

THE NEW ESA GOFC-GOLD LAND COVER IMPLEMENTATION TEAM PROJECT OFFICE

Global Observation for Forest and Land Cover Dynamics is a coordinated international effort working to provide ongoing space-based and in-situ observations of forests and other land vegetation cover types, for the sustainable management of terrestrial resources and to obtain an accurate, reliable, quantitative understanding of the terrestrial carbon budget. Originally developed as a pilot project by the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) as part of their Integrated Global Observing Strategy, GOFC/GOLD is now a panel of the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS). The general framework is summarized and further refined in Figure 1.

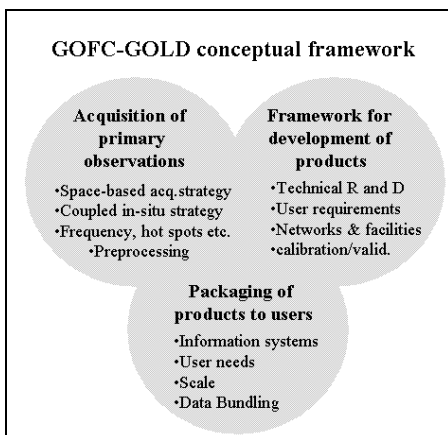


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of GOFC/GOLD.

Following extensive discussions between the GOFC Executive Committee chaired by John Townshend and ESA, it was proposed that the Jena University in Germany would provide an excellent location for the GOFC

Land Cover Project Office. Starting February 2004, the new ESA GOFC/GOLD Land Cover Implementation Team Project Office (GOFC LC IT PO) is being put in place at the Geoinformatics Department of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany. Christiane Schmullius becomes a Co-chair of the GOFC GOLD LC IT jointly with David Skole, Michigan State University, who is chairing the implementation team for several years. ESA decided to fund the GOFC LC PO for duration of 3 years.

In February 2002, the Land Cover IT inaugurated its first 2-year plan. To review the accomplishments and to continue towards an operational forest and land cover monitoring system (using both satellite and in situ observations), the new Project Office is hosting the 2nd Implementation Team meeting at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, from 2nd until 4th March 2004.

The main objectives of this workshop are:

1. GOFC/GOLD Forest and Land Cover Implementation Plan: review of accomplishment and future prospects,
2. introduction and inauguration of the new ESA GOFC/GOLD Land Cover project office,
3. role and interest of space agencies and international and global programmes e.g. GMES and GEO to GOFC/GOLD activities.

The meeting will include representatives from other GOFC/GOLD IT's, Regional Networks and the Director. Additional representatives from CEOS, GTOS, FAO, ASIACOVER, and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment are being invited to help connect and coordinate the LC IT activities with the larger programmatic and research framework.

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GOFc-GOLD LAND COVER PROJECT OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The most challenging of the GOFc/GOLD theme groups is Land Cover Implementation.

The associated information products of land cover characteristics and changes appeal to the widest spectrum of users, including resource managers, policy makers, and scientists studying the global carbon cycle and biodiversity loss. The primary function of this Implementation Team is to plan, conduct, and supervise activities and actions which advance GOFc/GOLD's objectives. It is focused on developing methods, tools and products for land cover measurement and monitoring using space-borne and in-situ observations. The team's efforts are also directed toward assessing current needs and deficiencies for global and regional monitoring to support; Global Change research, national and regional inventories and assessments, and international policy. The team works closely with other GOFc/GOLD implementation teams and established regional networks in Asia and Africa. For the use of remote sensing data for land cover mapping GOFc/GOLD has proposed a systematic program for coarse resolution (250 - 1000 m) land cover mapping on a five year cycle, combined with periodic mapping and monitoring of forested areas at fine resolution (~25 m). Very large datasets from a wide range of sensors have to be acquired, assembled, processed, and analysed. Although most of the individual technology components have been demonstrated, coordinated systems to generate the required products need to be established.

Although GOFc/GOLD LC IT has established a strong organizational structure and taken comprehensive implementation ac-

The GOFc-LC-PO objectives:

1. To establish a GOFc-LC-PO at the Jena University including the necessary infrastructure required to operate the GOFc-LC-PO.
2. To staff and operate the GOFc-LC-PO for a period of three consecutive years starting February 1st 2004.
3. To manage and coordinate the execution of the GOFc-LC implementation plan in close cooperation with the GOFc/GOLD-chairs John Townshend and Alan Belward.
4. To support ESA in the coordination of land cover validation activities focussed on the development of a user information service for the reporting and exchange of validation results and information relating to the operational activities of satellite platforms and data delivery particularly related to the GLOBCARBON and GLOBCOVER projects.
5. To provide ESA with appropriate progress and annual reports and attend regular review meetings at ESA ESRIN, Italy.

tion there are still several important issues and needs of special importance for the future evolution of the organization.

These are:

- involvement of additional space agencies and other concerned partners interested in land cover monitoring
- strengthening of the regional networks including
 - coordination workshops
 - network implementation resources
 - participation in product validation
 - improve data networks and internet connectivity
 - improved metadata on product availability
- continued involvement of the user communities and refinement of requirements
 - strengthen policy user involvement

- broader participation in GOFc GOLD implementation
- technical backstopping and implementation support from other workgroups and programs

UPCOMING GOFc-GOLD LAND COVER EVENTS

GOFc EVENTS

February 2004

CEOS Land Cover Validation Workshop

Venue: Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts
Date: 2 - 5 February, 2004
Contact: Dr. Alan Strahler (alan@bu.edu)

Regional GOFc-GOLD Workshop

Venue: St.Petersburg, Russia
Date: 23 - 26 February, 2004
Contact: Dr. Olga Krankina
(olga.krankina@oregonstate.edu)

Objectives:

Initiation of the formation of Northern Eurasia Regional Information Network (NERIN) with observational data inventory as a major activity initially.

March 2004

GOFc-GOLD Land Cover Implementation Team Meeting

Venue: Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany
Date: 2-4 March, 2004
Contact: Prof. Dr. Christiane Schmullius
(c.schmullius@geogr.uni-jena.de)

Objectives:

- o Inauguration of the first 2-year plan of the LC IT
- o review of accomplishments and future prospects
- o introduction and inauguration of the new ESA GOFc/GOLD LC PO
- o role and interest of space agencies and international and global to GOFc/GOLD activities

NON-GOFc EVENTS

May 2004

International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA) 12th Annual Scientific Conference

Venue: Fairbanks, Alaska, USA
Date: 3-7 May, 2004
Contact: Dr. D. McGuire

Objectives:

- o Scientific understanding of climate-disturbance interactions in the circum-boreal region
- o influence on management decisions regarding climate change impacts, and adaptation to climate change in the boreal region

Further information at: http://www.fao.org/gtos/gofc-gold/2004_e.html

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