

# CEOS and UN SDGs: *how should we move forward?*

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As of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

**Objective:** offer options for decision (Plenary) on the future of the AHT

As an *ad-hoc team*, our existence needs to be reassessed at the Plenary this year. **This document outlines the 3 options that the SDG AHT has identified as a way forward, to be discussed at SIT TW in preparation for Principals' decision at the 2020 CEOS Plenary.**

- OPTION 1:** Renew the AHT, with the view of transitioning to a CEOS permanent body by CEOS 2021 Plenary (new WG or other existing structure)
- OPTION 2:** Become a new CEOS WG or be integrated in existing CEOS bodies (noting that a new WG creation is unlikely to be possible by CEOS 2020 Plenary at the time of writing this document)
- OPTION 3:** Disband and transfer all CEOS related activities on SDGs to GEO from November 2020, based on Agencies' priorities & interest (this would mean no CEOS coordination)

## Context

The **SDG AHT journey in CEOS:** the 30th CEOS Plenary (2016) established a CEOS Ad-hoc team on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG AHT) with the objective to coordinate the efforts of the CEOS agencies in supporting the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) to advance the uptake of Earth Observation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. Through its SDG AHT, CEOS' role is to act as a "Space Enabler" and facilitate access and use of satellite data in the SDGs.

## The SDG journey in CEOS:

*"Coordinating space community efforts"*



Since then, the AHT has provided internal CEOS coordination activities, and external engagement with a large and complex multi-stakeholder ecosystem, while supporting GEO in its mandate to engage with the UN system and countries requiring support on EO.

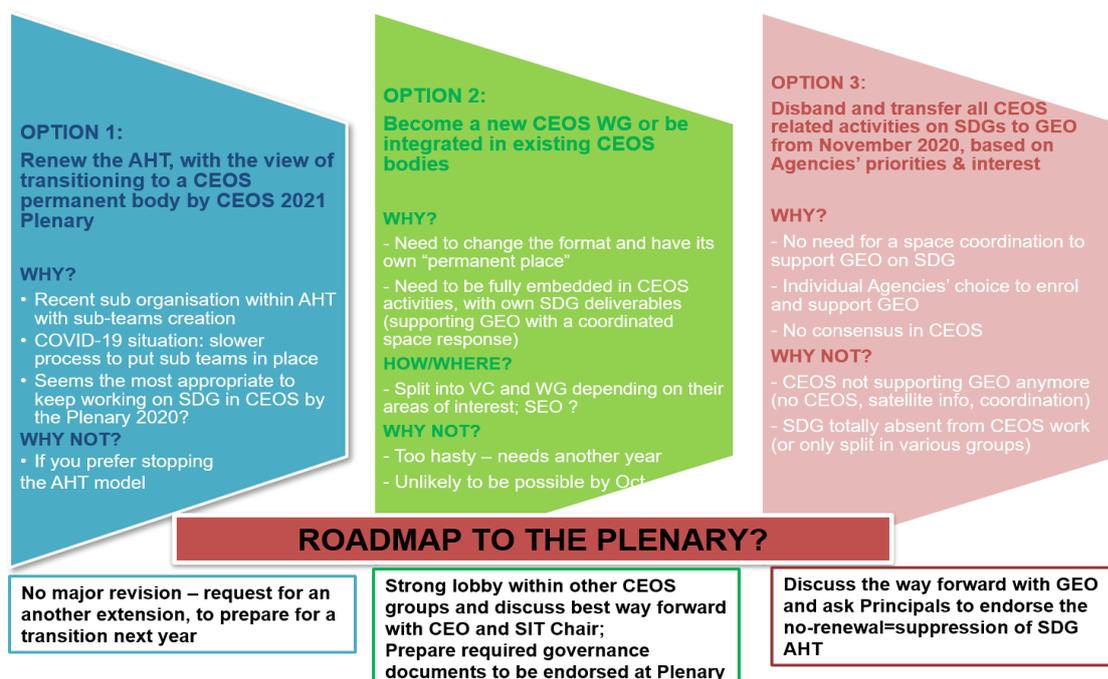
This year, the AHT has established four new sub-teams, with an increased active engagement from other CEOS agencies, to help GEO analysing the specific EO data needs for **4 priority SDG Indicators**, and facilitate satellite data availability, accessibility, and use, as well as identifying data gaps for each SDG indicator.

Some developments worth noting include:

- **Increased CEOS Agencies' engagement**, with sub-team leaders representing now 7 different Space Agencies (NASA, SANSa, CSIRO, DLR, ESA, CNES and NOAA);
- Increased our **collaboration with GEO**, involving experts from various GEO WP activities including EO4SDG, LDN, HPI, GUOI, WETLANDS, AQUAWATCH, GLOWS, BLUEPLANET;
- **Increased our engagement with other CEOS groups**: WGCapD (developing further activities/webinars on EO and SDGs) and SEO (ODC algorithms to support SDG with Python notebooks), COAST (14.1.1)
- Coordinated **satellite information on EO data sources** from relevant missions (global, free and open, calibrated and sustained) in support of SDG monitoring and reporting;
- Provided a **CEOS response to 2 major GEO EO4SDG activities**,  
1) the "GEO Federated Approach on SDGs" to harness available expertise and resources inside and outside of the GEO work program (including CEOS) in order to maximise impact; and  
2) the development of "GEO SDG Toolkits", online platforms to collect, consolidate and make available SDG-related EO relevant resources (including practical guidelines for countries to integrate EO data into national systems)
- Held a face-to-face **strategic meeting in Geneva** (February) with GEO Secretariat, SDG co-leads, CEOS SEO, and GEO EO4SDG, to discuss and clarify our CEOS role (see CEOS & GEO remits diagram).
- **Established 4 sub-teams** on respectively SDG indicators 6.6.1 (water-related ecosystem); 11.3.1 (urbanisation); 14.1.1 (marine pollution via COAST); 15.3.1 (land degradation) – including Terms of Reference, clear objectives, leadership and membership.

## What are the options today?

Given all this, the SDG AHT has proposed the following options for discussion at SIT TW, with the objective to take one forward for decision to CEOS Principals at the Plenary.



## Conclusion

In consultation with the CEO, the SDG AHT co-leads would like to acknowledge that, despite the global pandemic context, significant progress has been made this year with the creation of sub teams that actively work on key deliverables to support GEO and the SDG process.

ESA and CSIRO are keen to continue to support these efforts next year, but they would like to stress that their position is likely to change if no permanent (or alternative solution) mechanism is found for SDGs in CEOS by the next Plenary.

At this stage, based on the AHT members' survey responses (as of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 20) and leaders' opinions, the AHT would recommend

**OPTION 1: Renew the AHT, with the view of transitioning to a CEOS permanent body by CEOS 2021 Plenary (new WG or other existing structure)**