

FAQ for GEO Call for Proposals

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

What is GEO?

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is coordinating efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS. GEO is a voluntary partnership of governments and international organizations. It provides a framework within which these partners can develop new projects and coordinate their strategies and investments.

What is GEOSS?

GEOSS is a “system of systems” with components consisting of existing and future Earth observation systems across the processing cycle from primary observation to information production. The Earth observing systems that participate in GEOSS retain their existing mandates and governance arrangements, supplemented by their involvement in GEOSS. Through GEOSS, they will share observations and products with the system as a whole and take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the shared observations and products are accessible, comparable, and understandable, by supporting common standards and adaptation to user needs. GEOSS thus makes it possible to combine information from currently unconnected sources, in order to obtain a view that is sufficiently comprehensive to meet user needs. More on GEOSS can be found at <http://www.earthobservations.org/geoss.shtml>.

What are the 9 GEOSS Societal Benefit Areas (SBA)?

- Reducing loss of life and property from natural and human-induced **disasters**;
- Understanding environmental factors affecting **human health** and well-being;
- Improving management of **energy** resources;
- Understanding, assessing, predicting, mitigating, and adapting to **climate variability and change**;
- Improving **water** resource management through better understanding of the water cycle;
- Improving **weather** information, forecasting, and warning;
- Improving the management and protection of terrestrial, coastal, and marine **ecosystems**;
- Supporting sustainable **agriculture** and combating desertification;
- Understanding, monitoring, and conserving **biodiversity**

Who are the GEO Members and Participating Organizations?

As of March 2009, GEO’s Members include 77 Governments and the European Commission. In addition, 56 intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations with a mandate in Earth

observation or related issues have been recognized as Participating Organizations. The complete list can be found at http://www.earthobservations.org/ag_members.shtml .

What is the overall purpose of this Call for Proposals?

This CFP seeks to promote practical applications of Earth observations to improve decision making and to highlight specific examples in which Earth observations provide societal benefit. The CFP has a strong interest to support end users in developing countries and improve how they use Earth observations.

The CFP supports broader GEO efforts to showcase the value and benefits of Earth observations through successful applications examples.

What is the scope of Projects

Proposed projects may be local to international in scope. Projects may include any type or number of organizations and participants.

Type I & II projects should be results-oriented (not exploratory research). Projects should be focused on the integration or improvement in use of Earth observations into decision support systems, assessments, decision processes, or other decision making activities. Workshops and training efforts could be included as part of a project proposal but these should not be the primary focus of a proposal.

What Societal Benefit Areas are included in this Call?

- **Human Health.** Within this SBA, GEO especially requests proposals related to use of Earth observations for decision making related to infectious diseases or air quality.

- **Water.** Within this SBA, GEO especially requests proposals related to use of Earth observations for decision making related to water quality or drought management.

- **Energy.** Within this SBA, GEO especially requests project proposals related to use of Earth observations for decision making related to renewable energy.

- **Agriculture.** Within this SBA, GEO especially requests project proposals related to use of Earth observations for decision making related to forests.

GEO expects to address other Societal Benefit Areas in future Calls for Proposals.

2 PROJECT PROPOSAL PREPARATION**What is a Concept Proposal?**

A Concept Proposal is a very brief description of the scope and objectives of a given project (5 pages or less in length).

Earth Observations for Decision Support

A Concept Proposal contains necessarily the following information to support the evaluation: i) project team leader’s name and contact information; ii) implementing organizations and partners; iii) initial description of project concept, including description of the decision or problem needing improvement and the application of Earth observations, data, or model products; iv) intended beneficiaries and anticipated benefits and improvements; v) anticipated duration of project; and vi) level of experience with Earth observations and type of assistance requested (if any).

These Concept Proposals are intended as a way to minimize initial efforts of project teams so that only projects of interest will prepare Full Proposals. However, the Concept Proposals need to contain sufficient information to enable the review panels’ evaluation and GEO support to the projects.

