

**Draft Terms of Reference for**  
**CEOS Working Group on Capacity Building and Data Democracy**  
**(WGCapD)**

**Preamble**

The effective use of Earth Observation data is essential for the understanding and stewardship of our planet. Furthermore, the advancement and sustainability of satellite Earth Observations will be determined by end users, who must be empowered through free access to these resources. Effectively reaching those end users, especially in developing countries, has been an impediment to the maximum use of Earth Observation data. It is with these thoughts in mind that the concept of Data Democracy was born and on which the basis of this Working Group (formerly known as the Working Group on Education, Training, and Capacity Building) is reestablished.

During its 2008 CEOS Chairmanship, the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) began a special initiative entitled “Data Democracy for Developing Countries”. This Initiative was continued and further developed by the subsequent CEOS Chairs, Thailand’s GEO-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) in 2009 and Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (INPE) in 2010. The objective of this Data Democracy Initiative, as noted in the 2010 CEOS Rio Statement, is “provision of timely access to key data sets free of charge to build capacity worldwide,...enhanced data dissemination capabilities, sharing of software tools, increased training, and technology transfer to end users.”

**Mission Statement**

The WGCapD will build upon the CEOS Data Democracy Initiative in an effort to increase the capacity of institutions in less developed countries for effective use of Earth Observation data for the benefit of society and to achieve sustainable development. The WGCapD will focus and unify CEOS efforts toward providing wider and easier access to Earth Observation data, increasing the sharing of software tools such as the use of open source software and open systems interface, increasing data dissemination capabilities, transferring relevant technologies to end users, and providing intensive capacity building, education, and training.

**Membership**

Membership of the WGCapD is open to all CEOS Agencies. WGCapD members may sponsor non-CEOS organizations to participate in the WGCapD if they have relevant expertise and can constructively contribute to the WGCapD objectives.

**Objectives**

The overall objective of the WGCapD is building capacity for the effective use of Earth Observation data as well as providing wider and easier access to those data.

Specific objectives include:

- **Establish effective coordination and partnership among CEOS agencies and institutions offering education and training in Earth Observation** – The WGCapD will facilitate activities that substantially enhance international education and training in Earth System Science and the observation techniques, data analysis and interpretation skills, required for the use and application of Earth Observation data to meet societal needs. Meeting this objective will include the following activities:
  - Exploit the cumulative capabilities of CEOS Agencies by establishing unified and unique capacity building activities.
  - Partner with locally based and managed regional partners to increase effectiveness and decrease duplication of efforts.
  - Use threads such as disaster response or climate change to build capacity through discussion of a focused subject.
  - Focus on user needs for data and capabilities, including IT infrastructure, to inform actions/plans for delivering the appropriate data and training for the effective use of Earth Observation data.
  - Conduct remote sensing workshops and seminars to foster the use of Earth Observations and increase workforce capacity.
  - Publish Earth Observation education and training materials.
  
- **Work with CEOS entities to address data accessibility** – The WGCapD will work closely with CEOS entities to increase data accessibility especially in under-served communities. The WGCapD will specifically work with WGISS to ensure a seamless transition from the technical matters relating to data accessibility to the matters relating to systemic and individual capacity development. Meeting this objective will include the following activities:
  - Publicize resources, datasets, and software that have been made available to under-served communities.
  - Promote the use of dissemination systems (e.g., GEONETCast and other systems) to effectively reach areas that lack consistent internet access or redundant systems in case of emergencies.
  - Organize workshops and training activities to provide individual and institutional capacity to effectively use available Earth Observation resources.

## **Implementation**

Strategies and activities to meet the objectives and goals stated above shall be fully defined in a five-year plan, to be submitted to CEOS Plenary for endorsement and for subsequent annual updating. The WGCapD Chair shall report to each CEOS Plenary on progress and seek its review and guidance, bringing forward recommendations and proposals as appropriate.

## Procedures

- The WGCapD shall meet when appropriate, at least once per year, rotating the venue amongst its membership.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair for the WGCapD shall be designated by the CEOS Plenary and shall rotate every two years. The Chair shall prepare an agenda, prepare and distribute minutes of each meeting, and provide other secretariat support. At each meeting of the WGCapD, the time, place and host for the next meeting shall be established.
- For each meeting of the WGCapD, each member shall prepare and present a report on the member's current and planned capacity building and data democracy activities.
- The CEOS WGCapD shall coordinate its work with other international groups involved in related activities, as described in the CEOS Terms of Reference.
- The WGCapD shall strive to have at all times at least one unifying and unique project that will require the involvement, support, and cooperation of many CEOS Agencies.
- Each CEOS Member is invited to designate a point of contact for WGCapD correspondence; otherwise, correspondence shall be addressed to the agency's main point-of-contact within CEOS.
- The WGCapD shall coordinate its work with other CEOS Working Groups, and in particular with the Chair of SIT, who has overall responsibility for CEOS relations with GEO and its subsidiary committees and Secretariat.
- The WGCapD may propose modifications to the Terms of Reference and such modifications shall be submitted for approval at CEOS Plenary.