

GOFC-GOLD Regional Network Telephone Conference #1

13 September 2007

Participants: Olga Krankina, Michael Brady, Martin Herold, Kathleen Landauer, Philippe Mayaux, Pauline Dube, Mastura Mahmud, Dominick Kwesha, Erin Naydenov

1. Welcome, Objectives and Agenda Overview: Olga Krankina indicated that the RN telcon program stemmed from the 2006 Jena workshop in which the need to increase communication between the ExComm and the networks was highlighted. The telcons are planned for every three months. One goal of these telcons is to plan joint initiatives between the Implementation Teams and the Networks. This is also an opportunity for networks to exchange information and raise issues with the ExCom.
2. GOFC-GOLD developments: Michael Brady reported on the key developments of GOFC-GOLD. GOFC-GOLD is organized into an Executive Committee, Land Cover IT, Fire IT, and several Regional Networks. Members of the Executive Committee are comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive Director, Co-Leads of the IT's, Regional Network Coordinator, and members of the sponsoring organizations (START, NASA, GTOS). This past year GOFC-GOLD has had a change in leadership. Dr. John Townshend has stepped down as Chair (remaining on the LC IT), and has been succeeded by Dr. Anthony Janetos. This follows the rotational nature of GOFC-GOLD leadership. Philippe Mayaux is the Vice-Chair with responsibility to oversee RNs. The quarterly telcon program has started for the IT's and RN's. The minute of the telcon's are available on the GOFC-GOLD website (<http://www.fao.org/gtos/gofc-gold/minutes.html>). The Regional Network report stemming from the 2006 Jena Workshop is posted on the GOFC-GOLD report series webpage (http://nofc.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/gofc-gold/Report%20Series/GOLD_29.pdf).
3. START role in supporting networks: Kathleen Landauer reported that the overall mission of START is to work with environmental science programs to develop a system of regional networks in developing countries to facilitate collaboration among scientists to conduct research on global change science. NASA is supporting START to work with the GOFC-GOLD RN's and to work on GOFC-GOLD related programs. The funding is used mainly to support regional network participation in GOFC-GOLD events. START will also be working to improve the distribution of data and communication among the RN participants. RN input was requested for two new programs that START is developing. The first is to improve access to data through web portals. The second is to promote the development and training of young scientists (<35 years old), and increase their involvement. Olga Krankina suggested that START an additional need that START could help meet is to support RN website maintenance. **Action:** *Kathleen Landauer will summarize START's programs and distribute to the participants.* Dominick Kwesha reported that there is much difficulty with data access due to poor internet access in many parts of the world. The possibility of other methods of data distribution was discussed. Poor internet access also makes recruiting scientists to the RN's difficult.

Michael Brady suggested that promotional materials be prepared by the RN's following the templates already developed by the IT's. **Action:** *Erin Naydenov to circulate the templates among RNs and discuss further at upcoming RN telcon's.*

