network, share knowledge and experience with peers
- Influence global policy making - help to translate science into policy relevant results
- Contribute specific expertise to an important process and product
- Contribute to the current state of knowledge on trends and environmental issues
- Highlight new emerging issues
- Improve the delivery, outreach and impact of GEO
- Gain experience in assessment and learn in an interdisciplinary context
- As a Collaborating Centre, UNEP staff, lead author, representing an organization
- Invitation and request to join

Main Uses of GEO Reports prior to joining GEO

Research and academia

- Data references for research
- Comparative studies, scenarios
- Research and justifying research funding
- Academic work – teaching, lectures, presentations
- Authoritative reference

Policy development, legislation, lobbying

- Developing policy at global and regional level
- Lobbying governments for change
- Preparing policy briefs
- Reviewing legislation
- Needs assessments for science-policy linkages

Regional assessments, state of environment reporting

- Undertaking regional assessments and state of environment reporting at various levels.

Information, awareness raising

- Broad overview of environmental issues, status and trends
- Awareness raising activities
- Writing articles and use in media

Figure 4: Familiarity with UNEP's mandate, the GEO report and the GEO Year Book

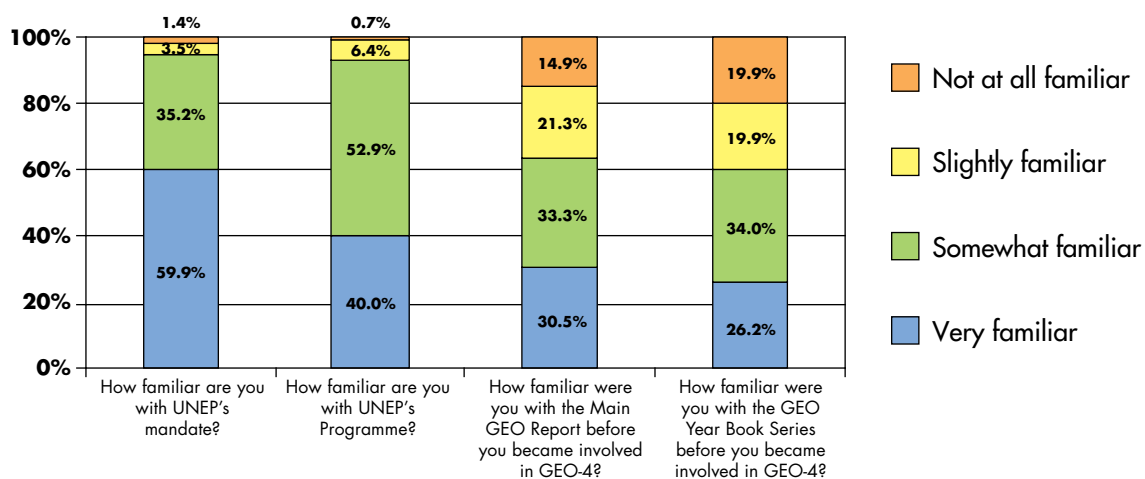
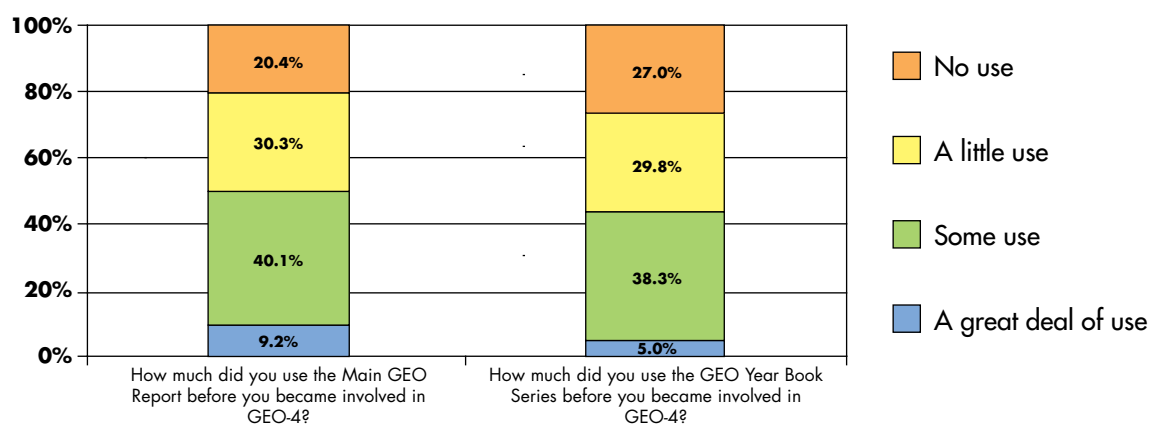


Figure 5: Use of Previous GEO Reports



FINDING 3 - CLARITY OF PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUPS

Participants were asked a set of questions on the clarity of purpose of their Working Groups related to the mandate, results, roles and responsibilities, level of agreement, and time commitment needed to fulfil their Working Group responsibilities.

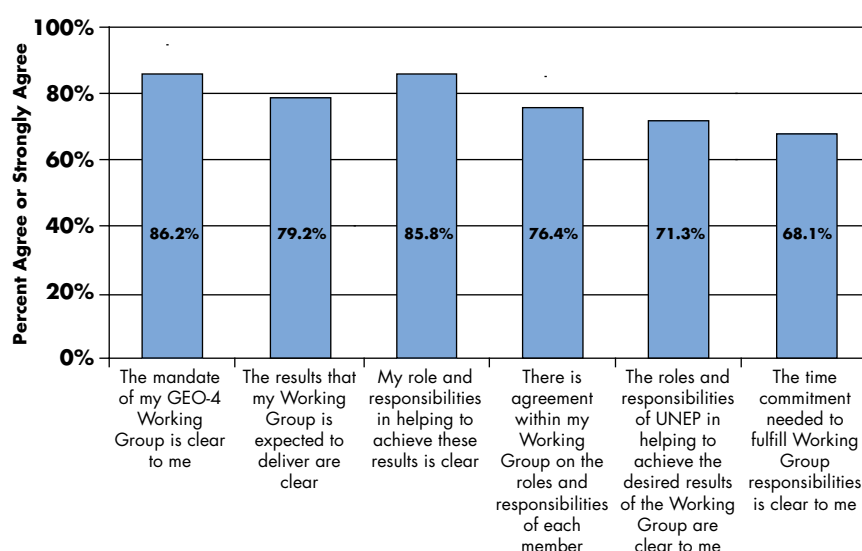
Findings

- ✓ The mandate, results and roles and responsibilities of Working Groups were clear to the majority of participants
- ✓ The specific roles and responsibilities of individual Working Group members and of UNEP in achieving the desired results were slightly less clear to all.
- ✓ The time commitment needed to fulfill responsibilities was not clear to about a third of participants.

Suggestions to improve clarity

- Clearer and more consistent purpose and expectations from UNEP – do not keep changing the goal posts on what is expected, keep the process stable.
- Clarify in writing what is expected of participants.
- Orient participants who are new to GEO – provide training in areas new to some participants such as scenarios.
- Resolve the expectations of participants and tensions in Working Group with respect to the need for both a policy document and scientific assessment.
- Clarify the role of GEO fellows – they came in half way through the process and many were not sure how best to contribute to the process.
- Develop a clearer workplan and working process – set out clearly who is in charge, what deliverables are expected, by when, and whose responsibility.
- Clarify and formalize the role of experts in the process.
- Clarify the role of UNEP staff in coordination, support and delivery of outputs.

Figure 6: Clarity of Purpose of Working Groups



FINDING 4 - SELECTION, MEMBERSHIP AND EXPERTISE OF WORKING GROUPS

Participants were asked a series of questions related to the selection of Working Group members, and their composition and expertise.

