

The Importance of Transparency in Official Forest Statistics

Forest Products Statistics Capacity Building
Workshop
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Javier Garcia Perez (Gamarra)
¹REDD+/National Forest Monitoring,
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- 1. TRANSPARENCY: TOWARDS OPEN GOVERNMENTS IN FOREST DATA**
- 2. TRADEOFFS AND OBSTACLES TO TRANSPARENCY**
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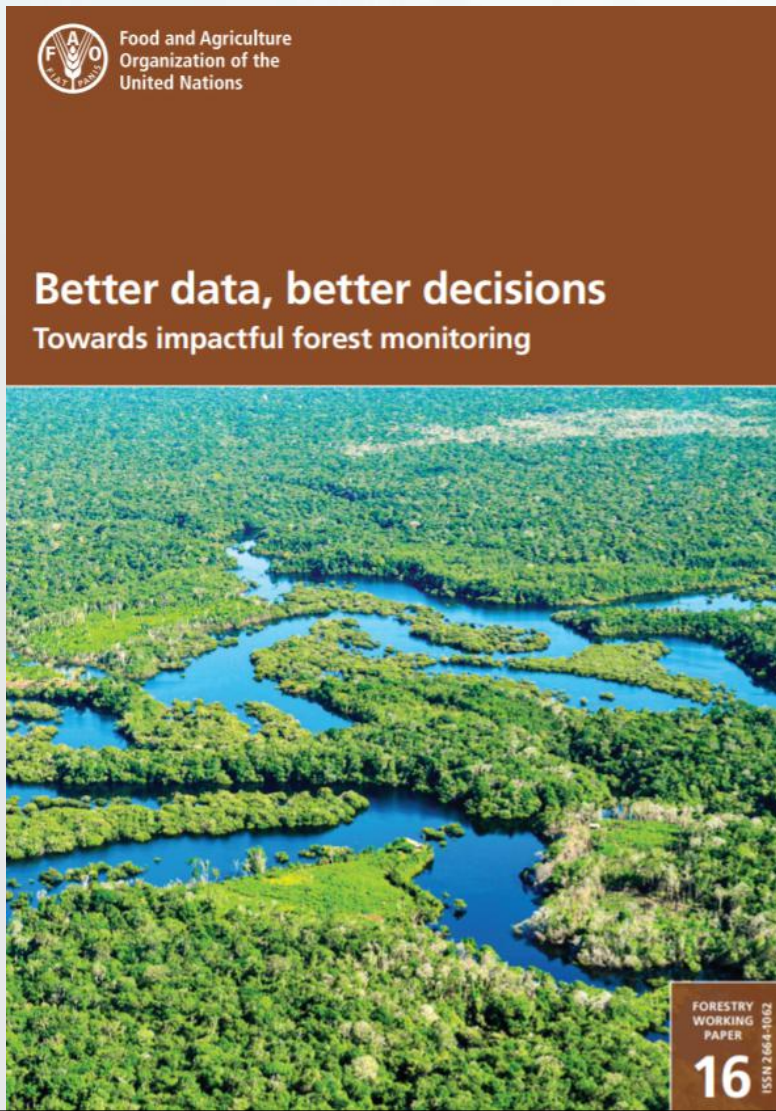
OUTLINE



1. TRANSPARENCY: TOWARDS OPEN GOVERNMENTS IN FOREST DATA

Data for Government Decision-making

Taking good decisions requires sound information, and ensuring SDGs requires acquiring and maintaining it

