

## **Report from the Pacific Islands Advisory Group**

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

*The report that follows was previously presented to the GEO Executive Committee at its 55<sup>th</sup> meeting (July 2021). It outlines the progress made by the PIAG to develop its Work Plan and proposes a draft Engagement Strategy to support delivery against the PIAG Terms of Reference. Going forward, PIAG will report to each Programme Board meeting in addition to its reporting requirements to the Executive Committee.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have significant and increasing exposure to disaster risk, climate change and sustainable development challenges. In 2020, the GEO Executive Committee convened the Pacific Islands Advisory Group (PIAG) to advise the GEO Programme Board and the GEO Executive Committee regarding the implementation of the elements of the Canberra Declaration for the PICTs.

Since the last report from the PIAG to the Executive Committee, the PIAG held two teleconferences with the full membership on 15 December 2020 and 25 May 2021, and two teleconferences of the co-chairs prior to each of the full meetings.

In this document, the PIAG presents an initial draft of its Engagement Strategy for Executive Committee review and comment.

### **2 A GEO ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE PICTS**

The PIAG has developed a draft outline of an Engagement Strategy (see Annex A) that identifies a series of actions and opportunities intended to increase and improve opportunities for connections between GEO and the PICTs. The outline is based on the PIAG Work Plan (see Annex B), and its key elements are directly linked to the PIAG terms of reference.

The Engagement Strategy highlights links between high level goals of GEO and the PICTs. Reading from left to right, vertical columns represent components, with each component building upon the former block. They are: Listed Deliverables (from the PIAG terms of reference), Activities (what PIAG and the GEO community may do, dependent on resources and priorities), Outputs (anticipated deliverables) and Outcomes (the long-term impact). Horizontal rows outline what might be undertaken in order to progress. For instance, if these Activities are implemented, then these Outputs are expected to be achieved, which in turn, will lead to these long-term Outcomes.

The PIAG proposes an inclusive approach to engaging with PICTs and relevant Participating Organisations and will capitalize on regional meetings and working groups (including Asia-Oceania GEO, the Pacific Geospatial and Survey Council, and the Pacific Islands GIS and Remote Sensing Users Group) to the fullest extent possible. During the implementation of the Engagement Strategy, PIAG members will continue to participate in, support, and connect the various activities underway for the PICTs. However, it is not proposed that the PIAG should oversee or directly implement these activities. While the details of implementation are yet to be determined, it is expected that implementation will be led by a mix of PICT-based regional organizations, GEO Work Programme activities, Asia-Oceania GEO, and other means. This reflects PIAG's status as an advisory body to the Executive Committee and the Programme Board.

### **3 NEXT STEPS**

Following the Executive Committee discussion, the PIAG will prepare the full Engagement Strategy to address the comments received and to further delineate the expected implementation mechanisms for the Strategy.

## Annex A – Draft Outline of a PIAG Engagement Strategy

**Goal: Welcome new Members from the Pacific and other island nations to the GEO community, and recognise the significant capabilities they have to offer. Emphasise the importance of GEO being inclusive of these countries with their significant and increasing exposure to disaster risk, climate change and sustainable development challenges. *EO Talanoa Statement (2019)***

