

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOIMAG/pb/11

29 May 2024

**GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary,
May 14 2024**

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

1. Review, feedback and approval on the options for including IK & LK into GEO-7.
2. Review and feedback on the draft agenda for the third Face to Face Meeting of the IMAG (3-5 September).
3. Review and approval of the IMAG Mid-stream review document.
4. Any other Business.

On these items the IMAG decided:

- To approve foregrounding of IK & LK into GEO-7 through integration of this knowledge into the 21 chapters and five chapeaus at the beginning of the five parts of the report.
- To closely monitor the foregrounding of IK & LK into GEO-7.
- To hold meetings with author teams and the convenors of the various task teams and the IK & LK Task Force during the third face to face meeting of the IMAG in September.
- To hold a joint meeting with MESAG during the third face to face meeting of the IMAG in September.
- To discuss and agree in collaboration with MESAG the approach for providing a validation opinion on GEO-7 during the third face to face meeting of the IMAG in September.
- To discuss and agree on an approach for the production of the GEO-7 Summary for Policymakers at the September IMAG meeting.
- To hold a Coordination Group meeting during the third authors meeting on 6 September 2024.
- To reflect on the objectives of the third face to face meeting of the IMAG and share any additions for inclusion into the agenda.
- To approve and adopt the IMAG Mid-stream review document.
- That the Secretariat will provide an update on the First Order Draft Review in the next IMAG call.
- That the Secretariat will circulate revised timelines of the GEO-7 process to be discussed in the next IMAG call.
- To revisit the approach of conducting the SOD review given the learnings from the FOD review.
- To reach out to more natural and social scientists in the next review.
- That the Secretariat shares the names of the four MESAG members that follow the IK & LK process.
- 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-chairs of the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG).

Review, feedback and approval on the options for including IK & LK into GEO-7

An introductory briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Local Knowledge (LK) process noting that the inclusion of IK & LK was requested in the [GEO-7 Scoping document](#). The Secretariat noted that the IK & LK Task Force is made up of 14 members who provide advice on how best to integrate IK & LK into the report as well as act as lead authors on IK & LK in GEO-7. It was highlighted that during the Second Authors' Meeting in Vienna, the IK & LK Task Force explored various approaches to integrate IK & LK messages and ultimately wrote various texts, but the author teams indicated a preference for a much more structured approach for providing the IK & LK text than having it drafted outside of their chapters. The Task Force revisited its process and formulated four options in discussions with the assessment co-chairs.

The GEO-7 assessment co-chair provided an explanation of the four options that were formulated for the inclusion of IK & LK into GEO-7:

- Option one: GEO-7 to integrate IK & LK into each of the 21 chapters which is a similar approach by IPBES and IPCC.
- Option two: a single standalone chapter on IK & LK.
- Option three: a standalone chapter and integrate IK & LK into the 21 chapters as needed.
- Option four: have IK & LK chapeaus at the beginning of each of the five parts of the report while also integrating specific issues into the 21 chapters.

It was further highlighted what the preferred options for the Task Force and the other assessment co-chairs were while noting the general agreement on the need to integrate IK & LK into each of the 21 chapters. The assessment co-chair explained that the assessment co-chairs and the Secretariat recommend the fourth option and that the 14 Task Force members had already chosen to distribute themselves across the 21 chapters based on their expertise and how they would each contribute to the 21 chapters.

IMAG inquired on the success of IK & LK integration and if there is sufficient capacity to ensure that each of the 21 chapters addresses IK & LK in a scientifically credible manner. The assessment co-chair replied that integration of IK & LK is indeed possible, though challenging, and that the Task Force has the capacity to input IK & LK messages into the 21 chapters. The assessment co-chair further noted that IPBES has done well in integrating IK & LK into its assessments. He however explained that the Task Force notes that there are limitations to the IK & LK approaches in assessments given the chapter structure of environmental reports where various environmental themes are separated, whilst for IK & LK holders, the environment is viewed in a holistic way. It was also noted that the fourth option provides the IK & LK Task Force an opportunity to go beyond the IPBES approach which focuses on integration into the chapters as GEO-7 could also include five chapeaus for the five parts of the report, which should reflect the Indigenous conceptualizations of the themes in these parts of the report, in addition to the chapter-by-chapter integration. The assessment co-chair noted that the Task Force is more likely to put more effort into certain chapters than others based on where the IK & LK perspective is most relevant and just like all the other authors, the Task Force would also be able to bring in contributing authors where needed and will receive a lot of input for the drafting work from the planned IK & LK Dialogues.