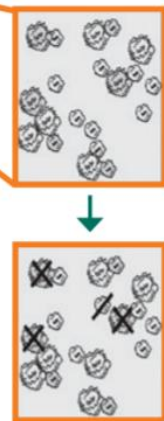


1. Where and when to cut?



Evidence: forest management inventory of selected trees for growth modelling

2. Which trees to cut?

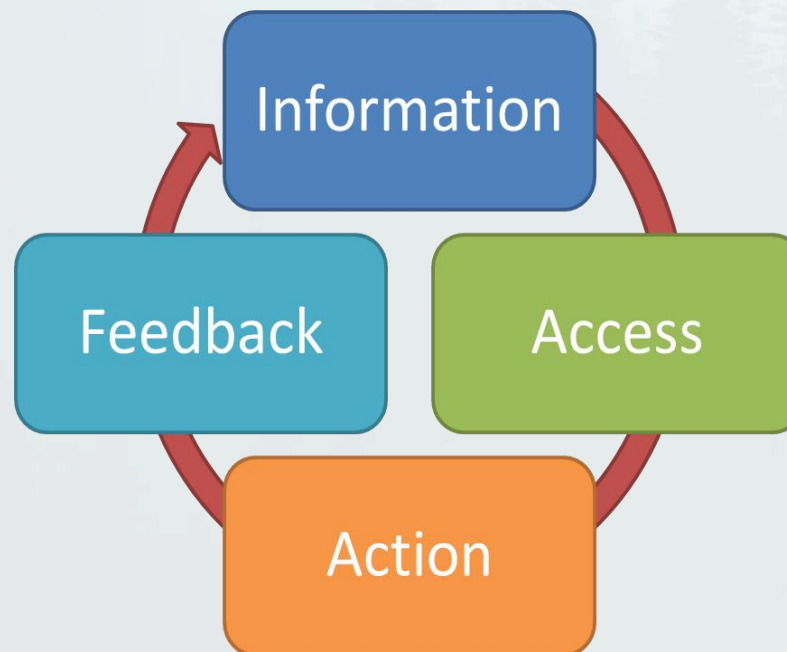
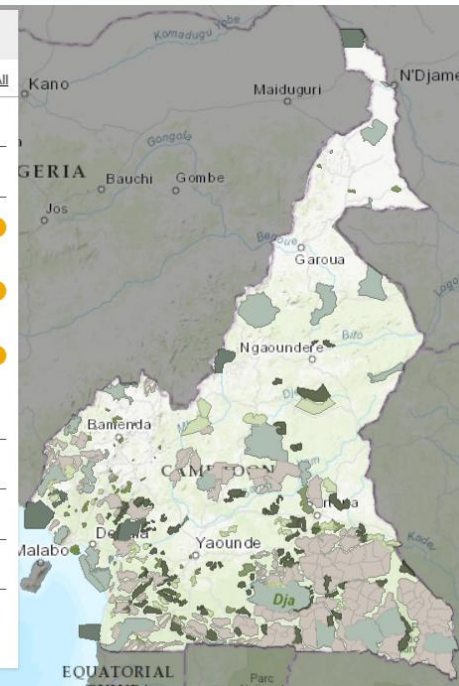
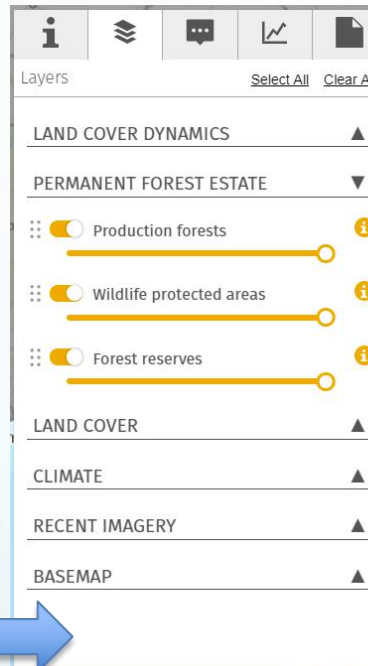


