

## Proposal for a Remote Sensing Assessment (Support?) as part of FRA 2010

Working Group by FRA reps

## Rationale for remote sensing work

- There is an important need to address this issue
- Vital for Table 1 in FRA
  - Currently report on only the NET change
  - Should also be reporting on DEFORESTATION and AFFORESTATION
  - But very hard to collect and data not available for many countries (most?)

## 1. Is an RSA useful and needed?

- There was significant and robust discussion among the group
- Several points of view with 2 positions most notable:
  - 1. Some concern from countries that have good forest inventories that the RS proposal may contradict their results or even undermine their NFIs (not good)
  - 2. Interest and support from countries where forest inventories are less well developed and they are not able to estimate deforestation or afforestation well and could be assisted by the proposal.

## Should it be implemented in FRA 2010?

- A final decision or recommendation was not possible during the session (premature)
- Consensus was to support further work to refine the proposal
- We need to investigate technical options and best way forward before agreement to implement
- Agreed to get a draft paragraph prepared for presentation to plenary on Friday

## Important issues – not in TOR 1

- Potential threat to core NFI and FRA work – RS data seen as unreliable at certain levels and do not wish RS data to replace NFI data
- FAO seen as Competent Authority (globally) so data must be robust (used by some – politicians, NGO's - as the true figures of forest resources)
- Need to state end products clearly – map, statistical survey...(with caveats/precision)
- Risk to over-interpret technology
- Need to clearly articulate and design it not to undermine, but support existing NFI forest data collection processes
- Should do RS as 'others' are doing RS and FRA does not want to be left behind

## Important issues – not in TOR 2

- Need to be clear on RS definitions – e.g. high resolution to some is medium resolution to others
- FRA has one of the best networks of specialists – utilise in a Task Group?
- How free is 'free' data?
- FRA provides a centre of cooperation for countries to join in with RS
- Remote Sensing Support instead of Remote Sensing Assessment
- RS could be attached by FRA to country NFI's as a sub-project (issue of resources in country)
- What are the costs and what do we get for the cost? Need to prioritise needs and see if they are worth the cost.

## 2. What should be the scope of the RSA? Which variables should be included and assessed?

- Summarise at Regional, biome global level – no national data
- Variables:
  - forest extent / area as close as possible following FRA definition
    - (>10% cover hard, 20% easier)
    - Can we do the 0.5ha limit (possibly not) - only to 1ha?
  - forest cover change to assess deforestation, reforestation, fragmentation and afforestation (very important as not poss under current FRA)

## 2. What should be the scope of the RSA? Which variables should be included and assessed?

- Variables (cont'd):
  - forest characteristics (may not be possible?),
    - separate plantations e.g. oil palm, rubberwood
    - Bamboo (other studies shown promise but not global)
    - Mangroves (important)
  - forest designation, management and use probably not possible but could be combined with other maps to derive estimates
  - other thematic areas?
- Level of precision needs to be declared

## 2. What should be the scope of the RSA? Which variables should be included and assessed? **How**

- Use high resolution to sample forest areas
- Need indigenous knowledge/field surveys to complement and aid RS
- Sampling level needs to be agreed
- Methodology must be flexible over time (for next 1000 years?) and not sensor dependant
  - Postpone for discussion by specialist group
- Collaboration with NFI critical
- Outsource RS work

## 3. Which partner institutions should be invited to collaborate on the RSA?

- NC's could invite institutions from their countries
- There are a number of Universities that are centres of RS excellence which could be used
- There was some reluctance to define partners due to the long term-nature of this work:
  - Could have an open invitation to institutions
- INBAR, USGS, NASA, IMPE, ICIMOD, ITTO, GEO

## 4. Which suggestions does the group have regarding the type and number of interpretation nodes and hubs?

Regional organisations  
S.American node to be discussed  
Make training workshops easier/cheaper

## 5. Decentralized RSA implementation: Is the proposed Information Framework considered an appropriate and operational execution and dissemination platform for the 2010 RSA?

- Make information collated more available
- What data – only images or raw data
- Potential donors will like it more if others can use it

**What are the costs?**

**6. Any other matters of interest related to the theme**

**Next steps**

- Up to Kotka meeting to recommend to proceed
- Technical Need to investigate options to implement