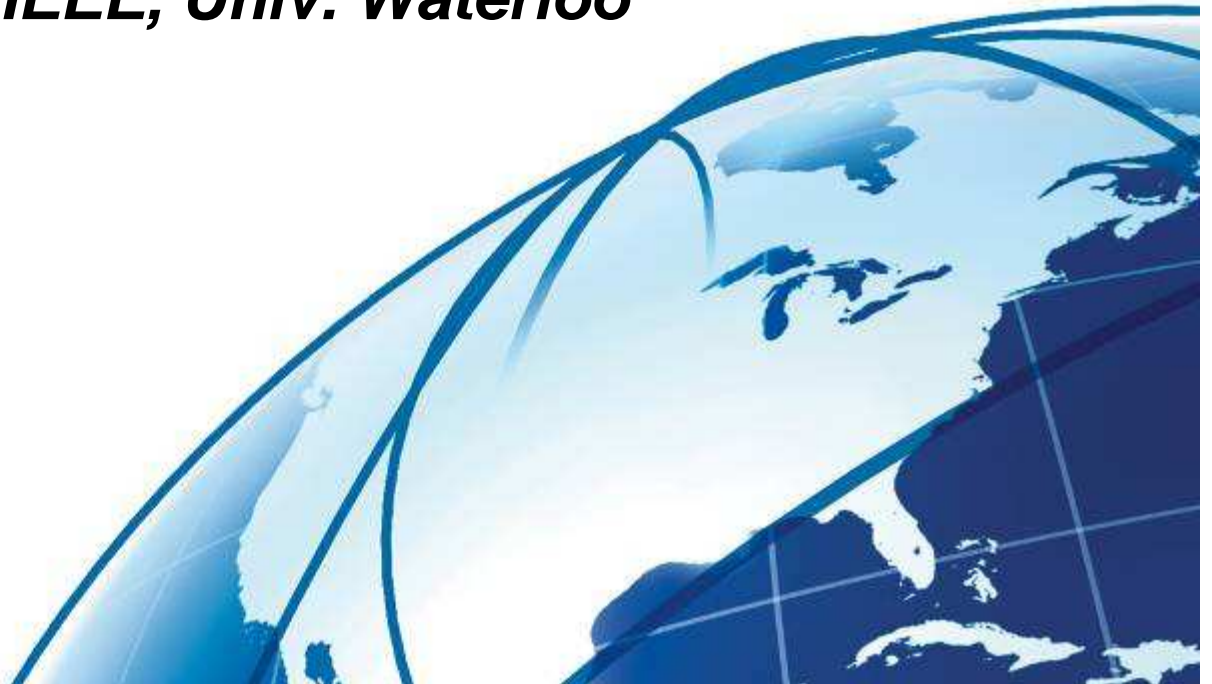




Community of Practice Guidance

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UIC Committee***





Guidelines for Generating Community of Practice Proposals

- A Community of Practice is defined as: “A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”
 - The following are classic characteristics of a Community of Practice (CoP)”
 - self-organizing
 - informal
 - boundary-spanning, outside organizations
 - many kinds of members: contributors, lurkers, newbies, facilitators, etc.
 - members distributed throughout an organization
 - voluntary, based on trust
 - sharing of best practices in reusable knowledge base
 - require more than just discussions.



The Objectives of a CoP will vary with the specific community but will include:

- Identify, gather, and seek agreement on their particular user community requirements;
- Provide a forum for cooperation of activities where GEOSS adds value to existing initiatives, to identify linkages and opportunities for collaborative strategic and technical projects and to coordinate the delivery of some GEOSS targets to enable the realization of societal benefits.
- Report on progress and provide updates to the User Interface Committee, GEO and other stakeholder communities as appropriate;
- Advise the User Interface Committee, other CoPs and GEO on matters relating to their particular area of interest or societal benefit, and on cross-cutting issues of interest to the CoP.
- Provide an informal point of contact for members or other jurisdictions on the specific benefit or interest area that affect more than one organization;



The Role of the Community of Practice within GEO

- The [GEO Plenary](#) establishes *Committees and Working Groups* to address aspects of GEOSS implementation and provide a mechanism for GEO [Members](#) and [Participating Organizations](#) to engage fully in the work of GEO.
- The Committees and Working Groups provide high-level review advice, recommendations, and support in the ongoing development and implementation of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. They also actively promote the implementation of GEOSS activities as described in [Annual Work Plans](#).
- The intergovernmental *Group on Earth Observations* (GEO) is leading a worldwide effort to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) over the next 10 years.
- GEOSS will work with and build upon existing national, regional, and international systems to provide comprehensive, coordinated Earth observations from thousands of instruments worldwide, transforming the data they collect into vital information for society.



The Role of the Community of Practice within GEO

- The *User Interface Committee* (UIC) engages users in the nine [societal benefit areas](#) in the development, implementation, and use of a sustained GEOSS that provides the data and information required by user groups on national, regional and global scales. The User Interface Committee has a specific goal to address cross-cutting issues by coordinating user communities of practice, ensuring continuity and avoiding duplication.
- To assist the Committee in meeting its objectives the UIC has chosen to develop a number Communities of Practice (CPs) to provide fora for producers and users to work together on areas of interest to GEOSS.
- The Committee's Terms of Reference, as adopted by GEO II December 2005, can be found at:
<http://www.earthobservations.org/docs/TOR-UIC.pdf>
- A user-led community of stakeholders, from providers to the final beneficiaries of Earth observation data and information, with a common interest in specific aspects of societal benefits to be realized by GEOSS implementation.



