External Review 2019 – Terms of Reference

1. Rationale:

EuroGOOS is established since 1994 and as an independent legal entity (AISBL) in 2013. An external review of the organisation has not taken place in recent years. A review is appropriate as the procedures and structure of the EuroGOOS Office have changed significantly since 2013. It is therefore timely to conduct a full internal and external review of its current status. This review would be of benefit to both the Office and its membership in considering how EuroGOOS operates and what could be improved, with fresh ideas for future short- and medium-term strategy. The external review is to be a light-touch and have a forward looking approach rather than a heavy and detailed evaluation.

2. Internal and External Review Process:

The review process can harvest initial feedback provided by EuroGOOS members via the members survey conducted in late 2017. The results of this questionnaire can be presented in the form of a report to serve as an input for the External Review Panel.

The external review will be guided by an External Review Panel consisting of 5 experts guided by a Chair. The panel members will represent all relevant EuroGOOS stakeholders including the marine science community, operational oceanography organisations, EU and international policy makers, and end-users. This panel will conduct the external review with support from the Office. The EuroGOOS Office and Executive board will conduct the internal review.

3. Timeline:

January 2020: Exec Board will select potential chairs and experts for the External Review Panel. The EuroGOOS Office will contact the potential chairs and experts to set up the panel and to discuss the scope and intended outcomes of the internal review process. Once all invitations have been accepted, the membership of the panel will be announced to the EuroGOOS members. The Exec Board will also assess the fitness for purpose of the EuroGOOS members questionnaire as the basis for the external review and revise this if deemed necessary.

Feb 2020: The EuroGOOS Office will develop a questionnaire to be circulated to all EuroGOOS members and alternates for completion. This will allow member organizations to provide feedback on the full range of EuroGOOS operations. A first proposal for internal review questions is included in Annex 1.

April 2020: The EuroGOOS Office will collect, collate and present the results from the questionnaires in a report and provide to the Board and (once approved) the External Review Panel.

May 2020: A physical meeting of the External Review Panel will be organised back-to-back with the EuroGOOS General Assembly. The EuroGOOS Office will provide Travel and Subsistence for the invited experts during the attendance of this meeting. The External Review Panel will perform a SWOT-analysis focussing on 4 key competencies of EuroGOOS, as well as an analysis of the EuroGOOS operations as outlined in the terms of reference. The outcomes of this will be compiled in a list of findings and recommendations.

The practical organisation of the review would be as follows:

 -  The panel will have a chance to discuss some items with, and ask questions to, the EuroGOOS delegates and Executive Board at the General Assembly.

* -  The panel will finalise the SWOT-analyses and draft their recommendations and present some first high level recommendations to the Board immediately following the General Assembly.

A minimal workload is foreseen for the External Review Panel members outside of the review meeting.

May - July 2020: The EuroGOOS Office will follow up via tele-meetings/email with the External Review Panel to finalise the external review report.

The EuroGOOS Office will draft a response to the recommendations and adopt them as necessary. This response and an action plan for the short- and mid-term will be presented to the EuroGOOS membership at a meeting in Autumn 2020 for discussion and input.

It is not foreseen that the report of the internal review questionnaire, the external review panel, or the response and action plan of EuroGOOS will be published externally.

4. Strategic areas to review

The main purpose of the External Review Panel is to:

* ▪ Consider whether the current status and operation of EuroGOOS are fit-for-purpose;
* ▪ Consider the relevance of EuroGOOS;
* ▪ Consider whether the core activities (listedbelow) of EuroGOOS are fit-for-purpose;
* ▪ Comment on the achievements and impact of EuroGOOS to date, and the potential for future impact;
* ▪ Recommend such changes to the aims, objectives, modus operandi, core instruments and activities, and the terms of reference of EuroGOOS as appropriate;
* ▪ Report findings and recommendations to EuroGOOS Executive Board.

To answer these questions, the external review should focus on 4 key areas that are of strategic importance EuroGOOS functioning:

4.1. EuroGOOS Organisation structure and governance

The main focus is to check if the EuroGOOS still fulfils the tasks it was set up to do (provide a Forum for its members), to analyse membership, delegate engagement, participation, and support. The review will also look at the role and functioning of the EuroGOOS Office, if the current structure is still fit for purpose and if not, how this could be improved. The role of the delegates as ambassadors for EuroGOOS at national level will be also explored. The Office will provide input through our publications and EuroGOOS internal review report.

4.2. Functioning and the role of EuroGOOS in the wider EU marine landscape

The delivery of operational oceanography and the EU Marine policy landscape has diversified over the past 5-10 years. The main purpose of this section is to analyse what the role is of EuroGOOS in the wider EU marine landscape, how EuroGOOS is seen vis-à-vis other marine organisations, how we can differentiate/stand out from other similar organisations and how we can ensure added value for our members. This has to be based on the knowledge of the reviewers and any information that they might need from the Office. The reviewers will also have the ability to discuss with our delegates at the General Assembly. This section should also take into account and evaluate the communication actions and outputs from the EuroGOOS.

4.3. EuroGOOS activities and outputs and their impact

This sections will look at the outputs we have provided over the past 5 years since becoming a legal entity. Are the EuroGOOS outputs still valuable or do we need to focus on other areas, look at the topics that we work on. Questions on the types of outputs we provide ( e.g. white papers, conference proceedings, policy briefs) and the value of these are also important. In addition, it would be good to know if a different format of output would be useful? And how we can communicate our work more effectively? How do we evaluate the impact of our activities? The review panel can access the EuroGOOS publications online, and will get access to the impact reports that the Secretariat compile.

4.4. Financial review

Given the financial constraints of working within a fixed income budget, with limited ways of improving our finances, the reviewers will look at our financial overview, future budget projections, etc. and give ideas on how to make the organisation financially sustainable in the long term? The EuroGOOS financial information is reported at the General Assembly and the review team will be provided with a financial analysis of the past years and a projection for the future.

The outcome of these review results can be presented in a SWOT analysis, in order to identify EuroGOOS’s:

* -  Strengths: factors that give EuroGOOS an edge over other organisations;
* -  Weaknesses: factors that can be harmful for EuroGOOS;
* -  Opportunities: favourable situations which can bring a competitive advantage;
* -  Threats: unfavourable situations which can negatively affect the organisation.

The goal of the SWOT analysis is to distinguish between where we now and where we wish to be. Each evaluation should be kept short and specific (only include key points and issues) and points should be ranked in order of importance.

5. Expectations:

The external review panel members will be expected to attend and participate in the meeting Paris, France, except in extraordinary circumstances. They will also be expected to carry out any document reviews or to submit report contributions as requested by the EuroGOOS Office in a timely manner.

6. EuroGOOS Core Instruments and Activities:

* • Interaction with Member Organizations 🡪 General assembly, newsletters
* •  External communication 🡪 Website, twitter, conference presentations, workshops and events, news releases
* Linkages to GOOS steering committee and GRAs
* ROOS meetings, services and events
* •  Working Groups and task team outputs🡪Position papers, Policy Briefs for high- level research and policy recommendations
* •  Statements 🡪 Science commentaries
* •  Forums and conferences 🡪 Forum series, EurOCEAN, ad hoc events (EOOS workshops and conferences, European Maritime Day, etc.)
* •  EU projects🡪INTAROS, EEA, EuroSEA, FORCOAST, JERICO