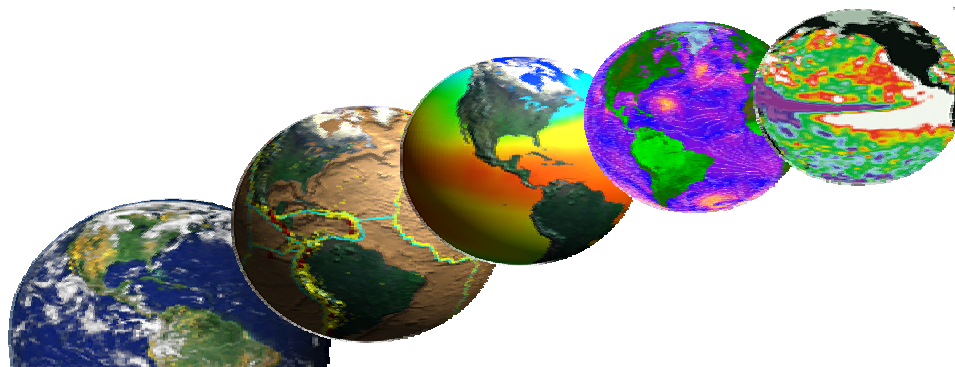


Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and Canadian GEO



In Washington, in July 2003, representatives from the leading spacefaring nations met at the invitation of the United States. It was the first time politicians at the highest level had met with space agency representatives and ministers of the environment to discuss how space assets can better serve environmental objectives. An intergovernmental ad hoc Group on Earth Observations (GEO) was created by this Earth Observation Summit to coordinate a dedicated global initiative to work towards the creation of comprehensive, sustainable and globally coordinated Earth observations.

The overarching plan for GEO is to implement a new global Earth observation system of systems (GEOSS) that links thousands of individual technological assets into a comprehensive Earth observation system or systems to provide critical scientific data needed to address important global economic, social and scientific challenges. With this improved knowledge, decision-makers around the world will be able to make more informed decisions regarding climate, the environment and a host of other economic and social issues that are affected by Earth and climate systems.¹ GEOSS will be a distributed system of systems, building step-by-step on current cooperation efforts among existing observing and processing systems within their mandates, while encouraging and accommodating new components.

GEO is preparing a 10-year implementation plan for GEOSS that will be presented at the third Earth Observation Summit in 2005.

Currently, GEO consists of 47 members and 29 participant international organizations. They have established five subgroups: Architecture, Capacity Building, Data Utilization, International Cooperation, and User Requirements and Outreach.

Canadian Group on Earth Observations:

A Canadian interdepartmental committee has been created with representatives from five core departments: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian Space Agency. DFAIT, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, Industry Canada, and Health Canada have also been active participants.

References:

GEO Website: <http://earthobservations.org>

Earth Observation Summit I Website: <http://www.earthobservationsummit.gov>

Earth Observation Summit II Website: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kaihatu/earth/index.htm

Canadian Group on Earth Observations: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/geo/events_e.htm

Framework for 10-year Implementation Plan: <http://www.ics-inc.co.jp/eos2e/FramworkDocument.pdf>

¹ NOAA News Release 25/2/2004 <http://www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/releases2004/feb04/noaa04-020.html>