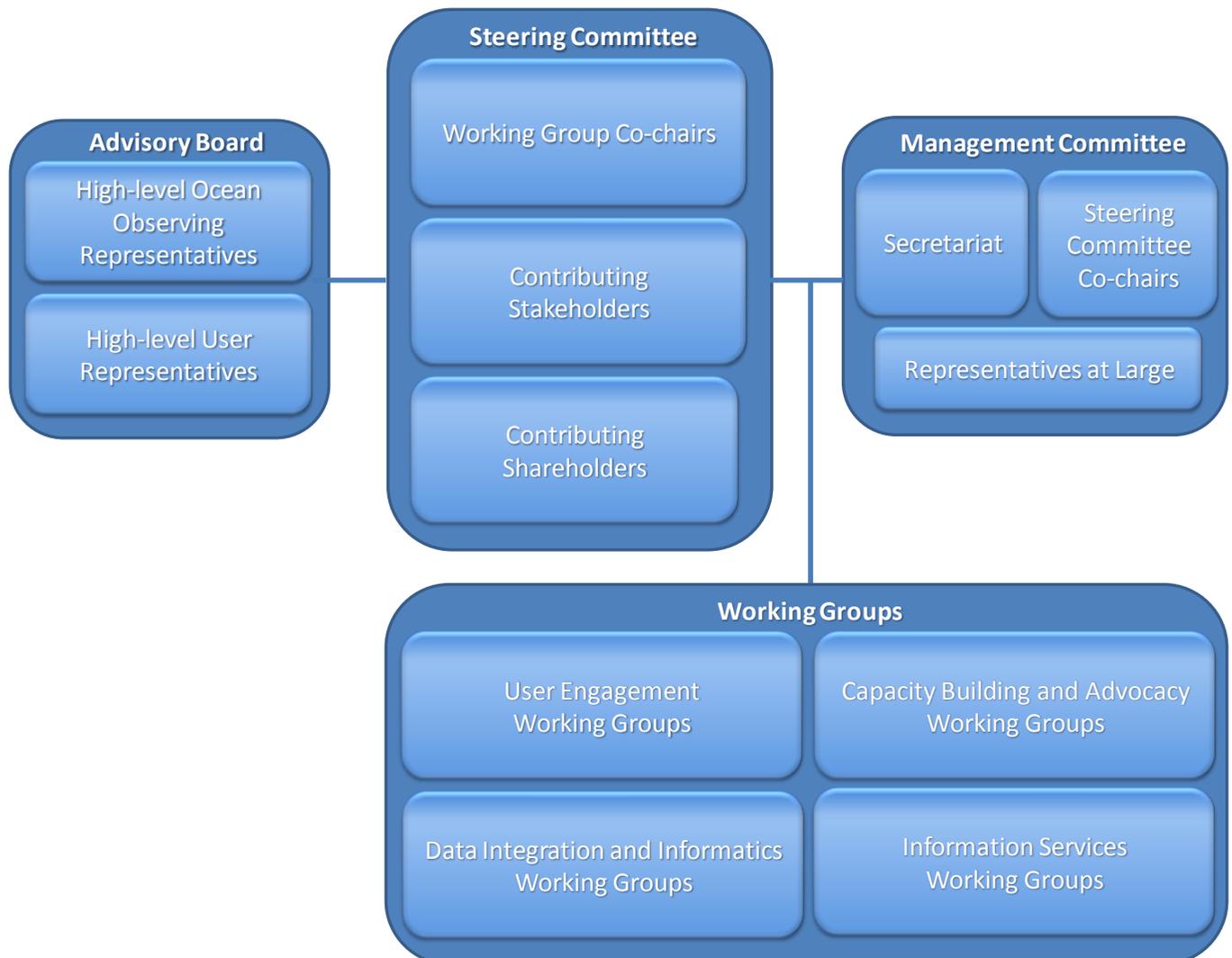


Terms of Reference
GEO Initiative
Oceans and Society: Blue Planet
Adopted on December 2, 2016

Note: These Terms of Reference (ToR) serve as an Addendum to the Blue Planet Implementation Plan, as submitted to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO). Both the Implementation Plan and the ToR will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Blue Planet Steering Committee, and updates submitted to GEO for approval as necessary. The procedure for making amendments to the ToR is described in Section 2.2 of this document.

1. Overview of the Structural Elements of Blue Planet

The organization of Blue Planet is reflected in the figure below.



The structural elements include:

- Advisory Board: responsible for providing the strategic direction for Blue Planet and advocating for Blue Planet.
- Steering Committee: main decision-making body, responsible for coordinating Blue Planet's activities, identifying and, where possible, contributing resources.
- Management Committee: responsible for managing the daily operations and activities of Blue Planet.
- Secretariat: provides scientific and technical coordination for Blue Planet Components as well as logistical support for Blue Planet activities.
- Component Working Groups: will implement specific project activities in support of Blue Planet's four main objectives.

2. Details of the Structure of Blue Planet

This section provides information about the roles and responsibilities and *modus operandi* of each structural element. Participation in the Advisory Board, Steering Committee and Components/Working Groups will not be remunerated. Attendance of Advisory Board, Steering Committee and Component/Working Group Meetings will generally be funded by the members themselves, although opportunities for travel funding will be sought by the Steering Committee, particularly for members from developing countries. Efforts will also be made to schedule meetings back-to-back with Blue Planet Symposia or other relevant events.