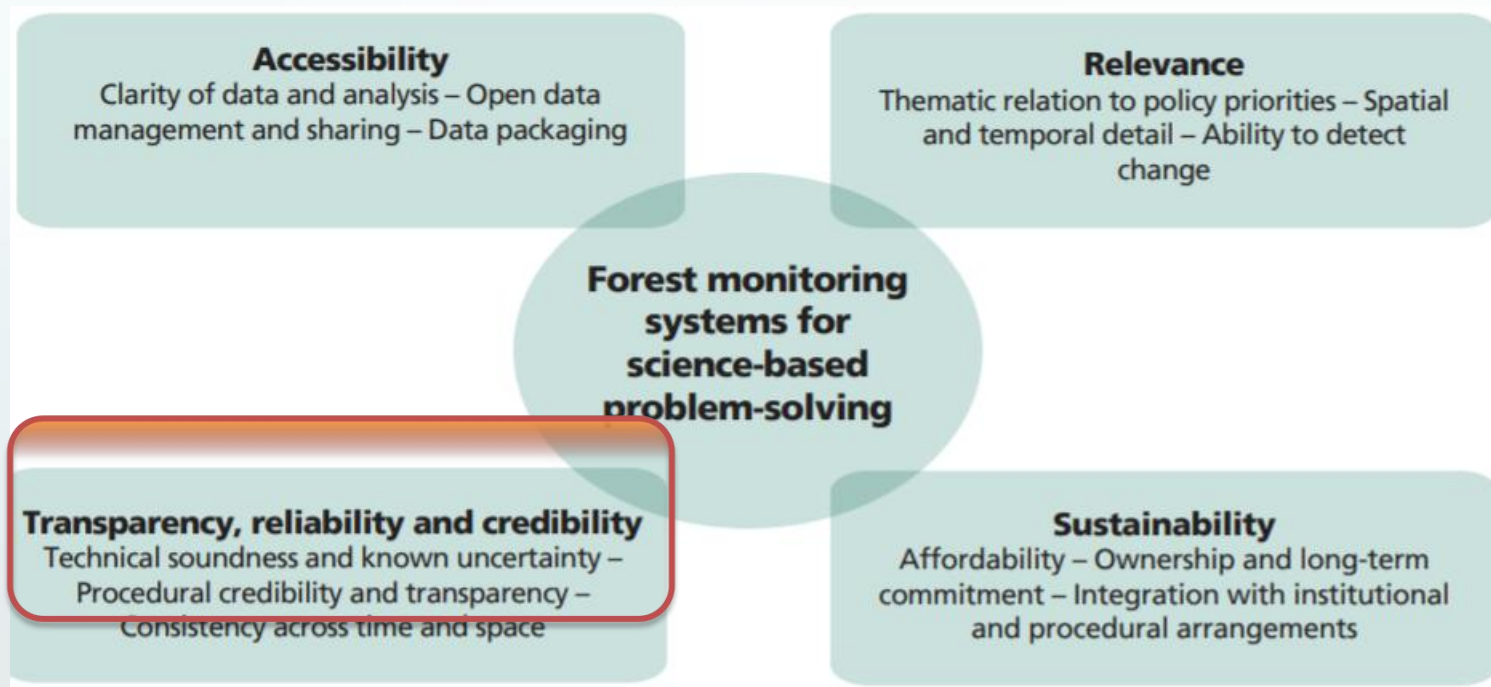
Evidence: full inventory of all commercial trees to select the trees to harvest

