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Webinar XI  
**Open and Transparent Forest Data:  
Innovation and Technology for Climate  
Action**

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## Open and Transparent Forest Data: Innovation and Technology for Climate Action

11 November 2020

Recording Link: <https://youtu.be/rGWuruPN-JY>

### Questions and Answers

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**1) Does she have a list of the 26 countries that she could share? (Rocio)**

Pilot countries to the CBIT-Forest project up today are in LAC: Guatemala, Honduras; Africa: Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire; Asia: Thailand, Laos. Additional, selected 20 countries will be contacted from the following sub-regions in Mesoamerica, francophone countries in Africa and South East Asia. Please follow our web site for updates: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/boosting-transparency-forest-data/en/>

**2) Can we recommend tools for the library like explorer.land? (Yelena)**

SEPAL and Open Foris collaborate with many partners that develop geospatial tools. You can provide links to [SEPAL](#) and [Open Foris](#) on your website as recommended tools for generating relevant data. If you are interested in having your code integrated as an application in SEPAL you can post in the [Open Foris support page](#) or contact Erik Lindquist at [erik.lindquist@fao.org](mailto:erik.lindquist@fao.org).

**3) Could you provide the timeline and milestones involved in the development of the BFIS? (Mariam)**

We took 3 years for initial development of BFIS. Cooperation among stakeholders, digitalization of hard copy data, collection of data and signing of agreements were the milestones to develop the system.

**4) how can I know more about your geospatial portal based on GeoNode tools? (Mariam)**

I can connect you with the experts who are working at the Resources Information Management System Unit of the Forest Department and Bangladesh Computer Council to answer your questions related to the GeoNode tools.

**5) Where can we find data on the main drivers of deforestation? do we know which ag commodities, for example, contributed to clearing forests?? (Mariam)**

We have a report on the drivers of deforestation. This document is under the process of approval. We may share the document upon approval.

**6) Are these data provided by the States or from the work of FAO specialties? (Anssi)**

The Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) is conducted at the request of the FAO member countries. The data to the process are reported by the countries through a global network of National Correspondents who have been formally nominated to this task by the Head of Forestry of each country. The National Correspondents and their teams receive training on how to report official national statistics to the FRA process in a transparent and consistent way. The prepared national reports are then reviewed by the FRA secretariat to ensure that the reporting is carried out consistently with the well-established reporting guidelines.



**7) Do you have some web statistics at hand about how your platform is used? Where the users come from, how many visits per month? How else do you track impact of your platform? (Anssi)**

Yes, we have started monitoring the FRA Platform traffic. We cannot register all the visits yet, but the preliminary statistics show that since its publishing in July the Platform has been already visited thousands of times.

**8) How are the data updated, particularly in case of spreading fires like in Amazonia, Siberia (Anssi)**

The latest FRAs have been conducted using a five-year cycle. Because of that, we have not been able to share the latest data on disturbances such as fires. However, FAO has now been requested to develop a more flexible reporting process which will allow more frequent voluntary updates of key indicators in the future.

**9) Can we also download forest maps and/or geospatial data along with the statistics? (Anssi)**

At the moment, FRA Platform's dissemination functionalities are limited to sharing tabular and narrative type of data. However, the countries can use their reports to share links to any geospatial datasets they may have that are relevant for their reports.

**10) What has been the main challenges for developing Bangladesh information system; what are the key elements for that helped you to create this system? (Mariam)**

The main challenge was the lack of IT skills and facilities at Forest Department. Identification of gaps and addressing the gaps was the 1st step to develop the system. FAO and Bangladesh Computer Council were supported for initial development of the BFIS. Currently World Bank is helping Forest Department to upgrade the system and the development of more modules to manage and conserve our forest.

**11) Any plans for providing spatial outputs using the FRA portal or its integration with other portal where information for Forest restoration and planning activities? (Anssi)**

The countries can already provide links to such resources in their metadata. In addition, the latest Committee on Forestry has requested FAO to that analyse if and how reporting on restoration-related indicators to future FRAs can streamline reporting for countries between multiple restoration initiatives. The results of this analysis will be presented in 2022.

**12) Where I can find the data for deforestation in FRA? For example Ecuador? (Anssi)**

By going to <https://fra-data.fao.org/>, selecting a country and using the dialog in the left part of the screen. To see the deforestation data the country reported to FRA, select section 1 "Forest extent ..." and table 1d.



