

GOFC-GOLD Executive Committee Teleconference – 20 April 2011

Participants: Anthony Janetos, Michael Brady, Martin Herold, Kathleen Landauer, Olga Krankina, Olivier Arino, Curtis Woodcock, Garik Gutman, Christiane Schmillius, Krishna Vadrevu

Highlights

- GOFC-GOLD promotes validation focus at World Forest Observatory meetings
- NASA renews three-year support through START – GOFC-GOLD Project
- Vietnam to host next LCLUC science team meeting
- GOFC-GOLD website updated

Details

1. Remarks from the Chair

- Anthony Janetos summarized the World Forest Observatory (WFO) meeting at Washington from 31 March to 1 April. Martin Herold and Oliver Arino also reported on the second WFO meeting held at the GEO Secretariat at Geneva from 19-20 April 2011. The work of GOFC-GOLD was presented at each of the meetings. The discussions resulted in a surprise decision by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (SF) to invite new proposal submissions. Tony Janetos discussed with the SF the need for a strong element on validation of forest area and attributes (carbon, biomass, timber, biodiversity). This suggestion was well received by SF. The focus on global validation would compliment the current international efforts by FAO-FRA, GEO and GOFC-GOLD to: i) form networks of land cover experts and RS methodologies; and ii) compiling databases of RS data (e.g. MODIS, GlobCover, etc). Olivier Arino commented that the WFO should concentrate on compiling in situ data and lobby national forest inventory agencies to share national plot and allometric data that can be used to develop validation methodologies first and later on maps. A good example is the GTOS Global Terrestrial Observing Network (GT-NET) for glacier, permafrost, soil moisture, etc., where scientists and operational agencies share their in situ data (<http://www.fao.org/gtos/GT-NET.html>). Curtis Woodcock endorsed the validation focus. He explained that this is particularly important as the EO community begins to address land cover change. He mentioned at least four different initiatives doing global land and forest cover change mapping. Methods development and coordination will be needed, particularly as expensive multiple high resolution EO imagery will be needed for the same places where change occurs. **Action:** Tony Janetos to draft a 1-2 page letter of interest to the SF for the committee to review.
- Curtis Woodcock explained the background to the request from John Townshend to initiate an ad hoc Working Group of practitioners who are trying to carry out global or very large regional scale analyses of Landsat data with particular reference to land cover and land cover change detection. The ExComm viewed the proposal favourably. **Action:** Michael Brady to inform John Townshend of the Executive Committee's support and to provide guidance on establishing a GOFC-GOLD Working Group. Note: background information on the topic is included in the recent LCLUC meeting (March 2011) presentation on "Are there lessons for the future for global Landsat analyses?" See challenges described in slides 29-35. (http://lcluc.umd.edu/Documents/ScienceTeamMtg/2011_03/Tuesday/Townshend.pdf)

2. Regional Networks (RN)

- Olga Krankina reported that a proposal is being prepared for a Central Asia RN and that she will identify an opportunity to hold a kick-off discussion. She proposed that the GOFC-GOLD RN telcon series be revived, but with a focus on RNs in adjacent regions, e.g., Central Asia, NERIN, East Europe, etc. **Action:** Olga Krankina to request support from the Project Office for inter region (continental) teleconferences.
- Kathleen Landauer reported that she had received a letter from NASA confirming that the new three year project starts on 15 April 2011 and that funds are available.
- Michael Brady explained that an endorsement request was received via the University of Maryland from Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC) International Imaging Limited. The request was for GOFC-GOLD to prepare a letter of endorsement for continued Africa satellite data coverage (a suggested draft from DMC was circulated). The Committee agreed that continuous and freely accessible data is important in Africa, agreed in principle to sending a letter, but had concerns about the commercial aspects of the draft letter. Olivier Arino clarified that DMC data are not ESA data. Tony Janetos commented that the letter from GOFC-GOLD should address the principles of ensuring continuous and freely accessible data, and not discuss licensing details. **Action:** Michael Brady to request that DMC identify the correct organization responsible for the Africa data (EU-GMES?), and then revise letter for Committee endorsement. The letter will also be shared with landing Mane at OSFAC to ensure the interests of the RN are reflected.
- Garik Gutman reported on the NASA Land-Cover/Land-Use Change (LCLUC) Science Team meeting at UMUC Conference Center, Adelphi, Maryland, 28-30 March 2011 (<http://lcluc.umd.edu/meetings.php?mid=21>). The next LCLUC Science Team meeting will be hosted by the Hanoi University of Agriculture in Vietnam from 7-9 November 2011. (<http://lcluc.umd.edu/meetings.php?mid=21>). The Asia RNs will be invited to participate. **Action:** Michael Brady to coordinate with UMD and MSU to prepare participants list and budget for RN participation, including SEARRIN and the new Asia Pacific Forest Network (APFNet) led by China.

