

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

To whom it may concern

EXECUTIVE BOARD

FROM
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March 28, 2022
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SUBJECT
Position document Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation

Dear members of the Faculty Board,

On 22 and 23 September 2021, the Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) was visited by an international review committee as part of the research evaluation in accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2021 –2027 (SEP) for research reviews in the Netherlands. The review covered the research of ITC's six departments for the 2014-2020 period. The committee consisted of prof. dr. ir. Arnold Bregt (chair, Wageningen University and Research), prof. sir dr. Paul Curran (City, University of London), prof. dr. Ann van Griensven (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), prof. dr. João Porto de Albuquerque (University of Warwick), prof. dr. Serena Coetzee (University of Pretoria), dr. ir. Sandra Verhagen (Delft University of Technology) and Anne Hoek van Dijke MSc (PhD candidate Wageningen University and Research).

The Executive Board has taken note of the report and the recommendations of the committee with great interest. It was pleased to read that the committee recognizes and values ITC as a viable, societally relevant and scientifically strong institution, playing a world leading role in the field of remote sensing and spatial analysis. While the report is constructively critical of certain aspects and identifies a number of challenges, overall it conveys confidence in a bright future for ITC.

In response to the report, the management team of ITC has written a position paper in which it reflects on the committee's main recommendations. Also, it presents a targeted course of action and associated timeline. The Executive Board highly appreciates the document's reflective and forward-thinking tone. ITC shows a high degree of willingness to critically examine itself and use the momentum created by the external evaluation for further improvement. The Executive Board was particularly pleased to note that ITC is emphatically striving for an increased connection with the university as a whole. It strongly supports ITC's ambition to intensify collaborations with other UT faculties, as well as with the Twente Graduate School and the Diversity and Inclusion Office. The Executive Board is convinced ITC could play a leading role by initiating and maintaining a UT-wide conversation on topics relevant to all faculties.


One topic that is highly suitable for such interfaculty exchange, is the establishment of (new) indicators for scientific and societal impact. With its intention of determining a more focused subset of indicators to

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underpin the faculty's strategy and targets by the summer of 2022, ITC can inspire and pave the way for other faculties facing a similar task. In general, the Board encourages ITC to be as concrete as possible in defining impact and to link it to direct and measurable outcomes. The Board supports the faculty's ambition to continue pushing ahead to set the standards for open science in the geospatial domain, among which open flagship geo-datasets. Another important challenge ahead is to further promote diversity and inclusion. The Board was pleased to learn that ITC plans to formulate a concrete set of policies by the end of 2023, focusing on understanding the benefits of diverse teams and on what is needed to make effective use of diversity to improve ITC's research & leadership. Connecting to the UT-wide Diversity and Inclusion Office will help to link these policies to UT-wide objectives. Finally, the Board notes that ITC has started a systematic review of its PhD programme to address disparities between different categories of PhD candidates. Policies will be developed to – where possible – eliminate such differences and promote the wellbeing of all PhD candidates. As this is a pressing matter that also affects other faculties, the Board appreciates ITC's intention to work closely with TGS and HR.

To conclude, the Board notes that it has every confidence that ITC will take the committee's suggestions for improvement forward and continue to build itself a strong position within the University of Twente. The Board wishes the Faculty of ITC every success in following-up on the recommendations of the evaluation.

The Executive Board,



Prof. Dr. Ir. A. Veldkamp,
Rector Magnificus