**13) In a post-pandemic scenario, which technological tools can be most effective for governments and especially civil society, to manage forests and their management. Monitoring is without effect if the problems of communities around forests and their sustainable use cannot be eradicated. Is there any projection to promote technologies in municipalities? (Julian)**

There are an increasing number of freely available tools and platforms that can be used by all forest stakeholders. An example is FAO's [Open Foris](#), with a range of technical solutions for collecting and analysing forest data, both on the ground and using remote sensing technology. The [SEPAL](#) geospatial platform can be used from your mobile phone in limited band-width situations, using cloud-based computing resources, and is being widely used by governments and civil society.

**14) What are your expectations about the use of this satellite imagery by countries in the context of REDD+? (Ellen)**

The countries will know best how to make use of these data for their particular context. Hopefully the data will contribute to the basis for policy development and implementation as well as assessment of policies, and reporting. On particular topics, one could foresee the data being used to reduce uncertainty, as reference or training data, improved estimates for forest degradation and regrowth/removals, in the fight against forest crime, and many other aspects related to forests and land use.

**15) How do you intent to build capacity for its usage? (Ellen)**

There will be technical capacity building and outreach in relation to the data, but we are still developing our approach to this. Apologies for not being more specific at this point in time.

**16) Any Do we have a manual or guidance document to search for the acronyms used in the SEPAL platform? (Yelena)**

You can find documentation and useful links for SEPAL on our Github wiki page <https://github.com/openforis/sepal/wiki>. We are in the process of developing comprehensive tutorials; if you are interested to test these tutorials, please e-mail Erik Lindquist at [erik.lindquist@fao.org](mailto:erik.lindquist@fao.org). He can send the draft tutorials for your use, review, and comments.

**17) Are there updated tutorials / materials on using SEPAL? (Yelena)**

You can find documentation and useful links for SEPAL on our Github wiki page <https://github.com/openforis/sepal/wiki>. We are in the process of developing comprehensive tutorials; if you are interested to test these tutorials, please e-mail Erik Lindquist at [erik.lindquist@fao.org](mailto:erik.lindquist@fao.org). He can send the draft tutorials for your use, review, and comments.

**18) Can you use counties divisions? (Yelena)**

In SEPAL you can use a custom area of interest by uploading it first as Google Earth Engine asset or you can draw a polygon directly on the map.



**19) Do you have a website or videos for the use of data that you have presented? (Yelena)**

You can find documentation and useful links for SEPAL on our Github wiki page <https://github.com/openforis/sepal/wiki>. We are in the process of developing comprehensive tutorials; if you are interested to test these tutorials, please e-mail Erik Lindquist at [erik.lindquist@fao.org](mailto:erik.lindquist@fao.org). He can send the draft tutorials for your use, review, and comments.

**20) Is SEPAL an application or a web link? (Yelena)**

SEPAL is a web-based platform - accessible here <https://sepal.io/> and also works on mobile devices (through a web browser)

**21) How our country data can be uploaded to the platform? (Karl)**

Your data can be added for private use with the "Add Local Data" and "Add Web Data" functions. If you are the data owner you can contact [fao-data@fao.org](mailto:fao-data@fao.org) to have data considered for inclusion in the platform for all access. You can also contact us to suggest data for inclusion. Authorised FAO HiH Country Teams can add data directly.

**22) FRA platform and Hand-in-Hand will be linked? (Karl, Anssi)**

We are working to make the FRA 2020 data available in the Hand-in-Hand platform. All links and publications are available at the end of this document.

**23) What are the plans to include more countries to the hand-in-hand countries' list? (Karl)**

The current countries we are prioritising Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tuvalu, Yemen, Zimbabwe. Several other countries have also independently requested to join the platform following the hand-in-hand approach.

**24) The tool is fabulous. How are the data shared? Can we really count on their reality? (Karl)**

How data is shared is dependent on how the data has been included. Federated (directly linked to live data source) is accessible from the source (e.g. openstreet maps or NASA data). Deep integrated and ingested data can be accessed through the platform directly (e.g. as download CSV, GeoTIFF, Shapefile etc). All data has limitations and so it is important to consider the metadata to better understand if the data is fit for your purpose.

**25) Can I download a map created with the desired variable along with the legend? (Karl)**





A story can be created in the platform and shared with others. There is a print function that includes the map and the legend.

**26) Is there any possibility of expanding the coverage of data? (Karl)**

Your data can be added for private use with the “Add Local Data” and “Add Web Data” functions. If you are the data owner you can contact [fao-data@fao.org](mailto:fao-data@fao.org) to have data considered for inclusion in the platform for all access. You can also contact us to suggest data for inclusion. Authorised FAO HiH Country Teams can add data directly.