IMAG inquired as to whether the scientific credibility of the report could be jeopardised given that the IK & LK content in the document may not be considered as 'science' based on a Western perspective, especially given the wide spectrum of views and approaches from different Indigenous Peoples. The

Secretariat replied that there were no Indigenous representatives present at the Scoping Meeting where the request to integrate IK & LK into GEO-7 was made, but there are strong safeguards to ensure scientific integrity is maintained, through the Intergovernmental and expert peer review process, where Member States would be able to provide feedback and the Task Force could readjust based on the feedback.

IMAG highlighted that the discussion on the four options for IK & LK integration is related to the best possible way to do so and not whether it should be integrated into the report. IMAG noted that the standalone chapter option would provide a standalone picture and would divide the report rather than provide a whole picture approach, thus making the fourth option a better option in telling the whole story. It was observed that the Task Force would have a lot of ground to cover as the other authors have been writing the chapters for a significant amount of time compared to the Task Force. Lastly IMAG expressed the need to manage risk to ensure that the report remains credible and that the process is closely monitored, given the concerns raised on capacity. The Secretariat noted that the face-to-face IMAG meeting in September would provide an opportunity to hear from the IK & LK Task Force on how the work is progressing.

IMAG welcomed the document on the four options IK & LK integration into GEO-7 and approved the fourth option, which is the integration into the 21 chapters and five chapeaus at the beginning of the five parts of the report. IMAG indicated that the fourth option was a good compromise and followed the IPBES and IPCC approaches of IK & LK integration while also allowing for more specific IK & LK profile in the five chapeaus and respecting the agreed scope and outline of GEO-7.

Review and feedback on the draft agenda for the third Face to Face Meeting of the IMAG (3-5 September).

A briefing was provided by the Secretariat on the proposed objectives of the third face to face meeting of the IMAG. The Secretariat explained that the face-to-face meetings of the IMAG and the MESAG would happen in parallel to the third authors' meeting. This would enable the IMAG and the MESAG to have sessions with the authors and conveners of the various task groups and the IK & LK Task Force. These sessions would allow for questions and the provision of additional advice to the authors from IMAG, while also monitoring the progress in the preparation of the report.

The Secretariat highlighted that IMAG could use the face-to-face meeting to develop some thinking on the approach for providing the validation opinion of GEO-7 and the process for producing the Summary for Policymakers. It was explained that the approach for providing the validation opinion of GEO-7 is rooted in the [GEO procedures document](#) that was agreed in September 2022. The procedures document indicates that the validation opinion will be provided by the IMAG or MESAG. It was further explained that the validation opinion that is provided at the end of the GEO process will have a lot of impact on the adoption of the report and the acceptance of it by Member States during the negotiation of the Summary for Policymakers. The Secretariat indicated that IMAG could discuss their approach in collaboration with MESAG in the September meeting, as both advisory bodies will have completed mid-stream reviews by then.

The Secretariat highlighted that in the approach to produce the Summary for Policymakers, the assessment co-chairs play an important role and, given IMAG's role in ensuring the policy relevance of the GEO-7 findings in a format that is presentable and accessible to Member States, the discussion on its production will be critical during the September meeting.

IMAG inquired if there will be a joint meeting with the MESAG to which the Secretariat explained that there will be a half day meeting with the MESAG to consider joint issues and that there will also be a Coordination Group Meeting which includes the bureaus of the IMAG, MESAG, Ad Hoc Open-Ended meetings and assessment co-chairs.

