

GOFC-GOLD Executive Committee Teleconference – 24 June 2010

Participants: Michael Brady, Tony Janetos, Hassan Virji, Kathleen Landauer, Johann Goldammer, Garik Gutman, Krishna Vadrevu, Curtis Woodcock, Martin Herold, Olivier Arino, Chris Schnullius

Highlights and Action Items

- New coordinator to strengthen fire activities in GOFC-GOLD regional networks
- ESA's Climate Change Initiative to address land cover and fire as essential climate variables
- Globcover 2009 is in progress
- GOFC-GOLD REDD Sourcebook recognized at UNFCCC expert meeting
- GOFC-GOLD contributing to development of GEO Global Forest Monitoring Network

Details

1. Remarks from the Chair

- NASA regional network proposal feedback. Tony Janetos invited Hassan Virji from START to review the proposal comments received to date from ExComm and to provide his views. Hassan Virji thanked the committee for providing comments on the draft proposal. He categorized the comments into the following two points and added his views: 1) Concerns that the overall cost was significantly higher than previous proposals. His view is that the cost is higher, but not significantly as it includes costs to support the Chair and Regional Network Coordinator. He agreed that the new cost level needs to be discussed with NASA. Garik Gutman did not respond with any concern over costs, but asked about the timing. 2) Concerns that the new components in the proposal are too ambitious for a best efforts organization. He explained that in order for the Regional Networks to advance their programs they need to move more deeply into capacity building and science activities, in addition to the current somewhat ad hoc engagement in workshops and meetings. The fellowships and advanced institutes aim to strengthen engagement with Implementation Teams and Working Groups.
- Michael Brady pointed out that there are examples that illustrate the advancement of the network capabilities based on GOFC-GOLD engagement with the implementation teams and working groups. These include the following proposals submitted by two regional networks to the Group on Earth Observations to solicit for project funding within the earth observation community: a) OSFAC regional network submitted a proposal on "Capacity Building for Forest Monitoring in Central Africa (Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale, University of Maryland, South Dakota State University, Northern Research Institute, Tromsø); and b) SEARRIN members from Indonesia submitted a proposal on "Utilization of ALOS satellite data to support Mapping and Monitoring Deforestation and Degradation in Indonesia (Agency of the Assessment and Application of Technology and Ministry of Forestry Republic of Indonesia).
- Tony Janetos acknowledged the need for START to more fully engage in network activities and not fulfill only a travel support function, although this is an important role. He also reminded the committee that there have been many discussions over the years on the appropriate role of GOFC-GOLD in supporting the networks and that it was agreed the role is one of catalyzing network development, and minimizing the provision of direct financial support that could create sustainability problems.

- Regarding the Young Scientist component of the proposal, Hassan Virji proposed that the proposed conference be held in association with the IGBP conference "Planet Under Pressure: new knowledge, new solutions", 7-10 May 2012 at London. The committee agreed with this suggestion.
- Garik Gutman requested information on the new project schedule. Kathleen Landauer explained that the current project will continue to the end of 2010, with the new project commencing in January 2011.
- Michael Brady suggested that further detail be provided to the proposal sections containing the new activities on fellowships, advanced institutes and youth conference. The detail should address the organization resources needed to implement the new activities, in addition to the current levels of best effort through GOFC-GOLD members. This might include the need for additional assistance using START resources or external contracts. He also suggested that the sections include a short assessment of how the new proposed activities are consistent with the catalytic orientation of GOFC-GOLD network support. **Action:** Kathleen Landauer will revise the proposal to address the above considerations.

2. Regional Networks

- Data Initiative follow-up: Kathleen Landauer reported that to date one proposal has been received following the Asia data initiative and is being assessed for funding.
- Garik Gutman raised the issue of a new network in the Southeastern region of Europe, west of the Black Sea. This was brought up at the recent LCLUC meeting at Tartu. He requested the ExComm to consider the viability of such a network and will bring this issue up at the Tashkent meeting planned for 2011.

3. Fire IT Update

- Johann Goldammer reviewed the upcoming meeting at the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC), involving numerous organizations (UNISDR WFAG, FAWG, ILCFMAA and EUR-OPA).
- Krishna Vadrevu reported that the presentations are now available on the Fire IT website from the planning meeting at Frascati in March 2010. He also announced that Anja Hoffmann has agreed to act as a regional network coordinator with a focus on supporting fire IT activities amongst the networks. The role is also intended to strengthen coordination between the regional networks of GFMC and GOFC-GOLD. It is expected that she will work closely with Olga Krankina, the lead network coordinator. **Action:** Michael Brady to draft and invitation letter for Anja Hoffmann for ExComm review.

