

Pacific Islands Advisory Group Terms of Reference

This document is submitted by the Pacific Islands Advisory Group to the Programme Board for information.

1 BACKGROUND

At the 51st Executive Committee meeting (19-20 March 2020), the establishment of an advisory group was endorsed to propose a strategy for engaging Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). Specifically, the Pacific Islands Advisory Group (PIAG) was created to support progress against Articles 10 and 11 of the Canberra Declaration.

The role of the PIAG is to strengthen the PICTs-GEO relationship (governance, GEO Work Programme activities, regional caucuses, etc); build a community of practice to share knowledge, expertise, data and information and opportunities; and to make recommendations to GEO governance (both the Executive Committee and the Programme Board) on further opportunities/issues as identified to support the GEO engagement priorities.

Strengthened involvement in GEO by the PICTs, including regional Participating Organisations, will benefit both the GEO community and the PICTs by:

- Increased access and use for the PICTs to the wealth of knowledge, information, data, and expertise available through the GEO community; and
- Increased understanding by the GEO community of the knowledge, know-how and expertise of the PICTs, including traditional EO practices, small island EO innovation and application of EO methods that are especially focused and relevant to small islands with large oceanic estates.

This advisory group was intended to be open to participation by non-members of the Executive Committee and to Participating Organizations. Currently there are five government members (Australia, China, European Commission, France (New Caledonia), and the United States,) and five Participating Organizations (Micronesia Conservation Trust; the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and the World Ocean Council). As the only GEO Member in the PICTs region, Tonga has also been invited to join and other countries will also be encouraged to participate.

2 PIAG TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference in Annex A were approved without changes at the 53rd Executive Committee meeting.

Annex A

Pacific Islands Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

1 PURPOSE

The Pacific Islands Advisory Group (PIAG) is convened to advise the GEO Programme Board and the GEO Executive Committee regarding the implementation of the elements of the Canberra Declaration for the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs). In the longer term, the group may also support GEO engagement with island nations in other regions.

In particular, the PIAG is requested by the Executive Committee to give special attention to articles 10 and 11 of the Canberra Declaration, which recognize the need for GEO to:

- Recognize the significant capabilities the PICTs and other island nations have to offer; and
- Be inclusive of these countries with their significant and increasing exposure to disaster risk, climate change and sustainable development challenges.

2 DUTIES

- Work with the PICTs and international organizations to increase their participation in GEO governance and relevant GEO Work Programme activities, consistent with the priorities and needs identified in the [GEO Week 2019 Talanoa Outcome Statement](#);
- Organize, and participate in, discussions with representatives from the PICTs to support local communities (including GIS and remote sensing) in expressing and then better understand their interests, needs, constraints, and priorities, and where appropriate, support their capacity building as related to GEO and the GEO Work Programme;
- Work with other parts of the GEO Work Programme that are relevant to the PICTs;
- Encourage those living in PICTs to share with the GEO community their Earth observations expertise, areas of interest, and priorities, and to provide feedback and advice on GEO's products and services; and
- Work with the PICTs to identify and implement technical Earth observations solutions according to expressed needs and priorities of the PICTs.

3 TERM

The PIAG is convened until the end of the 2022 calendar year. This term may be extended by decision of the Executive Committee

4 EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Prioritized list of GEO Work Programme activities, including regional GEOs, that will be engaged to determine their relevance to the needs of the PICTs.
- Meetings or workshops to consult with PICTs and international organization stakeholders on how to encourage greater participation in GEO activities.

- Options papers for the GEO Programme Board and Executive Committee consideration providing recommendations on ways to strengthen GEO’s engagement with the PICTs, including, where appropriate, a draft implementation plan.
- Establishment of a “GEO presence” within existing Pacific Island Communities of Practice to share information, knowledge, expertise and opportunities between GEO and PICTs on Earth observations matters.
- Identify GEO activities that clearly express the needs and progress of the PICTs to the [Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development](#) (2018-2030).

5 MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PIAG must be nominated by GEO Members, Participating Organizations or Associates.

Leadership of the PIAG will be decided by consensus of its members. Geographical diversity and co-leadership are encouraged. The current co-leads are Australia; China and the Pacific Community (SPC), supported by New Caledonia (France).

The GEO Secretariat will provide support to the PIAG.

6 REPORTING

The PIAG will report its progress to the Executive Committee annually unless there are key matters specific to the PIAG scope and deliverables that require Executive Committee’s consideration.

The PIAG will provide an update at each Programme Board meeting as a regular standing item to ensure close connectivity between PICTs and the GEO Work Programme.

7 REVISIONS

These terms of reference may be revised at any time by the Executive Committee.