

Draft Private Sector Subgroup Work Plan

This document is submitted by the Private Sector Subgroup to the Programme Board for information.

1 BACKGROUND

The Private Sector subgroup (PS-SG) is convened to advise the Programme Board and the Executive Committee regarding the implementation of the elements of the Canberra Declaration related to the private sector. In particular, PS-SG is requested by the Executive Committee to give special attention to article 16, which includes the need to create opportunities for small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) to leverage Earth observations.

2 HIGH-LEVEL WORK PLAN

The PS-SG considered a wide range of possible activities that it could undertake in support of its terms of reference, particularly as they relate to creating opportunities for SMMEs. In developing the high-level work plan below, the subgroup members agreed that the focus should be on practical activities, rather than theoretical studies. The sub-group also agreed that it should focus on exploiting its potential to act as the 'linking point' between the private sector and the work programme activities, leveraging existing groups and processes such as the Regional GEOs, Foundational Task Working Groups, Programme Board Engagement Teams, and Industry Associations (including those that are GEO Participating Organizations) to reach into GEO and out to the private sector.

In support of the above, the sub-group has defined a following high-level work plan with two streams of activity:

Activity 1 - Engage with the Private Sector

With a special focus on SMME's, the sub-group will work through national level, regional-level, and industry association networks to:

- Better understand drivers and blockers for private sector engagement with GEO and the GEO Work Programme (GWP);
- Understand private sector needs for information products and services;
- Broker connections to work programme activities, including through guidance to the private sector on interacting with GEO;
- Highlight which GWP products and services can be used and exploited by the private sector;
- Highlight those GWP activities that will benefit from private sector involvement;
- Identify further downstream private sector players, beyond Earth observation technology; and
- Connect the private sector with GEO Week and the industry stream, in support of the organizers and hosts.

Activity 2 – Engage with GEO Work Programme activities

Leveraging networks such as the Engagement Teams, the sub-group will engage with GWP activities and the broader GEO community to:

- Understand opportunities for private sector contributions to GWP activities and for uptake of GWP methods, services, and products;
- Understand needs of GWP that could be addressed through private sector involvement;
- Understand which GWP products and services can be used and exploited by the private sector;
- Develop information and outreach products that highlight opportunities for the private sector broadly and SMME's specifically in GEO and the benefits of doing so;
- Support and advise interested GWP activities on interacting with the private sector; and
- Assist private sector organizations in making connections with potential markets and user communities.

3 NEXT STEPS

The subgroup will develop a schedule of specific activities and events in support of the high-level work plan.

The subgroup has discussed the importance of driving real engagement between the private sector and the GEO community, including through formats such as using hackathons and webinars. Such activities could in some cases build on existing events that the GEO community and others may organize such as symposia. However, short, targeted, standalone events may also be desirable noting the challenges of engaging audiences (particularly private sector audiences) in lengthy events that cover a broad range of topics.

The subgroup also discussed the potential to focus some of its efforts on tackling specific application areas (for example, agriculture, the “blue economy”, or land degradation) as a way of making progress in what is a very large and diverse area. It may be possible to identify areas where there is greater mutual willingness and readiness for engagement, and use this as a basis to target initial efforts.