	SUPPORT IN THE SETTING UP OF A REMOTE-SENSING UNIT FOR THE MONITORING OF FOREST COVER IN CAR	**Ref.**
SalvaTerra		55

Expert(s)	Country	Volume (md)	Amount* (€)	Beneficiary	Funding	Start date	End date	Partner(s)	Reference
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Detailed description of the project	Services provided

Detailed description of the project

Within the framework of the mechanism of Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, Maintenance or Increasing of Forest Carbon Stocks (REDD+), satellite imagery has become essential to the task of monitoring the surface area of tropical forest. The countries of the Congo Basin having a deficit in this area, the French Development Agency (AFD), with the support of Astrium SAS, decided in 2009 to finance the acquisition of this satellite imagery, via a project called the "Tropical Forests Space Observatory" (OSFT).

These images were captured using the SPOT 4 and 5 satellites (with an average resolution of 10-20 m), in 2000 and again in 2010, and covered the tropical rainforest of six countries located in the heart of the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, DR Congo). In the case of the CAR, it had also been planned to collect very high-resolution imagery (VHR, 2.5m) of two-thirds of the territory using the SPOT 5 satellite.

In the OSFT project, images were provided by Spot Image and support for the recipient countries in their use was provided by a consortium comprising the Institute of Research for Development (IRD), the *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* (CNES), the National Geographic Institute - France International (IGN-FI) and the *Office National des Forêts - International* (ONFI).

With the CAR being to a greater or lesser extent the "pilot" country in this project, the mission objectives were (i) to present the latest advances and recommendations for the monitoring of tropical forests and the Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of the related GHG emissions, (ii) to present the added-value of the OSFT project in this context, (iii) to identify the existing capability in image processing and (iv) to agree on image licensing procedures.

Services provided

Interviews were conducted with the key national stakeholders in the OSFT project: Ministries in charge of the Environment and Forestry, Laboratory of Climatology, Mapping and Geographical Studies (LACCEG), *Centre de Données Forestières* (CDF), Project to Support the Implementation of Forest Management Plans (PARPAF), Project on Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC), AFD, and the Prime Minister. This helped to highlight the lack of human resources and logistics necessary to handle satellite data: four experts with partial training in GIS and remote sensing, as well as insufficient equipment. The building of human and material capacities is a top priority.

A workshop chaired by the Minister of Environment and Ecology was then held at the end of the mission to make presentations on REDD+ MRV, the OSFT project, the diagnosis in terms of national capability for processing satellite data, and finally, to discuss licensing procedures.

The participants were emphatic that the monitoring of forest cover should be extended to the North where strong anthropogenic pressures exist (extensive grazing, slash and burn, fires, gold and diamond extraction, etc.). As it happens, the REDD+ mechanism will be implemented at national level and 70% of the forests are dry in the CAR, and as such are not covered by this OSFT project. Concerns were expressed about the risk of the misappropriation of VHR images if access to them was not safeguarded. Finally, it was decided that the REDD+ National Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, would sign a general license with ASTRIUM and specific licenses with REDD+ project developers. This Committee will be backed-up by the REDD+ Technical Coordination and its REDD+ MRV Working Group, in order to manage the data and to gradually take responsibility for its processing.