Webinar VII
Forest Data and Transparency: 'Zoom in' on the Experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Recording Link: https://youtu.be/i4JmGuwJOJ4

Questions and Answers

For more information about the international technical webinars series, please visit the FAO elearning Academy website

1) **Will the forest data mosaics to be prepared by Planet et al be open data?**
Yes, the satellite mosaics will be available for all through different platforms: SEPAL and GFW for instance, as well as Collect Earth and Collect Earth Online. You can get an overview of the monthly mosaics on the GFW base-maps already here. More information on this soon through official press releases – check back on the websites of Planet, FAO and NICFI for the latest information. Press releases already released can be found here and here.

2) **Juste savoir si vous pouvez nous partager les images satelitaires des zones forestières pour la RDC?**
Oui, ces images seront publiques, et disponibles a travers plusieurs Plateformes: SEPAL, GFW, Collect Earth Collect Earth Online. Normalement d'ici la fin du mois.

3) **I would like to have contacts for Remi for further engagement, my main question is around possibilities of support for Zimbabwe for NFI and NFMS.**
Thanks for your message. Please contact rebecca.tavani@fao.org

4) **How are you supporting countries implementing community forestry programs to harmonise their forest monitoring at project level within the NFMS at the national level?**
That is a very good question. With CAFI and FONAREDD, we have a program with WWF for integrated programs in Equateur province in DRC, with a strong focus on community forestry. This is in the starting phase, but stay tuned and contact FAO DRC or DIAF for more details.

5) **Comment est que les inventaires sont réalisés dans les zones à insécurité?**
Another good question. During field inventories in DRC any areas where there were security risks due to conflict or crime were not visited. The safety of the field crews is paramount. Remote sensing approaches are particularly useful in this case, enabling data to be collected from areas which are inaccessible for whatever reason. The Government of Myanmar and FAO with support from Finland are currently piloting a conflict-sensitive approach to forest inventory which you may be interested in. You can read more here.

6) **Aujourd'hui le vrai problème n'est plus l'octroi des concessions forestières aux communautés locales mais sa gestion effective, car à quoi ça sert d'octroyer une concession forestière à une communauté locale qui ne sera pas en mesure de mobiliser les moyens financiers nécessaires pour la mise en œuvre des activités pour lutter contre la pauvreté et préserver l'environnement ? Pour citer le cas précis de la RDC.**
Very good question. This is really the crux of the problem isn't it. With forest monitoring in general and for REDD+ in particular the idea is to work from the bottom up and ensure

that local communities gain access to the benefits, and that those benefits are equitably shared within communities. We are still far from that in most countries unfortunately but are working towards it through capacity building with local communities, participatory approaches and FPIC processes such as those used in DRC and the strengthening of institutions, which would eventually ideally be able to provide regular funding for forest monitoring activities. The flow of benefits from REDD+ is a work in progress, with the first payments only disbursed just last year in 2019. We still have a lot to do.

7) How is Congolese civil society included in the forest monitoring system? They were not mentioned as one of the actors or stakeholders involved.

Civil society has been involved in the forest monitoring system and is indeed a key partner. This report summarizes the ongoing collaboration with civil society on REDD+ in DRC, such as the Working Group on REDD Climate (Groupe de Travail Climat REDD). Also the PIREDD project is a good example of ongoing collaboration with civil society on REDD+ in DRC as it works closely with community and farmer groups to tackle root causes of deforestation while ensuring community engagement, sustainable livelihood development and benefit-sharing.

8) Comment la société civile congolaise est-elle intégrée dans le système de surveillance des forêts ? Elle n'a pas été mentionnée comme l'un des acteurs ou parties prenantes impliqués.

Voir ci-dessus.

9) Since forest Mensuration is such a technical exercise, kindly advise how communities where able to understand the results and processes. I am in Zimbabwe doing a pilot survey in carbon sequestration with an organisation called SAFIRE

Meeting with local communities is a fundamental part of the forest inventory. Communities are met with prior to accessing the forest during field inventory, sometimes through the formation of focus groups, and forest inventory activities are explained including the intended results and the overall process of national forest monitoring including frequency and use in planning. Communication and transparency are fundamental.

10) For the forest monitoring in DRC, are sampling plots prepared in order to carry out ground truthing exercise? How many plots are there for the whole of DRC and how are they selected? And with those number of plots how long does it take to complete one cycle of forest monitoring exercise?

NFMS contains two main aspects: satellite based monitoring system (http://rdc-snsf.org/) and National forest inventory. NFI has 321 Sampling Unit which have been almost all inventoried on the ground. It took 3 years to complete 90%, the remaining ones are precisely in zones with insecurity, not always easy to carry this work out.

11) **How can technical and financial partners to the DRC Government be even more efficient in supporting DRC in transparent and timely availability of forests and deforestation data?**

The main element that has been repeatedly identified as a key gap is the provision of good, regular and frequent satellite observation data to enable validation of monitoring products (maps, near real time alerts). The procurement by NICFI (https://www.nicfi.no/current/new-satellite-images-to-allow-anyone-anywhere-to-monitor-tropical-deforestation/) to provide universal access to high-resolution satellite monitoring of the tropics is a very good example of what financial partners can do to support efforts to stop the destruction of the world's rainforests

12) **Is DRC able to follow in near-real time the evolution of the forest cover? In other words, is DRC able to detect deforestation (on a monthly basis, for example) using satellite data?**

Yes, DRC is able to follow forest cover change in near-real time thanks to available high resolution and high cadence imagery such as those of Planet Labs. See above answer

13) **I would like to ask to Mr. Benjamin Toirambe Bamoninga [DRC government]:**

How do your ministry manage the challenges and difficulties, particularly in building a trust between institutions who provide the data?

