

## **GOFC-GOLD Executive Committee Teleconference – 15 September 2010**

Participants: Tony Janetos, Michael Brady, Olivier Arino, Martin Herold, Kathleen Landauer, Johann Goldammer, Curtis Woodcock, Chris Justice, Garik Gutman, Krishna Vadrevu, Chris Schmullius, Olga Krankina, Allan Grainger (guest)

### **Highlights**

- GOFC-GOLD addresses conceptual plans for a World Forest Observatory and the Global Forest Observation Initiative
- Fire implementation team member assumes fire coordinator role for regional networks
- Remote sensing support provided during Russia fires provides valuable real-time information
- GOFC-GOLD contributes to ESA's Climate Change Initiative
- New biomass working group supports GEO forest carbon tracking in Mexico
- GOFC-GOLD contributing to 2010 GCOS Implementation Plan

### **Details**

#### **1. Remarks from the Chair**

- World Forest Observatory: Alan Grainger of Leeds University joined the teleconference and was invited to explain the proposed World Forest Observatory (WFO) (paper was distributed). Tony Janetos welcomed Alan Grainger and expressed his view that the WFO is an enormously important issue to GOFC-GOLD, which has been part of the mandate since its inception in 1997. He observed that the achievement of WFO needs a solid organizational context to ensure scientific validity and be operationally useful. Alan Grainger then explained the WFO concept, which includes plans to generate global forest cover data sets and maps in 2010, 2013 and annually after 2015. He mentioned that the WFO is intended to make use of existing organizations, networks and teams, which would form regional monitoring centres and nodes. He emphasized that the WFO concept includes close collaboration and is complimentary with other similar initiatives at FAO, GEO, GOFC-GOLD, etc. Committee members responded with supportive comments on the need for the WFO to: a) take advantage of the GOFC-GOLD regional networks; b) cooperate with GEO FCT and GOFI; c) secure an ongoing revenue stream; and d) carefully assess availability and acquisition of annual data, and ensure homogeneous approaches among data types. Curtis Woodcock explained that GOFC-GOLD has supported the WFO concept and has established a strong scientific base for its implementation. Tony Janetos expressed the interest of GOFC-GOLD in the WFO and the desire to explore a formal role. Alan Grainger thanked the committee for the discussion and welcomed involvement in the WFO through the provision of advice on a scientific board, and through the regional networks. Another important contribution is in the area of validation. He explained that the WFO proposal will be submitted to the Sloan Foundation on 15 October. He requested a letter of support, which could be included with the proposal. **Action:** Tony Janetos will develop a statement of purpose to define the mode of interaction with the WFO, and provide this to Alan Grainger. **Action:** Michael Brady to discuss the WFO paper with GEO FCT co-leads to get their view on the linkages. **Action:** Michael Brady to draft a letter of support for committee review.
- GEO Global Forest Observation Initiative (GFOI): Martin Herold reported on the July meeting at FAO during which the GFOI planning paper was finalized (presentation was distributed). At this meeting the US provided stronger influence over the GFOI direction than

in the past, emphasizing the need for more research and methods development, and increased support for the associated forest carbon tracking (FCT) task and its national demonstrator activities. In this regard, the GFOI demonstration phase (FCT task) has been extended to 2012. This provides time to complete FCT methods and allow for their inter comparison among the NDs, as well as make use of the LDCM planned for 2013.

## 2. Regional Networks (RN)

- Olga Krankina reported on initial planning for a NERIN RN workshop at Tashkent in 2011. The workshop will include training. Participants from Estonia and Latvia will be invited, as part of an effort to strengthen the Eastern Europe component of NERIN. Olga Krankina requested that the RN teleconferences be resumed, but with a more focused purpose of planning for upcoming events. These could include the Tashkent workshop and SAFNet meeting in 2011. **Action:** Olga Krankina to request telcon support from the Project Office when required.
- Michael Brady reported that a letter was sent to Anja Hoffman of the Fire IT, inviting her to take on the role of Fire Coordinator for the RNs. Anja Hoffman accepted this new role and is working with Olga Krankina to identify coordination needs among the RNs. **Action:** Michael Brady to send a letter to the RN representatives to introduce Anja Hoffman. (done) He also mentioned the completion of the report of the Conference on Monitoring Forest Carbon Stocks and Fluxes in the Congo Basin, 2-4 February 2010 at Brazzaville. The report will be included in the GOF-C-GOLD Report Series.
- Kathleen Landauer reported that the RN support proposal was submitted to NASA and is currently being reviewed. The current support agreement with NASA will be completed in June 2011. It is anticipated that the new agreement will follow with no gap period.
- Michael Brady provided an update on East Asia RN development. GOF-C-GOLD has held a series of meetings and workshops with the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), several members of SEARRIN, and the Asia-Pacific Forest Network (APFNet). A plan of work has been developed to strengthen forest mapping and monitoring in East Asia, including the use of regionally available EO data sources. A funding proposal is being prepared for further workshops, development of a training guide, and a pilot project on establishing a validation test site network. The CAF will present the activities at the upcoming GEO Summit at Beijing in November. Garik Gutman suggested that the East Asia network participate along with SEARRIN in the upcoming LCLUC meeting planned for 2011 at Vietnam.
- Curtis Woodcock observed that the RNs would benefit from increased interactions with members of the GOF-C-GOLD implementation teams and working groups. He proposed that members be encouraged to join selected RNs in a supporting role. The cases where this has occurred were cited. The different needs of each RN were recognized as something members may be able to address, in addition to the basic RN support provided by the GOF-C-GOLD Project Offices. **Action:** Olga Krankina and Michael Brady to draft a letter for IT members.

