

First GEO-6 Co-Chairs Meeting



Professor Paul Ekins



Professor Joyeeta Gupta

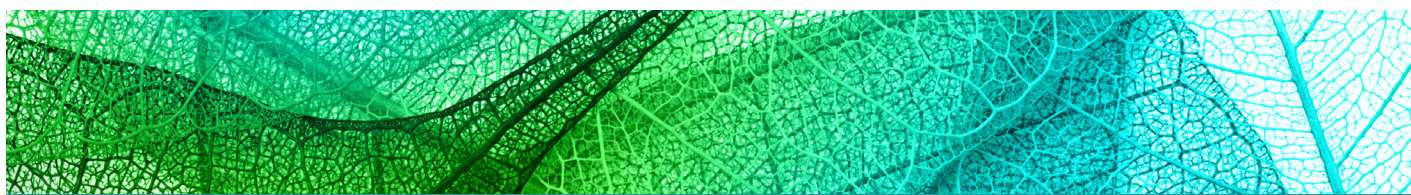
The Co-chairs of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook assessment, Prof. Paul Ekins and Prof. Joyeeta Gupta, met with The Global Environment Outlook Secretariat at the Economy Division offices in Paris to discuss the most recent developments of the assessment process and the preparations for the upcoming first authors meeting. The Co-chairs meeting highlighted key issues for GEO-6, such as how to add value in a crowded assessment landscape and how to focus GEO-6 on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. Co-chairs and the Secretariat also discussed the type of drafting guidance to be provided to the authors, dates and timings for key author meetings and review periods, data and analysis questions, and finally how best to conduct outreach during the GEO-6 process in order to inform and create anticipation for the assessment.

The Co-chairs expressed that the value of GEO-6 is mainly achieved by focusing on the integrated nature of the environmental challenges we face as well as ensuring a thorough analysis of the baseline for the Sustainable Development Goals, including options for achieving these goals at the national and regional level. Tracking the Sustainable Development Goals in the assessment will require a focus on high quality data, but gap filling will probably be needed to ensure a full picture is provided. This gap filling may need to be done by the Global Environment Outlook's Innovative Outlooks Group, to model or disaggregate globally available data sets or geo-spatial data.

Decisions made during the meeting include:

- The timing of GEO-6 meetings and meeting preparation should be planned well in advance to ensure a smooth process for authors, co-chairs/vice-chairs and other participants;
- The value-added of GEO-6 is the integrated nature of its analysis and the ability to develop clear guidance for countries for achieving the 2030 Agenda as well as a truly sustainable world in 2050.
- The findings of existing and emerging environmental assessments and outlooks need to be considered and incorporated into GEO so that the connections/interactions among these different environmental issues can be assessed in the integrated framework of GEO-6. This will require an active coordination effort by the Secretariat.
- GEO-6 should be primarily a data and indicators-based assessment with peer reviewed literature used to fill gaps where data and indicators are not available or reliable.
- Cities, governance and equity are not currently covered in the annotated outline and should be added as overarching issues in support of the analysis of the cross-cutting issues.
- Gaps need to be filled in the current author list, in particular for the analysis of Drivers, Policy Effectiveness and governance.
- The overarching narrative of GEO-6 should be clear to authors and drafting of short stories should be encouraged to improve the readability and accessibility of the GEO-6 products.
- An active outreach effort during the whole GEO-6 process is needed to raise the profile and create anticipation for the GEO-6 products. Outreach for the final GEO-6 products should be planned well in advance, through collaboration with major influencers and partners.

With regard to drafting of the assessment document, the Co-chairs indicated that counterpoints and dissenting findings should be presented by authors while drafting the assessment, but these should be placed in the appropriate context of credibility/acceptability of the science. Efforts should also be made to highlight potential negative impacts of particular policy decisions, in particular with respect to equity and distributional impacts. The overall narrative of the assessment should be clear to authors in order that particular issues can be highlighted in the appropriate sections. For example, complex waste management issues such as the environmental impacts of the ship recycling industry, waste picking by women and the evolution and impact of citizen science on environmental data are subject areas that can be dealt in short narratives at appropriate parts of the assessment.



First Global authors meeting, 20-24 February 2017



Regional GEO-6 Book sprint September 2015

Advisory Panel (SAP) will conduct planning meetings during the middle 3 days and The Innovative Outlooks Group will mainly focusing on brainstorming on new methods and tools for Global Environment Outlook-type assessments and developing a work plan for the Outlooks component of the assessment. Global Environment Outlook Fellows will attend all five days of the meeting and focus on research support for the author teams.

The sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook will feature a unique component where authors will address 10 cross-cutting issues¹ across 5 environmental themes (Air; Fresh water; Oceans/Marine, Land and Biota) in order to ensure coherent analysis of these issues across the environmental themes and create a direct link with the Sustainable Development Goals. To provide guidance and leadership, the assessment co-chairs and vice-chairs will circulate amongst the drafting groups to observe and provide thoughts on the overarching themes and focus areas of the assessment. Co-chairs and vice-chairs will be active participants in the discussions of the drafting teams, while the UN Environment Secretariat will provide administrative and technical support. Substantive support to the authors will be provided by UN Environment content experts.

