



European GEOSS Workshop on
Water

- Towards coordinated European contributions to the GEO Societal Benefit Area Water -

German Federal Institute of Hydrology (BfG)
Koblenz, Germany, 11-12 May 2010

Dear Colleague,

You are cordially invited to the EUGENE Expert Workshop on the Societal Benefit Area of Water as defined by GEO. This workshop is an important mechanism on the road to a well coordinated and sustained European contribution to GEO and GEOSS.

Background

The inter-governmental Group on Earth Observation (GEO) initiated the establishment of a globally-coordinated earth observation system of systems (GEOSS). The development of GEOSS is supposed to qualitatively improve our understanding of the Earth system, enhancing global policy- and decision-making abilities. GEOSS therefore addresses nine societal benefit areas (SBAs), with Water being one of them.

The GEO Strategic Targets Document accepted at the 6th GEO Plenary in Nov. 2009 states:

“Before 2015, GEO aims to produce comprehensive sets of data and information products to support decision-making for efficient management of the world's water resources, based on coordinated, sustained observations of the water cycle on multiple scales.”

Europe as one of the cornerstones of GEO intends to provide a strong GEOSS component. However, abundant relevant European activities are not yet adequately integrated, and Europe's technical strengths could contribute to a greater extent to the development of GEOSS.

The EUGENE project

EUGENE is an FP7 Support Action. Its main objective is to foster collaboration between pan-European organisations in the field of earth observation and to strengthen the coordination of national and regional programmes and organisations in their work towards GEO. Contributions to the European GEO strategy will be made by proposing a structured approach for three selected GEO SBAs as a subset to start with: Climate, Disasters and Water. The overarching goal is to ultimately achieve a strong European GEOSS component.

Currently, status quo studies are prepared covering European actors and capabilities, their relation to GEO, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats referring to the three SBAs mentioned above. Draft study reports will be available prior to the workshop in April 2010.

More information on EUGENE can be found at <http://www.eugene-fp7.eu/>.

Workshop goals and expected outcome

A Water SBA status quo study report, which has been drafted beforehand, will be put up for discussion at the workshop. It will be reviewed from an expert perspective. Furthermore, the report will form the basis for strategic considerations on how to achieve a well-coordinated and sustained European GEO component and contribution to GEOSS regarding Water.

Major outcomes of the workshop will be

- an updated report on the European status quo relevant to the Water SBA,
- a strategic document, referring to a coordinated European contribution to GEO for the Water SBA,
- potential inputs to a coherent European position and visibility at the GEO Ministerial Summit taking place in Beijing in November 2010.

Audience addressed

Pan-European organisations and programmes, major actors at European Member States level as well as global level organisations under the GEO umbrella are encouraged to take part in the workshop. Participants will benefit by the possibility to contribute to European strategic issues. Valuable synergies between organisations might be discovered, and the possible share of individual actors in European contributions to GEOSS will become more apparent.

You can contribute to the workshop's success by bringing in your organisation's perspective on GEO and on future opportunities, challenges, and needs in technical, regional and global perspectives.