## 3. Fire IT Update

- Johann Goldammer reported on his involvement in the Russia fire situation during the 2010 summer. He observed that the remote sensing support provided to Russia resulted in valuable real-time information for fire management, disaster mitigation and relief activities. He also reviewed plans for the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference to be held in South Africa in

May 2011 under the auspices of UNISDR and FAO. He proposed that GOF-C-GOLD sponsor a booth at the conference and that a side meeting is organized involving those GOF-C-GOLD RNs with an interest in fire issues. In addition, he suggested that the upcoming SAFNet RN planning meeting be rescheduled to coincide with the conference, which would result in savings to GOF-C-GOLD for travel support. The Committee agreed with the suggestions. **Action:** Krishna Vadrevu to work with Anja Hoffmann to coordinate the agreed upon activities at the conference.

- Krishna Vadrevu reported on a conference planned for 8-9 November 2010 at St. Petersburg, Russia, on Open Burning and the Arctic: Causes, Impacts, and Mitigation Approaches (<http://www.bellona.org/fires-and-the-arctic>). **Action:** Krishna Vadrevu to explore opportunities for RN participation at the conference.

#### **4. Land Cover IT Update**

- Curtis Woodcock reported that a proposal is being prepared to address the recent discussions with Google. The proposal contains linkages to GOF-C-GOLD interests in: creating a global validation network, tasks in the GCOS Implementation Plan, links to the WFO and GFOI (discussed above).
- Martin Herold reported on the ESA climate change initiative (CCI) meeting. The initiative is driven by the GCOS requirements and is currently addressing land cover, fire and glaciers in the terrestrial domain (up to 10 ECVs). The CCI will provide ECV user feedback to GCOS. The land cover project is led by Pierre Defourny; the fire project by Emilio Chuvieco who is a member of the GOF-C-GOLD fire team. Chris Schmullius and Martin Herold also have some role in the land cover activities. The GTOS Secretariat also participated in the meeting. The projects have just started and the first effort is to establish a dialog and provide an assessment of requirements from the climate change science/modeling community so the monitoring activities and products are targeting their needs. It would be important to discuss these issues comprehensively at future GOF-C-GOLD team meetings. Also the issue of validation is of particular relevance.
- Olivier Arino provided further details on the ESA sponsored CCI meeting (above) and assured the Committee that the CCI is an open process, which is addressing the GOF-C-GOLD concerns about coordination and governance of ECVs at this early stage of their development and formalization. He also announced that ESA has applied for a booth and side-event at CoP 16. If these are approved, GOF-C-GOLD is welcome to provide materials for display and distribution. **Action:** Olivier Arino to inform the Committee if application is successful.
- Martin Herold informed the Committee that ESA has indicated it will soon issue a tender for a project to support the GOF-C-GOLD land Cover Project Office.

#### **5. Working Groups**

- GEO Agricultural Monitoring task: Chris Justice indicated that the task will hold a joint event with IIASA on land cover inter comparison early in 2011. **Action:** Chris Justice to provide an update on activities and plans, as well as guidance on how to strengthen links between the task and GOF-C-GOLD for land use analysis.
- Biomass WG update: Chris Schmullius reported that a contract is in place with CONABIO to support Mexico's involvement in the GEO FCT task as a national demonstrator country. The work will focus on using Envisat ASAR for biomass mapping. It will build on the work

completed in Russia and Canada on biomass mapping in boreal forests. Results from the Mexico work will be displayed at CoP 16. Regarding working group plans, she anticipates a meeting in 2011 at Jena.

## **6. GTOS/G3OS/GEO matters**

- GEO matters: (Also see discussion above on GEO GFOI.) Frank Martin Seifert of ESA reported that the GEO forest carbon tracking (FCT) task will be presented at the GEO Ministerial Summit at Beijing, 3-5 November. The third FCT data acquisition phase is commencing over national demonstrator countries, which have been expanded to 10, with the addition of Peru, Columbia and DR Congo.
- Martin Herold reported on a discussion with Caroline Richter, the current director of the GCOS secretariat. He was able to get some insights on how GCOS foresees the future of ECV-related development and the implementation process. First of all there is a revised version of the GCOS implementation plan: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/Publications/gcos-138.pdf>. GOF-C-GOLD has provided inputs to the update some comments have been incorporated. Of particular relevance is a recent letter that has been circulated providing more details and requests feedback on specific implementation activities: ([http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/documents/GCOS-WCRP\\_JointLetter\\_All.pdf](http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/documents/GCOS-WCRP_JointLetter_All.pdf)). In the letter, GCOS and WCRP are asking international organizations to support the expert groups involved in scientific analysis, inter comparison and review of climate data records. It calls for adherence by groups and institutions involved in climate data record generation to the new Guideline for the Generation of Datasets and Products Meeting GCOS Requirements, to support transparency, traceability and scientific review: (<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/Publications/gcos-143.pdf>). This document provides more requirements, principles and definition of key issues for activities aiming to respond to the GCOS requirements. GOF-C-GOLD is listed among the institutions. **Action:** ExComm to consider the request for input to the process as described in the GCOS letter. Martin Herold to advise on a reply.

## **7. Any other business**

- The next ExComm telcon is planned for 20 October 2010.

## **8. List of Documents Circulated**

- September update of event schedule 2010
- Presentation on the GEO Global Forest Observation Initiative
- World Forest Observatory concept summary
- GCOS 2010 Update: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/Publications/gcos-138.pdf>
- Update on East Asia regional network development

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