Findings

- ✓ A strong majority reported their Working Groups to be based on merit, geographically and gender balanced, and including young professionals.
- ✓ A strong majority of participants reported their Working Group members to be knowledgeable, experienced, respected leaders, collaborative and engaged in the group's work.
- ✓ Participants were less positive that the selection of their Working Group members was transparent.
- ✓ Participants were also less positive that their Group had the right balance of policy and science, and environment and development expertise.
- ✓ Almost 40% reported missing critical expertise in their Working Groups in the following areas:
 - Policy development and implementation
 - Scenarios
 - Human development, poverty, social sciences
 - Governance and law
 - Business, macro economics, finance, trade and trade policy
 - Environmental education
 - Communication, information technology, graph design
 - Climate change, natural disasters
 - Specific expertise in - soil biology, aquaculture, freshwater and marine sciences, chemical pollution and the atmosphere.

Main areas of suggestions for improving the Expertise of Working Groups

- Strengthen the selection process for experts
- Make sure they are known leaders in the field – published in peer reviewed journals, may have to pay for inputs from the best
- Recruit earlier to ensure you get the best
- Ensure experts are based on merit, scientific soundness and are willing to work in groups and contribute between meetings
- Wider recruitment and advertising – not a 'closed club'
- Go beyond collaborating centres for recruiting experts, engage centres of expertise and individuals as well as establish independent technical advisory groups
- Ensure fresh thinking – young professionals and 'out of the box' thinking
- Learn from other processes. Examples of good selection of experts are the processes for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report, and the Human Development Report
- Ensure better balance of policy, sciences (social and natural), academic and development expertise
- Ensure policy and development expertise earlier in the process so that products are well designed for intended users
- Ensure regional balance in all working groups – some were uneven
- Ensure regional specific expertise – regional experts
- Include cultural experts who can advise on other ways of viewing and expressing knowledge and science to reach a broader audience – non western thinking, indigenous peoples and knowledge
- Clarify the role of consultants in relation to experts and Working Group members
- Gender balance could have been better in some groups
- UNEP should build an expert data base globally and regionally – make this available to regions and collaborating centres
- Manage the expertise better for optimal benefit

- Ensure better integration of expertise
- Establish better mechanisms to capture and incorporate ideas that are provided

Figure 7: Respondents about the selection, membership and gender balance in their Working Group

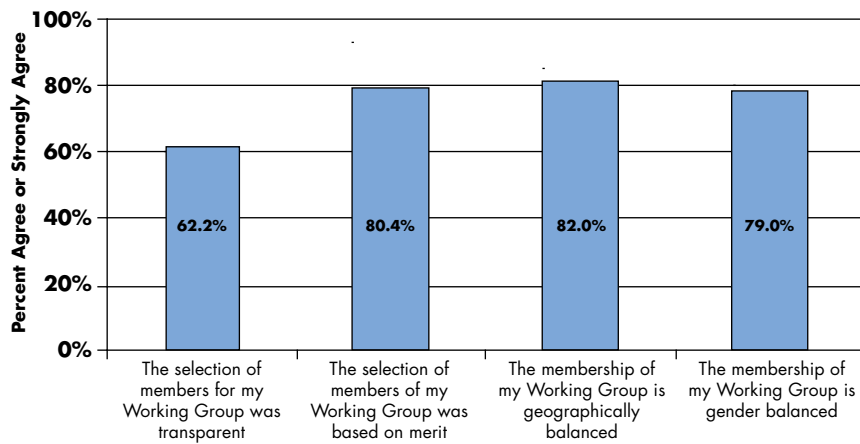


Figure 8: Respondents about the balance of expertise in their Working Group

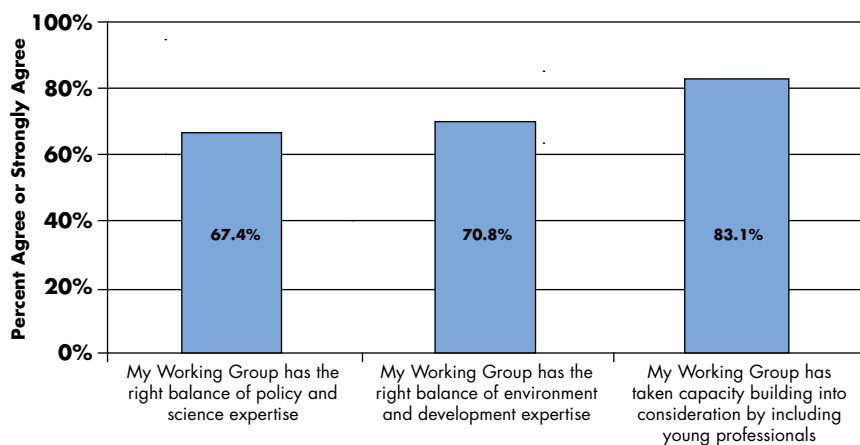


Figure 9: Respondents about the expertise of their fellow Working Group members

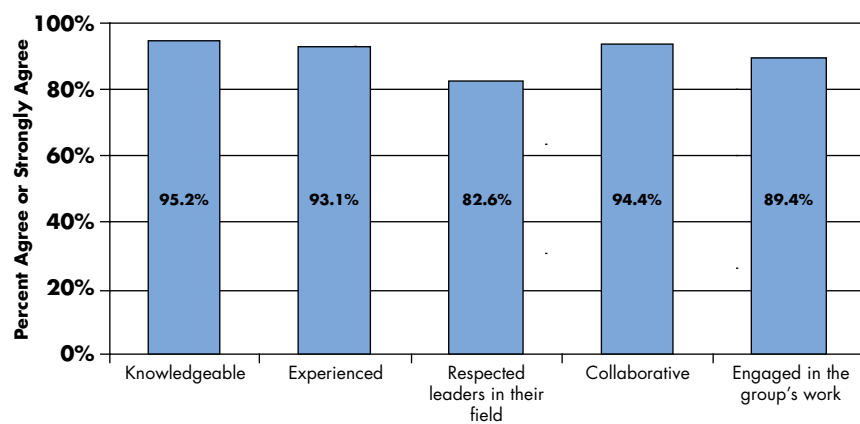
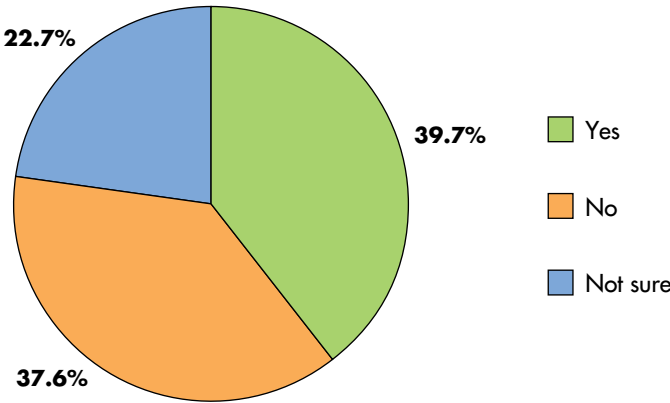


Figure 10: Respondents about any missing expertise in their Working Group



FINDING 5 - EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Participants were asked a series of questions focused on how well their Working Group or Chapter Writing Group planned and managed its work, how transparent and efficient the work processes were, and how effectively the group developed consensus, resolved conflict and followed through on commitments.

Participants were asked for suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the Working Group or Chapter Writing Group process and products.