What are the deadlines?

<i>CFP Issued</i>	<i>13-February-2009</i>
<i>Concept Proposals Due</i>	<i>4-June-2009</i>
<i>Review Concept Proposals Announce results and invite Full Proposals</i>	<i>12-August-2009</i>
<i>Full Proposals Due</i>	<i>10-November-2009</i>
<i>Review Full Proposals Announce results</i>	<i>15-January-2010</i>
<i>Kickoff Meeting</i>	<i>circa March 2010</i>
<i>Applications Showcases</i>	<i>Future GEO Plenaries and Workshops</i>

Can I submit a Full Proposal if I don’t submit a Concept Proposal?

Yes.

If I submit after a deadline, will GEO accept my proposal?

Section 3.3 addresses proposal submission. GEO (UIC and CBC) may consider late proposals on a case-by-case basis. Project Advisors may submit their proposals at any time.

For Full Proposals, can the proposal be less than the page limit?

Yes. The focus of a project proposal team should be on the content. Proposals need to include sufficient information on the topics articulated in Section 4.

Is there any time limit to complete the projects?

Projects are likely to be 6 months to 3 years in duration. Project teams should scope their project so the project is able to demonstrate concrete results within three years.

Who can apply and submit a proposal?

Organizations of every type may submit proposals. Projects should include at least one GEO Member or Participating Organization. However, project leads however don't need to be GEO Member or Participating Organizations. Section 3.1 addresses Eligibility.

Are non-GEO Members and Participating organisations eligible to submit applications?

Yes, organizations of every type may submit proposals without restriction on the number of organizations on a proposal or teaming arrangements. Projects should include one or more GEO Members or Participating Organizations. Section 3.1 addresses Eligibility.

Is there a maximum number of a partner or participants in a project?

No. Organizations of every type may submit proposals without restriction on the number of organizations on a proposal or teaming arrangements. Teams of organizations and collaborations spanning organizational sectors (e.g., academia, private, government, public, etc.) and expertise (e.g., technical, management, scientific, etc.) are strongly encouraged and recommended.

How many project proposals can be submitted by the same respondent?

There is no restriction on the number of proposals that an organization may submit or participate in for this CFP. Nevertheless, each proposal must be a separate, complete, stand-alone document for evaluation purposes.

What Earth observations can I use?

Earth observations span a wide range of data, information, and techniques from which to develop applications for decision support. Examples of Earth observations include:

- Measurements from ground-based, in situ monitors;
- Data and measurements from Earth satellites;
- Derived products from satellite measurements;
- Products and predictive capabilities from Earth system models;
- Scientific knowledge about the Earth system; and,
- Data visualization techniques.

Section 1.4 addresses Earth Observations.

3 ADVISORS PROPOSALS

I am interested in being an Advisor. What is involved and how do I identify a project?

Individuals and organizations interested wishing to serve as Project Advisors must submit their curriculum vitae and describe their interest, experience, expertise, accomplishments, and skills with Earth observations and applications to decision making. They must also describe their availability and commitment to serve as an advisor as well as the number of projects they wish to advise at one time. The GEO UIC and CBC will match advisors with received projects. More details are available in section 4.4 of the CFP

Will I be paid for being an Advisor?

No, GEO will not provide funding for Advisors. Advisors are expected to arrange their own funding and/or serve on a pro bono basis. Advisors will need to identify their level of commitment to one or more project.

4 EVALUATORS/EVALUATIONS:**Who will evaluate the projects and how are evaluators chosen?**

Through the responses to the CFP and nominations from the GEO committees, the User Interface Committee and Capacity Building Committee will jointly select reviewers and establish review panels. The review panels will include subject-matter experts in the respective SBA and experts familiar with technical and/or management aspects of applications of Earth observations to decision making. Each panel will be made up of a minimum of 5 people, and the panel should collectively possess expert knowledge the following areas (some panelists may possess more than one expertise):

- Earth observations and models (scientific and technical perspectives);
- GEOSS and/or Earth observation data products and access;
- The particular SBA (preferably from a Community of Practice);
- Project management and Earth observations applications;
- Management and policy issues related to the SBA;
- Resource mobilization; and,
- Capacity building.

