

Welcome

Welcome to FRA News, the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment E-Newsletter

In this issue, you will find a discussion of remote sensing and Country Reports for forest monitoring, progress of the project “Improved information to promote forest management for protection of soil and water” and other relevant information about meetings, publications, the World Forestry Congress in September, South Africa and changes in the FRA staff.

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1. NEWS

Forest monitoring approaches: Remote Sensing and FRA Country Reports

Forest monitoring has recently become a popular and controversial topic among those interested in forest area change estimates. With the arrival of Landsat-based global tree cover analyses from the University of Maryland, many believe that these estimates are improvements over ground-based measurements.

The recent paper published by Kim, Sexton and Townshend (Accelerated Deforestation in the Humid Tropics from the 1990s to the 2000s, Geophysical Research Letters, 2015) has gotten a great deal of media attention because it reports increasing forest loss in the tropics while FRA 2010 reported a reduction in the loss rate. FAO has responded to the assumption in the paper that country reporting on forest area is inherently inferior to Landsat analyses. We are planning to continue responding to the technical issues in the Kim paper to try to highlight the risks of using these data in comparison to FRA data - for example, the Kim data really refer to tree cover and not forest land use, which is what FRA reports as forest.

We would encourage readers to review the Kim paper and consider responding as you see fit. It is important that foresters, remote sensing specialists and the public understand the nature of forest monitoring approaches and what they mean for forest management.

2. Japan Project

New method for assessing the protective function for soil and water provided by forest

The Global Forestry Resources Assessment (FRA) team unveiled results from the project “Improved information to promote forest management for protection of soil and water”, implemented with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.

The project aimed at enabling developing countries to obtain reliable information on the protective function for soil and water provided by forests. This function is very important for disaster resilience and water security and can be conserved and enhanced only if it is recognized and the forest is managed accordingly. Four different methods have been field tested in selected forest sites in Nepal, Mexico and Viet Nam. The results have been jointly analyzed, discussed and ranked and one method was identified as the most reliable, cost- and time-effective. Each of the project partners - the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Nepal, the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFORST) and the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) in Mexico - will present and discuss the results at national level before the end of the spring.



3. Meetings

The Global Forest Observations Initiative

The Global Forest Observations Initiative is a voluntary network of like-minded organizations and individuals working on forest monitoring, assessment and remote sensing for forest monitoring. The organizations leading this network are the Governments of Australia and Norway, the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, SilvaCarbon and FAO. FAO is represented in GFOI through the FRA together with participants from UN-REDD. The GFOI recently held a series of meetings hosted by the Government of Australia to help coordinate capacity building and joint actions on the GFOI Methods and Guidance Document as well as an update on a listing of research and development topics and discussion of how network partners can help inform space agencies of specific satellite imagery needs.

For more information see <http://www.gfoi.org/>

4. Save the date

XIV World Forestry Congress

The XIV World Forestry Congress, which will be held 7-11 September in Durban, South Africa, is fast approaching. This is a unique opportunity for people from around the world to gather together and review key issues around forests and forestry, and to share ways of addressing them. For more information about participation, please see: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/wfc/en/>



5. Publications

The publication "Field guide for rapid assessment of forest protective function for soil and water" presents a scientifically sound, cost-effective and easy-to-apply method for collecting data on the protective functions for soil and water provided by forest for developing countries.

The Global Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper No. 185 "Testing field methods for assessing the forest protective function for soil and water" is a thematic study to assess the scientific accuracy and cost-efficiency of different field assessment methodologies, including details on the tests and the data analysis conducted in Nepal, Viet Nam and Mexico. It is now available for download at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra/88988/en/>



Printed copies can be requested from Yoganath.Adikari@fao.org.

The digital versions are available for download at: www.fao.org/forestry/fra/88988/en/

6. Staffing news

Monica Garzuqia left the FRA team to join a new challenging assignment as Forestry Officer with the FAO Global Forest Survey project. Monica participated in the FRA 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 and was a regular contributor to many aspects of the FRA.

Erik Lindquist has transitioned to the UN REDD team working on remote sensing and forest change detection and a new cloud-based image processing system. Erik was a major contributor to FRA 2010 Remote Sensing Survey and to many FRA 2015 analytical and data management tasks.

Rémi D'Annunzio has moved on to be a consultant with the UN-REDD team based in Wales, UK. In his current job he is providing technical support to countries in remote sensing and GIS to build national forest monitoring systems, with a special focus on Africa.

Flavia Rosati We would like to welcome Flavia Rosati who has joined the FRA team as a volunteer for 6 months. Flavia has a bachelor degree in foreign languages and is working on a Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation. Flavia is very enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with FAO.

*To Monica, Erik and Remi - a sincere thanks for all of the hard work you have put into the FRA!
We wish you the very best in your new roles.*