The NFMS of DRC is piloted by DIAF at the Ministry of Environment but monthly data on deforestation events is being channelled to the provincial and district level under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. This is a relevant example of how the NFMS is structured and integrated at the institutional level in the country.

Is there any system set in place on how to use and share the data? Is it working?

The NFMS has a portal that is precisely doing this. See more information here: http://rdc-snsf.org/

Are you considering to build a Big Data for the Forest Monitoring?

NFMS is already based on the latest cloud-computing platforms, benefitting from currently available public Big Data, such as Google Earth Engine and SEPAL. The NFMS of DRC is not intending to re-invent the wheel but rather use and build upon the huge wealth of data and information available in the cloud

14) **What is the name of the tool?**

National forest monitoring assessment tool. The NFMS assessment tool is available at the end of the lesson 2 of the e-learning course:

eLearning course on "Forests and transparency under the Paris Agreement":
English: https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=587
Spanish: https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=610
French: https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=616
Information brief on the NFMS assessment tool

English: http://www.fao.org/3/ca9903en/ca9903en.pdf
French: http://www.fao.org/3/ca9903fr/ca9903fr.pdf
Spanish: http://www.fao.org/3/ca9903es/ca9903es.pdf
Quick guidance on the NFMS assessment tool
English: http://www.fao.org/3/cb0988en/CB0988EN.pdf
We also mentioned the cloud computing platform SEPAL, available at https://sepal.io

15) **Is there any article about global forest watch? more info about this map is available?**
Please find the article here.

16) **Les formations en télédétection ou suivi des terres ne peuvent-elles pas être organisées par la FAO?**
Nous allons lancer une serie de formations en francais et en anglais sur les plateformes et outils SEPAL, Collect Earth, LCCS-v3, ainsi que Collect, pour fin octobre et novembre. Vous pourrez trouver des informations spécifiques sur ces formations et vous inscrire sur la page web de l'équipe REDD+ de la FAO, ici : http://www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/fr/c/1312176/.

17) **Seeing the security issues that DRC is going through, and we all know that rebels are hidden in the forest which can impact on the biodiversity in general, what does the FAO and the SNSF do and or advise to the Government in this regard? (Remi)**
The team of the SNSF is before all, attentive to the health and security of its agents. In areas where there are known conflicts or risks of being confronted with armed factions, FAO does not authorize field visits to be done. In these particularly sensitive areas, the use of good remote sensing data, updated in a regular manner, is a strong asset to fill the data gap. It also allows for fine-tuned monitoring and better decision making.

Don't you think rewarding those who always plant trees and those who have plantations of tree can be a solution to drop deforestation? what do you do in that regard?? (Toirambe)
We distinguish between afforestation/reforestation and deforestation under REDD+. While planting trees (with due consideration given to species, soil type, environment etc.) is generally a great action in terms of climate change mitigation as well as with other benefits, we also need to prevent the loss of existing forests i.e. stop deforestation, as evidence suggests that differences between planted forests and natural forests in terms of biodiversity and carbon stored are significant. Therefore, REDD+ intends to prevent deforestation *as well as* promoting afforestation/reforestation activities such as you mention.

18) **Please could you organize a capacity building for those who are interested?**

A series of webinars have been launched on October 15 and anyone interested can join, some of the tools mentioned today will be covered.
English: http://www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/en/c/1310877/
French: http://www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/fr/c/1312176/

19) **How to reconcile different approaches and methods by different stakeholders for result-based payment?**
An important question too, and I think you are referring to REDD+ nesting. This publication could be interest to you, and you can read more generally here.

20) **Is private sector leveraged by this?**
Yes, FAO is working with the private sector on forest monitoring, one recent example being the partnership with Planet Labs in order to provide high resolution satellite imagery for DRC and seven other tropical forested countries.

21) **How is FAO working closer to NGOs at the national level in terms of trust funding goes directly to benefit local communities in Lake Tumba region?**
FAO is engaged with WWF in an Integrated REDD+ Program in the Equateur province to adopt community and individual afforestation methods with a view to secure tenure within savannah areas. It also aims to ensure the promotion of Agroforestry as well as of sustainable agriculture and conservation in post-cropping fallows in order to contain new fronts of clearing in natural forests.

22) **I am able to see the map from that URL but I am wondering if there is any paper about this map? how to make this map technically etc.**
The Planet data available through the NICFI procurement will be mostly for visualization and production of better quantitative data on areas of land cover and land cover change

23) **Please could you share to all of the participants these presentations?**
Please note that the webinar video recording, presentations and Q&A will soon be available in the FAO elearning Academy dedicated webpage:
https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=606

Useful and related links

Case study of DRC
English: http://www.fao.org/3/cb0702en/CB0702EN.pdf
French: http://www.fao.org/3/cb0702fr/cb0702fr.pdf
Spanish: http://www.fao.org/3/cb0702es/cb0702es.pdf
Poster:
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