4. Land Cover IT Update

- Olivier Arino reported on the ESA Climate Change Initiative (CCI): the Land Cover and Fire ECVs will be KO on 1 August, with contract duration of 3 years for about 2 million Euros each. In Bergen (Living Planed Symposium 28 June- 2 July with 1300 participants), there will be 4 sessions on land cover, 4 on forest biomass and 2 on agriculture. Two sessions are organized on ECV subjects in order to present the concept and work to be performed. The 10 ECV scientific groups will meet at ESA-ESRIN Frascati from 15-17 September for an ECV co-location meeting in order to analyze progress and commonalities.

- Olivier Arino also reported on the GlobCorine product and documentation. The 2005 product was validated and is available as of 6 May 2010. This project was initiated at the request of the European Environmental Agency one year ago. GlobCorine demonstrates an automatic service that can generate in a consistent way a land cover / land use map and a land change indicator, based on a CLC-compatible legend using MERIS FR time series. The GlobCorine main user is the European Environmental Agency (EEA). It concentrates on the pan-European area, including the Mediterranean basin (including N. Africa) and the European Russia. Its main data source is the Envisat MERIS fine resolution (300m) mode data acquired between end 2004 and mid 2006 (<http://dup.esrin.esa.int/ionia/globcorine/products.asp>). He also reported that Globcover 2009 is in progress and is being adjusted to LCCS version 3.

5. Working Groups

- REDD WG workshop plans: Martin Herold reported that planning is going well for the July REDD Sourcebook workshop at the Canadian Forest Service, Victoria, Canada. Approximately 45 participants from 25 countries have registered. Also related to REDD, he reviewed the recent version of the report from the recent UNFCCC SBSTA expert meeting (May 2010)., during which he gave a presentation and the report makes direct and strong references to the GOFC-GOLD activities and the Sourcebook including asking for further coordinated activities (http://unfccc.int/methods_science/redd/items/5603.php, http://unfccc.int/files/methods_science/redd/application/pdf/expert_meeting_report.pdf). He believes this is a strong recognition of the usefulness of our joint efforts at the political level.
- Biomass WG update: Chris Schmullius reported that plans are set for biomass sessions at upcoming events in June at Bergen, Norway (ESA Symposium) and in July at Hawaii, USA (IGARSS). She reported on several biomass (timber inventory) mapping activities, including comparisons of optical and SAR methods (MODIS and ISAT GLAS). Regarding GOFC-GOLD advocacy for open data policies, she expressed concern over news that the data policies at JAXA may be changing, with increased commercialization of SAR data. **Action:** Chris Schmullius to keep ExComm informed of changing data access policies.

6. GTOS/G3OS/GEO matters

- GTOS update and requests for GOFC inputs: Tony Janetos and Michael Brady participated in a GTOS Executive Committee telcon on 14 June with the Chair, Ricardo Valentini, and Programme Director, John Latham. The purpose of the discussion was to seek GOFC-GOLD views on the revised GTOS strategy document. Tony Janetos confirmed that the content of the document is acceptable and reflects the general direction of the panel in 2010. There was concern expressed that the strategy should pay increased attention to the further development and operationalization of terrestrial Essential Climate Variables (ECV). **Action:** Michael Brady to distribute ECV description in strategy document. Olivier Arino mentioned that land cover and biomass ECV issues will be discussed in detail at the upcoming Bergen meeting, with an additional focus on the challenges of their application for the biodiversity and desertification conventions. **Action:** Olivier Arino to provide highlights of ECV discussions at Bergen meeting.
- GEO matters: Martin Herold circulated the latest version of the GEO Report on the Concept Phase for Developing a Global Forest Monitoring Network. He noted that GOFC-GOLD activities and contributions are described in the report. **Action:** All ExComm members to

review document and provide comments to Martin Herold before the July 13-14 GEO meeting at Frascati.

7. Any other business

- The next ExComm telcon is planned for late July or early August 2010.

8. List of Documents Circulated

- June update of event schedule 2010
- May 2010 teleconference minutes
- Programme for July 2010 REDD Sourcebook workshop
- Report on the GEO Concept Phase for Developing a Global Forest Monitoring Network, draft 17 June 2010

GOFC-GOLD Project Office