Findings

- ✓ Overall the majority of participants agreed that:
 - Each Working Group was effective in achieving its results
 - Products were of high quality – independent, credible, scientifically based, policy relevant
 - Each Working Group fulfilled their Terms of Reference
- ✓ Although participants were overall positive, many suggestions indicate room for improvement in:
 - Clearer results, expectations, roles, responsibilities, authority
 - Improvement in the model itself
 - Design of the process
 - Management of the process – orientation and preparation, managing work flow efficiently and transparently, improved information management, communication, exchange and interaction, better time management
 - Quality assurance, transparency
 - Leadership
 - Cross collaboration among and between groups, and within UNEP
 - Clearer role of UNEP
 - Funding and financial arrangements

Suggestions for Improving Effectiveness of Working Groups Products and Process

Clearer results, expectations, roles, responsibilities and authority

- Clearer results, outputs and products, plus an agreed multi-year schedule
- Clearer roles and responsibilities for delivering results, clarify authority and level of independence of the Working Groups and Chapter Lead Authors, and role of UNEP
- Stakeholders to contribute to identifying target audience and users; these need to be widely agreed

Improve/rethink the model

- Rethink whether GEO should be a scientific assessment – or developed fully to the stage of policy and practice implications – now it is somewhere in between
- The scientific assessment product and the policy-practice recommendations (now the Summary for Decision Makers) are two different products that require different authors, skills and participants
- Consider whether an intergovernmental process is necessary – i.e. an approval process like the IPCC, or consultation procedure such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. If retained, the process needs a neutral Chair, the UNEP Chief Scientist, for example
- UNEP should be firmly in control of the process, clear expectations, rules and procedures for country governments known in advance
- Chapter Lead Authors and Working Groups should complete their assessment summary, and a separate short product should be written for policy makers by policy specialists. Scientists should not attempt to write policy documents

- Examine the IPCC, MA, and the United States' National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental assessments and other assessment processes for lessons and good practices

Design of the process

- Stronger conceptual and analytical underpinning - ground the products / work better in theory and concept from the start
- Greater conceptual clarity on concept of 'interlinkages' in theory and practice, work from an integrated thematic approach from the beginning for all chapters
- Develop the Human Wellbeing guiding paper early to frame the development challenges, then feed into the other groups, ensure cross fertilization
- Ensure balance in policy, science, and environment / development practice
- Ensure major regions are well represented – Asia-Pacific underrepresented this time
- Support innovative thinking 'outside the box', across disciplines and cultures
- Open the process of selecting target users for GEO to better reflect environment and development action needed (users, those who must take action at all levels)
- Broaden the range of collaborating centres to include more policy and development centres to develop the second stage policy product
- Work closely with other UNEP Divisions and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate the implementation plan – linking environment and development policy and programmatic action
- Provide earlier support for GEO fellows and integrate them into the process
- Size of groups – some too big, some too small – think about optimal size

Orientation and preparation

- Hold the multi-stakeholder meetings long before the Working Group begins its efforts to better inform and frame the issues
- Carry out an orientation session for new GEO participants early, especially for GEO Fellows
- Ensure all participants are clear on target audiences / intended users from the start
- Ensure cross working group communication from an early start
- Sequence better the human wellbeing framework to feed into other chapters
- Send out updates just before meetings to keep people focused and connected to the process

Management of the process

- Structure, level of management support and funding needs to be well established for a multi-year process

Managing work flow efficiently and transparency

- Streamline the process, simpler, more cost effective, clearer expectations
- Fewer large meetings,
- More efficient work processes and logistical support
- Better time management
- Better use of technology
- Greater transparency in decision making and allocation of resources

Improved information management, communication, flow of information, exchange and interaction

- Better access to information throughout the process – sharing of key documents, access to academic journals
- Much improved communication between sessions, among and between groups, virtual meetings, chat forums, form network of GEO Working Group members
- Bi monthly update to all groups and participants
- Communication from the High Level Consultative group shared with groups. The High Level Consultative group seemed disconnected from the process except for senior UNEP staff
- Better linkages between global and regional teams, visits to regional institutes
- Improved use of communication technology – internet, web interactive work spaces for ongoing exchange and accessing previous exchanges,
- Better time management, workflow management
- Clearer deadlines, more time for production of products

- Set priorities from the start, change only if absolutely necessary, ensure a logical flow through the process
- Not all group members need to have equal participation throughout – have a core group, sequence other inputs as appropriate

Quality review and transparency

- Improve the peer review process - more rigorous checking of scientific analysis and data
- Condense and improve the scientific and statistics related work
- Improve transparency of decision making, consensus and conflict resolution
- Reduce the influence of UNEP in the report writing and rewriting

Leadership, vision

- Strengthen the vision and leadership from all who play a leadership role such as UNEP, Chapter Lead Authors, and Chairs of Working Groups
- Stronger leadership on integrating multiple perspectives

Cross collaboration – among and between groups, within UNEP and the UN

- Ensure more collaboration and communication between groups
- Ensure that UNEP engages other UNEP Divisions in GEO, particularly the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), the Division for Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC), Division of Global Environment Facility (DGEF), and with UNDP on development

Outreach

- Clarify the role and results expected of outreach from the beginning
- Ensure an agreed budget for outreach strategy and products, and the participation of the UNEP communications team

Role of UNEP

- Ensure that the UNEP GEO implementation schedule and budget is clear and managed to time and budget to avoid disruption, loss of momentum and lack of motivation of participants
- Ensure stronger vision, leadership, orientation to and moderation of the process from UNEP – keep a firm hand on the process, Chair the meetings, and resolve conflicts
- Strive to ensure that UNEP involvement is perceived as supportive and not political interference – be clear on roles
- Some participants felt that political interference threw the process off track, and the lack of UNEP support at times jeopardized the quality and delivery of products
- New UNEP management and reorganization resulted in uncertainty for the GEO-4 process and budget – this was disruptive and not helpful to the process and added considerable stress and uncertainty for managers, collaborating centre partners and participants in the process. Avoid this in the future – respect commitments that are made and follow through with participants
- Earlier and more efficient management of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between institutions is needed to ensure clarity of expectations around deliverables and timely delivery of work
- Ensure better coordination, engagement and cross collaboration with key UNEP Divisions such as the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), the Division for Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC), the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), and the Division of Public Information (DCPI)

Funding

- Need a predictable multi-year budget for the whole process – the stop / start delays in funding proved to be destabilizing for partner institutions and individuals who need a firm commitment to allocate time and people. This is also not motivating for participants and managers
- Consider paying experts and Chapter Lead Authors to ensure quality and commitment to delivery
- Give Working Groups some flexible resources – empower them to communicate and work between sessions

- The Outreach Working Group was an excellent initiative that was under-utilized and under- resourced. In future this group needs to know the expected results and budget for outreach strategy and communication products if they are to advise appropriately

Figure 11: Respondents about the effectiveness of their Working Group

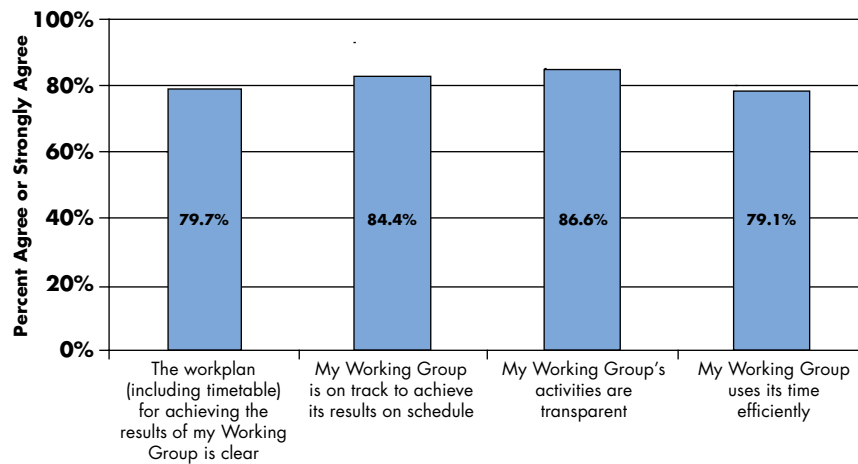


Figure 12: Respondents about consensus building and conflict resolution in their Working Group

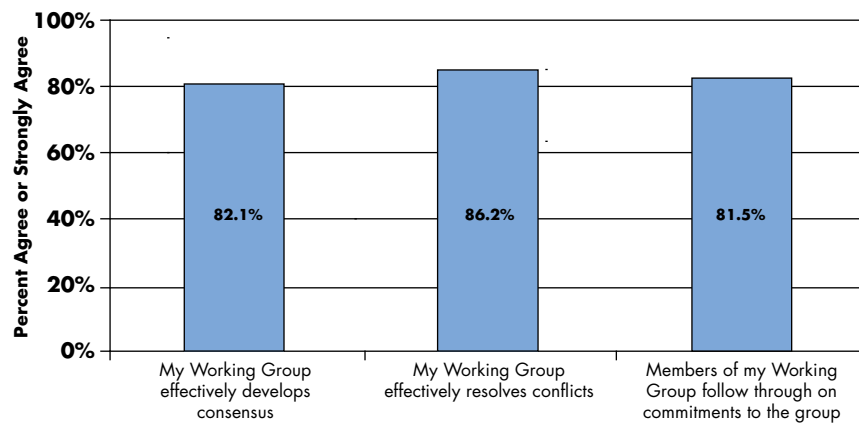


Figure 13: Respondents about the quality of products delivered by their Working Group