Coordination meeting with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

UN Environment's Science Division and the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services met to discuss coordination between the Global Environment Outlook and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services assessment processes over the next 2 years, as the environmental and ecosystem assessments are developed.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services regional assessments are likely to provide useful inputs for Global Environment Outlook, especially for chapters on Biota and Land, thus the logic in creating synergies between the two processes. The Intergovernmental Panel's work on ecosystem valuation could be especially useful for authors of the Global Environment Outlook. This work tries to avoid anthropomorphizing the value of ecosystems, but helps create a framework for considering ecosystem value within existing assessment approaches.

Authors working with Intergovernmental Panel are in the process of creating final review drafts of the 6 regional assessments and will produce the first review draft of the global assessment for May/June 2017. The timelines of the Global Environment Outlook and the ecosystem global assessment are very similar, as the environmental assessment will also be producing a draft during this time frame. However, the similar timelines might make it difficult for the Intergovernmental Panel global assessment authors to have material to summarize for the Global Environment Outlook.

The first global authors meeting will take place in Frascati, Italy (near Rome) from the 20th to the 24th of February 2017. The meeting will be hosted at the European Space Research Institute (ESRIN) facilities.

Meeting structure:

The meeting will cover a full 5 days, with opening ceremonies and author orientation on Day 1, interaction between the authors and the Global Environment Outlook advisory bodies on Day 2, and finally Days 3-5 will focus on drafting of chapters in order to finalize the zero order draft of the first two chapters of the assessment by the end of the meeting.

In parallel to the authors meeting, the High-level Inter-governmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group (HLG) and the Scientific



¹ Chemicals and Waste; Culture, Education and Society; Human health; Climate impacts; Energy; Resource use; Polar regions; Environmental disasters; Food and Gender.

Having developed expertise in assisting authors with managing citations, references, charts, maps, infographics and now with access to plagiarism checking software, Science Division could assist the Intergovernmental Panel by providing access to this infrastructure in support of the ecosystem assessment authors. The upcoming webinar on citations, references and plagiarism as well as the one on management of charts, graphs and infographics will provide details on this infrastructure. The planned webinar on the revamp of the structure and content of UNEPLive could benefit from a closer link with the Intergovernmental Panel and World Conservation and Monitoring Centre datasets, which in turn could benefit author teams in both assessments processes. Such collaboration could maximize benefits for both the environmental and the ecosystem assessments by allowing compelling visuals to be created in both assessments.

Polar Circle Marathon

At the end of October GEO Unit staff member Sandor Frigyk participated in the Polar Circle Marathon which took place near the small town of Kangerlussuaq, Greenland just north of the Polar Circle. Part of the route was run on the polar ice sheet where participants had to carefully follow a marked out course to prevent slipping into hidden ice crevasses. The remainder of the route was through beautiful arctic tundra, passing enormous glacier tongues and moraine plains, where reindeer and musk oxen could occasionally be seen grazing.

Sandor successfully completed the 63km Polar Bear Challenge which entailed running both the full marathon on Saturday 29th October as well as the half marathon the next day. Temperature variation was extreme, ranging from -29 to -9 degrees Centigrade over the two day period. Sandor remarked that it was interesting to experience firsthand the effects of global warming on the polar ice cap. The exposed ice has now become dark grey in colour, whereas in the past when it was much lighter there would be greater reflection of sun light. There is now greater absorption of heat energy leading to a reinforcing feedback loop causing further melting of ice. Global warming is a harsh reality for the local population in Kangerlussuaq who experience increased river flooding in summer that has even destroyed a bridge in the town.



Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development: a Gap analysis to strengthen the science-policy interface

The gap analysis produced by UN Environment under the mandate of Governing Council decision 27/2 and UNEA I resolution I/4, won't be sent out for technical review as scheduled. In agreement with UN Environment's Law Division, it has been decided to extend the coverage of the analysis by including Governance issues, both at global and regional levels. Science Division will closely work with Law Division to capture the gaps existing in legal agreements which could be strengthened to bridge the gap in the Science policy interface. The first draft of the paper, including the Governance component, should be available and circulated in January for technical review.

Review of the Integrated Environmental Assessment

The scientific/technical review of the Integrated Environmental Assessment Guidelines draft is now open. UN Environment, with its partner GRID Arendal, is in the process of developing updated Integrated Environmental Assessment Guidelines. This work was launched with a call for expertise, with a group of experts working towards compiling recent works on Integrated Environmental Assessment into a revised set of draft guidelines for conducting global, regional, thematic and rapid or alert-type assessments. The initial draft was then reviewed by the Global Environment Outlook advisory bodies; the Assessment Methodologies, Data and Information Group; the High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Bodies and the Scientific Advisory Panel. A full scientific and technical review of the integrated environmental assessment guidelines by our community of Global Environment Outlook reviewers is now on-going from 9 November 2016 to 13 January 2017.

