*This is a follow-up message from the GEO Secretariat from 3rd October 2018*

Dear Jan,

You may recall that GEO Secretariat roles have been shifted in the past few months and so I am now providing support to Programme Board, while Doug has moved to other duties.

I believe Dr Camara was going to contact you regarding your application, but I wasn't able to confirm if he has done so yet. In any case, I would like to provide you with a bit more detail regarding the process of entry into the GEO Work Programme.

There are two ways in which a new activity can be accepted into the Work Programme: as a GEO Initiative or as a Community Activity. The Implementation Plan that you sent to us in July was considered as a GEO Initiative. Unfortunately, the timing of when we received the Implementation Plan, combined with summer vacation schedules of the review team, did not allow for the review process to be concluded prior to the September Programme Board meeting, which is normally the last meeting prior to the annual Plenary meeting. As Siri Jodha explained, the Programme Board had some outstanding concerns about the proposal and so did not approve it at the September meeting for inclusion in the Work Programme update to be presented to Plenary.

However, activities may also be included in the Work Programme as Community Activities on the approval of the Secretariat Director. This approval was given for Arctic GEOSS, and so it was included in the Work Programme update that was distributed to GEO Principals on 19 September. Arctic GEOSS may then be moved to the GEO Initiative category once the Implementation Plan is approved by the Programme Board. Recognition as a Community Activity allows Arctic GEOSS to proceed with its work as planned while the refinement of the Plan continues.

The next regular meeting of Programme Board will be on 7-8 February 2019. Documents for this meeting, including the report from the Programme Board review team and a revised Implementation Plan, would be required for distribution by the end of the first week of January. While a short meeting of Programme Board is planned for 29 October, it may be difficult to meet the deadline for documents of 4 weeks prior to the meeting. I would also need to consult with the Programme Board co-chairs whether they would include this item on the agenda of that meeting. That said, if it were possible to resolve the outstanding issues and put the approval of Arctic GEOSS as a GEO Initiative for decision at the October Programme Board meeting, this change could be introduced at the Plenary meeting when the Work Programme update is presented for approval.

I am sorry that your proposal has gotten caught up in our internal process within GEO, but I hope that you can appreciate that this is also a sign of how seriously we take the information you provide to us and of our interest in understanding your proposal fully. If you have other questions about the approval process or about other matters related to GEO generally, you are always welcome to contact me directly. Regarding the substantive review of your proposal itself, please continue to work with Siri Jodha as you have been doing.

Best regards,

Craig Larlee

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