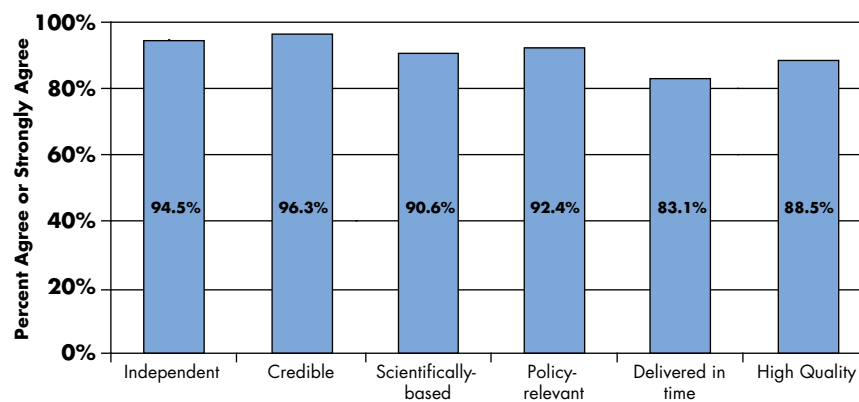


Figure 14: Respondents about effectively achieving the tasks of their Working Group

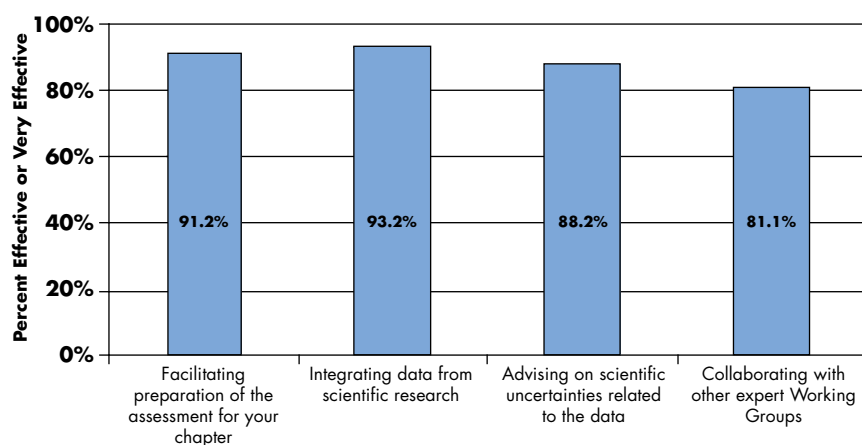


Figure 15: Respondents about effectively achieving the tasks of their Working Group (continued)

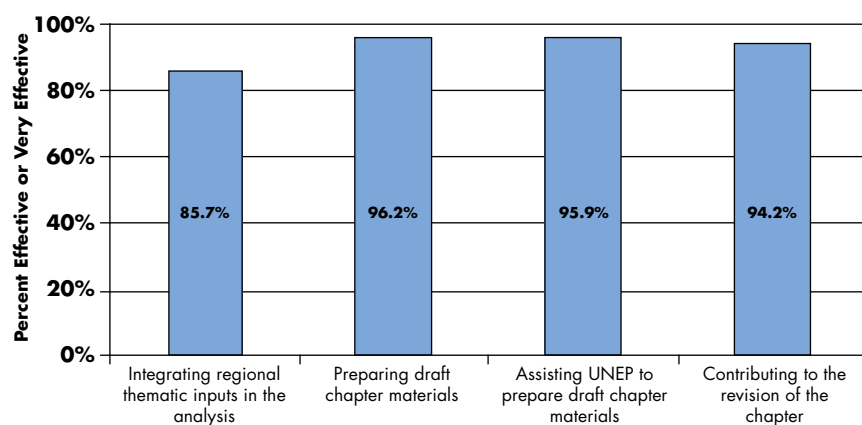


Figure 16: Respondents about the effectiveness of key chapter coordination roles and responsibilities

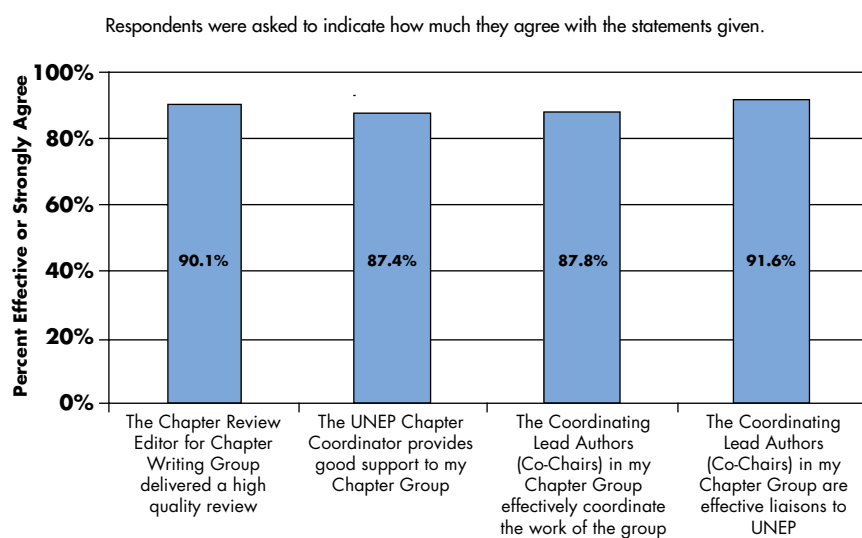
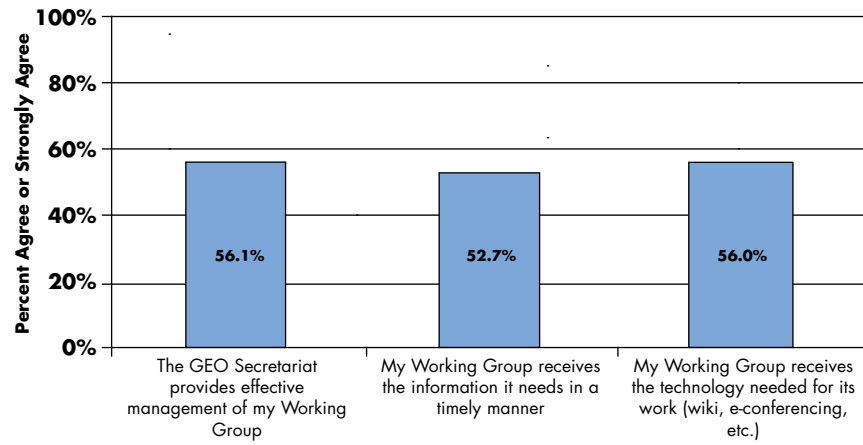


Figure 17: Respondents about the effectiveness of the working relationships in their Working Group



FINDING 6 - MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP OF WORKING GROUPS

Participants were asked a series of questions related to the management of Working Groups including suggestions for improvements.

