**CSS Implementation:**

**CEOS Decision-making Process**

**CEOS Self-Study: Key Recommendation on Decision-making and New Initiatives**

*“Develop a process for reviewing and selecting new activities with consideration for CEOS objectives and available resources.”*



**Charge to the Topical Team on the CEOS Decision-making Process:**

*The charge to this topical team is to develop a suite of options for a CEOS decision-making process, and to identify what governance requirements and responsibilities would be needed for implementation of that process. The process should address a) selection of new projects and how to adjudicate among multiple candidate projects when resources preclude doing all; b) criteria for sunsetting old projects when and as appropriate; and c) approaches for CEOS to decide whether a project is within its scope and mandate, or would be better handled by another organization.*

One of the points that the CSS Steering Committee heard many times during the CEOS Self-Study was the strong message that CEOS needs a decision-making process to help choose wisely from among the many good ideas for new projects and the many external requirements that CEOS is asked to handle. Without a selection process, CEOS has no mechanism to manage competing ambitious proposals or to decide what is within its scope, and so it finds its resources stretched thin.  CEOS also operates without a regular mechanism to evaluate success and to sunset projects that should be considered completed. A decision-making process would address these concerns, and it would also help CEOS to identify those activities that are within its scope, as opposed to those that would better be done by other coordinating bodies.

New initiatives are exceedingly important to ensure that CEOS remains responsive and relevant, whatever the external circumstances and drivers may be at any given time. However, the projects that CEOS takes on must be balanced with the resources that are available, and the CEOS of today is stretched very thin by taking on new projects without either reducing or sunsetting old ones. New ideas abound, and there are, and always will be, far more good ideas and genuine needs than there are resources to support them. Underlying all is the shared desire not to compromise the quality, integrity, or timeliness of deliverables related to important commitments.

Without a selection process, CEOS continues to find it difficult to address problems that might arise, and it has no mechanism to manage the stresses posed by ambitious goals during times of economic downturns, or when members are unable or unwilling to fully participate in chosen activities. Similarly, since decisions are taken by general acclamation, activities that do not receive unanimous support are sometimes left in an uncertain status.

A corollary that is implicit in the points above is that without a clear process for choosing its activities, CEOS also has no clear, fair mechanism by which to identify those activities that are within its scope, as opposed to those that would better be done by other coordinating bodies.

Leveraging the scope and competencies of other coordination bodies would allow CEOS to focus on its strengths and resist “scope creep.”

The *ad hoc* approach no longer suffices for an organization of 25 years’ maturity. CEOS is at a turning point in this regard, and it requires a fair and balanced process for proposing, evaluating, and selecting new initiatives, and for sunsetting old projects when necessary and appropriate. The process must identify how decisions are made, when they are made, and by whom they are made.

The charge to this Topical Team is to develop a suite of options for a CEOS decision-making process, and to identify what governance requirements and responsibilities would be needed for implementation of that process. Because of the scope and impact of this topic, and the diversity of opinion regarding solutions to it, it is crucial that this Topical Team develop options for consideration, rather than a single closed-form solution. This Team will produce an options document, and the decision-making process that results from Plenary deliberation on the options document will be a key component of the CEOS Strategic Documents to be developed in 2013.

The Team should not “start from scratch” – it should draw as needed upon the CEOS Self-Study Synthesis Report and Annexes (Study Team Reports on Executive Functions, Working Groups and SBAs, and Virtual Constellations), as well as other CEOS documentation, in developing options for consideration.

**The charge to this topical team is to develop a suite of *options* for a CEOS decision-making process, and to identify what governance requirements and responsibilities would be needed for implementation of that process. The process should address a) selection of new projects and how to adjudicate among multiple candidate projects when resources preclude doing all; b) criteria for sunsetting old projects when and as appropriate; and c) approaches for CEOS to decide whether a project is within its scope and mandate, or would be better handled by another organization.**

The Team is *not* expected to conduct a new, exhaustive study of this topic, since that work was already done during the CEOS Self-Study. Instead, the Team should heavily draw upon and extract relevant sub-sections of the CEOS Self-Study Synthesis Report as well as the CSS Annexes (Study Team Reports on Executive Functions, Working Groups and SBAs, and Virtual Constellations), in which these issues were evaluated in depth.

Milestones and Process:

* This *white paper* sets up the discussion for your topic. The charge to your Team is to produce an *options paper* (not a single closed-form solution) for your topic.
* Team work is conducted entirely by teleconference and email.
* A draft version of your options paper should be submitted to the SIT Chair Team by September 1, so that it can be distributed before the SIT Technical Workshop.
* A breakout session on the Monday prior to the SIT Technical Workshop will be devoted to your Team’s topic, to share Team results, gather input, and answer questions.
* Your Team leadership will present a brief report within the SIT Technical Workshop on either Tuesday or Wednesday.
* After the SIT Technical Workshop, your paper should be refined based on input gathered, so that a clean draft can be distributed prior to Plenary.
* At Plenary, decisions will be made regarding the best set of options for CEOS to implement, based upon the material that your Team has prepared.
* Options decided upon at Plenary will be incorporated into the CEOS Strategic Documents.