UN environment

GEO MATTERS

GEO-6 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

HEALTHY PLANET HEALTHY PEOPLE

MAY 2018

Introducing the Science Editors of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook

The sixth Global Environment Outlook is an independent, science-focused assessment of the current state of the global environment, the policy response to address these environmental challenges and the outlooks or prospects for the near to medium-term future. Four authors meetings of the sixth Global Environment Outlook assessment have already been held in the period from February 2017 to March 2018. Each of these meetings advanced the drafting of the three main sections of the report, with a total of 25 chapters being drafted by a team of more than 160 coordinating lead authors, lead authors and contributing authors. Each of these chapters has already received some level of peer review with the intergovernmental review of the entire publication scheduled to begin in June 2018.

It is envisaged that the final number of pages for the full report should be of approximately 500 pages, while the sum of all draft chapters received so far amounts to approximately 800 pages. Therefore, in addition to the work of the authors, UN Environment has decided that a qualified science editing team is needed to shorten and streamline the text, improve clarity, coherence, and 'readability'.

The editors will look at the use of literature cited, as well as proposing revisions to the text to present findings in a more concise and readable manner and make the best use of figures and illustrations. A structural editor will focus on the publication as a whole and consider rearrangement of chapters or sections to present the arguments more logically, eliminate duplication within and across chapters, and propose ways to present the analysis in a more compelling fashion for maximum impact. The science editing team is working now to review and comment on all 25 chapters for the quality of the science and analysis, propose changes to the text to present the findings in a more concise and readable manner, propose structural editing of the chapters and the publication, and conduct some technical editing of the chapter text to ensure consistency of language, rationale and strengthen the analysis presented in the assessment.

Green ink
Communicating science

The team selected to do this work includes UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (https://www.unep-wcmc.org/about-us) as coordinators and a team of editors at Green Ink (http://www.greenink.co.uk/#about-green-ink). Green Ink has a team of highly experienced communications professionals with in-depth knowledge of a wide range of disciplines in the sciences, social sciences and international development, specializing in handling scientific, technical and complex content. The team of editors will be working closely with the UN Environment Secretariat and the Co-chairs of the assessment, Professor Joyeeta Gupta (University of Amsterdam) and Professor Paul Ekins (University College London).

Pete Christopher

So far the science editing team has held inception calls with the GEO-6 secretariat and Co-chairs to provide background, explanation of timescales, brief on tasks, expectations of ways of working and outcomes. The team will review and comment on the chapters by 15 May 2018 and until 15 June, conduct calls with all the assessment's authors to discuss the science editors comments and approaches to addressing them.

Tim Woods

After the intergovernmental review scheduled for 15 June to 15 August, the science editing team throughout the period 15 August to 15 September will again summarize and convey proposed scientific, structural and technical edits to the Co-chairs, all authors and the GEO Secretariat.