Findings

- ✓ Slightly more than half of respondents agree that the GEO Secretariat provided effective management, timely information and the technology needed to do work effectively.
- ✓ A strong majority of respondents reported that the Chair of their Working Group provided effective leadership of the Group by:
 - responding to requests in a timely manner
 - encouraging participation
 - creating an atmosphere of trust
 - resolving conflict and encouraging innovation
- ✓ Chairs received slightly lower positive scores in communicating regularly between meetings and involving all members in decision making

Suggestions for Improvements in Management and Leadership

- Better support from UNEP for new communication technology use among and between groups
- Consistent guidance to Working Groups – not changing direction often
- More consistent long term support for those assuming management and leadership roles (Chapter Lead Authors and authors)
- Ensure UNEP key staff attend all meetings
- Provide minutes for members and leaders who could not attend or were not invited
- Provide support for inter-group leaders coordination, sharing and training
- Ensure adequate mandate for the Outreach Group – appoint an outreach specialist to lead the Outreach Working Group similar to model of other Working Groups
- Improve transparency of decision making
- Ensure high quality active leadership – ensure people know who the leaders are – Chapter Lead Authors, and UNEP Coordinators
- Provide more consistent communication from leaders between meetings – especially the rationale for and transparency of changes
- Be more open to contributors from developing countries
- Ensure better use of technology to communicate more effectively to Working Groups such as wikis and blogs, etc)
- Provide regular updates to Group members, summary notes, minutes of meetings
- Introduce all members before hand – especially young professionals
- Develop a network for groups to use and access themselves
- Keep the momentum and continuity of the process throughout – stick to the agenda

Figure 18: Respondents about the management and information technology support provided by UNEP to their Working Group

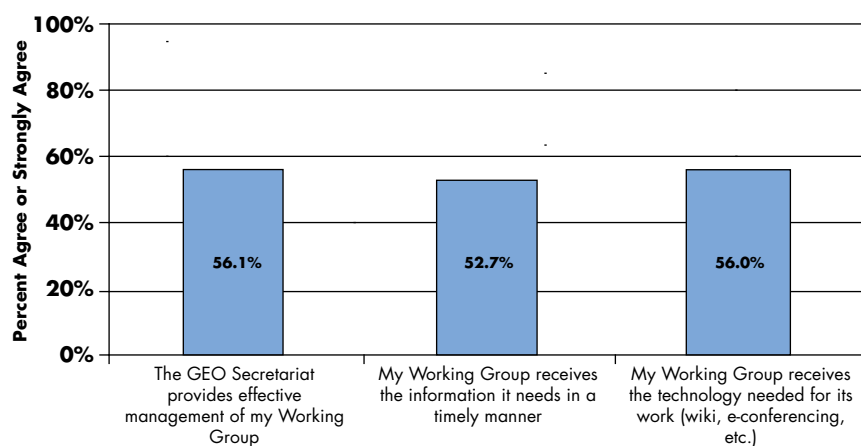


Figure 19: Respondents about the leadership exercised by the chair of their Working Group

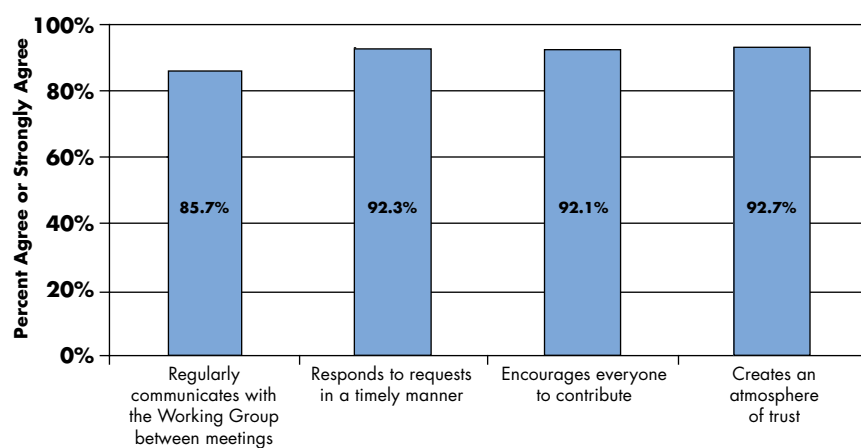
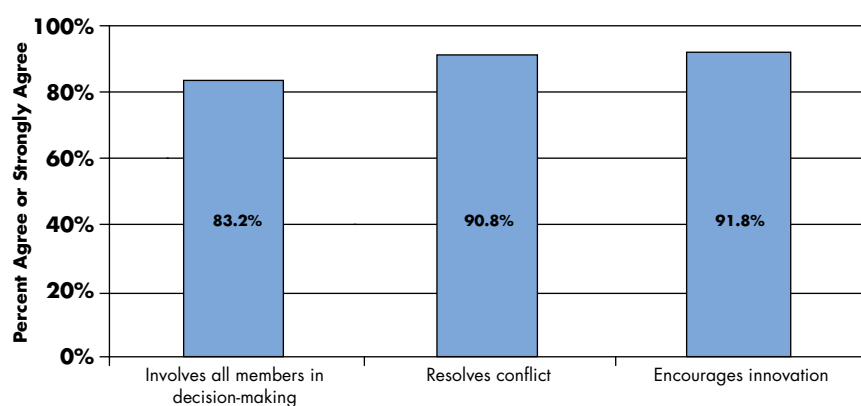


Figure 20: Respondents about the leadership exercised by the chair of their Working Group (continued)



FINDING 7 - EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETINGS

Participants were asked a series of questions pertaining to the management and leadership of Working Group meetings, and improvements that could be made to this part of the Working Group process.

Findings

- ✓ The majority of participants reported that their Working Group meetings were effective with respect to:
 - Objectives, agendas, documents, time management, venue
- ✓ Room for improvement was noted in:
 - Setting objectives ahead of time
 - Setting time limits for agenda items
 - Defining clear roles for the meetings – facilitators, note taking
 - Keeping and circulating minutes

Suggestions for Improvements

Agenda setting

- Better sense of priorities for agenda – set goals, deal with important things first, have a more logical sequence, realistic about time needed
- Better planning and conceptualization of meetings – clear purpose
- Let Chapter Lead Authors set agenda, not UNEP staff – too bureaucratic sometimes

Length, size and carbon footprint of meetings

- A meeting of five days duration is too long – people get tired, inefficient towards the end – suggest breaking up the time to recharge the energy of participants
- Large meetings are hard on staff and often an inefficient use of resources for what is produced. Consider smaller more focused meetings held more often using teleconference facilities
- With climate change the necessity of travel should be constantly questioned
- Costs of large meetings should be known and discussed openly - encourage participants to provide ideas on alternatives for cost effective work mechanisms

Management of meetings/work flow

- Clear definition of roles
- Better group and work flow management – motivation, consistency
- Better monitoring by group itself of where it is, what it has achieved, review results achieved between meetings
- Better time management – more realistic of time needed for work, set time limits for items
- Divide tasks - writing and editing, wider group consultation and input, among and between groups
- Share the roles of facilitation, note taking – involve participants more in responsibilities for the outputs of the meetings
- Strengthen facilitation skills of Groups and the process overall
- Make better use of UNEP professionals – such as staff from the Division of Communication and Public Information and the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions

Record of meeting - minutes

- Better keeping and circulation of minutes – concise bullet point minutes sent out in a timely manner after each meeting

Figure 21: Respondents about the effectiveness of the organization of meetings

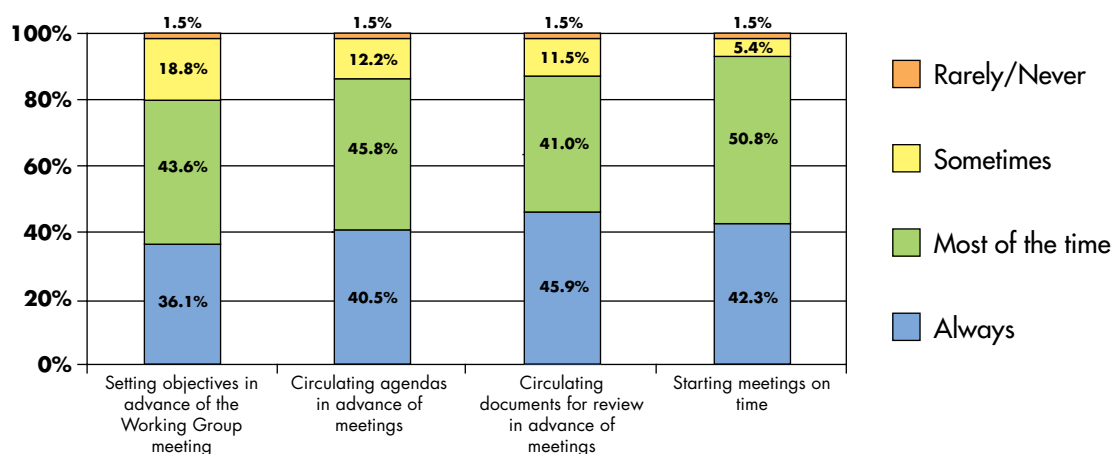


Figure 22: Respondents about the effectiveness of managing the agenda, roles and objectives of meetings