Principles

- Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from activities under a Community of Practice will be borne by the Member or participant that incurs them, and will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.
- CPs must be open to all who wish to participate and their activities must be transparent.
- The objectives of the CPs must address one or more of the GEOSS societal benefit areas and one or more of the tasks articulated in the annual work plan.
- CP Leaders are responsible for communicating/liaising with the UIC, including the preparation of quarterly progress reports for submission to GEO Secretariat.
- A co-chair of the UIC will be assigned to act as a point of contact for each CP.



CP	CP Lead	Contact	UIC Co-Chair responsible	
Coastal Zone	Paul Digiacomu, Hans-Peter Plag IGOS-P Coastal Theme	Paul.M.DiGiacomo@jpl.nasa.gov hpplag@unr.edu		CP-COASTAL@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG www.czcp.org
Renewable Energy	Ellsworth LeDrew	ells@watele.uwaterloo.ca		ENERGY_GROUP@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG
Air and Health	Gary Foley	Foley.Gary@epamail.epa.gov		COP-HEALTHENV@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG
Geohazards	Hans-Peter Plag Stuart Marsh	hpplag@unr.edu shm@bgs.ac.uk		www.geohazcop.org

Water and Heath	Gary Foley	Foley.Gary@epamail.epa.gov		
Global Water Cycle	Rick Lawford	lawford@umbc.edu		
Forest	Michael Brady	mbrady@nrcan.gc.ca		COP-FOREST@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG
Agriculture	Chris Justice - Geography Department, University of Maryland, USA; Jai Singh Parihar - ISRO, India			<u>COP-AG@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG</u>
Cryosphere	Jeff Key - NOAA, USA			
Biodiversity	Woody Turner - NASA, USA; Anne Larigauderie - DIVERSITAS			<u>GEO-BON@LIST.GEOSEC.ORG</u>
Carbon Cycle	Roger Dagerville			
IGOS-P components				



Template for CP Proposals

- Community of Practice Objectives – What societal benefit area will the CP address?
 - *Each CP will have slightly different objectives but of necessity there will be common objectives such as:*
 - *To identify, gather, and seek agreement on their particular user community requirements;*
 - *To provide a forum for cooperation for activities where GEOSS adds value to existing initiatives, to identify linkages and opportunities for collaborative strategic and technical projects and to coordinate the delivery of some GEOSS targets to enable the realization of societal benefits.*
 - *To report on progress and provide updates to the User Interface Committee, GEO and other stakeholder communities as appropriate;*
 - *To advise the User Interface Committee, other CPs and GEO on matters relating to their particular area of interest or societal benefit, and on cross-cutting issues of interest to the CP.*
 - *To provide an informal point of contact for members or other jurisdictions on the specific benefit or interest area that affect more than one organization;*



Template for CP Proposals 2

- Justification – what value will the CP add over existing collaborative activities?
 - *This paragraph will contain information specific to the societal benefit area. However, there will be a number of themes that are consistent throughout the Communities of Practice (CPs). They are:*
 - *no global mechanism to bring together actual users, potential users, researchers, producers and distributors of Earth Observation data and information;*
 - *the absence of a coordinated and consistent global approach has resulted in impediments to information sharing and duplication of effort; and*
 - *some information concerning the importance of the particular societal benefit area.*



Template for CP Proposals 3

- Membership – outline the key partners required for the CP to be successful:
 - *Each Community of Practice would include representatives from GEO member states, participating international organizations and any other stakeholders/organisations that have similar interests, goals, and or objectives, working closely together to create a forum for efficient and effective intelligence and advice to be provided to GEO for the successful implementation of GEOSS. Both developing and developed countries will be represented. Membership of a generic CP is illustrated below.*



Template for CP Proposals 4

- Working Methods – how will the CP operate
 - *This section should detail how the CP will operate, who will act as the lead and how business will be conducted (by email, teleconferences, regional meetings.....).*
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- Plan of Activities to contribute to delivering GEOSS Work Plan Targets
 - *This section should detail, including timescales, the activities the CP plans to undertake and which targets in the 2006 or 2007-09 GEO work plan they support. The Annual GEO Work Plan can be downloaded from the Document Library on the GEO web page <http://www.earthobservations.org>*



Addendum

- Quote from:
 - “Cultivating Communities of Practice”, by Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott and William M Snyder, the Harvard Business School Press, USA, 2002, 284 pages
 - “Communities of practice are distributed groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis.”



Addendum 2

- *The domain:* A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. (You could belong to the same network as someone and never know it.) The domain is not necessarily something recognized as "expertise" outside the community. A youth gang may have developed all sorts of ways of dealing with their domain: surviving on the street and maintaining some kind of identity they can live with. They value their collective competence and learn from each other, even though few people outside the group may value or even recognize their expertise.



Addendum 3

- *The community:* In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. A website in itself is not a community of practice. Having the same job or the same title does not make for a community of practice unless members interact and learn together. The claims processors in a large insurance company or students in American high schools may have much in common, yet unless they interact and learn together, they do not form a community of practice. But members of a community of practice do not necessarily work together on a daily basis. The Impressionists, for instance, used to meet in cafes and studios to discuss the style of painting they were inventing together. These interactions were essential to making them a community of practice even though they often painted alone.



Addendum 4

- *The practice:* A community of practice is not merely a community of interest--people who like certain kinds of movies, for instance. Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. A good conversation with a stranger on an airplane may give you all sorts of interesting insights, but it does not in itself make for a community of practice. The development of a shared practice may be more or less self-conscious. The "windshield wipers" engineers at an auto manufacturer make a concerted effort to collect and document the tricks and lessons they have learned into a knowledge base. By contrast, nurses who meet regularly for lunch in a hospital cafeteria may not realize that their lunch discussions are one of their main sources of knowledge about how to care for patients. Still, in the course of all these conversations, they have developed a set of stories and cases that have become a shared repertoire for their practice.”



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- User Response
- Benefits of CoP
- Next Steps
- Challenges
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