3. Has this been done correctly?



Evidence: *Interactive Forest Atlas* for field checking



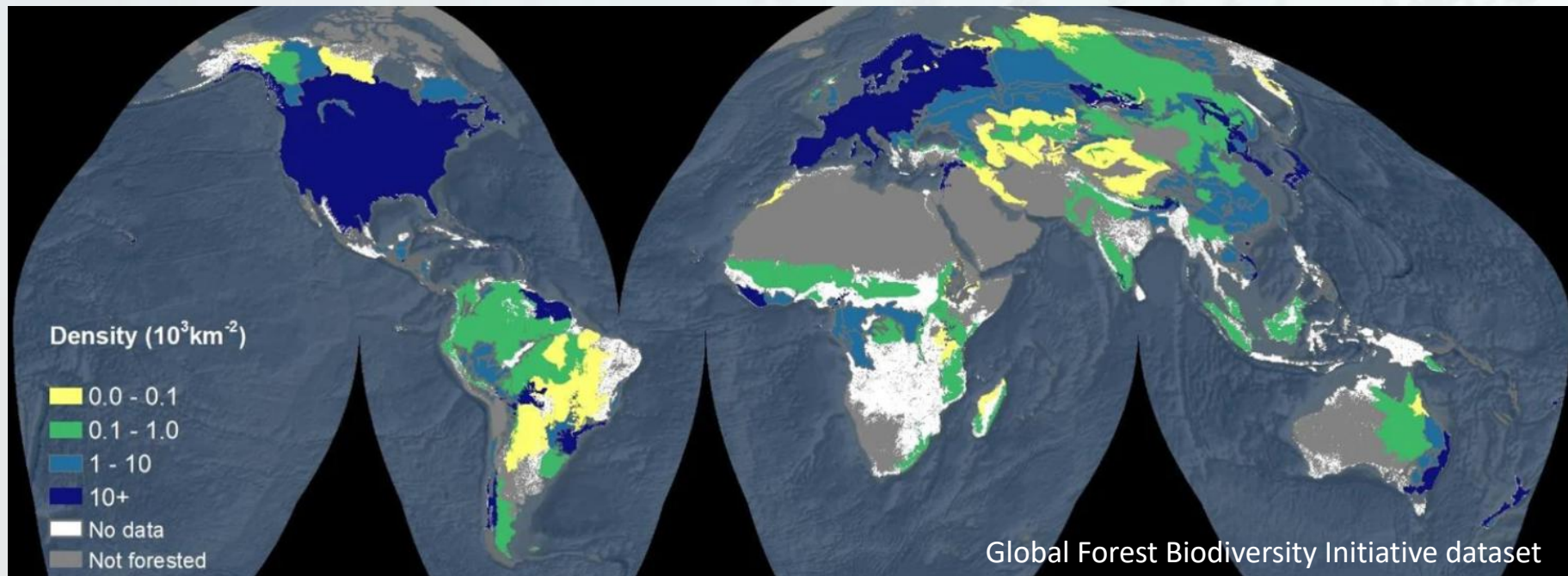


Open Data: Bottom-up Transparency



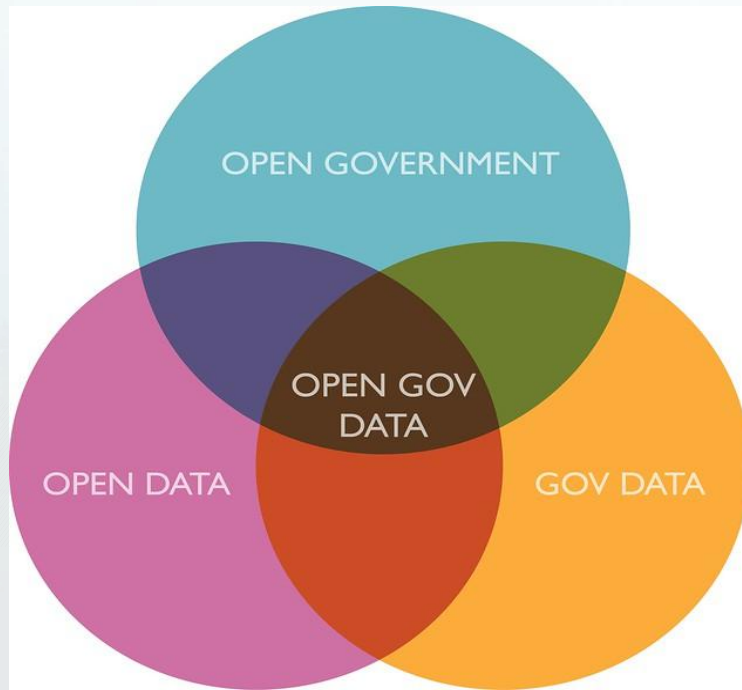
The open data movement (driving science and research) aims at improving decision-making on natural resources (A. Kangas, LUKE, Finland)

The last 10 years have witnessed a substantial increase in transparent and credible sharing of in situ forest data



Liang, J., & Gamarra, J. G. (2020). The importance of sharing global forest data in a world of crises. *Scientific Data*, 7(1), 1-5

