

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CEOS WORKING GROUP ON DISASTERS (WGDisasters)

Issue 4, 22 July 2019

Mission Statement

The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Working Group on Disasters (WGDisasters) ensures the sustained coordination of disaster-related activities undertaken by the CEOS Agencies and acts as an interface between CEOS and the community of stakeholders and users involved in risk management and disaster reduction.

Membership

Membership is open to all CEOS Agencies (Members and Associates). In addition, the Working Group includes experts from non-CEOS Agencies who have relevant expertise to contribute to the objectives of the WGDisasters. These experts may be selected to co-chair activities within the WG.

Objectives

The main objectives of the CEOS WGDisasters are:

- To support the efforts of Disaster Risk Management authorities in protecting lives and safeguarding property by means of satellite-based EO and science-based analyses;
- To foster increased use of EO in support of Disaster Risk Management;
- To support the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and in particular contribute to its Priority 1 “Understanding Risk”; and
- To raise the awareness of politicians, decision-makers, and major stakeholders of the benefits of using satellite EO in all phases of Disaster Risk Management.

In pursuit of these objectives, the WGDisasters should:

- Contribute to the monitoring of the implementation of this Framework;
- Support the work of international initiatives such as for instance the Group on Earth Observations, in so far as it is related to risk and disasters, in particular by contributing to or leading Initiatives, Community activities or other GEO-related activities;
- Strive to increase the awareness of decision-makers of the critical role of satellite EO; and
- Reinforce the need for enhanced satellite EO programs to better address DRM needs.

To achieve these objectives, the WG Disasters shall draft and regularly update a Disaster Risk Management Earth Observation Strategy. This Strategy should:

- Identify and assess gaps in Earth Observation data necessary to address all parts of the disaster management cycle with the aim of better supporting the needs of the user community involved in disaster risk management.
- Be focused on risk rather than hazards alone, through activities that support hazard, exposure, and vulnerability assessment;
- Be global in scope, but building on strong partnerships at local/national or regional levels;
- Be realistic, in that it begins with achievable outputs and grows iteratively to global impact through partnership;
- Be user-driven (i.e. defined from user information needs and based on the engagement of the diverse user communities involved in DRM);
- Take into account the needs of the science community in respect of how to better understand natural hazards and related disaster risks with the help of satellite-based EO;
- Address the full-cycle (i.e. address mitigation/preparedness, warning, response/recovery, etc.);
- Address multiple hazard types;
- Take into account all relevant EO based capabilities available (such as for instance the International Charter Space & Major Disasters, Copernicus Emergency Management Service, Sentinel Asia, etc.) or under development; and
- Be sustainable in the long-term through partnerships with non-space organisations, in particular with international DRM stakeholders from the international donor community.

In the delivery of its mandate, the CEOS Working Group on Disasters will:

- Identify priority areas and initiatives within the theme of risk management and disaster reduction that should be supported by the CEOS Agencies;
- Represent CEOS in the GEO Work Plan activities (to include leadership of Tasks and Components, as determined by CEOS leadership) and develop CEOS Actions to support the execution of the GEO Disaster Tasks and Components in accordance with CEOS Work Plan;
- Ensure the coherency and the proper coordination of CEOS Agencies resources that support disaster-related activities undertaken by CEOS;
- Interface the major stakeholders and other representatives of user communities including both scientific and other users involved in disaster risk management, to better understand and assess their needs and priorities, taking into account the resources available in the CEOS agencies;
- Advise and coordinate CEOS Agencies in better use of existing assets and the deployment of new assets that will reduce address needs and priorities;
- Maintain a close dialogue with GEO and UNDRR experts to ensure appropriate recognition for the use of space-based Earth Observations within the Sendai Framework. Relevant activities will include and leverage existing disaster-related efforts supported by CEOS Agencies;

- Identify and establish a dialog with the major potential funding agencies active in this domain;
- Undertake any other relevant activities as instructed by CEOS Chair.

The Group shall operate under the same procedures of conduct as established CEOS Working Groups.

Structure and Procedures

A WGDisasters Chair and Vice-chair will be designated by the CEOS Plenary and will rotate among WG members every two years. Both will be staff from CEOS Agencies. In addition, WGDisasters Chair will provide administrative support during the whole chairmanship period. The designated Vice-chair will assume the chair after two years, and a replacement Vice-chair will be designated by Plenary.

Each CEOS Agency is invited to designate a point-of-contact for WGDisasters correspondence and representation; otherwise correspondence will be addressed to the Agency's main point-of-contact within CEOS.

The WGDisasters will normally meet twice per year, rotating the meeting venue among its membership or locations conducive to WGDisasters goals. Remote participation at these meetings will be possible. At each meeting, the time, place and host for the next meeting will be established.

For each meeting, the Chair of WGDisasters will prepare the agenda prior to the meeting and distribute notes and actions following the meeting. WGDisasters Chair will be responsible for following actions established during their chairmanship.

The CEOS WG Disasters has a sub group, the Data Coordination team, that is responsible for coordinating the CEOS WG Disasters response to all data requests for disaster related activities. It formed by representatives from all CEOS agencies contributing data through the WG Disasters, and is responsible for its working procedures.

The WGDisasters will coordinate its work with other CEOS Working Groups, the Virtual Constellations, and with the CEOS SIT who will be invited to send a representative to WGDisasters meetings to facilitate coordination.

The WGDisasters may propose modifications to these Terms of Reference, and such modifications will be submitted to CEOS Plenary for approval.