

Proposed Terms of Reference for a 2021 Symposium Subgroup

This document is submitted by the Secretariat to the Programme Board for decision.

1 BACKGROUND

GEO has convened an annual symposium addressing the GEO Work Programme (or Work Plan) since 2010. While the format and topics addressed have varied over the years, the event is firmly established as a key highlight of the GEO annual cycle. It has been held in the period between April and June, primarily to avoid conflict with

The target audience of the GEO Symposium has typically focused on the leads and participants of GEO Work Programme activities; the sessions have therefore typically addressed issues thought to be of interest to this community. The specific theme of the Symposium varies depending on the point within the three-year Work Programme cycle. The 2021 Symposium will mark the mid-point of the 2020-2022 GEO Work Programme.

Organization of the GEO Symposium was managed by the GEO Secretariat in the early years. Since its creation, the Programme Board has played an increasingly important role in the design and management of the event; a fact recently recognized formally in the GEO Rules of Procedure. In recent years, the Programme Board has convened a subgroup to work with the Secretariat on the organization of the Symposium for each particular year. Further, the Programme Board has provided guidance to the subgroup regarding the theme or themes that it would like to see addressed at the Symposium.

2 SITUATION IN 2021

The 2020 version was the first GEO Symposium to be held in an online format, all others being in-person events, usually at the Secretariat offices (World Meteorological Organization building) in Geneva, Switzerland. While there are indications that some countries may fairly advance in their COVID-19 vaccine distribution by late spring, others may lag. The Secretariat is also planning to convene a Data and Knowledge Workshop (the successor event to the Data Providers Workshop) around the middle of May. It is proposed that the 2021 GEO Symposium be held in mid-June, tentatively 14-18 June. This would potentially allow for the Symposium to be an in-person event for those able to travel under the conditions at the time, while incorporating online elements for those unable or unwilling to travel.

3 SUBGROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

As required under the GEO Rules of Procedure, proposed terms of reference are provided as Annex A to this document.

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

Programme Board is requested to:

1. Confirm the date for the 2021 GEO Symposium as 14-18 June;
2. Approve the draft terms of reference for the Symposium subgroup;
3. Suggest possible intended outcomes, themes, topics, or sessions for consideration by the subgroup;
4. Nominate (including self-nomination) members to the subgroup.

ANNEX A

GEO PROGRAMME BOARD – SYMPOSIUM SUBGROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The Symposium Subgroup is convened to work with the GEO Secretariat to plan and implement the 2021 GEO Symposium.

DUTIES

- Based on the guidance of the Programme Board, develop a programme for the 2021 GEO Symposium, including target audiences, topics to be addressed, and session formats, all of which will be described in a concept note.
- Identify and invite speakers, presenters, panellists, etc. to participate in the event, taking account of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion considerations such as gender, geography, and generation.
- Publicize the event to the identified target audiences.
- Serve as session coordinators, moderators, break-out group leaders, and/or note-takers during the event.
- Develop and implement tools to assess the success of the Symposium in achieving its intended outcomes.
- Identify lessons learned that may aid in the planning of future Symposia or other events.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- 2021 GEO Symposium concept note (1 March 2021).
- Draft Symposium agenda (15 April 2021).
- 2021 GEO Symposium (mid-June 2021, exact date to be confirmed).
- Lessons learned report to Programme Board (PB-21).

MEMBERSHIP

Participation in the subgroup is open to all Programme Board member representatives (principals and alternates).

DURATION

The subgroup will be dissolved following presentation of its lessons-learned report to the Programme Board.