PIAG Terms of Reference	Proposed Activities	Proposed Outputs	Planned Outcomes (5-10 Years)
<p><b>SCOPE</b> the EO needs and priorities of the Pacific</p> <p><b>CONSULT</b> with PICTs to understand needs, barriers, opportunities for engagement</p> <p><b>CONNECT</b> technical EO activities in PICTs and GEO with one another</p> <p><b>ALIGN</b> with relevant UN agendas</p> <p><b>ADVISE</b> GEO governance on how to strengthen the link between PICTs and GEO</p>	<p>Identify EO needs and end user priorities and connect to the GWP</p> <p>Strengthen PICT-GEO engagement</p> <p>Promote participation by PICTs in activities that increase knowledge sharing, expertise and opportunities</p> <p>Promote alignment with UN ESCAP and other UN Agendas</p> <p>Advise ExCom and PB on ways to improve GEO-PICT engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritized list of WP to promote/facilitate engagement with PICTs</li> <li>• Identify the best channels for individual GEO member assistance to PICTs</li> <li>• Establish a PICT community of practice (CoP)</li> <li>• Increased PICT membership in GEO</li> <li>• Increased PICT involvement in GEO workshops and meetings</li> <li>• PICT leadership forum for GEO</li> <li>• Training and development opportunities for PICTs, includes data sharing</li> <li>• Greater PICT engagement with the private sector.</li> <li>• Greater transfer of knowledge GEO ↔ PICTs</li> <li>• Aligned activities GEO ↔ UN ESCAP</li> <li>• GEO-UN ESCAP workshops</li> <li>• Alignment with other UN Agendas</li> <li>• PIAG Draft Engagement Strategy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Talanoa Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICT governments lead all Earth Observation conversations and interventions in the Pacific.</li> <li>• PICT leaders and governments able to apply available EO to support enhanced decision making and achieve sustainable outcomes/development.</li> <li>• PICTs actively support marine and terrestrial stewardship in partnership with GEO and Earth Observation partners.</li> <li>• PICTs utilize EO to benefit regional blue economies.</li> <li>• Recognition of Traditional Knowledge in the Pacific and its inclusion as part of EO interventions and application to Oceans and Lands sensing initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Canberra Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEO community provide valued support to PICTs with their significant and increasing exposure to disaster risk, climate change and sustainable development challenges.</li> <li>• GEO community recognizes and draws on the EO capabilities the Pacific retains</li> </ul>

### Annex B – PIAG Work Plan

Item	Expected TOR Deliverable	Action	Timeframe	Lead/ participants	Priority	Status
1	Prioritized list of GEO Work Programme activities, including regional GEOs, that will be engaged to determine their relevance to the needs of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs).	Work Programme Mapping	2020	SPC (Andrew Jones)	High	Draft complete
		Cooperation on high-resolution satellite images and technologies, etc	March 2021	China (Tang Xinming)	High	Ready to provide 2-meter satellite images free of charge at any time to PICTs and their international organizations, needing the computer/server and internet at the cooperated country.
		Update at each Programme Board meeting				
		Undertaking the EO needs assessment	Ongoing	All		
2	Meetings or workshops to consult with PICT stakeholders on how to encourage greater participation in GEO activities.	Face to face meetings or workshops	2021-2022 (depending on the epidemic control)	All	High	
		Online training			High	China would like to provide the training on data processing and remote sensing technologies( face to face and online)
		Exchange visits			High	
		Engage with other GEO initiatives to explore opportunities to strengthen engagement between the Pacific and GEO			Medium	Underway – a guest speaker from another GEO initiative is invited to present at each PIAG meeting, followed by a group discussion
	Recruit new PICT-based GEO members	Ongoing	GEO Sec	As appropriate/ according to PICTs interests	Ongoing discussions with FSM, Vanuatu and Fiji	

Item	Expected TOR Deliverable	Action	Timeframe	Lead/ participants	Priority	Status
3	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.	Paper on implementation plan or other options (TBC)	Defer until June 2022	PIAG Co-leads and PB representatives		Zero draft prepared
4	Establishment of a "GEO presence" within existing PICTs Communities of Practice to share information, knowledge, expertise and opportunities between GEO and the PICTs on Earth observations matters.	Identify and work with a government based geospatial forum for PICTs	Ongoing	SPC		Pacific Geospatial and Surveyors Council identified as a key forum. PGSC has endorsed the GEO Week 2019 Talanoa Outcome Statement 2019 on Earth Observations
5	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)		Ongoing	UN-ESCAP		

## APPENDIX 1 TO THE PIAG WORK PLAN

### PIAG TERMS OF REFERENCE 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 Countries and Territories 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 \(2018-2030\)](#).