IMAG noted the objectives of the third face to face meeting of the IMAG and requested members to reflect on them and send any additional objectives to enable finalization of the objectives and agenda by the Secretariat.

Review and approval of the IMAG Mid-stream review document.

The Secretariat noted that IMAG had provided inputs to the draft IMAG Mid-stream review document and showed how the comments had been incorporated into the revised draft. It was noted that some of the inputs received were on the challenges in attracting the interest of experts from the Eastern European region and how that could possibly be addressed by engaging more partners from Eastern Europe. The other highlighted challenge was on conducting outreach and awareness raising activities, that were difficult due to budget constraints. The Secretariat also noted the incorporation of the GEO-7 outreach events into the Mid-stream review document to showcase the outreach efforts of GEO-7 as well as the note on the need for resource mobilization efforts being complemented by a strong outreach strategy. Lastly, the Secretariat explained it will assist in conducting training on Integrated Environmental Assessments for Bahrain in June 2024 as part of its supporting services.

IMAG inquired on who is included in the trainings that have happened so far and if the fellows are invited to those training sessions. The Secretariat noted that the training in Malawi also included some young experts from Malawi that were part of the training. Additionally, GEO fellows received some training on their role as fellows in the initial authors meeting in Bangkok and a number of them have gone through the pilot of UNEP's science to policy course that was run in collaboration with Peking University, which included participation of some GEO-7 experts as speakers, including the IMAG co-chair.

IMAG expressed concern about the current timelines for GEO-7 and the capacity for the authors to meet deadlines given the additional request for inclusion of IK & LK and inquired as to how IMAG and MESAG could support the Task Force. The Secretariat noted that there are four members of the MESAG who are following the work of the IK & LK Task Force and are involved in the various IK & LK meetings. The Secretariat also highlighted the request from assessment co-chairs for a detailed breakdown of the GEO-7 timelines, which could be presented in the next IMAG call, where the challenges could be highlighted, and advice provided by IMAG on how they could be managed and addressed. IMAG welcomed the detailed timeline breakdown, noting that the changes to the timeline will be important especially for the planned intergovernmental review to ensure proper planning for adequate time to conduct the reviews.

IMAG adopted the Mid-stream review document while highlighting that there is no formal requirement for the document, but it was important to take stock of the work that has been done so far, noting the challenges ahead and that the meeting in September will also provide an opportunity to assess where IMAG can support the GEO-7 process.

Any other business

First Order Draft Review: The assessment co-chair provided a briefing on the First Order Draft Review that took place from 12th February to 14th April 2024. It was noted that the authors did not receive as many comments as expected and there is ongoing brainstorming on how to ensure the next review (intergovernmental and expert peer review) receives an adequate number of comments. The assessment co-chair suggested that regional webinars, with national focal points, to encourage governments to review and comment would be useful, as this was done by IPCC, and that would encourage reviewing from non-OECD countries who traditionally are not as active in peer reviews as OECD countries.

It was explained that the Secretariat selected 240 reviewers, considering disciplinary, geographical and gender balance and the second order draft will need to make sure there are more reviewers overall and more social scientists and economists. The Secretariat noted that given that the peer reviewers had gone through an elaborate application process, it was expected that they would all review and provide comments, which was not the case, necessitating a revisit of the approach to ensure a broad and diverse selection of peer reviewers.

IMAG offered to support by reaching out to more natural and social scientists for the next review and suggested that the next IMAG call should include statistics on the FOD review.

Update on the Scoping Meeting of the National State of the Environment and Outlook Report in Malawi: The Secretariat provided an update on the ongoing work in Malawi noting that the Secretariat was working with Grid Arendal, which is a GEO collaborating centre, in providing support to the Malawi Environment Protection Authority to produce their National State of the Environment and Outlook Report. The Secretariat noted that the Scoping Meeting for that report will be happening from 20-23 May in Lilongwe and the goal of the meeting is to review and approve the scoping document. It was also highlighted that there were planned separate briefings with Principal Secretaries from the various ministries and members of the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Climate Change.

