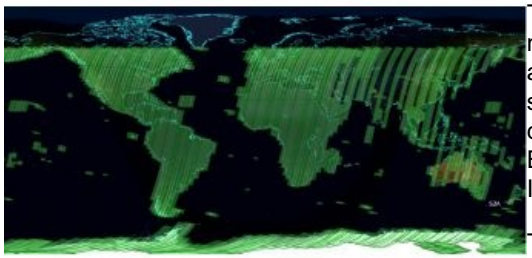
Milestone Reached in Forest Monitoring from Space



Thanks to a major effort to ensure full satellite coverage of the world's forests, all countries now have the necessary data for annual forest monitoring. This full and open forest data is available as a result of the open-data policies and collaboration of a variety of national space agencies and coordinating bodies. This advance in satellite coverage was coordinated by the Group on Earth Observations through its space arm, the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), and through its flagship Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI).

The satellite data underpinning this effort comes primarily from the United States Landsat series (USGS), and the European Union Copernicus Programme Sentinel-1 radar series and optical Sentinel-2 series (EU/ESA). Additional contributions are provided by Japan (JAXA), Brazil (INPE), China (CRESDA), France (CNES), Italy (ASI), Canada (CSA), and Germany (DLR). Further datasets are anticipated next year from the space agencies of the UK (NovaSAR mission) and Argentina (SAOCOM mission).

Global coverage of forests through this collaboration will continue from 2017 until at least 2030, allowing countries to confidently apply satellite data in their national forest monitoring and reporting systems.

Deforestation and forest degradation is the 2nd leading source of carbon emissions globally and must be reduced significantly in order to meet global climate targets. Complete forest cover data is crucial for countries to be able to report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in support of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

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