2.1. Advisory Board

The Advisory Board will provide oversight and strategic direction to the Steering Committee. The Advisory Board will meet quarterly via teleconference, and if possible once yearly in person.

The Advisory Board will be composed of high level individuals representing foundational ocean observing organisations and users. Nominations will be invited via an open call sent out to ocean observing organizations and high level user representatives (i.e. UN Groups, World Bank). Self-nominations will be welcome. The Steering Committee will review nominations and select a maximum of 10 members to serve terms of 2 years, renewable once.

2.2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the main decision-making body, responsible for coordinating Blue Planet's activities. Steering Committee duties are:

- To promote the aims and objectives of Blue Planet and expand its profile and prominence;
- To review and endorse the Implementation Plan and Annual Work Plans of Blue Planet;

- To monitor and evaluate institutional effectiveness of Blue Planet against aims and objectives outlined in the Implementation and Annual Work Plans;
- To represent stakeholder and shareholder interests;
- To provide guidance and support to Blue Planet Components and monitor their progress;
- To coordinate the production of deliverables for reporting to the GEO Secretariat;
- To work with the Blue Planet Secretariat and the GEO Secretariat to identify new stakeholders and shareholders that would contribute to and benefit from Blue Planet.
- To identify opportunities for collaboration between stakeholders/shareholders.
- To facilitate and coordinate relevant activities and mobilise resources when opportunities arise, in concert with the Advisory Group.

The Steering Committee will, as far as possible, operate by consensus. Decisions requiring a vote will be decided by simple majority of the votes cast. The quorum for a valid vote is participation of one half of the voting members of the Steering Committee. Votes may be held at meetings or by appropriate electronic means. These procedures will apply, for example, to make any changes to the Terms of Reference. The Steering Committee will meet in person at least once yearly and via teleconference on a monthly basis.

The Steering Committee will consist of the Leads (or Co-Leads) of Components and Working Groups and other contributing shareholders and stakeholders. Shareholders, as defined here, are those organizations that contribute resources for the overall coordination of Blue Planet (e.g. Secretariat, publications, Symposia, etc.) and/or the production of new services (specifically as Blue Planet products). Stakeholders are those organizations that contribute to, or benefit from, the Blue Planet Mission and Objectives, and in particular the work of the Components, either from the provider or user end. It is anticipated that between one third and half of the Steering Committee will consist of representatives of user communities.

Steering Committee members will be elected by the existing Steering Committee, from among the nominations received following an open call. Nominations can be made by the Advisory Board, stakeholder and shareholder organisations, or members of the community. Self-nominations will be welcome. In their decision, existing Steering Committee members will take into account the contributions of the shareholder organisations being represented, the relevance of the stakeholder organisations being represented, the balance between “providers” and “users”, geographical representation and gender balance.

Steering Committee members will serve a 3-year term with the potential for two one-year extensions (not to exceed 5 years in total). The term may be shortened to two years, for example if a member is serving as a representative of another organization, to align with the term they will serve as official representative (e.g. Chair or Executive Committee member) of that organization. Three Co-Chairs will be elected by the Steering Committee members, and will serve terms of three years, with the potential for two one-year extensions (not to exceed 5 years in total).

2.3. Management Committee and Secretariat

The Management Committee is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of Blue Planet and ensuring that activities are kept on schedule. The Management Committee is composed of the Blue Planet Secretariat and the 3 Steering Committee Co-Chairs. A small number of members-at-large (preferably no more than 3) may be appointed by the Steering Committee to fill gaps in geographical representation and/or expertise. The Management Committee will operate via regular e-mail correspondence and conference calls will be held on average every two weeks.

The Blue Planet Secretariat will provide scientific and technical coordination for Blue Planet Components as well as logistical support for Blue Planet activities. The Blue Planet Secretariat will have a Scientific Coordinator and a Technical Manager. Other roles may be created as the need arises and depending on the availability of funds/contributions from the shareholders. The Blue Planet Secretariat will report to the Steering Committee Co-chairs.

Blue Planet Secretariat duties are:

- To provide scientific and technical coordination for Blue Planet Components;
- To provide day-to-day logistical support for Blue Planet;
- To support the Steering Committee in the coordination of Blue Planet deliverables;
- To provide logistical support to the Advisory Board;
- To promote Blue Planet in the international arena;
- To work with the Initiative Leader to interface with and report to the GEO Secretariat on behalf of Blue Planet;
- To support the organisation of Blue Planet Symposia;
- To manage the Blue Planet website, social media and other communications.

2.4. Component Working Groups

Component leads will identify and form working groups as needed. The Component leads are responsible for identifying leads for all working groups formed for their component. Working group leads will be responsible for populating their working groups. The current list of Components is outlined below. Component leads, Working Group titles and Working Group leads are listed in the Implementation Plan.

Component 1 - Data Integration & Informatics
Component 2 - Capacity Building and Advocacy
Component 3 - User Engagement
Component 4 - Information Services

The duties of the Component leads are:

- To identify and articulate relevant component working groups.
- To identify working group leads and collectively identify appropriate individuals to serve on working groups.

The duties of the Component and Working Group leads are:

- To coordinate outputs from working group activities.
- To contribute to Blue Planet outputs

- To participate in reviewing Blue Planet activities and make contributions to the update of the implementation plan.

3. Adoption and review of the Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference were adopted by the Blue Planet Steering Committee via electronic vote on December 2, 2016. This document will be reviewed at least on an annual basis by the Steering Committee.