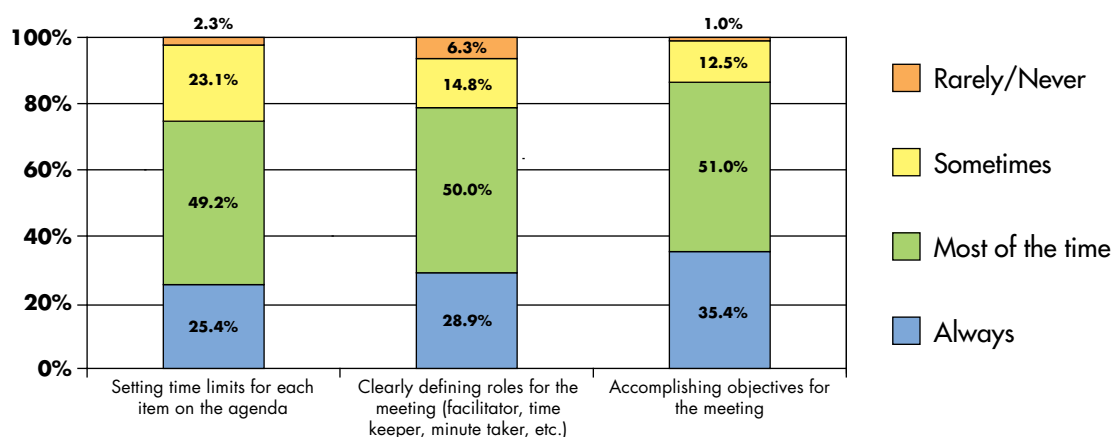
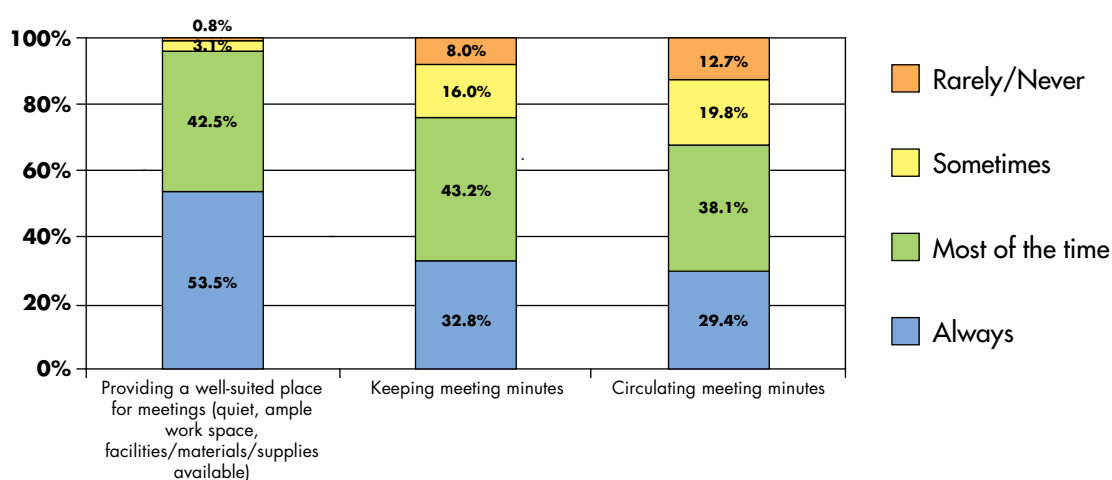


Figure 23: Respondents about the meeting venues and meeting minutes



FINDING 8 - MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Participants were asked a series of questions pertaining to how participants viewed the utilization of their skills in the Working Group process, whether their viewpoint was heard and contribution recognized, and overall whether the Working Group process was worth their time and effort.

Findings

- ✓ The strong majority of respondents agree that their:
 - Viewpoint was heard
 - Contribution recognized
 - Working Group made a significant contribution
 - Working Group experience enriched their professional work
 - Working Group experience was worth the time and effort
 - Working Group experience put them in a stronger position to support the work of UNEP
- ✓ There is some room for improvement in fully utilizing the skills of participants.
- ✓ The GEO-4 process enables greater influence of participants most at global and regional levels – less so at national and local levels.

Figure 24: Respondents about their involvement in the Working Groups

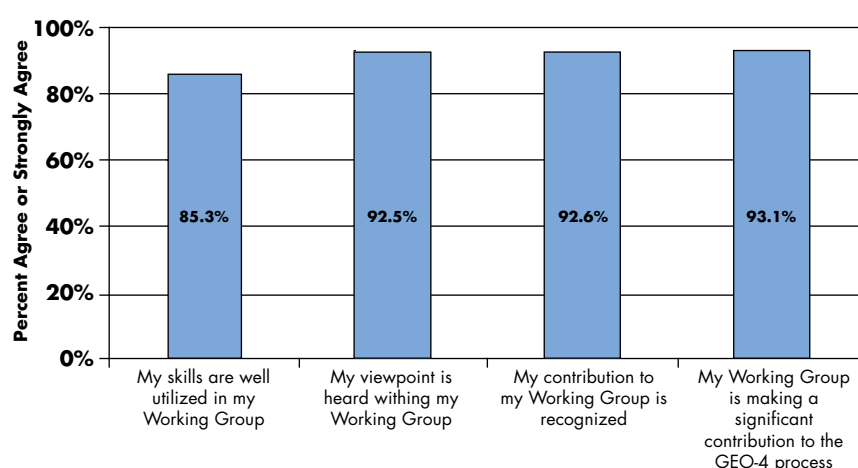


Figure 25: Respondents about the benefits of their Working Group Experience

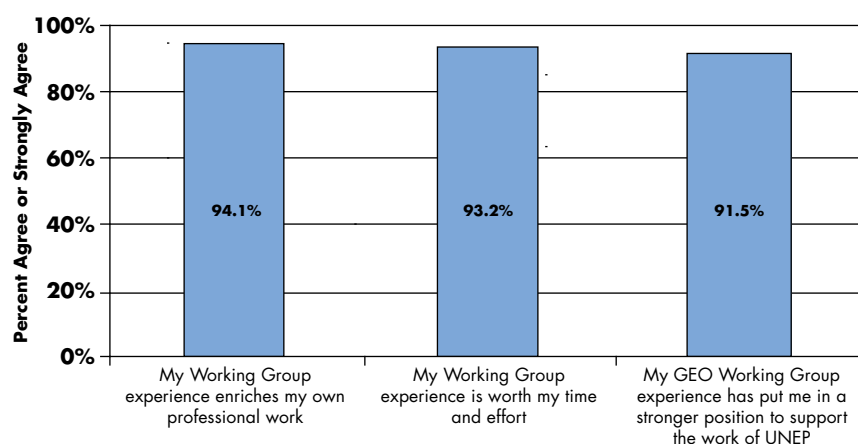
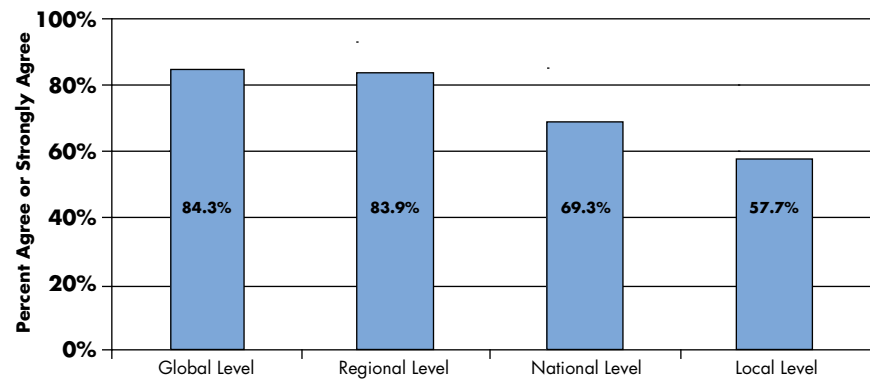


Figure 26: Respondents about how their Working Group experience may enable them to have more influence at different levels



FINDING 9 - VALUE ADDED OF GEO-4

Participants were asked to identify other assessment processes in which they were involved, and to rate GEO-4 in relation to the other assessment processes as better, about the same or worse.

