

Summary of side event on:

GOFC-GOLD sourcebook as technical guidance for REDD implementation: update and prospects

Organized by: the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS) and its technical panel on Global Observations of Forest Cover and Land Dynamics (GOFC-GOLD)

Held at UNFCCC SBSTA 28, Thursday, 05 June 2008, 18:00 - 20:00 at MoE, WIND, Bonn Germany

In support of the UNFCCC REDD efforts, and related methodological discussions and implementation activities, the technical panel of the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS) on “Global Observation of Forest Cover and Land Dynamics” (GOFC-GOLD, www.fao.org/gtos/gofc-gold) has continued its activities through a dedicated working group. The group has been active since the initiation of the UNFCCC REDD process in 2005, has organized expert workshops, and has contributed to related UNFCCC/SBSTA side events and GTOS submissions. The activities resulted in a draft of a user friendly sourcebook on: “Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries: A Sourcebook of Methods and Procedures for Monitoring, Measuring and Reporting.”

The sourcebook provides a consensus perspective from the community of earth observation and carbon monitoring experts on methodological issues relating to quantifying the green house gas (GHG) impacts of implementing activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation in developing countries (REDD). Based on the current status of negotiations and UNFCCC approved methodologies, it aims to provide additional explanation, clarification, and methodologies to support REDD early actions and readiness mechanisms for building national REDD monitoring systems. The sourcebook provides guidance on how to correctly use satellite remote sensing data to monitor changes in forest cover, and provides clarification on applying the IPCC Guidelines for reporting changes in forest carbon stocks at the national level. The first draft was presented for open review in conjunction with UNFCCC COP 13 in Bali. The draft is available for open review: <http://www.gofc-gold.uni-jena.de/redd/>.

The side event provided an update on recent Sourcebook developments and next steps for its further evolution. Four presentations were given

1. Sourcebook background and development process (20 mins, D. Mollicone)
2. Soil carbon monitoring and estimation (10 mins, C. Siebner)
3. New sections and critical issues (20 min, M.Herold):
4. Addressing uncertainties for reporting (10 mins, G. Grassi)
5. Panel discussions (with remarks from GTZ: R.Wolf and ESA, F-M. Seifert).

Overall the side event was well attended with about 70 participants. Several LULUCF national negotiators from Annex I and non-Annex I countries were present. Materials of related GTOS activities, i.e. on the UN Global Land Cover Network and Observing Essential Climate variables in the terrestrial domain have been circulated. All side event presentations are made available on the related UNFCCC website (http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/events_list.html).

The following issues came up in the side event discussions and should be considered for the future sourcebook efforts:

- Several participants highlighted the usefulness of the sourcebook for their activities including REDD case studies and capacity building efforts.
- The new sections planned for the sourcebook updates that have been presented in the side event (i.e. fire observations, soil carbon estimations, accuracy assessment, evolving technologies) have been found valuable additions.
- There was emphasis on the flexibility to sourcebook provides to fit different national circumstances.
- Some participants noted the importance of a combined approach of using satellite and ground data in conjunction with the notion that the sourcebook provides a suitable status of what satellite remote sensing can contribute to national REDD-related monitoring; in particular in the independent nature of satellite data.
- There was some interest in understanding the cost implications, in particular for some new and evolving technologies.
- There was a specific question on how the sourcebook relates to developments and methodologies in the voluntary carbon market (i.e. voluntary carbon standard etc.)
- There were a number of detailed technical comments:
 - For monitoring degradation using the direct approach described in the sourcebook, there was a request to better link the activity data with emission factors
 - Two participants emphasized the merits of community-based forest monitoring and role of earth observation for verification purposes
 - A comment on the use of fire observations for the national monitoring requested clarification on how the results would be different if or not fire observations are included in particular for monitoring degradation

Overall, there was encouragement to continue the sourcebook evaluation and it an updated version was announced before the UNFCCC SBSTA workshop in Tokyo at the end of June, along the following considerations:

The new version (COP13.2) is an update of the sourcebook presented at COP13 in Bali (COP13.1). It considers the suite of comments and suggestions received through an open review process that includes specific edits, and new or updated sections for fire observations and the accuracy assessment and area estimates for activity data. We recognize that the recent UNFCCC decisions at SBSTA 27 and 28 in this issue opened new possibilities, which include role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. While carefully following such progress, the next round of updates will reflect these discussions. In addition, new chapters and sections on implementing national inventories, soil carbon estimations, and evolving technologies are already in development.

Related websites:

Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS): <http://www.fao.org/gtos/>

GOFC-GOLD REDD sourcebook: <http://www.gofc-gold.uni-jena.de/redd>

GOFC-GOLD: <http://www.fao.org/gtos/gofc-gold/>

GOFC-GOLD land cover project office: <http://www.gofc-gold.uni-jena.de/>

M.Herold

7.June 2008