

Pacific Island Countries Move to Collect Earth Tools to Prepare Data for Biannual Reporting to UNFCCC Wolf Forstreuter

At the end of November 2014 and in February 2015, SPC organised two workshops to share experience in establishing National Forest Monitoring Systems and creating the link to the Regional Forest Monitoring Facility (RFMF) based at the secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). SPC is a regional organisation with a very good network within the 22 member countries. FAO financed the RFMF and these workshops as part of a series of activities supported by the UN-REDD Programme in this case through the FAO regional project "Strengthening regional support to national forest monitoring systems for REDD+ in the Pacific". The workshops trained data collection of land use and land use change in a transparent and statistical sound way and they introduced the assistance of UN-REDD.

The RFMF at SPC decided to have one workshop for low lying or atoll islands and separate workshop for volcanic islands as both types of Pacific Island Countries (PIC) have different forest cover binding the on land carbon. While volcanic islands are still covered with substantial amount of rain forest of high biodiversity carbon of atoll



Hands on guided training on Collect Earth, Saiko and Earth Engine forest monitoring tools

islands is mainly bound in coconut palms only few pockets of forests can be found.

The two workshops gave an introduction to the project, outlined the needs to create transparent and statistically sound data, documented the land use classification schemes of the countries, discussed the progress of national forest monitoring systems, explained the assistance provided by the RFMF and showed the already available parts of the regional forest monitoring portal. However, the best received part of the training was the land cover and land cover change data collection and the data analysis through



Participants, Resource Persons and Observers pictured above with Deputy Director SPC Geoscience, Dr Kifle Khasai (Sitted 3rd from Left); Fiji Permanent Scretary for Fisheries and Forests, Mr Inoke Wainiqolo; Team Leader FAO Forrest Monitoring, Dr Andrew Haywood and Deputy Conservator of Forest, Mr Eliki Seruvatu.

Collect Earth tools. PICs have very few people experienced in remote sensing (RS) and GIS, the RS software is very limited and finances to purchase satellite image data are extremely restricted. Collect Earth was received as a solution to provide activity data required for country reporting without investing in the above mentioned.

Six atoll countries attended the first FAO monitoring workshop in November 2014: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu. Five countries attended the volcanic islands monitoring workshop in February 2015: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In March this year the RFMF will conduct another workshop focussing on Collect Earth application only. This workshop will be attended by Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

In the new established Regional Forest Monitoring Facility 10,000 sample points will be collected and analysed for Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu until end of June this year to provide the statistically required data for their country reporting. These are the three Pacific UNREDD countries besides Papua New Guinea. It is sure that other countries will follow to utilise the newly established RFMF with appropriate computer hardware and suitable Internet connection to create their data source for the biannual reporting to UNFCCC. During the two workshops the need for transparency was discussed and it is very sure that all the countries, which are collecting statistical sound land cover change data, will display the analysis on the regional portal. The response regarding this was very positive during both conducted workshops.