

Satellites Tracking Forests Avoided Deforestation

Theme



Why Forests Matter Forests have great economic and ecological value, as they generate resources that foster biodiversity and offer means of subsistence to the poorest populations. Furthermore, while they play a crucial role in the water cycle and in regulating climate, they are also a vital carbon sink guarding the planet against climate change. However, destruction, excessive exploitation and degradation as a result of human activities such as clear-cutting, farming and mining also make forests a source of CO₂.

Deforestation and REDD

Deforestation, particularly in tropical regions, is responsible for about 20% of global CO₂ emissions. The REDD programme (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) aims to fund actions in favour of sustainable management of forests so that their economic, environmental and social goods and services benefit developing countries, communities and forest users while also contributing to important reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Under REDD, developing countries affected by deforestation would receive carbon credits in return for emissions reductions achieved by preserving forest resources. This will be one of the topics on the agenda at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

The Value of Satellite Imagery

Satellite imagery makes it possible to detect change in forests between different dates. Besides telling us the extent of deforestation, imagery also lets us locate where changes are happening and better understand the underlying mechanisms.

REDD calls for an irrefutable system for monitoring, evaluating and checking forest cover and carbon stocks. Satellite imagery combined with field data is a tool well suited to providing objective data for geographic information systems to support local avoided deforestation policies.



Conservation Efforts

Preserving Madagascar's Forests

Teams at Good Planet and WWF are working to help local populations define strategies to avoid CO₂ emissions, reduce global deforestation rates and restore degraded forests.

351,000 hectares of forest protected in 2008.



GoodPlanet.org

Goals

- Evaluate and improve operational REDD strategies
- Transfer management of 141,000 hectares of forest to local populations
- Restore plant cover in 20,000 hectares of damaged forests
- Replant 3,000 hectares of forest to provide a sustainable source of firewood



REDD Pilot Project in Colombia

CAM (Corporación autónoma regional del Alto Magdalena), with technical support from an ONF International team, is leading a project in the department of Huila to develop REDD mechanisms.



Goals

- Establish a reliable REDD methodology
- Pursue development of sustainable farming and agroforestry practices
- Implement a conservation and outreach project for the region
- Create extra potential financial resources for local organizations through the sale of credits on voluntary carbon markets as a REDD project



Preserving Tropical Forest and Carbon Stocks in Uganda

The Woods Hole Research Center is working actively to get tropical and subtropical countries more involved in emerging carbon markets.



Goals

- Increase forest cover and preserve biomass
- Establish carbon monitoring systems
- Build national and regional capabilities through technology transfer



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