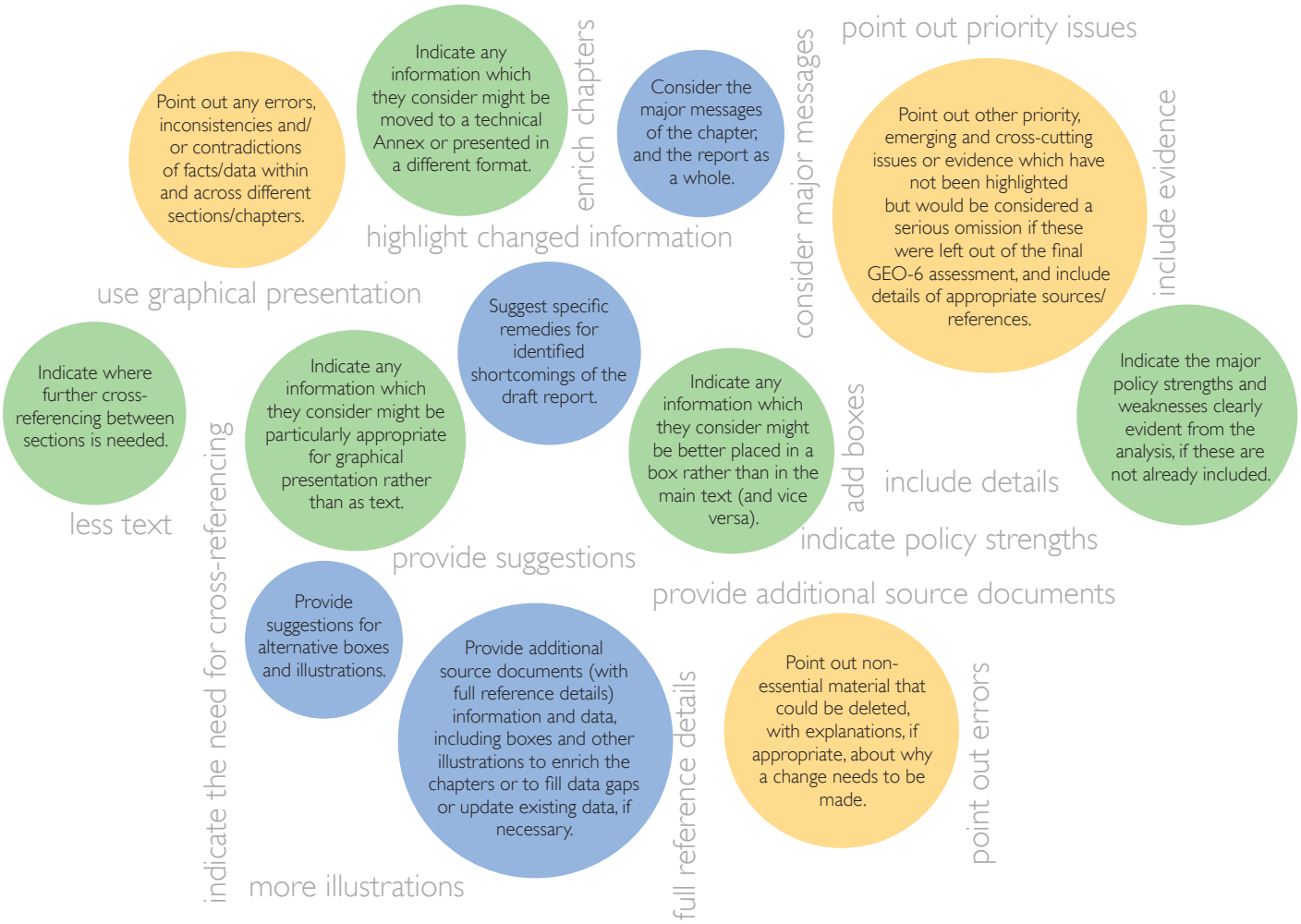
Of course, the authors of the assessment are ultimately responsible for the content of their chapters, therefore proposals and suggestions from the science editing team will need to be discussed with and accepted by the coordinating lead authors, lead authors and contributing authors of the assessment. With this strong team in place the Global Environment Outlook Secretariat expects the assessment to be readable, compact, and actionable by governments and policy makers.

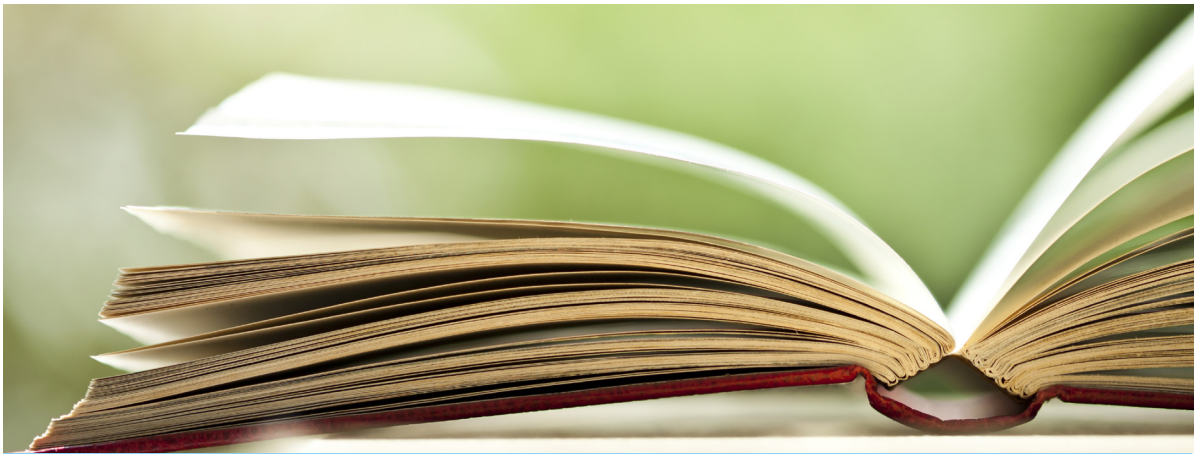
Anne Sweetmore

Review Guidelines for the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook

In order to ensure the scientific integrity and coherence across chapters of the Global Environment Outlook, a technical review of all the chapters of the assessment was conducted from 15 April 2018 to 15 May 2018. The first 9 chapters of the Global Environment Outlook had previously undergone two technical review as well as one intergovernmental review by both technical experts and government nominees. The Policy and Outlooks chapters have so far undergone a first order draft review. The outcome of these reviews has been discussed and addressed in the previous authors meetings and review editors have reported on the progress of the review processes. In this recently concluded review of the current draft of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook global assessment (GEO-6), reviewers were requested to focus their comments on one main chapter, but also provide written comments on other chapters if there is a reasonable link to their area of expertise. Reviewers were then asked to submit their review comments in English in the reviewer's grid provided by the secretariat, while identifying the page, section and line number of the text that the comment refers to.

