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December 27, 2022

GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary, December 6, 2022

Important Note: In order to make our calls more efficient and effective, members of the GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each. Members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking to minimize background noise.

The Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) met at its second virtual call to discuss GEO-7 progress and plan next steps for the advancement of its work. Agenda items included:

1. Review and advice on the ongoing nominations for the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG)
2. Review and advice on the nomination process for GEO-7 experts (authors, review-editors, GEO-fellows) and collaborating centres.
3. Review and advice on GEO-7 schedule, including expert meetings and updated detailed workplan for the IMAG
4. Any Other Business

On these agenda items the IMAG decided:

- The IMAG noted the progress and the challenges that may arise from MESAG nominations and reaffirmed its readiness to intervene should there be need for gap filling in order to fulfil the MESAG selection requirements
- A proposal for MESAG membership will be sent after 15 December deadline for IMAG's feedback. IMAG members will send comments on the proposed MESAG membership via e-mail. This will allow for formation of the MESAG in the early part of January 2023 and have a call between the Co-chairs of the IMAG and the new MESAG members. In case there will be questions and issues of substance, Co-chairs of the IMAG will consult with the secretariat to see whether there is need to have a call for further discussion or whether those issues can be dealt with via e-mail.
- The IMAG is pleased with the progress of the nominations for GEO experts and collaborating centres and noted the tight schedule ahead in selection and formation of author teams and collaborating centres in early 2023.
- IMAG will meet in the fourth week of January where the IMAG will discuss the author team selection proposal. Further, the call to review and discuss the approach for regional and subregional analysis within the GEO will be in the third week of February 2023 because it will be one of the key items for the discussion in Bangkok. The meeting in February will be a preliminary one and will be used to identify a number of issues. The secretariat can then prepare a brief note for the Bangkok meeting from that February meeting.
- The Secretariat will provide doodle polls seeking availability preference of the IMAG for the next two meetings. Meeting invites will then be sent to the IMAG booking its time in advance of the next two meetings planned for early 2023.
- The Secretary will update the IMAG as soon as possible the approval status of the scoping document and a confirmation on the face-to-face meeting in March in order to book their time.

Rapporteur	Signature
Rafael Monge	

Summary of the meeting

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

Review and advice on the ongoing nominations for the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG)

The secretariat presented the status of the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) nominations. The nomination period for the MESAG started on 24 October 2022 and is expected to close on 15 December. In its presentation the secretariat highlighted the low number of nominations from Member states showing lack of a single nomination from some regions by the time of this IMAG meeting. Further, the secretariat highlighted the need to ensure diversity of expertise ranging not only in the conventional GEO related fields which are mainly natural sciences, but also in social sciences like economists, social development and scenarios and outlooks. The secretariat stated that an assessment of the nominations would be done at the end of the nomination period and a potential scenario would be that the MESAG is constituted with a few gaps that fail to fulfil the criteria i.e., gender, geographical balance and diversity of expertise where a target approach would be applied to fill these gaps.

On this item, the IMAG noted the progress and the challenges that may arise from MESAG nominations and reaffirmed its readiness to intervene should there be need for gap filling in order to fulfil the MESAG selection requirements. Further, the IMAG noted the geographical and gender imbalance of the presented MESAG nomination update highlighting that it was important to ensure these balances are achieved within the remaining two weeks of the MESAG nominations. Some IMAG members also highlighted that they had received the invite in their respective governments, initiated the process from their side and nominations are in the pipeline. Other members also submitted that due to limited resources and in line with the desire for co-creation between the two GEO-7 advisory groups, they had decided not to nominate for a MESAG role. The IMAG also highlighted that some nominations had been made through the portal for some social scientists' candidate and enquired if the Secretariat had received the nominations noting that the nomination process does not provide an acknowledgement receipt. Further, the IMAG stated that it would be valuable for the Secretariat to identify current gaps and approach the IMAG for a targeted approach in ensuring the criteria is met is selection of the MESAG. IMAG members also sort clarification on the deadlines for nominations

On this issue the secretariat highlighted that the lack of nominations from Member States was not concerning because they take a while to come through and tend to come in towards the deadline. Therefore, the Secretariat expects to have more nominations towards the end of the nomination process. However, it may be challenging to achieve gender balance in the Secretariat's MESAG proposal which would ideally have 10 representatives from Member States, 10 from a major group and 10 from the experts in order to balance across the three groups. Further, the Secretariat responded that the deadline for nomination for the MESAG is December 15th, 2022. This will allow the Secretariat to provide a proposal on membership of the MESAG for IMAG's advice in good time. This will then lead to the formation of the MESAG in early January 2023. IMAG members were requested to share the MESAG nominations request within their networks and to follow-up with their respective governments in case they are planning to nominate before the deadline. The Secretariat

will also ensure that the nomination portals provide acknowledgement receipts after every successful nomination submitted.