4. Network Introductions and upcoming network events:

- SAFNet Update: Pauline Dube reported on the SAFNET workshop in Maputo, Mozambique. The workshop focused on fire early warning systems. There was a lot of government support from Mozambique and South Africa. The report will be available at http://safnet.co.za/products/pdfs/Agenda_6th_SAFNET_workshop.pdf. There is now an editorial board for material to be posted on the SAFNet website, which has moved from the University of Maryland to the region. One discussion at the workshop highlighted the need for more input from SAFNet into the national programs. There is a need to have a SAFNet sub-committee within each country to push the SAFNet objectives at the national level. The terms of reference for the sub-committees has been drafted, however support is required to get the process started by allowing members from different parts of the country to meet. SAFnet has submitted a proposal to the IDRC (?) program on Climate Change. SAFNet attended the recent IDRC workshop in Nairobi. Pauline Dube requested more information on the upcoming events in Ghana, and the possibility to have more than two participants attend. *Action: Pauline Dube will send to Erin the names, affiliations, justifications for potential additional participants at Ghana workshop, if support for additional participants becomes available these people can be invited.*
- Urumqi Workshop: Olga Krankina reported that there will be a one day workshop on 20 September in Urumqi, China focused on arid regions. The workshop will engage the scientific community involved in remote sensing and monitoring land cover and fire in that region.
- West Africa Workshop: Philippe Mayaux reported that the GOF-C-GOLD events in Accra, Ghana will take place the second week of November. The West Africa Regional Network meeting will take place from 12-14 November followed by the workshop on the requirements for Fire Early warning systems in Africa will take place from 14-16 November in Accra, Ghana. Two representatives from each of the three established Regional Networks in Africa are encouraged to participate.
- Miombo Network update: Dominick Kwesha reported that many Miombo network members have been carrying out national specific projects on land use, land cover, biodiversity and conservation. In Zimbabwe, projects are underway to try to integrate biodiversity strategies. One goal is to integrate land cover (remote sensing) into national biodiversity strategies to come up with indicators to monitor the effectiveness of what is being done to reduce biodiversity loss. Another area of interest is the GEF (Global Environmental Facility) - interested in the protected area networks in different member states of signatories to the CBB (Convention on Biodiversity). Funding is required to develop proposals to improve the management and monitoring (remote sensing) of protected areas. Over the past 10 years, Miombo has been identifying hotspots in terms of land cover change. The monitoring needs to be done more frequently (5 years or less). National conservation networks are being implemented.
- SEARRIN update: Mastura Mahmud reported that there were recent earthquakes in Sumatra, with the worst event registering 8.4 on the Richter scale. There were no tsunamis associated with the earthquakes but the death toll amounted to 60 people. Disaster monitoring (earthquakes, mud slides, forest fires, etc.) in the Asia Pacific region is provided for by a portal called Sentinel Asia. Relevant satellite images are provided from participating

agencies in Southeast Asia, Japan and Australia. The ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) is a website that is responsible for detecting fires in the Southeast Asian region. The area of satellite coverage has extended to include countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines, which was previously limited to Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Satellite images used for detection include the MODIS, NOAA, FY-2 and MTSAT. One potential activity required is to help develop the infrastructure (updated computers, internet access) in SEARRIN member countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

5. GOFC-GOLD Land Cover Implementation Team: Martin Herold reported that the LC IT had their first IT telcon recently which was useful in coordinating IT activities. The LC IT will have a meeting on 23 – 26 October at Boston to discuss several issues, including the global validation initiative. This was discussed at the last IT meeting in 2006 at Jena. The IT has progressed on this initiative by using existing data to test methodologies. The implementation plan to make the validation more operational will be discussed at the Boston meeting. The RN's are an essential part of this initiative, by providing input into the design, information and local knowledge. Once the strategy is consolidated, the funding for implementation will be sought. There are several new global products that will be available this year that will require validation. Two products include the GlobeCover land cover map (300m) available in November or December 2007 and the new MODIS land cover map (500m). NASA is producing a 2005 dataset (mosaic of global Landsat), in which GOFC-GOLD is involved, that should be available in the second half of 2008. The 2005 Landsat data will be required for reference to validate the global product. The LC IT has been involved in the issue on reducing emissions from deforestation, particularly in tropical developing countries. The report from the 2nd GOFC-GOLD Workshop on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation, 17-19 April 2007, Santa Cruz, Bolivia is available at: <http://www.fao.org/gtos/gofc-gold/series.html>. Currently the climate convention (UNFCCC) is negotiating the potential benefit for reducing deforestation. GOFC-GOLD has taken the role to promote earth observation and providing technical guidelines. GOFC-GOLD has been working with GEO on global land cover and has contributed to a book that will be available for the GEO ministerial summit in November. The book will be used for outreach activities, each RN will be provided with a copy of the book. The RN's are promoted in the FRA 2010 activities as well as the other GOFC-GOLD activities.
6. Any other business:
 - The next RN telcon is planned for 13 December 2007 at 09:30 ET, more participants are expected.