

Mapping Forest Degradation

In terms of detecting forest degradation, what are your experiences? Are there experiences in the room with the use of remote sensing?

- Free data provided by digital globe showed only secondary species like African Tulips, Climber and Tree Ferns but not forest degradation, therefore focusing on Climber species will indicate the level of degraded forests. Another option would be the use of radar to indicate forest degradation because it has the ability to penetrate the forest and mapping the forest floor.
- Its important to identify if the degradation is caused by, and manifested through a reduction of canopy cover or is degradation occurring at the lower forest layer. With this information it is possible to identify which parameters can be used to measure degradation through remote sensing. The concept of having vegetation reference sites is one that is being practiced in Queensland, Australia i.e when assessing the different quality of vegetation, they refer back to the reference site, a more stable environment with the right conditions and which enables them to quantify the different degradation levels of various sites.
- There is a need for countries to define 'What is forest degradation?'. Following this, it is important to identify and track the use of forests which could result in a cost-benefit analysis because we cannot always rely on different types of remote sensing and UAVs for verification. Field assessments and measurements focusing only on forest activities with a greater impact apart from low impact activities is also a useful approach.

Over the years technology has become cheaper and easier to handle with more investment placed on training people with the use of new technology and tools.