What are the criteria for the evaluation?

The review panel will assess each proposal on the three factors established in the CFP: Importance, Technical Feasibility, and Project Design.

The Importance criterion includes the following factors:

- Significance of the topic, problem, or decision making addressed;
- Potential benefits and impact of the project;
- Ability for the project to be sustainable and replicable;
- Alignment with one or more of the SBAs for this CFP (Human Health, Water, Energy and Agriculture);
- Appeal to multiple resource-providing organizations (Type I projects);
- Ability to support the sustainable development requirements of beneficiaries (Type I projects).

The Technical Feasibility criterion includes the following factors:

- Overall scientific or technical merit of the proposal;
- Qualifications, capabilities, or experience of the project team;
- Ability to access and apply proposed Earth observations to the problem or decision making;
- Ability to achieve the desired outcome with the proposed Earth observations.

The Project Design criterion includes the following factors:

- Ability to manage the project and achieve the stated objectives;
- Ability to quantify requested funding and realism of that request;
- Involvement of one or more GEO Members or Participating Organizations;
- Likelihood to demonstrate results within 3 years;
- Ability to demonstrate the value of GEOSS and the quality of outreach activities.

What is the likelihood that a project will be accepted?

As many projects as possible will be included in the selections;

What information will I receive from the review?

GEO (CBC and UIC) will contact the project lead with the results of the review panel and GEO decision. The review panel will prepare a Proposal Review Summary which provide significant text and information to explain the panel's discussion and evaluation. The Summaries will have text describing strengths and weaknesses on each of the three review criteria as well as the overall rationale. The Summaries are intended to help project teams improve their understanding of Earth observations and the quality of their projects.

Will I have access to the evaluation report?

Yes, GEO will send the Proposal Review Summary (aka, evaluation report) to the project lead.

When will I find out about my proposal? Who will contact me?

See deadlines above

For Concept Proposals, the CFP Management team will notify each Proposal Team leader via e-mail or letter regarding the proposal selection. For Full Proposals, the GEO Secretariat will notify each Proposal Team leader via letter and e-mail regarding the proposal selection. For Project Advisor Proposals, the CFP Management team will notify each Advisor via email regarding the acceptance.

I am interested in becoming an evaluator/reviewer. What do I need to do?

Please submit your CV (or brief biography) indicating your area of expertise and availability to GEO Secretariat (secretariat@geosec.org) for the attention of Fernando Ramos and Imraan Saloojee.

5 FUNDING

Is GEO providing funding for the projects?

As it is stated in the CFP documentation, this call "does not offer funds for preparation or participation in a proposal or project. GEO may however attempt to match selected projects from developing countries with resource-providing organizations."

Although no direct GEO funding will be available for the projects, there will be strong efforts to source funding for those projects that are highly recommended by GEO's Capacity Building and User Interface committees and the CFP project evaluators.

If funding is not guaranteed, why should I propose?

Although funding is not guaranteed, project teams may benefit from the expertise of the GEO community through experts reviews. Therefore, the final Full Proposal selected will have passed through GEO selection and review process so they will have already an international revision and recognition.

What are the budget limits for proposals?

There are no budget limits. However, as GEO will try and source funds for some selected projects it would be recommended to keep the project budget to realistic levels.

Is there any funding procedure established?

Projects that may receive funding will have to adhere to the rules and procedures of potential resource-providing organizations.

6 OTHER

If I do not want to submit a proposal, are there other ways to become involved?

Yes. Please contact the GEO Secretariat at secretariat@geosec.org