

Proposal for 2023 GEO Symposium

13-14 June 2023

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

1 CONTEXT

The annual GEO Symposia are a key opportunity for the GEO Work Programme community to exchange information, share experiences and foster collaboration.

Held in-person for the first time since 2019, the 2023 GEO Symposium is particularly key as it will be a critical programmatic checkpoint on the new post-2025 direction for GEO that will be agreed in Cape Town at the Ministerial Summit in November 2023.

Speakers and participants will build on GEO's achievements over the last decade, to carve out how GEO can accelerate equitable access to Earth observations and produce and disseminate information that leads to implementation.

The Symposium will be held back-to-back with the Open Data and Open Knowledge Workshop on 15-16 June, and synergies will be identified between both events.

2 PROPOSED THEME

Possible themes proposed for the 2023 Symposium include:

- Transformative Pathways for a Post-2025 GEO
- Stand out in the crowd: GEO Work Programme for Nature, People, and Planet
- Moving forward together on a transformative post-2025 GEO
- Push the Pedal for a Post-2025 GEO

The selected theme for the Symposium would underscore the urgency for action against the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. GEO, and in particular, its Work Programme, must evolve towards accelerating equitable access to, and use of, Earth observations through integrated, innovative and scaled products and services.

3 TARGET AUDIENCE

The key target audience for the Symposium will be the GEO community (GEO Members, Participating Organizations, Associates, GEO Work Programme activities).

Efforts will also be made to engage non-member UN agencies, possible funders, academia, private sector and others, especially those that are Geneva-based.

4 PROPOSED OBJECTIVES

- Support the development of the Ministerial Declaration and Post 2025 Strategy.
- Advance collaborations on a GEO Work Programme that provides integrated, innovative and co-designed products and services.
- Provide the GEO Work Programme community with opportunities to showcase their work and network with each other.

5 FORMAT AND POSSIBLE SESSIONS

The Symposium will take place in plenary with no parallel sessions to maximize consensus and engagement in the core discussions that need to be advanced for GEO's post-2025 strategy.

The Symposium could include two **interactive dialogues** on the post-2025 strategy and the GEO Work Programme. Speakers will include members of the Programme Board, GEO Work Programme activity leads and key stakeholders, users and partners. Each of the dialogues will unpack a key topic of the post-2025 strategy with a panel discussion. Exact focus of the dialogues will be identified with the approval of the Programme Board after the draft of the strategy is submitted to ExCom for its March meeting.

It is also proposed to have two **flash talks** bringing together 5-7 speakers that speak for 5 minutes each using a maximum of three slides. The following topics for the flash talks are proposed:

- Enablers for scaling the impact of the GEO Work Programme; and
- Mobilizing resources for the GEO Work Programme.

The following topics (exact titles to be defined) are suggested for the **thematic sessions**:

- Biodiversity and Nature: In this session, GEO's efforts to create the world's first Global Ecosystem Atlas will be examined, via the showcase of a few illustrative applications. The Global Ecosystem Atlas is a GEO post-2025 incubator.
- Urban Resilience for Heat and Health: The session will describe GEO plans to develop an integrated heat and health service built upon state-of-the-art Earth observations for urban resilience against climate change. This service is a GEO post-2025 incubator.
- Multi-Hazard Risks and Impact via the GEO Work Programme: Through this session, the GEO Work Programme activities focused on systemic risks will discuss how, why and where GEO is best positioned to deliver impact for countries and local communities.
- Operational services via the GEO Work Programme: The objective of this session will be to unpack the key characteristics of effective operational service from the perspective of users and partners and identify challenges and opportunities for the GEO Work Programme activities to become more operational and focused.

See Table 1 for the possible format of the Symposium.

Table 1: Possible Format of the 2023 GEO Symposium

	Tues 13 June		Wed 14 June
09:00-10:00	Opening	09:00-10:15	Thematic Session 3
10:00-10:30	Coffee break	10:15-10:45	Coffee break
10:30 – 12:00	Interactive Dialogue on the Post-2025 Strategy and the GEO Work Programme	10:45 – 12:00	Thematic session 4
		12:00 – 13:30	Lunch
12:00 – 12:30	GEO Ministerial Summit Update	13:30 – 15:00	Interactive Dialogue on Post-2025 Strategy and the GEO Work Programme
12:30-14:00	Lunch	15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
14:00 – 15:15	Thematic Session 1	15:30 – 16:30	Flash Talks
15:15 – 15:45	Coffee break	16:30 – 17:00	Closing
15:45 – 17:00	Thematic Session 2		
17:00 – 18:00	Flash Talks		

6 ORGANIZATION AND TIMELINE

The GEO Secretariat will take the lead on organizing the Symposium with coordination with the Programme Board and the Regional GEOs. The following milestones are proposed:

- 8 February: Programme Board gives feedback to, and endorses, the overall proposal for the 2023 GEO Symposium
- 17 March: Programme Board members and regional GEOs receive draft annotated agenda, including potential speakers and panelists, for review (capturing comments received at Programme Board meeting)
- 31 March: Secretariat receives and incorporates feedback on draft agenda
- 7 April: Revised annotated agenda, including potential speakers and panelists, circulated to Programme Board members and regional GEOs
- 13-14 June: Symposium takes place, in-person in Geneva
- September: Lessons learned report presented to the Programme Board (PB-27)

7 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Programme Board will support the Secretariat in ensuring that speakers, presenters, panellists, etc. are invited to participate in the event, taking account of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion considerations such as gender, geography, and generation.