Open Government: Top-down Transparency

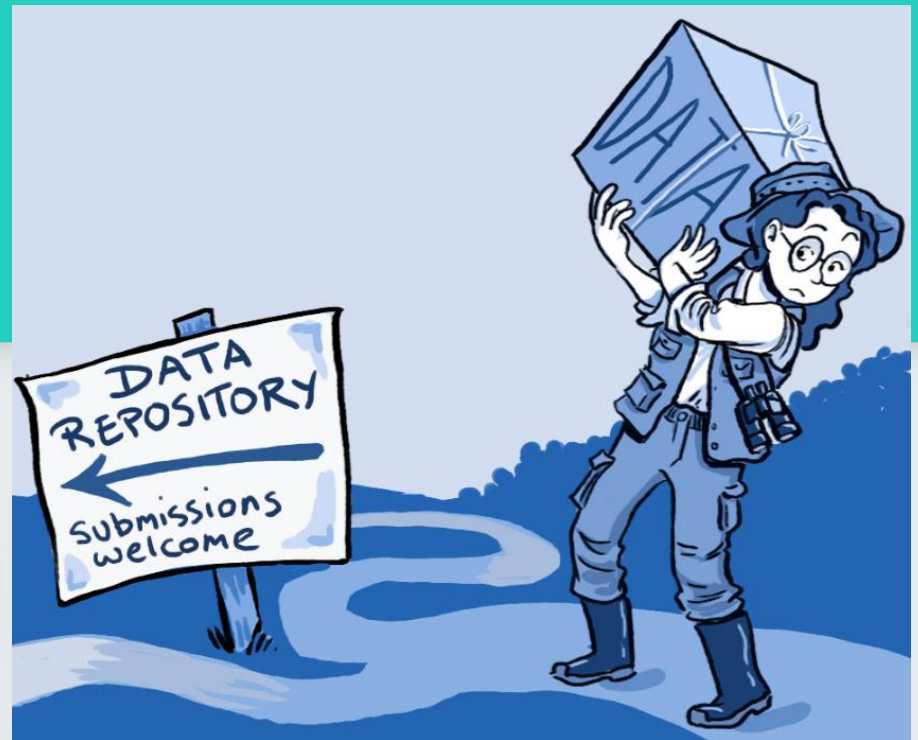


Both bottom-up and top-down approaches in the forest sector can contribute to:

- Drive science and research
- Hold government and companies accountable
- Improve land use planning

Better data from governments on forest products through the joint forest product questionnaire (JFSQ) can also drive investment in the forest sector, prevent resource depletion as part of sustainable management, promote fair trade and legality, enable carbon credits, access finance (donor support) for sustainability projects

2. TRADEOFFS AND OBSTACLES TO TRANSPARENCY



There is reluctance from many sides to share data:

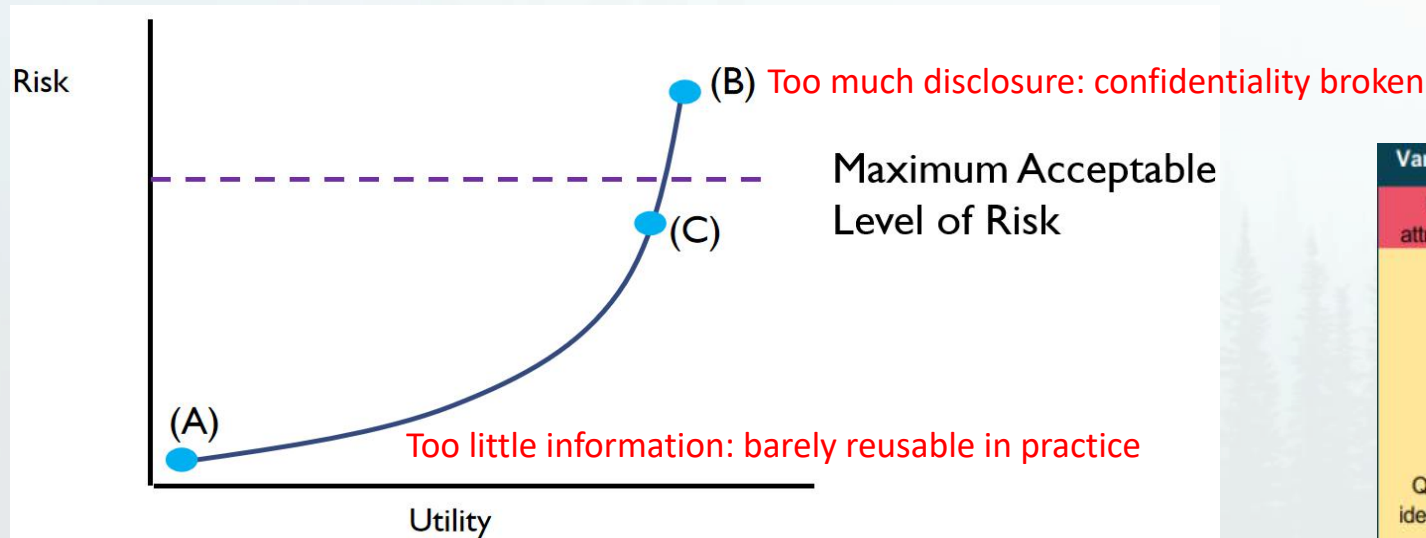


- The **private** sector (forest industry, mills etc) may have reasons to **keep data private** (competition, business strategy) and yet they also gain for **increased transparency** (planning, investment)



- The **public** sector may also want to **avoid data disclosure** (too much accountability for decisions or budgets), but transparency **improves governance and public engagement**, as well as **inclusive development and innovation** (the speedy development of COVID vaccines was largely due to full monitoring and disclosure of data).