Findings

- ✓ Slightly more than half (54.5%) of respondents had not been involved in any large assessment process before GEO-4.
- ✓ Of the 43.7% who had been involved in large assessment processes such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were the most commonly cited, followed by:
 - Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)
 - World Water Assessment Programme – World Water Development Report
 - State of the Environment and National Assessments
 - Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA)
 - Africa Environment Outlook
 - Arab Environment Outlook
 - Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (FAOSTAT)
 - International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)
 - Other regional assessments
- ✓ Respondents involved with other assessments were fairly evenly split on how GEO-4 performs in comparison with other assessment processes:
 - 31.6% worse
 - 34.2% about the same
 - 34.2% better
- ✓ Reasons GEO-4 performs better:
 - Good methodologies – DPSIR (Driving Forces-Pressures-State-Impacts-Responses), scenarios, policy analysis
 - Interdisciplinary team work, diverse exchange across disciplinary boundaries, involvement of local experts, flexible
 - Much cheaper than the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, smaller group, good interaction with broader group of stakeholders, not as rarefied an atmosphere as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
 - Global, regional, national and local cities applications and spin offs
 - Ongoing network of regional collaborating centres
- ✓ Reasons GEO-4 performs worse:
 - Too disorganized and demanding of time
 - Lack of clarity of expectations
 - Too cumbersome
 - Not scientifically rigorous enough
 - Not the best experts
 - Lack of leadership and vision
 - Not transparent enough
 - Over engineered
 - Too much interference from the UNEP political level
 - Too heavy a process
 - Process not managed well

- ✓ Three quarters (73.3%) of respondents used the GEO process and products in their work – purposes cited were:
 - Teaching
 - Training – capacity building
 - Research, references, PhD / Masters studies
 - Awareness raising
 - Networking with other disciplines, peers
 - Writing reports, articles
 - National and regional assessments
 - Consulting
 - Special projects – risk analysis, vulnerability assessments, Doha mandate, environmental and health impact assessment, nature-society relationships
- ✓ More than half (54.3%) report their GEO-4 experience has led to other collaborations and partnerships.
- ✓ Thirty percent report communicating with their Working Group members several times a month or more, more than fifty percent several times a year, and eight percent never communicate with their WG members.
- ✓ Respondents indicate they would like to contribute to other aspects of GEO such as:
 - Capacity building (50 respondents)
 - Training and mentoring in GEO (44 respondents)
 - Outreach and engagement (32 respondents)
 - Specialized focus - cities, futures thinking, regional GEOs, developing educational products around scenarios, GEO fellows
- ✓ Almost all respondents (96.8%) indicate they would like to be involved in the next GEO process.

Figure 27: Respondents about their involvement in other large assessment processes

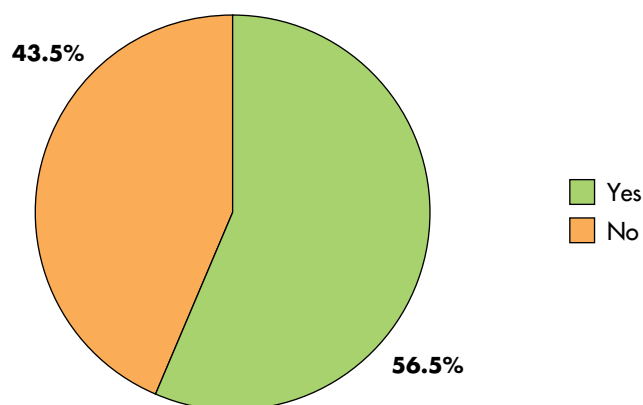


Figure 28: Respondents about how the GEO-4 process compares with other assessment processes

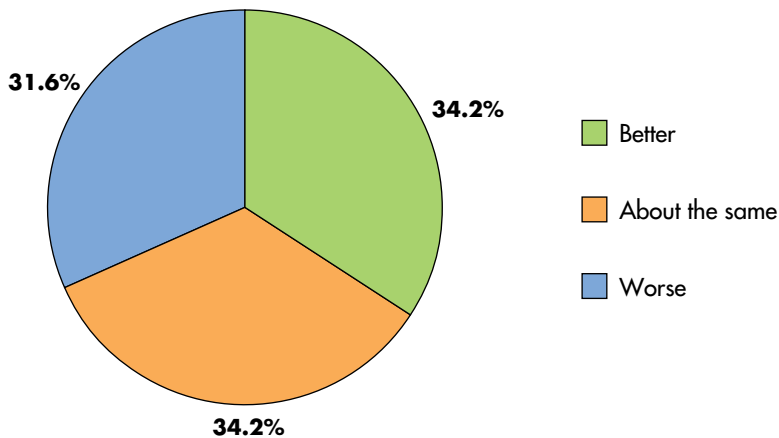


Figure 29: Respondents about whether or not they currently use aspects of the GEO-4 process and products in their work

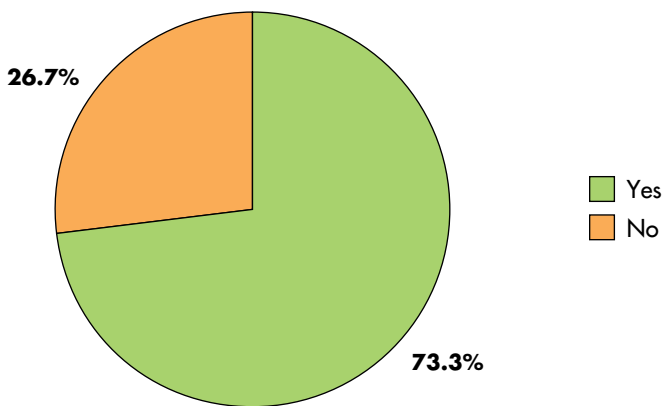


Figure 30: Respondents about whether or not the GEO-4 Working Group experience has led to other collaborations or partnerships

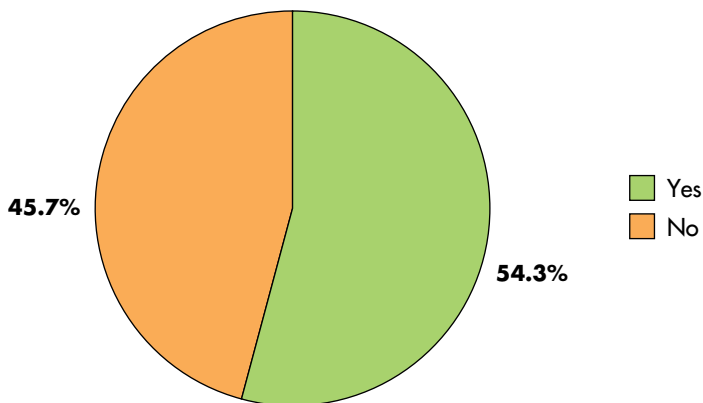


Figure 31: Respondents about how often over the last year that they have communicated with members of their Working Group (outside regional meetings)

