



# GFOI Plenary 2018

## Outcomes

In 2018, the Global Forest Observations Initiative's (GFOI) annual Plenary was held in Bogota Colombia from 12 to 16 March. The Plenary provided a productive forum for global coordination on forest monitoring for emissions measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) issues for REDD+, transparency under the Paris agreement and related fora. It further fostered a large and diverse network of experts and practitioners who collectively provide a larger and more targeted package of support to implementing countries than any one partner could provide alone.

GFOI membership has expanded in recent years, which has significantly increased the Initiative's ability to coordinate international support and help ensure it's targeted at national needs. This year's participants provided a wide range of expertise and experience, such as those of national implementers, donors, international organizations, technical experts, policy makers and academics.

The Plenary focused on efforts to ensure that international support is targeted at country needs, delivered in a well-coordinated manner and ultimately contributes towards the operationalization of national forest monitoring systems (NFMS) to address MRV requirements. Consultations were held on GFOI priorities for the period 2018-19 to ensure the Initiative is best serving the interests of its partners.

The major outcomes from the GFOI Plenary 2018 are as follows:

- i. **Strengthened network of GFOI partners and collaborators.** The Plenary assembled the largest and most diverse group of participants in its history with 130 registered participants from 38 different countries, sixty percent men and forty percent women. This included representatives from GFOI's new leading partners in the European Space Agency, the United Kingdom and the World Bank.
- ii. **Consensus on the value of country-led needs assessment,** with an emphasis on these being specific to a country's unique national needs. It was also agreed that these holistic assessments should not be limited to technical matters but should also include broader issues such as institutional and governance arrangements, consultation with decision makers, endorsement by national authorities and clear communication to international partners so they can form the basis for subsequent support and collaboration.

- iii. **Confirmed the clear need for a refocused component that addresses obstacles to data and tool use by practitioners in implementing countries.** Furthermore:
  - a. The criteria for **consistently assessing levels of maturity (CALM)** should be used to confirm that products and tools are sufficiently operational for inclusion in and GFOI guidance material. The component should work closely with the R&D component, so that products which are not yet mature can be prioritized for further R&D.
  - b. The **REDDcompass framework should be used by the component** to help countries select appropriate products to meet their nationally specific requirements. The inclusion of products in **REDDcompass will be based on those considered operational under CALM** and as endorsed by the Methods and Guidance Documentation (MGD) Advisory Group (AG)
  - c. The component should only consider products that are **open source** and **affordable** solutions for implementing countries
  - d. The component should take a strong implementation focus, which should be reflected in its title, membership and structure.
- iv. Highlighted the benefit of expert workshops to address knowledge gaps and other challenges to progress as identified in country-led needs assessments and by implementing partners.
- v. Identified need to build sustainable capacity in countries, including by training the next generation of practitioners through university courses, facilitating south-south exchanges and other ongoing collaborations.

