

**GEF Land Degradation Monitoring Project
Steering Committee Conference Call
23 January, 2016**

Present:

Dr. Sandy Andelman, Vital Signs
Dr. Michael Cherlet, JRC
Dr. Lennart Olsson, Lund University
Dr. Compton Tucker, NASA

Dr. Ulrich Apel, GEF Secretariat
Dr. Miguel Morales, CI-GEF Project Agency

Mr. Tristan Schnader, Vital Signs
Dr. Alex Zvoleff, Vital Signs

Discussion on strategy for managing project delays

Dr. Andelman provided a summary on the current delays that the project has been experiencing. Most of Output 1.1.1, the comparison of different datasets and methods for land degradation, has not been completed. Several other outputs in the project depend on Output 1.1.1's completion. The bulk of the work from Output 1.1.1 is NASA's responsibility, and the Project Technical Team has been having challenges getting it done.

Dr. Andelman referred to a version of the workplan that highlights all delayed activities for the project, including:

1. Output 1.1.1 Activity 3 – Soil moisture-NDVI analyses with NASA's MERRA-2 1981-2016 soil moisture data, which NASA reported as completed. The following were reported as delayed with the expected completion date of December 31, 2016: analyses with the Hadley's Center's NadISDH soil moisture data set; analyses of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center's soil moisture data; and analyses of JRC's 1-km NDVI data from 2002-2012, which should be compared to all three soil-moisture data sets.
2. Output 1.1.1 Activity 4 – NDVI-soil moisture residual trend analyses and error determination. NASA reported this activity as delayed and that it was working on the evaluation of methods to derive residuals from different NDVI data sets. NASA reset the activity's completion date to December 31, 2016.
3. Output 1.1.1 Activity 5 – Process and verify commercial satellite data 50 cm mosaics for Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. NASA reported that this activity was scheduled for on-time completion at the end of FY17Q2 and that it ran a complete high-resolution panchromatic mosaic (50cm) ahead of schedule over the entire country of Senegal (2002-2015) to evaluate and verify quality outputs. Additionally, NASA reported that it

has been reprocessing mosaic tiles for Senegal prior to processing mosaics for the other three pilot countries.

4. Output 1.1.1 Activity 7 – Report for Output 1.1.1 as outlined in paragraph 57 of the ProDoc. NASA originally reported that it would complete this activity by November, 2016 so the Project Technical Team could review the report prior to the end of FY17Q2. NASA has continually pushed back the report's deadline.
5. Output 1.1.1 Activity 8 – Complete peer review of report for Output 1.1.1 and finalize report thereafter.
6. Output 1.1.2 Activity 6 – Write report for Output 1.1.2 as outlined in paragraph 63 of the ProDoc.
7. Output 1.1.2 Activity 7 – Complete peer review of report for Output 1.1.2 and finalize report thereafter.
8. Output 1.2.1 Activity 1 – Document all land degradation satellite processing and analyses on an ongoing basis. NASA has reported that this activity on track and that details of data processing and methods are being updated and summarized for the Output 1.1.1 technical report.

Dr. Andelman suggested that the Steering Committee consider what to do if these deliverables are not completed in the next month. By the end of March, we are supposed to have given the first web presentation on the recommended approaches to the UNCCD, the UNCCD Operational Focal Point, and others in our pilot countries. Additionally, the UNCCD commissioned a report from CSIRO and the ESA, which will track the indicators for Land Degradation Neutrality. The UNCCD would like include the findings from our project in that report, but we are quickly running out of time. If we do not get the report on Output 1.1.1 done by Feb 15th, our findings will not be included.

Dr. Olsson reported that his team needs the satellite analyses to compare with what is going on the ground. Lund can no longer wait for the completed mosaics of the high-resolution data for all four countries. Instead, Lund has agreed to NASA prioritizing the completion of mosaics for key areas designated by Lund. Dr. Andelman noted that Vital Signs has already asked NASA to prioritize Vital Signs landscapes, but NASA has not provided an indication of when those will be completed. Dr. Olsson indicated that his team will provide NASA with a list of areas where high-resolution processing should be prioritized.

Dr. Andelman reported that she and Dr. Tucker will meet this Wednesday, January 25th, to discuss and work on the Output 1.1.1 report. For the next report, which is due at the end of this quarter, Dr. Andelman suggested talking to Dr. Tucker about choosing an alternate within NASA to make authorization calls, so that the NASA team can complete its work on time.

The Steering Committee agreed that it would be difficult to get a completed report on Output 1.1.1 on time for the CSIRO/JRC report without having a reviewable version by the end of the week. Dr. Andelman agreed to report back to the Steering Committee on Wednesday on whether or not we have made progress.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the call adjourned at 11:45 a.m. EST.