Update on the second IK & LK Dialogue: The Secretariat provided a briefing on the second IK & LK Dialogues to be held in Oaxaca, Mexico where 21 Indigenous Knowledge holders would meet to discuss the types of Indigenous Knowledge that could be useful for the different GEO chapters. The Secretariat explained that the initial Dialogue that happened in March was a conceptualization dialogue, and the second Dialogue would be useful for developing content that could be used in the GEO-7. It was noted that the Dialogues would be facilitated by an expert team from the University of Veracruz. It was also mentioned that the MESAG members and assessment co-chair following the IK & LK work are engaged to ensure things move forward well.

IMAG inquired about the possibility of knowing the MESAG members following the process to enable consultations and insights into the process. The Secretariat agreed that the four names of the members involved would be shared. IMAG inquired as to whether IK & LK would come up in the Malawi meeting and requested for a report on how the IK & LK would be integrated into the Malawi report. The Secretariat replied that UNEP-WCMC is supporting Malawi in carrying out a National Ecosystem Assessment which is applying the IPBES methodology that includes IK & LK Dialogues with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The Malawi National State of the Environment and Outlook Report (NSEOR) would integrate the majority of the findings from the National Ecosystem Assessment into the applicable chapters of the NSEOR.

Organization of the 3rd Authors Meeting: The Secretariat provided an update on the third author's meeting that will run from 2-6 September 2024. It was highlighted that UNEP's Executive Director made the decision to move the meeting to Nairobi after the Secretariat had conducted surveys, queried various people in UNEP and the UN security staff based in Jordan. The Secretariat explained that there has been feedback from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jordan indicating their objection to the relocation of the meeting. The Secretariat explained that there is an ongoing dialogue for Jordan to co-host the meeting in Nairobi by bringing some Jordanian experts to Nairobi. The Secretariat noted the importance of the third authors meeting as it provides an opportunity for the authors to ensure narrative coherence and linkages across the chapters and also allows for face to face meetings of the IMAG, MESAG and the GEO-7 Coordination Group to advance their work, including the provision of advice for the SPM preparation process, since the First Order Draft (FOD) of the SPM will accompany the Second Order Draft of the main report in the intergovernmental review. It was further explained that the authors would get more time to polish the Second Order

Draft to ensure coherence and collaboration happens before the Second Order Draft review period in November and December 2024, and that there will be a small drafting group that will be conducting the drafting of the SPM.

IMAG pointed out the criticism that the last GEOs had conveyed negative messages, and they hope that the current GEO would have much more positive messaging, while being solutions oriented and recognizing there are limitations, as this approach would be more helpful to decision makers. The Secretariat replied that the proposed solutions focused approach should provide positive messaging in the SPM by showing the transformations that are already happening and the ones that could happen. IMAG also inquired if the Adhoc Global Assessments Dialogue (AGAD) was still in place and if it could support the upcoming peer review process. The Secretariat explained that they had reached out to participants in the AGAD, such as IPCC and IRP, to inquire about the numbers and diversity of their peer reviewers. The AGAD meets three to four times a year to learn from each other, with the goal of improving assessments going forward.

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- IMAG members will send any additional objectives for the third face to face meeting of the IMAG.
- The Secretariat will share the names of the four MESAG members following the IK & LK process in GEO-7.

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
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
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. 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. Margarita Guerra (Alternate)	Ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Major Group
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups
Dr. Fabian Wagner	Dean, Capacity Development and Academic Training, IIASA, Austria	Germany	Science and Technology
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization

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
Mrs. Dušica Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Ms. Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	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
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. Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern 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
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. Ruth Viola Spencer	Chair, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas(MEPA) Trust	Antigua and Barbuda	Women
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf	Sustainability Research Program Director at Gulf Research Center (GRC)	Egypt	Science and Technology
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