

SEGH strategy document 2022-2026

Overall goals:

- Increase diversity of membership
- Enhance research dissemination
- Increase value to membership
- Improve global collaboration

Pre-pandemic, the SEGH held a successful conference on an annual basis, now fully adapted to online conferences likely to take precedence with a move to hybrid virtual/in-person conferences post pandemic, particularly driven by net zero considerations for responsible travel. This greatly enhances the diversity and equitable nature of membership representation and interaction. In addition, the website has greater functionality providing a central point of reference for members for the latest news, training materials and archive documents for members. The official journal of SEGH, Environmental Geochemistry has continued to develop positively, with an impact factor in 2021 growing to 4.898, available via the SEGH website to members or via the SpringerNature portal.

The SEGH board is representative of the membership structure with 6 posts available for each of Europe, Africa, Asia/Pacific and the Americas. Additional members are seconded to the board for special tasks.

Increase membership.

Membership has hovered around 120-160 in recent years across the globe, with increases historically experienced from physical conference recruitment/retainment. During the pandemic period and likely beyond, membership groups have been built and retained via the online SEGH Live platform of conferences and short meetings, which will likely become a long-term offering.

Memberships in recent years has largely been made up from Europe, with rapid growth since 2018 in Africa. Ongoing objectives should rebuild the collapse in memberships in the Americas and Asia/Pacific regions by 2025 to compliment membership growth in Africa. The COVID pandemic has upturned any targets for memberships. A sustainable cohort of members in each region with a minimum of 50 members by the end of 2023 would be a pragmatic target in order to have a critical mass of members in each region to organise online meetings/conferences or training sessions, with the necessary financial resources that will come from sufficient membership at this scale to build further.

A significant proportion of members (~40%) as ECRs in 2021 provides a platform to grow the community and for succession management of the international board and active volunteers to promote new initiatives. This is dependent upon the SEGH board actively engaging this cohort to keep them interested with regular planned activities for sharing of information/research or training events to demonstrate value for money and outcompete competing societies. The website should be further used as a tool for communication to a wider audience to attract and retain members, as well as providing a free-to-access resource for information, such as lectures or recordings of online conferences. The Fellowship programme requires further nurturing, with activities planned to engage their expertise and to promote the opportunity for mentoring ECRs.

The 50th year anniversary provided a vehicle for such interactions and new interactions will need to be planned to keep the momentum gained. Greater and more equitable support from each of the regions is required for all of these points, it should not be just Europe and Africa providing the energy behind these initiatives.

By the end of year 2022 post-pandemic it should be evident whether membership has increased evenly across each region, and specifically which countries, disciplines and type of organisation this has come from. The international board and regional representatives need to capitalise on any momentum.

Enhance research dissemination

One of the stated aims of the organisation is to ensure that sound science is used carefully, and to ensure that it is available to the wider public.

Currently, the EGAH journal has an increasingly good rating for readability and impact. The SEGH need to capitalise on this and engage authors publishing with EGAH, the majority of whom are unlikely to be members of SEGH, given that papers exceeded 1000 submissions in 2020.

Investigate further the potential to 'piggyback' on other conferences: create an offering which is complementary to other organisations. Synergy is beneficial to increase marketing opportunities for SEGH and demonstrate relevancy to the SEGH community.

Improve value to membership

As all researchers have an increasing need to demonstrate wider dissemination of research results. Besides the opportunity for inter disciplinary sharing of ideas, the global reach of the many and varied conferences does appeal to members. Through to 2025, SEGH will build on the COVID-19 pandemic response to engage with members and demonstrate the value of membership via online meetings to provide access to an increasingly geographically diverse community. An established pattern of conferences comprising of a hybrid physical and online presence in each of the regional sections should complement online and less formal gatherings, in addition to an annual global hybrid conference. Currently it is difficult for some members to attain travel agreements or resources to some of the 'further away' locations, and we must consider an increase in global diversity to SEGH alongside a responsible approach to the global transition to net zero carbon emissions.

Improve collaboration at a global level.

With a greater level of on-line meeting space, networking between researchers becomes easier, with SEGH facilitating researchers to find suitable partners. However, this becomes possible if the membership matures through engaged membership, not transient ones. Thus the strategies outlined above need to evolve engagement opportunities for members within and beyond the SEGH community.

SEGH has traditionally focused on universities and research institutes. The research generated and disseminated should be relevant to the 'real' world through line of sight to impactful research relevant to the global environmental challenges of the day. This requires inclusivity of differing sectors encompassing the business environment, policy decision influencers at government or non-government agencies. This is only evident if potential users can be engaged in dialogue. By 2030 at least 25% of the membership should be from sectors other than universities.