In any database, information is subject to a tradeoff: the more variables included, the more utility to external users, BUT also the higher is the risk to access sensitive data.



Variables	Comment
Key attributes	Absolutely private
Quasi-identifiers	Variables that linked to other anonymized tables can lead to identify the key attribute
Valuable attributes	high value/utility for database

Decision tool for forest data disclosure

Variable Sensitivity

Low

The information does not contain any sensitive information it can be disclosed without any particular precaution

Medium

Part of the information may contain some elements that need to be protected, partially modified, or partially disguised

High

The information contains high sensitivity data that needs to be heavily protected or completely disguised

Variable Utility

High

The information has a high utility, for transparency, replicability, analysis, and planning in country

Medium

The information if disclosed may help to better understand the data acquisition processes, help to understand or implement additional or complementary analytic processes.

Low

The information is of limited utility to a few collateral analyses or details

3. CBIT-FOREST: PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY IN FOREST DATA



Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector (CBIT-Forest)

The project aims to step up developing countries' ability to **collect, analyse and disseminate forest-related data, to make forest data transparent and accessible in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement.**

The main components include:



Boosting institutional capacity



Increasing technical capacity



Sharing knowledge



One year of...

capacity-building and raising awareness on forest monitoring



National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) **Assessment Tool**

Information note

- English **299** downloads
- French **30** downloads
- Spanish **35** downloads

Quick guidance

- English **346** downloads
- French
- Spanish



Pandemic lessons:

Open data for forest and climate action



Blogpost

<http://sdq.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/pandemic-lessons-open-data-for-forest-and-climate-action/>



The importance of **sharing global forest data** in a world of crises



Peer-reviewed article

<https://go.nature.com/39wBeTK>



Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) **reporting and dissemination platform**



<https://fra-data.fao.org/>

Food and Agriculture Microdata Catalogue (FAM)

The Food and Agriculture Microdata (FAM) Catalogue provides an inventory of datasets collected through farm and household surveys which contain information related to agriculture, food security, and nutrition. The FAM catalogue is populated by datasets which are collected directly by FAO and datasets whose collection are supported in some way by FAO. Our aim is to be a one-stop-shop containing metadata on all agricultural censuses and surveys which are publically available as well as provide direct access and/or links to the microdata.

FAM is continuously updated as new datasets from FAO and member countries become available. Organizations which collect relevant data are also highly encouraged to submit datasets for dissemination through FAM.



<https://www.fao.org/food-agriculture-microdata/en/>
<https://microdata.fao.org/index.php/catalog>

Contains:

- Metadata (Digital Documentation Initiative)



- Accompanying Documentation
- Microdata

4. LESSONS LEARNED



Global field observation repository

Encouraging data sharing in pilot countries



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- There is an ***initial reluctance to share in-situ forest data motivated by fears of illegal logging.***
 - ***More incentives to transparency are needed.*** Donors should push and countries should engage into open governments
 - The expected ***tradeoffs between the interests of data users and data producers generate different definitions along a gradient of what transparency means.*** To users, transparency is largely defined by the widespread probabilities a dataset has to be utilized, while producers mostly aim to restrict disclosure of data to protect privacy and confidentiality, while ensuring a minimum data disclosure is warranted.
 - There are ***regional patterns in the intention to openly share*** forest in-situ data.
 - ***Lack of an initial data-hosting infrastructure*** is also often a deterrent.
 - Expertise required to work towards open data is fundamental – ***forest and legal expertise from both sides (FAO and country) are needed.*** Comprehensive legal arrangements will greatly contribute to establish foundations for clear and well-structured open and transparent sharing of forest data.
 - Data transparency stems from the basics of trust. And ***trust build-up needs to be accompanied by continuous support.***
 - ***Decision tools for variable anonymization and data disclosure can trigger speedier action.***
 - FAM is a repository for agricultural microdata. More specific repositories contain metadata structures better suited for forestry/forest products, at the expense of scattering the information.

Thank you!

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