

Standards and Interoperability Forum

Terms of Reference

2007-09-26

Background

The Group on Earth Observations, GEO, commissioned its Architecture and Data Committee (ADC) to address standards and interoperability for the Global Earth Observations System of Systems (GEOSS). The GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan states: “Interoperability arrangements must be based on non-proprietary, open standards, and profiles must be specified when standards are not sufficiently specific. Rather than defining new specifications, GEOSS should adopt standard specifications agreed upon voluntarily and by consensus, with preference given to formal international standards such as ISO.” The GEO ADC established its Standards and Interoperability Forum to facilitate interchange of information and development of recommendations for standards and interoperability.

Purpose

The Standards and Interoperability Forum (SIF) provides advice, expertise and impartial guidance on issues relating to standards and interoperability for GEOSS.

Goal

The SIF’s goal is enabling ever greater degrees of interoperability among GEOSS components through facilitation, technical analysis, advocacy and education

Objectives

1. The primary function of the SIF is to address situations where GEOSS components cannot interoperate using one of the registered standards or other interoperability arrangements.
2. On behalf of and in full coordination with the ADC, the SIF will do analyses and make recommendations to GEO Members and Participating Organizations that come to it for assistance with interoperability issues.
3. The ADC will call upon the SIF to support consensus-seeking in matters of GEOSS interoperability.
4. The SIF will encourage the broader use of existing standards in recommending interoperability solutions for GEOSS, using formal international standards organizations as much as possible.
5. Where appropriate, the SIF will identify gaps in current standards and promote the creation of standards through existing Standards Development Organizations to fill such gaps.
6. The SIF will support education and outreach to increase awareness of standards used in GEOSS.

7. The SIF will help to maintain the content of the GEOSS Standards and Interoperability Registry, which is the repository for information on the interoperability arrangements employed among GEOSS components.

Composition, Organization and Reporting

The SIF will be composed of experts nominated by GEO Members and Participating Organizations. The SIF may also draw on subject matter experts globally to support its objectives and goals. The SIF will organize itself and will work by consensus of its participants.

The SIF will maintain a publicly-accessible data base of SIF actions and their status.

Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from activities under these Terms of Reference will be borne by the participants individually, their organizations or members and participating organizations of GEO. The GEO Secretariat will provide administrative support to the SIF.

The SIF will be reviewed by the ADC periodically.