Review and advice on the nomination process for GEO-7 experts (authors, review-editors, GEO-fellows) and collaborating centers.

The Secretariat was invited to present on the ongoing nominations for GEO experts and collaborating centres. Using the nominations letters released at the start of these nominations, the Secretariat presented that the GEO-7 experts nomination letter had combined four requests: Coordinating lead authors, Lead authors, Review editors and GEO fellows. A separate letter had also been provided for the nomination of the GEO collaborating centres. The Secretariat further highlighted that for Review editors, there's only one level of review editing while GEO Fellows are early entry professionals who are meant to support the author teams as they produce their chapters. A dedicated nomination portal has been provided for these experts and a separate portal where collaborating centres are requested to provide different types of information for their expressions of interest. The Secretariat reminded the IMAG that collaborating centres were clearly outlined in the resolution that the Executive director was to make a request for institutions that might want to become collaborating centres.

The Secretariat has received several enquiries for more information about these ongoing nominations. There are a number of institutions that are interested in supporting the GEO process. The Secretariat plan regarding collaborating centres is that if suitable to partner with an institution, a memorandum of understanding will be negotiated with the institution which would have no financial implications for either party. That memorandum of understanding will allow the institution to identify itself as a collaborating centre. There would be rules around the use of the UNEP logo and various other things that are the legal requirements in an MoU and in case of specific projects that the collaborating centre wants to undertake, a separate agreement would be made to allow flow of funds into a specific project either from the institution or from the Secretariat as needed. The deadline for both of these nomination processes (GEO experts and collaborating centres) is 15 January 2023.

The Secretariat also highlighted that it has taken a little bit of time to approve the GEO-7 scoping document which was discussed at the October 17th to 20th meeting. The Secretariat noted that because of the comments received during the 72-hours silent procedure, the scoping document is not yet adopted. However, the secretariat has started the experts nomination process because at least the annotated outline of GEO-7 has been agreed and currently does not contain any pending comments. As identified in the GEO procedures document there will be gap feeling for author teams after the initial selection process. The plan therefore is to have the initial team of about 80 authors at this stage to enable successful first authors meeting in Bangkok and then fill existing gaps as the drafting process commences to make a team of about 100 authors. The Secretariat will make a proposed list from the nominations received then pass it on to the assessment co-chairs and the MESAG for review. The list will then be shared with the IMAG before going to the Executive director for final approval. This will need to happen in the last two weeks of January 2023 to ensure adequate planning and processing of their participation in the first authors meeting in Bangkok.

On this issue, the IMAG noted the tight timeline in the nomination and selection process of the experts and collaborating centres. Further, it was noted that nomination letters have been received by different countries and agencies and identification of appropriate candidates was underway before official nominations are made through the portals. The IMAG further enquired if its members can also participate as GEO authors. The IMAG further enquired on the terms of reference and expected selection criteria for the collaborating centres. For this request the Secretariat directed the IMAG to the nomination letter request for the collaborating centres and presented in detail each term of reference and expected selection criteria.

In its response, the Secretariat informed the IMAG that its role is an oversight role over the whole process and at the end of the process the IMAG will issue a validation opinion. It will therefore be a conflict of interest for IMAG members to participate as authors because it will be judging its own work at that point. The Secretariat therefore discouraged IMAG members from participating as authors unless after resignation from an IMAG role.

On this agenda item, the IMAG was pleased with the progress of the nominations for GEO experts and collaborating centres while noting the tight schedule ahead in selection and formation of author teams early 2023.

Review and advice on GEO-7 schedule, including expert meetings and updated detailed workplan for the IMAG

The Secretariat was invited to present the updated GEO schedule. In its presentation, the Secretariat highlighted that the IMAG was scheduled to meet in person in October, which had already happened. The IMAG is scheduled to meet again at the first authors writers sprint in March 13 to 17 2023 and the third authors writer sprint scheduled for September of 2024. There will be virtual meetings throughout the GEO process and the last meeting of the full IMAG will be to finalize the draft summary for policymakers in September 2025. There will be various other meetings such as review and approval of the summary for policymakers which is the final ad hoc open-ended meeting. There will be peer reviews throughout the whole process, expert peer reviews and intergovernmental reviews, so there'll be numerous opportunities for the IMAG to feed into the process from a virtual perspective in addition to the face-to-face meetings.