3. Fire IT Update

- Krishna Vadrevu reported that plans are on track for GOFC-GOLD participation in the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference ‘Wildfire 2011’ - South Africa, 10-13 May 2011. He also provided an update on the Mexican Space Agency collaboration with the German Aerospace Agency (DLR) to launch a MIROS satellite. In this regard, DLR submitted a proposal to Mexican space agency. If the proposal is successful, MIROS will be launched as a piggyback satellite with the two other German IR-satellites TET-1 and BIROS through the German Aerospace center in the coming year. All the three satellites together form the constellation useful for mapping fire size less than 4m².

4. Land Cover IT Update

- Martin Herold reported that plans are on track for the GOFC-GOLD CEOS WGCV global land cover validation workshop to be held on 16-17. June at IIASA, and directly following the GEOSS-Agriculture Land Use workshop co-organized by Chris Justice.

5. Working Groups

- Land Use WG (under consideration): Krishna Vadrevu reported on that plans are in place for the IIASA/GOFC-GOLD workshop on Characterizing and Validating Global Agricultural

Landcover, 13-15 June at Laxenburg. The draft agenda can be found at (<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/FOR/lc/>).

- Biomass WG: Christiane Schmillius reported that FSU is supporting her now with two positions to organize the biomass WG. As a first task, they will prepare a GOFC-GOLD Biomass Newsletter and a Mailing List. The dates of the planned biomass meeting with FAO/GTOS have been pushed back. **Action:** Chris Schmillius to contact GTOS to confirm the meeting date. Chris Schmillius also reported on activities for the CEOS Response to the GEO Carbon Strategy. She is trying to understand the linkages between the work of CEOS and GTOS on ECVs, and the GEO Carbon Strategy, which does appear to focus on ECVs such as biomass. **Action:** Chris Schmillius to review the updated GEO Work Plan and Carbon task sheet when released in May.

6. GTOS/G3OS/GEO matters

7. GEO: Martin Herold reported on the first teleconference of the GFOI Task Force held on 31 March 2011. He will distribute the minutes when available. Michael Brady explained the background to the brochure on the GEO Forest Community of Practice (FCP), which was circulated. The intention is to position GOFC-GOLD as the focal point of the FCP because of its extensive membership and linkages through the ITs and RNs. The description has been submitted to GEO Secretariat for inclusion in the Community of Practice programme. There were no concerns expressed about GOFC-GOLD acting as the FCP focal point. Olga Krankina suggested that the maps on the brochure could be updated. **Action:** Martin Herold to search for newer maps.

8. Any other business

- Michael Brady reported that the GOFC-GOLD website has been updated, recent meeting minutes added, and that the Congo Basin Forest Workshop (2010) document has been added to the report series.
- The next ExComm telcon is planned for 19 May 2011

9. List of Documents Circulated

- April 2011 update of event schedule
- GEO Forest Community of Practice brochure
- DMC endorsement letter for continued Africa coverage

GOFC-GOLD Project Office