**27) Are How can we get in touch with BFD. I am a researcher looking at the mangrove governance in Bangladesh and India and would like to interact with forest officials to learn more. If you are able to connect me with someone that would be great (Mariam)**

It is easy to get in touch with the officials working at the respective Forest Divisions through using the BFD website ([www.bforest.gov.bd](http://www.bforest.gov.bd)). Specifically using the below link you will be able to get in touch with the officials of Sundarban Forest Division responsible for the management of natural mangroves of Bangladesh.

[http://www.bforest.gov.bd/site/view/officer\\_list\\_category/%E0%A6%96%E0%A7%81%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%BE%20%E0%A6%85%E0%A6%9E%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%9A%E0%A6%B2](http://www.bforest.gov.bd/site/view/officer_list_category/%E0%A6%96%E0%A7%81%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%BE%20%E0%A6%85%E0%A6%9E%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%9A%E0%A6%B2)).

**28) Are cyclone/Natural Hazard specific data available on these portals? Referring specially for cyclone prone region of Bangladesh. (Mariam)**

No, there is no data related to natural hazards in the BFIS. The Bangladesh Forest Information System (BFIS) presented in the webinar that was developed by Forest Department under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Separate ministry and department is working on the disaster management. They are the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the Department of Disaster Management. Respective websites can be explored for desired data.

**29) Remote sensing data is very useful to see changes, but to bring change it's essential for the public to also see these deforestation alerts overlaid with land ownership and current, valid forest harvest authorization permits. Does the FAO require that all CBIT participant countries provide this data in a complete, updated and fully transparent manner? (Yelena/Rocio)**

Great point! Biophysical data on changes gives insight to one part of the equation for tackling deforestation and change climate. Data created in SEPAL or any of the Open Foris tools can be overlaid with additional socio-economic data, such as land tenure and forest concessions. CBIT does not require participating countries provide data but encourages transparency and on that regard we are helping countries identify gaps and needs in order to enhance their National Forest Monitoring Systems.

**30) How is Hand-in-Hand linked with SEI's Trace Platform? (Karl)**



I am not very familiar with SEI's Trace Platform which seems to focus on environmental impacts linked to supply chains. Hand-in-Hand geospatial platform is focused on food and agriculture. There seems opportunities for potentiation synergies.

### Useful links:

Presentation of Rocio Condor:

**CBIT Forest project website:** <http://www.fao.org/in-action/boosting-transparency-forest-data/en/>

**E-learning 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>

**NFMS assessment tool - information brief:**

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>

You will find the NFMS assessment tool at the end of lesson 2 of the eLearning course

**NFMS assessment tool - Quick guidance:**

English: <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0988en/CB0988EN.pdf>

Soon in French and Spanish

**Democratic Republic of Congo case study:**

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>

**Costa Rica case study:**

English: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618en/ca8618en.pdf>

French: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618fr/ca8618fr.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618es/ca8618es.pdf>

**Bangladesh case study:**

English: <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1912en/cb1912en.pdf>

Soon in French and Spanish

Presentation of Mariam Akhter:

**Bangladesh Forest Information System (BFIS):** <http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/bfis/>

**BFIS video:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7bCCyrNbPc&t=1s&ab\\_channel=FoodandAgricultureOrganizationoftheUnitedNations](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7bCCyrNbPc&t=1s&ab_channel=FoodandAgricultureOrganizationoftheUnitedNations)



### Leaflets:

BFIS: <http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/library/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/11-BFIS.pdf>

### BFIS GeoPortal Module:

<http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/library/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/geo.pdf>

**BFIS e-Library Module:** <http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/library/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/e-library-.pdf>

**BFIS Forest Emission Factor Database Module:** <http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/library/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/allometric-.pdf>

**BFIS Tree Species Identification Module:** <http://bfis.bforest.gov.bd/library/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/tree.pdf>

Presentation of Anssi Pekkarinen:

All **FRA 2020 publications** and background information are available here:

<http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/>

**Interactive version of FRA 2020 Key Findings** can be found at: <http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/2020/en/>

The **FRA 2020 Platform** with all the data reported by the countries is at <https://fra-data.fao.org/>

Presentation of Ellen Bruzelius Backer:

**NICFI program:** [www.planet.com/nicfi](http://www.planet.com/nicfi)

Presentation of Yelena Finegold:

SEPAL: <https://sepal.io/>

OpenForis: <http://openforis.org/>

Presentation of Karl Morteo:

Hand-in-Hand Web page: <http://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/en/>

Hand-in-Hand Platform : <https://data.apps.fao.org/>

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