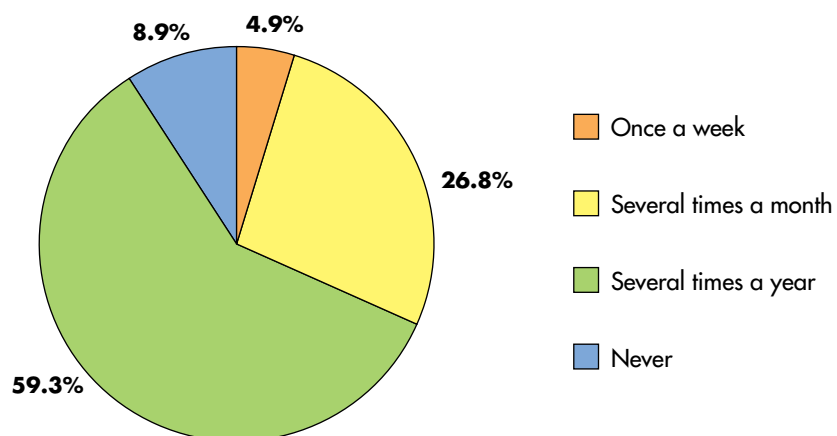
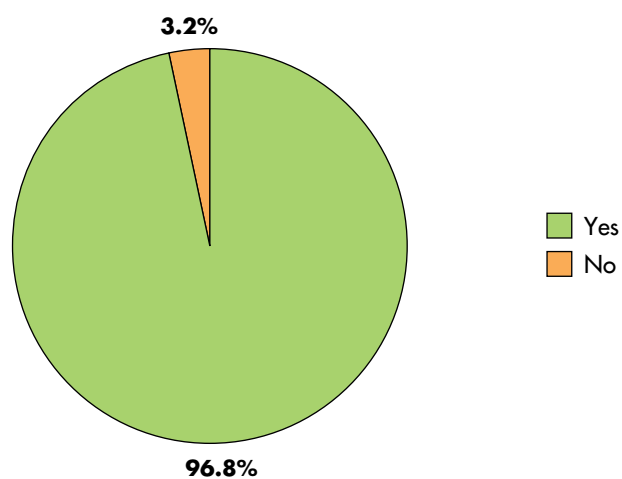


Figure 32: Respondents about their likely involvement in the next GEO process?



ANNEX 1

GEO- 4 Working Group Self Assessment

Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Welcome to the Self Assessment of the GEO-4 Working Group process.

There are 9 Sections to the Self Assessment which will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your individual responses will be confidential and only an aggregate of scores and summary of responses will be reported.

Thank you for your valuable feedback.

Section 1: Identification and Profile

Time period to which this self assessment applies: ☐ 2006 ☐ 2007 ☐ Both

Name of your Working Group: (please indicate one, or fill out a separate self assessment for each Working Group in which you participated)

Your region:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

How many years have you been involved with the GEO process?

Section 2: Your Familiarity with UNEP and GEO

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar
How familiar are you with UNEP's mandate?				
How familiar are you with UNEP's Programme?				
How familiar were you with the <u>Main GEO Report</u> before you became involved in GEO-4?				
How familiar were you with the <u>GEO Year Book Series</u> before you became involved in GEO-4?				

Your use of previous GEO reports:

	A great deal of use	Some Use	A Little Use	No Use
How much did you use the Main GEO Report before you became involved in GEO-4?				
How much did you use the GEO Year Book Series before you became involved in GEO-4?				

For what purpose(s) did you use GEO reports?

What was your main purpose in joining the GEO-4 Working Group process?

Section 3: Clarity of Purpose of your Working Group

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The mandate of my GEO-4 Working Group is clear to me.				
The results that my Working Group is expected to deliver are clear.				
My role and responsibilities in helping to achieve these results is clear.				
There is agreement within my Working Group on the roles and responsibilities of each member.				
The roles and responsibilities of UNEP in helping to achieve the desired results of the Working Group are clear to me.				
The time commitment needed to fulfill my Working Group responsibilities is clear to me.				

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the clarity of purpose for your Working Group?

Section 4: Selection, Membership and Expertise of Working Group

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The selection of members for my Working Group was transparent.					
The selection of members for my Working Group was based on merit.					
The membership of my Working Group is geographically balanced.					
The membership of my Working Group is gender balanced.					
My Working Group has the right balance of policy and science expertise.					
My Working Group has the right balance of environment and development expertise.					
My Working Group has taken capacity building into consideration by including young professionals.					
My Working Group members are:					
Knowledgeable					
Experienced					
Respected leaders in their field					
Collaborative					
Engaged in the group's work					

In your opinion, is your Working Group missing any critical expertise?

☐ No ☐ Not Sure ☐ Yes

If yes, please specify

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the expertise on your Working Group?

Section 5: Effectiveness in Achieving Objectives / Results

For all Working Groups and Chapter Writing Groups

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The workplan (including timetable) for achieving the results of my Working Group is clear.				
My Working Group is on track to achieve its results on schedule.				
My Working Group's activities are transparent.				
My Working Group uses its time efficiently.				
My Working Group effectively develops consensus.				
My Working Group effectively resolves conflicts.				
Members of my Working Group follow through on commitments to the group.				
My Working Group's products are:				
Independent				
Credible				
Scientifically-based				
Policy-relevant				
Delivered on time				
High Quality				

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the products of your Working Group?

For Chapter Writing Groups only

How effective is your Chapter Writing Group in fulfilling its Terms of Reference with regard to:	Very effective	Effective	Ineffective	Very ineffective
Facilitating preparation of the assessment for your chapter				
Integrating data from scientific research				

For Chapter Writing Groups only *(continued)*

How effective is your Chapter Writing Group in fulfilling its Terms of Reference with regard to:	Very effective	Effective	Ineffective	Very ineffective
Interpreting the findings of scientific research				
Advising on scientific uncertainties related to the data				
Collaborating with other expert Working Groups				
Integrating regional thematic inputs in the analysis				
Preparing draft chapter materials				
Assisting UNEP to prepare draft chapter materials				
Contributing to the revision of the chapter				

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Chapter Review Editor for my Chapter Writing Group delivered a high quality review				
The UNEP Chapter Coordinator provides good support to my Chapter Group				
The Coordinating Lead Authors (Co-Chairs) in my Chapter Group effectively coordinate the work of the group				
The Coordinating Lead Authors (Co-Chairs) in my Chapter Group are effective liaisons to UNEP.				
Members of my Chapter Group make substantive contributions to the group.				
My Chapter Group effectively develops consensus.				
My Chapter Group effectively resolves issues.				
My Working Group is clear on the audience for whom we are writing.				

Do you have any suggestions on how your Chapter Writing Group can improve its processes?

Section 6: Management and Leadership of the Working Group

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The GEO Secretariat provides effective management of my Working Group.				
My Working Group receives the information it needs in a timely manner.				
My Working Group receives the technology needed for its work (wiki, e-conferencing, etc).				
The Chair (leader) of my Working Group: • Regularly communicates with the Working Group between meetings • Responds to requests in a timely manner • Encourages everyone to contribute • Creates an atmosphere of trust • Involves all members in decision-making • Resolves conflicts • Encourages innovation				

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the management and leadership of your Working Group?

Section 7: Effectiveness of Meetings (or virtual work if applicable)

Please tell us how often the following activities occur in your Working Group	Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Setting objectives in advance of the Working Group meeting				
Circulating agendas in advance of meetings				
Circulating documents for review in advance of meetings				
Starting meetings on time				
Setting time limits for each item on the agenda				
Clearly defining roles for the meeting (facilitator, time keeper, minute taker, etc.)				
Accomplishing objectives for the meeting				
Providing a well-suited place for meetings (quiet, ample work space, facilities/ materials/supplies available)				
Keeping meeting minutes				
Circulating meeting minutes				

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of your Working Group meetings?

Section 8: Motivation and Satisfaction

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My skills are well utilized in my Working Group.				
My viewpoint is heard within my Working Group.				
My contribution to my Working Group is recognized.				
My Working Group is making a significant contribution to the GEO-4 process.				
My Working Group experience enriches my own professional work.				
My Working Group experience is worth my time and effort.				
My GEO Working Group experience has put me in a stronger position to support the work of UNEP.				

My Working Group experience will enable me to have greater influence at the...				
Global level				
Regional level				
National level				
Local level				

Section 9: Value Added of GEO-4

Have you been involved in other large assessment processes other than the GEO process?

☐ No ☐ Yes (please tell us the name of one other assessment process)

How does the GEO-4 Assessment process compare with your other assessment experience listed above?

- ☐ Better
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Worse

Why do you feel this way?

Do you currently use aspects of the GEO-4 process and products in your work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please provide an example of current use)

Has your GEO-4 Working Group experience led to other collaborations or partnerships in your work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

In the last year how often did you communicate with your Working Group members (outside of regular meetings)?

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Several times month
- ☐ Several times a year
- ☐ Never

What is the single most important change you would make to the GEO-4 process?

Are there other areas of the GEO process in which you would like to be involved? (such as Outreach and Engagement, Marketing, Capacity Building, Training). Please specify:

Would you like to be involved in the next GEO process?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

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