Reviewers were also encouraged to:





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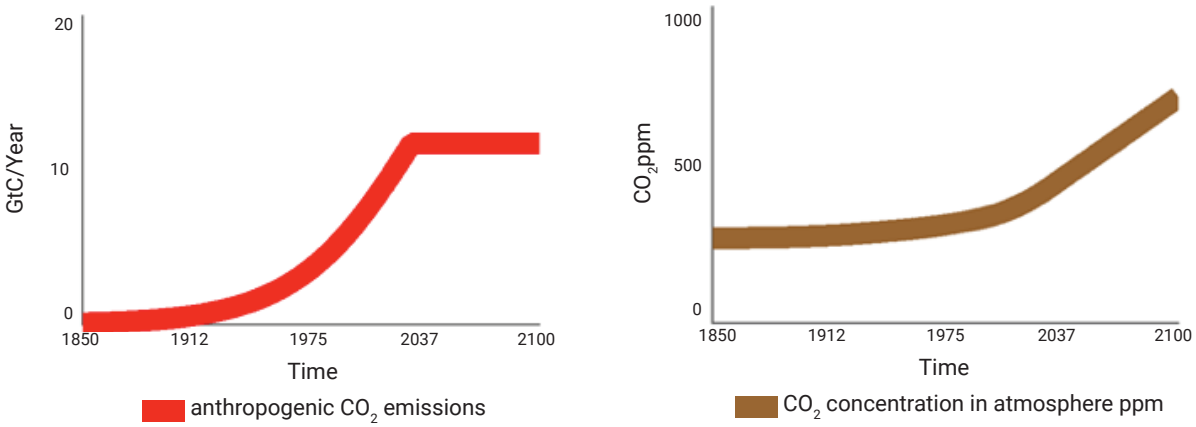
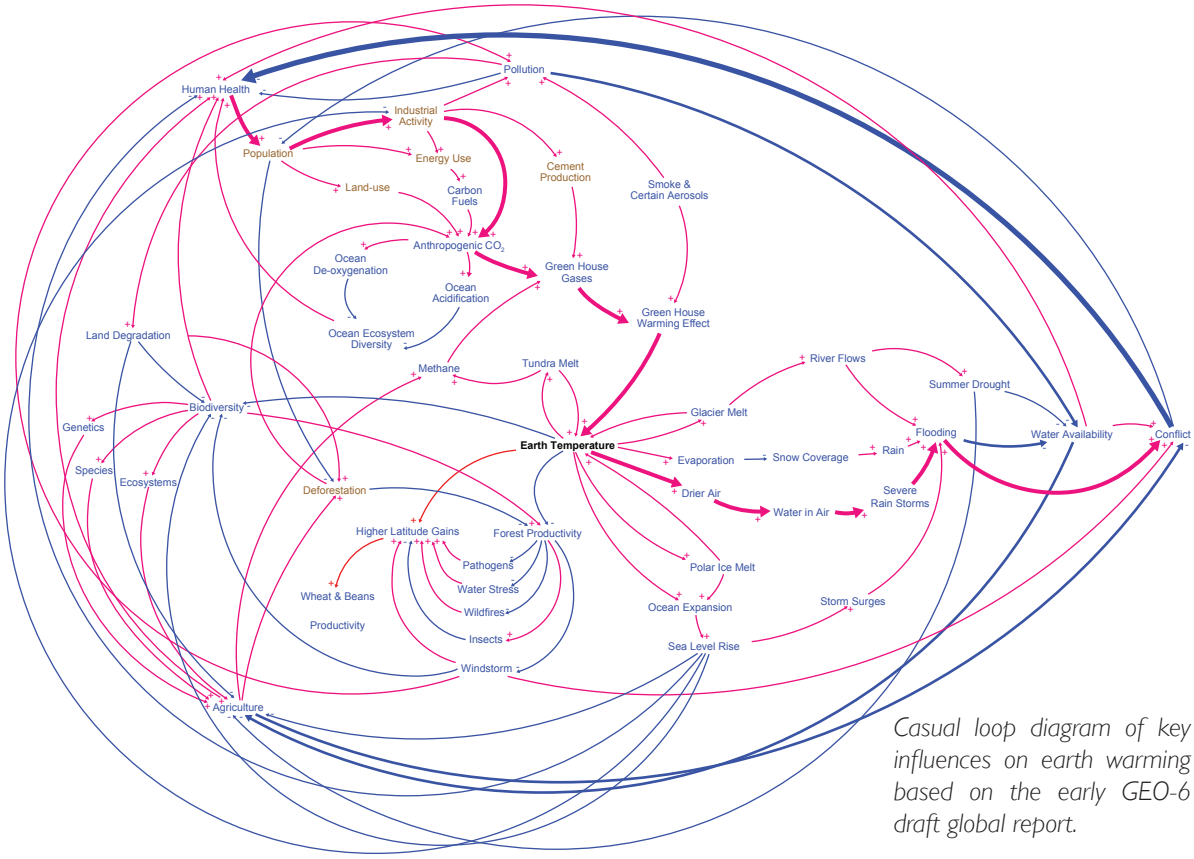
System dynamics insights into climate change: A perspective by Sandor Frigyik

