GEO Program Board review of ArcticGEOSS

This email was received 17th September from Siri Jodha Khalsa, sjsk@nsidc.org

Dear Jan,

The GEO Program Board (PB) has completed an initial review of the ArcticGEOSS Implementation Plan, which is being proposed for inclusion as a GEO Initiative in the GEO 2017-2019 Work Programme update. The PB fully supports SAON’s vision to establish a long term Pan-Arctic Observing System that serves societal needs. The plan for an ArcticGEOSS is fully aligned with GEO’s goal of ensuring the availability of reliable and timely information for decision making and we appreciate the effort that SAON has invested in preparing the proposal.

The Program Board recognizes that SAON coordinated with GEOCRI in the preparation of the proposal but it appears that nearly everything that SAON wishes to accomplish is already in the GEOCRI implementation plan.

A clearer explanation and rationale for a new GEO Initiative in needed.

In particular, the Program Board wishes to learn about the ways in which GEOCRI is currently unable to support SAON’s goals, and why Arctic GEOSS would benefit from being a stand-alone Initiative.

Another major concern is the uncertainty and apparent low priority of the infrastructure element referenced in Objective 1.5 of the Implementation Plan: “Develop a long-term repository for relevant project deliverables – establishment of ArcticGEOSS”, which is given “Low” urgency, “None” regarding relationship with international/other organisations and resourced through the SAON Secretariat, funding for which is sought under Objective 3.3: “Secure funding for international SAON secretariat and operational costs”. One of the criteria for accepting an initiative into the GWP is having “sufficient resources to achieve the stated goals”. Since it is stated in Section 7.1 of the proposal that “The pan-Arctic Observing System ... being coordinated by SAON includes a comprehensive data system”, the Board requests clarification on what “integration as a regional GEOSS node” would entail and what value it adds. Moreover, the proposal needs to detail the strategy, resourcing and success criteria for establishing an ArcticGEOSS. Contact information for the parties responsible for implementing and operating ArcticGEOSS, as well as the procedures that will be put in place to ensure Initiative progress should be provided.

The GEO Program Board is pleased that SAON is a Participating Organization of GEO and views it as a key partner in achieving GEO’s vision of ensuring coordinated observations in the Arctic for the benefit of Arctic residents and decision makers globally. We look forward to receiving your responses.

Best wishes,

SiriJodha Khalsa

Lead, PB review team