

Welcome

Welcome to this new issue of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment E-Newsletter, the **FRA News**.

In this issue, which is entirely dedicated to the FRA 2015 activities, you will find important updates on the review process, the country reporting process and the capacity building plan.

Contents

1. FRA 2015 Country Reporting process
2. FRA 2015 review process
3. The Capacity Building plan

1. FRA 2015 country reporting process

The deadline for the submission of the final FRA 2015 Country Reports was the 15th October 2013. So far, more than 60 country reports have been received and reviewed through the FRIMS and we would like to thank all the National Correspondents who submitted their draft report in time.

National Correspondents, who still have not submitted their report, are kindly requested to do so as soon as possible, in order to allow enough time for the analysis of the results and the compilation and analysis of global statistics.

We would like to encourage National Correspondents to submit their report using the online system FRIMS: <http://foreststats.org/fra2015/> to facilitate the review process.

Please contact the FRIMS helpdesk if you would like to receive more information about how to access the FRIMS : FRIMS-Help-Desk@fao.org.

2. FRA 2015 review process

An important part of the FRA process is the review of Country Reports. The purpose of the review is to provide National Correspondents with a source of comments intended to help identify any inconsistencies or gaps in the report, raise questions in advance of publication and make suggestions on content. It is not an editorial review. For FRA 2015 the review process takes place entirely inside the Forest Resources Information Management System (FRIMS) - meaning that all reviewers do their reviews online. We believe this process will be easier than ever before since reviews will be easy to consolidate and manage - and reviewers will have tools to double check the consistency and logic checks that the FRIMS has built in. In most cases there are two or three reviewers per country. Their reviews will be assembled by the Review Editor and sent to National Correspondents for their consideration. Once final versions that address the reviews have been submitted, the data set will be reviewed by Subject Matter reviewers.

We ask that Reviewers and National Correspondents process the reviews and comments as quickly as possible so that we have a complete dataset by no later than March 2014.

3. The Capacity Building Plan

During 2013 global, regional, sub regional and national capacity building activities took place with the aim of improving the information/data reported to FRA. National Network capacity building workshops were carried out in Uganda, DRC, Gabon, Cameroon, Paraguay, Sudan, South Sudan and Laos. Countries were able to identify a large number of stakeholders that can contribute to and also benefit from the FRA country reports. National Correspondents were able to progress towards unification of definitions and criteria, and improvements of the coherence at all levels.

Capacity building workshops to integrate remote sensing into the FRA country reports were organized in Ecuador, Mexico, Laos, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. These countries will produce updated data regarding forest area and change that can be reported to FRA 2015. Both the national network and remote sensing workshops will substantially contribute to the improvement of the quality of the data for the FRA 2015.

From August to December 2013, five regional and sub-regional workshops were organized to provide national correspondents with the technical assistance and guidance necessary to finalize the FRA 2015 country reports. The workshops represented a great opportunity for all the National Correspondents to share their experiences with colleagues at regional and sub-regional level and to clarify issues and difficulties related to the FRA 2015 country reporting process through an in-depth review of the all the FRA 2015 21 questions.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the National Correspondents that participated with interest and dedication and helped to ensure the success of the FRA 2015.

An example: the experience of Mexico

We would like to share with you the experience of Mexico, where exemplary work has been done to compile the FRA 2015 country report. CONAFOR (the Forest National Commission) designed and implemented a working scheme to compile the national report. They created a multidisciplinary team that established a clear division of tasks. They also created a template to register the information in each stage of the work. This template became the main tool to guide the responsible of each of the questions/ tables. This allowed a planned and coordinated work to find the requested statistics, many of them at tier 2 and 3 levels. This methodology allowed raising awareness of the FRA 2015 process at national level, and ensured detailed documentation of the process, the sources of information, the different stakeholders, the contacts and the decisions made when completing the tables. The methodology facilitated identification of deficiencies in terms of statistical forest-related data and inspired targeted proposals to improve them. This will serve for the next data collection exercise. CONAFOR was able to put into practice the methodology proposed by FAO which is logical, flexible and efficient.