GEO Unit staff member Sandor Frigyik completed a sabbatical leave in Norway at the University of Bergen in the final quarter of 2017 and returned to Nairobi in January. While in Bergen he also completed the first semester of a Master's degree in System Dynamics which he continues to pursue back in Nairobi. Sandor's sabbatical report, entitled System Dynamics insights into Climate Change, used simple models to explain the basic dynamics of CO_2 accumulation in the atmosphere. A common misperception is about how accumulative relationships will cause CO_2 concentrations to continue to increase in the atmosphere, even if emissions are capped and don't grow any further. This misperception can in turn lead to a wait-and-see attitude by the public towards the dangers of continued human generated CO_2. Even capping human generated CO_2 emissions in 2030 will still cause CO_2 concentrations to increase in the atmosphere into the future, further heating the earth (indicative data).



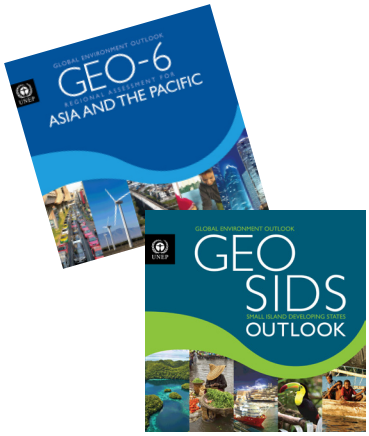
Using the GEO-6 Regional Reports, as well as initial drafts of the GEO-6 global report, Sandor also mapped out various causal link diagrams of the regions, thematic areas and climate change. His insight from this analysis was that when all environmental issues are considered together they lead directly, or indirectly, to increased global conflict. Mapping out the causal link diagram of the Sustainable Development Goals also pointed towards education being a potential point of high leverage for change. While in Bergen, Sandor took the opportunity to liaise with the Bjerknes Center for Climate Research to prepare an Ocean carbon foresight brief with UN Environment. Another upcoming initiative, also in liaison with the University of Bergen, is applying system dynamics analysis to understanding the dynamics of threats to wildlife populations, particularly as they relate to the use of land for wildlife and the associated conflicts of interest over land use.



Casual loop diagram of key influences on earth warming based on the early GEO-6 draft global report.

Know an Expert: Global Environment Outlook Author Profile

Dr. Peter King has been an avid environmentalist since his undergraduate days at Melbourne University where he studied Agricultural Science and it has remained an abiding passion for more than 40 years. He started his career in the Soil Conservation Authority in the state of Victoria and became the Land Studies Coordinator in Victoria's first Ministry for Conservation. He was one of the first graduates from the Masters degree program in Environmental Science at Monash University in 1977. He spent some time at the Environment and Policy Institute, East West Center in Hawaii and then set up his own environmental consulting company. Following some successful work for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a consultant in the period 1984-88, he started work with the ADB in March 1991 as an Environment Specialist in the Office of Environment. He established a sound reputation as ADB's leading natural resources management ("green") expert, with personal responsibility for over 50 loan and TA projects.



In 1998, he was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (Environmental Science) degree from Murdoch University in Perth, with a thesis entitled "Integrated Economic and Environmental Planning at the Subnational Level in Asia." In 2005, he took early retirement from ADB and is currently a Senior Policy Advisor for the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies in Bangkok. He heads the Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network secretariat and is a member of the Climate Change Asia Coordination Group. He is Coordinating Lead Author for the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook. Dr. King has contributed to multiple Global Environment Outlook reports including GEO SIDS and GEO Asia-Pacific, as well as successive global assessments. He expects that the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook will have moved the policy analysis a little bit further than previous GEO reports and policy makers will begin to take better notice.

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