

## The GEO Indigenous Alliance

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Indigenous Alliance was founded by Indigenous representatives at the [GEO Canberra Ministerial Summit 2019](#) in Canberra, Australia. The vision of the GEO Indigenous Alliance is to protect and conserve Indigenous Cultural Heritage by using Earth Observation science, data and technology to create a knowledge base that sustains the Earth we live on.

In December 2020, the GEO Indigenous Alliance hosted the inaugural [GEO Indigenous Summit 2020](#) event, which brought together Indigenous Peoples from around the world to share Indigenous-led innovations in Earth observation data, science, and technology, and discuss issues of Indigenous data sovereignty and data management in support of Indigenous communities. The event built on the (GEO) Indigenous Hackathons that brought Indigenous knowledge holders together with the GEO community to co-develop culturally relevant EO based tools for and by Indigenous communities that honour and acknowledge the human dynamics and cultural complexity of their communities.

To enable Indigenous Peoples toward equitable participation in and benefits from data creation, application, and stewardship within contemporary data environments, the GEO Indigenous Alliance advocates for the implementation of [CARE with FAIR principles](#). The GEO Indigenous Alliance sees [Free Prior and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#), as an important standard that Indigenous People can use to claim their rights to self-determination, consultation and participation in decisions that are central to climate action. The GEO Indigenous Alliance will focus on the implementation of the FPIC Declaration at local and national levels, as well as at the UN Human Rights Council and in a number of other international fora.

### Founding Members

- Titus Letaapo, Founding Member, member of the Samburu tribe, Kenya
- Kriton Glenn, Principal Advisor
- James Rattling Leaf Sr., Founding Member, Sicangu Lakota, Oceti Sakowin Oyate
- Diana Mastracci, Founding Member & International Strategic Liaison
- Mario Vargas Shakaim, Founding Member member of the Shuar Nation, Ecuadorian Amazon

The benefits of Earth observations (EO) are realized globally, but not everyone has the same ability to access EO data and tools. EO4IM (Earth Observations for Indigenous-led Land Management) aims to increase Indigenous peoples' capacities to use EO to achieve their land management goals. EO4IM is a NASA funded project led by Conservation International (CI) and aligned with the ongoing [Group of Earth Observations \(GEO\) AmeriGEO initiative](#).

EO4IM's approach starts with a conversation with communities to understand their land management goals and challenges, and how they are already using EO. In parallel, we conduct a social network analysis to map the flow of information within and between communities to identify key connections for information sharing and understand both beneficial and strained relationships. Next, we conduct targeted capacity development with communities so that they can use EO data and tools to help them achieve their goals and resolve conflicts. We are also investing in strengthening Indigenous peoples' networks by facilitating knowledge sharing among communities at the local and regional levels, and

ensuring that their voices are heard on global platforms through their representatives and through global networks such as the [GEO Indigenous Alliance](#).

For more information visit the [EO4IM website](#).

*We need Earth observations to make better decisions to protect the buffalo, to protect their lands and habitat. We need that work to be done together. We need capacity development. We need applications of science. We need economic development to provide a prosperous tribal community. We need training for our youth, training for both our native knowledge and as well for cutting edge scientific techniques.*

-James Rattling Leaf Sr. (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) founding member of the GEO Indigenous Alliance, speaking at the 2019 GEO Ministerial Week as the first Indigenous representative for the US GEO delegation.