The Secretariat then used the workplan table to present key dates and events for the IMAG. The next IMAG face to face meeting is planned for 14 to 16 of March 2023 with the next two being in 4th to 6th of September 2024 and 15 to 18 September 2025. The Secretariat however notified the IMAG that the GEO-7 scoping document has not yet been fully approved and there is still a back and forth with one country specifically on the budget in the scoping document and there have been requests to try and reduce the budget to try and bring it within the available funding from core resources at UNEP. One of the proposals for reducing the budget was to reduce the number of IMAG meetings. Consequently, the Secretariat has spoken to the IMAG co-chairs and the country's representatives and has developed a proposal that will satisfy this concern. The proposal will maintain the three IMAG face to face meetings as presented in the schedule table but it would reduce the IMAG participation to just having the Co-chairs and vice chairs participate at the final summary for policymakers negotiation for review and approval meeting which is the one planned for January 2026. However, since this is an ad hoc open-ended meeting, it is possible that some of IMAG members might end up being nominated anyways by their governments to be able to come to that meeting, but not as part of the IMAG instead representing their respective countries. This proposal, the Secretariat believes is reasonable and will be accepted but the final decision will be communicated when the decision has been made and the proposal approved.

On this issue the IMAG Co-chairs also briefed the group on their discussion with the Secretariat and the donor regarding the budget situation and where the co-chairs had emphasised the need to have the proposed IMAG face-to-face meetings given that IMAG is required at the end of the process to validate the process. This requires sufficient interaction with the authors and the actual work being undertaken. The IMAG co-chairs are therefore confident that the Secretariat's proposal is reasonable and look forward to hear soon about the outcome of the proposal because it affects IMAG's schedule.

On this issue, the IMAG enquired on the term "Expert group", seeking clarification on what it entailed. IMAG further enquired on planned workshops and the first authors meeting schedule seeking clarification on whether these are planned to happen at the same time. The IMAG also sort clarification on the GEO coordination group and how and when they would meet.

In its response the secretary highlighted that there are three categories being contacted for nominations in this nomination period for experts and collaborating centres. They are member states, UNEP accredited major groups and stakeholders and expert groups. GEO has a wide group of experts who have contributed in previous cycles and who have expressed interest in participating in future GEOs. The generic term experts is often used because anybody who is in that list has been involved or expressed an interest of being involved in assessments, especially the GEO assessment and they are not accredited stakeholder or a Member State within the UNEP definition. The expert group is therefore broader and not included in the nine constituencies under Agenda 21 forming the UNEP accreditation process establishing the stakeholders. On the workshop schedule, the Secretariat responded that the Solutions pathways methodology Workshop and the modelling and Scenarios workshop are planned to happen a week before the first authors meeting. The Secretariat's plan is to use the authors time as efficiently as possible therefore the week before the main authors meeting there will be two small workshops allowing the policy experts to work on their methodology for developing solutions pathways and the modelling and scenarios experts to develop their approach for the socioeconomic modelling of those solutions pathways. These experts will then stay over the weekend and participate in the full authors meeting the following week. The IMAG meeting will be in the middle of that week from 14 to 16 March. On the enquiry about the coordination group, the Secretariat explained that 1 and a half day of the 3 days meeting in March will be for the coordination group to meet and discuss how they will work together, what issues the coordination group would deal with in comparison to the IMAG, or the MESAG or the Co-chairs of the assessment and establish its own roles and responsibilities. The coordination group comprises of the Co-chairs of assessment, Co-chairs of IMAG, Co-chairs of MESAG and the Co-chairs of AHOEM.

The IMAG then further enquired the possibility of IMAG members to attend the workshops before the author meetings. On this issue the Secretariat highlighted that this will be very early stages of development and may not need IMAG's inputs. There will be another set of workshops for solutions pathways and scenarios and modelling later on the year. There are in the IMAG work plan some calls planned to review both of those methodologies.

The Secretariat then presented the IMAG draft workplan noting the changes that has been requested by the IMAG in its first face to face meeting in Nairobi. It was highlighted that the terms of reference have now been aligned with the terms of reference that are in the procedures document. The Secretariat presented the IMAG terms of reference in detail. In its presentation the Secretariat also noted that the situation now is that from January 15th, 2023, a group of about 100 authors have to be selected and approved. There is therefore a need for a call in the fourth week of January where the IMAG could discuss the author team selection proposal. Further, the Secretariat noted that the timing for the call to review and discuss the approach for regional and subregional analysis within the GEO has been changed. This had originally been planned for the third week of January, now the proposal is to move it to the third week of February 2023 because it will be one of the key items for the discussion in Bangkok. There have been proposals that a much more detailed analysis at the sub regional level can be done if the digital version of the GEO is a reality. The Secretariat will have UNEP regional coordinators at the meeting in Bangkok and they will be able to provide advice on what's possible. The meeting in February will be a preliminary one on regional and sub regional issues and can be used to identify a number of issues. The secretariat can then prepare a brief note for the Bangkok meeting.

