



Welcome from the UEB chairperson

By Stefanie Linser, Environment Agency Austria

We are happy to inform you that the European Space Agency (ESA) supported GMES Service Element on Forest Monitoring (GSE FM), which was initiated in 2003, is now in an extension phase to further conduct activities in Europe. This includes also the continuation of the work of the GSE FM User Executive Body. In the seventh issue of the UEB newsletter we will inform you on relevant highlights, ongoing user activities, new developments as well as upcoming conferences.

We would like to invite all GSE FM partners to contribute actively to the UEB activities including the newsletter and provide inputs and comments and share experiences with all partners in this manner. We look forward to your valuable participation to ensure the sustainability of this network “by the users - for the users”.

GSE FM REDD Pilot Projects and COP15, Copenhagen

By Sharon Gomez, GAF-AG, Germany

The issues of deforestation and degradation are central to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP)11 in Montreal in 2005, developing countries tabled a motion to include the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) in developing countries as a post-Kyoto Protocol mechanism. Since 2005, countries have therefore taken initiatives to develop REDD demonstration activities (pilot projects) and to work on methodological issues, technology transfer and capacity building which are all required for successful REDD implementation. The GSE FM expanded the service provision for the development of REDD Pilot Projects in Cameroon and Bolivia in 2007. The REDD Pilot Project in Cameroon which was implemented between 2007-2009, has the overall aim at integrating the application of Earth Observation (EO) technologies with the policy formulation. The project intends to establish baseline projections of emissions caused by deforestation, combined with regional projections of degradation nested in a wall-to-wall approach. Key methodological issues that are being addressed in the pilots include estimation and monitoring of forest areas (using remote sensing methods), establishing reference emission levels, and assessing both national and sub/national approaches. Innovative institutional arrangements/mechanisms such as technology transfer with south-south co-operation. Progress towards producing the forest mask (forest/no-forest maps) for these epochs and mapping the related land-use change between these time periods has been made, and an emission accounting to be based on a comprehensive biomass inventory has been developed.

The successful implementation of the GSE FM REDD Pilot Projects in Cameroon and Bolivia provided a substantial basis in terms of understanding the policy processes and the technical requirements for countries involved in the REDD process. This has led to ESA to further support (December 2009-2012) the GSE FM REDD expansion to additional countries in the Congo region-Gabon and the Republic of Congo as well as Lao PDR. The GSE FM REDD activities were presented at a side event at the COP15 in Copenhagen. The side event was co-hosted by the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC). Important to note was the participation of key Environment and Forest Ministers from the COMIFAC sub-region; more specifically the Ministers from the Central African Republic (current President of COMIFAC), the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Ministers from the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Additionally representatives from governments, NGOs and the scientific community were also present. Thus the event brought together both the political and technical issues in one session which is a key requirement for successful REDD implementation in the region. This forum proved to be invaluable in terms of providing a platform to present the GSE FM REDD activities in the Congo region which demonstrated progress made towards achieving national and regional goals in this climate change sector.

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COMIFAC-GAF Side Event at COP15, Dr. T. Häusler (GAF-AG) and Dr. J. Amougou (MINEP, Cameroon) presenting



Retrospect: Future Forest Monitoring Uppsala, Sweden 11-12 November 2009

By Tim Green and Tuula Nuutinen, EFI

Last November, high-level representatives of the institutions involved in forest monitoring met in Uppsala to discuss the future of the monitoring of European forests. The aim of the meeting was to promote a streamlined European forest monitoring programme capable of delivering the necessary information in support of the EU and member states policies that are relevant for the European forest ecosystems.

The representatives formulated informal conclusions and recommendations towards designing an improved, streamlined and multifunctional European Forest Monitoring Programme. Among other statements, the meeting concluded that *a cost-efficient forest monitoring should use an optimal technology for data collection, e.g. comprise not only field data but also data collected by remote sensing. The advantages of Earth Observation for European-level monitoring should thus be fully explored.* The full conclusions and presentations from the meeting are available at:

http://www.efi.int/portal/news_events/events/extra/2009/Future_forest_monitoring/

GNU Results available

By Herbert Haubold, Environment Agency Austria

GNU (GMES Network of Users) has produced several new documents which are likely of interest to the users and other stakeholders within the Forest Monitoring community. E.g. the GNU GMES Governance Principles show how users views can be translated into GMES governance, the GNU GMES Product Quality Criteria specify, what makes a great GMES product, and the GNU Assessment of Validation Practices explains how the usefulness of services can best be measured. All these and more documents are available at the GNU project website: <http://www.gmes-network-of-users.eu/results/>

REFOLANA summer school

By Annemarie Bastrup-Birk, University of Copenhagen

Forest & Landscape Denmark will hold a summer school (28 June to 9 July) on *Use of open source tools for spatial ecological modeling*. This 2-weeks REFOLANA course aims at demonstrating different free and open sources tools to carry out spatial ecological modelling and spatial analysis in ecology.

The course comprises a set of short lectures that present modelling concepts and procedures, as well as practical sessions for participants where participants can use the software and scripting routines to achieve large-scale data analysis.

For more information http://en.sl.life.ku.dk/Forskning/ForsknerskolenREFOLANA/Activities_courses.aspx#2010

Upcoming events

Geoland Forum – 24-25 March 2010, **Toulouse, France** http://www.gmes-geoland.info/geoland_Forum.php. The focus of the forum will be on presentation of progress of practical core services achieved in terms of pre-operational performance and delivery, and its translation into operational services.

30th EARSeL Symposium – 31 May-4 June 2010, **Paris, France** <http://www.earsel.org/symposia/2010-symposium-Paris/index.php>. Topics will include: *Land use and land cover, degradation and desertification and Forestry and forest fires.*

ForestSat 2010 conference – 7-9 September 2010, **Lugo, Spain** <http://forestsat2010.usc.es/>

The secretary and chairperson of the UEB will be in contact with the conference organisers to try and organise a dedicated session for GSE FM users. More information about this will be given in the next newsletter.

Note from editor

We hope that you find the articles in the newsletter interesting and informative. If you have ideas or materials for articles I would be happy to hear from you.

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