On this issue, IMAG requested the Secretariat for a time slot planning on the events to ensure planning of the next two meeting of the IMAG. The IMAG further enquired on a possibility for a hybrid meeting for the IMAG meeting in March.

In response, the Secretariat committed to opening doodle polls for the next two meetings of the year to enable efficient scheduling of the calls before end of the year. On hybrid participation of the IMAG

meeting in Bangkok, the Secretariat stated that the meeting will be at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok with virtual participation capabilities. However, co-chairs of the IMAG encouraged members of the IMAG to attend in person if possible, to enable a chance to discuss with authors and assessment co-chairs on key issues of the process in person.

On this issue it was agreed that before the January call, the Secretariat will send to the IMAG the proposal for the MESAG membership requesting feedback. This will allow for formation of the MESAG in the early part of January 2023 and have a call between the Co-chairs of the IMAG and the new MESAG members. The Secretariat will get e-mail feedback from IMAG members on the proposal for the MESAG membership. In case there will be questions and issues of substance, Co-chairs of the IMAG will consult with the secretariat to see whether there is need to have a call for further discussion or whether those issues can be dealt with via e-mail. Further, the Secretary will send to the IMAG as soon as possible the confirmation on the face-to-face meeting in March in order to book their time. Further, the IMAG requested the Secretariat to work out a way to effectively manage the coordination meeting as well as the IMAG meeting in March.

Any other business

- The IMAG enquired on the access to meeting outcome reports for the already conducted meetings. On this issue the Secretariat stated that it normally issues outcomes documents from all major meetings like the scoping document meeting. The Secretariat is therefore just about ready to circulate the revised scoping document for another 72-hour approval and will circulate the outcomes document with that request for the 72-hour silence procedure. For each of the IMAG meeting, a report will be provided by the Secretariat with a set of decisions at the top on the first page of the outcomes document and then the summary of the meeting will be provided in subsequent sections.
- The IMAG enquired on whether its members will also receive the communication on the scoping meeting. The Secretariat responded that all IMAG members were part of the mailing list for the GEO scoping meeting therefore they will all receive the communication on the new 72-hrs silent procedure and the scoping meeting outcomes document. Further, IMAG members have been posted on the GEO website and a press release has been made by UNEP announcing the formation of the IMAG with its membership.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 17h28 (EAT).

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- The Secretariat to provide doodle polls for two upcoming IMAG meetings and share the meeting calendar invite as soon as possible
- The Secretariat to confirm the dates for the Bangkok meeting as soon as possible for booking on time for the IMAG meeting in Bangkok
- IMAG members to share the MESAG, Experts and Collaborating centers nominations request within their networks and to follow-up with their respective governments in case they are planning to nominate before the deadline.
- Secretariat to share the presentation on the GEO timeline with the IMAG
- The Secretariat to share the MESAG membership proposal as soon as possible after the close of nomination deadline on 15th December for feedback
- IMAG to provide feedback on the MESAG proposal shared by the Secretariat through email

List of Participants

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
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Mr TOGHRUL FEYZIYEV	Advisor, International cooperation division of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group
Dr Marek Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Poland	Eastern European Group
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Mr Rafael Monge	Director - National Center of Environmental Information (CENIGA) Ministry of Environment and Energy; Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group
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Dr Lisa Eriksson	Policy evaluation and analysis; Sustainable Development Department; Swedish Environmental protection agency	Sweden	Western European Group
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Ms Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	Western European Group
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Mr. Miroslav Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Czechia	Eastern European Group
Mr Thomas Chali	Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management in Tanzania	Tanzania	African Group
Ms Neyra Herrera	Chief of Environmental Statistics; ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Names	Gender	Nationality	Major Group
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf		Egypt	Science and Technology

Ms. Ruth Viola Spencer	Chair, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas (MEPA) Trust	Antigua and Barbuda	Women
Mr Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities

Apologies

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr Modibo sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	Mali	African Group
Dr Thuraya AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA- Oman	Oman	Asia and the Pacific 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 Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern European Group
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Dr Toral Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	United States	Western European Group
Names	Gender	Nationality	Major Group
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization
Mr Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Norway	Non-governmental organization
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. Zahra Abu Taha	Recycling officer at ZATARI refugees camp, Oxfam	Jordan	Children and youth
Mr Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray	Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	India	Business and industry