



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

## Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)

# Towards improved global reporting on **primary forest**

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# Global Forest Resources Assessment

- Based on official country statistics reported to FAO through a global network of **officially nominated national correspondents**
- More than **60 forest-related variables** in **236 countries** and territories for the period from 1990 to 2020



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UNECE







# Some processes related to primary forest reporting

- **CBD**

- COP 2018 – “Welcomes .. the efforts made to improve the consistency of reporting on national data on primary forest area reported under the Global Forest Resources Assessment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, **considering the exceptional importance of primary forest for biodiversity conservation**”
- Primary forest mentioned among the potential indicators in the current draft of the upcoming [monitoring framework](#) of the post-2020 [Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

- **IUCN**

- Highlights the importance of primary forests (including intact forest landscapes) and distinguishing these from naturally regenerating forests managed for commodity production, planted forests and plantations
- Strongly supports the ongoing national reporting of primary forests for the FRA and the providing further guidance to improve the reliability and consistency of reporting

- **EU**

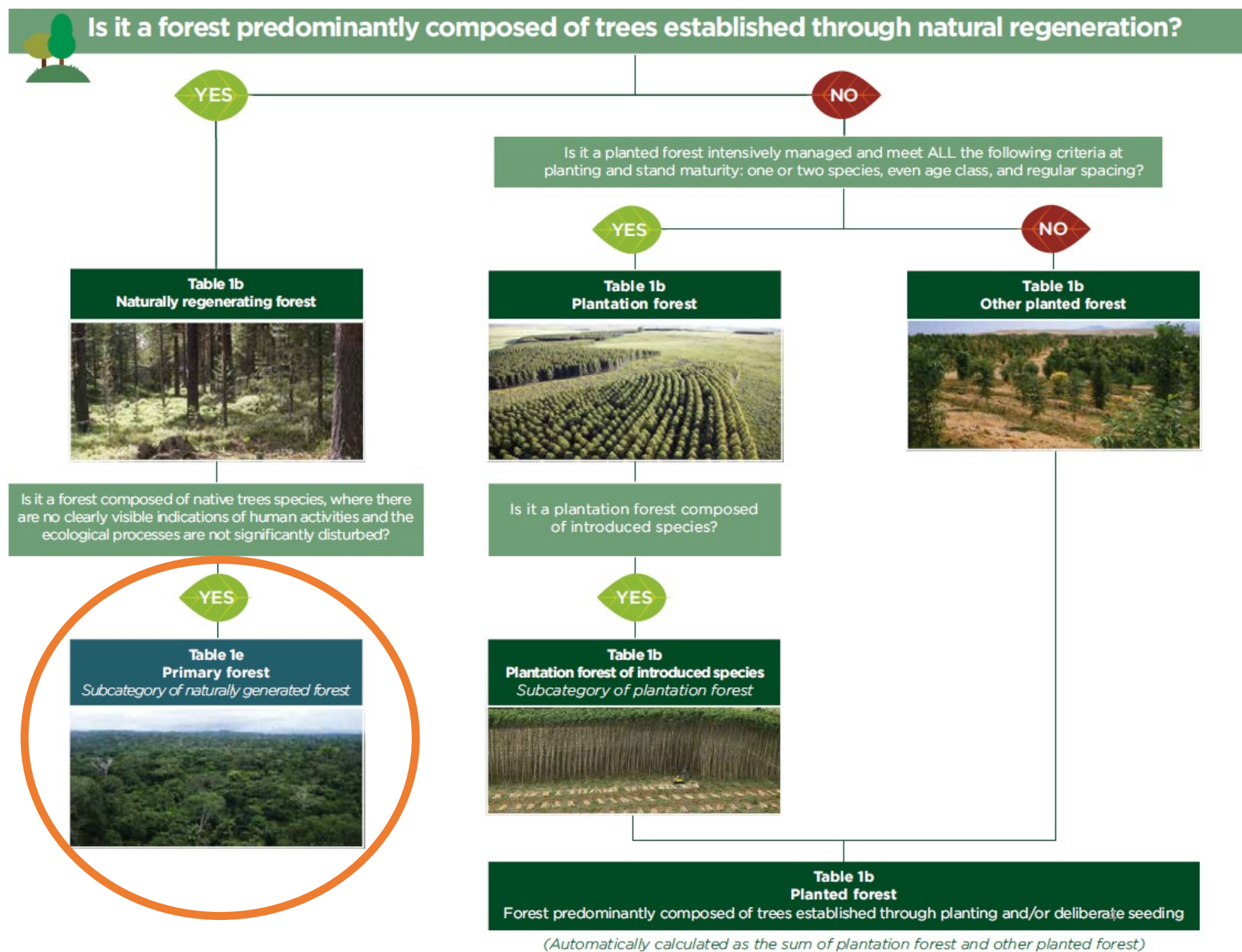
- Biodiversity strategy for 2030 : “it will be crucial to define, map, monitor and strictly protect all the EU’s remaining primary and old-growth forests”

- **FSC and PEFC**



# Primary forest reporting in FRA 2020

*“Naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed”*





# FAO definition of primary forest

*Naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed.*

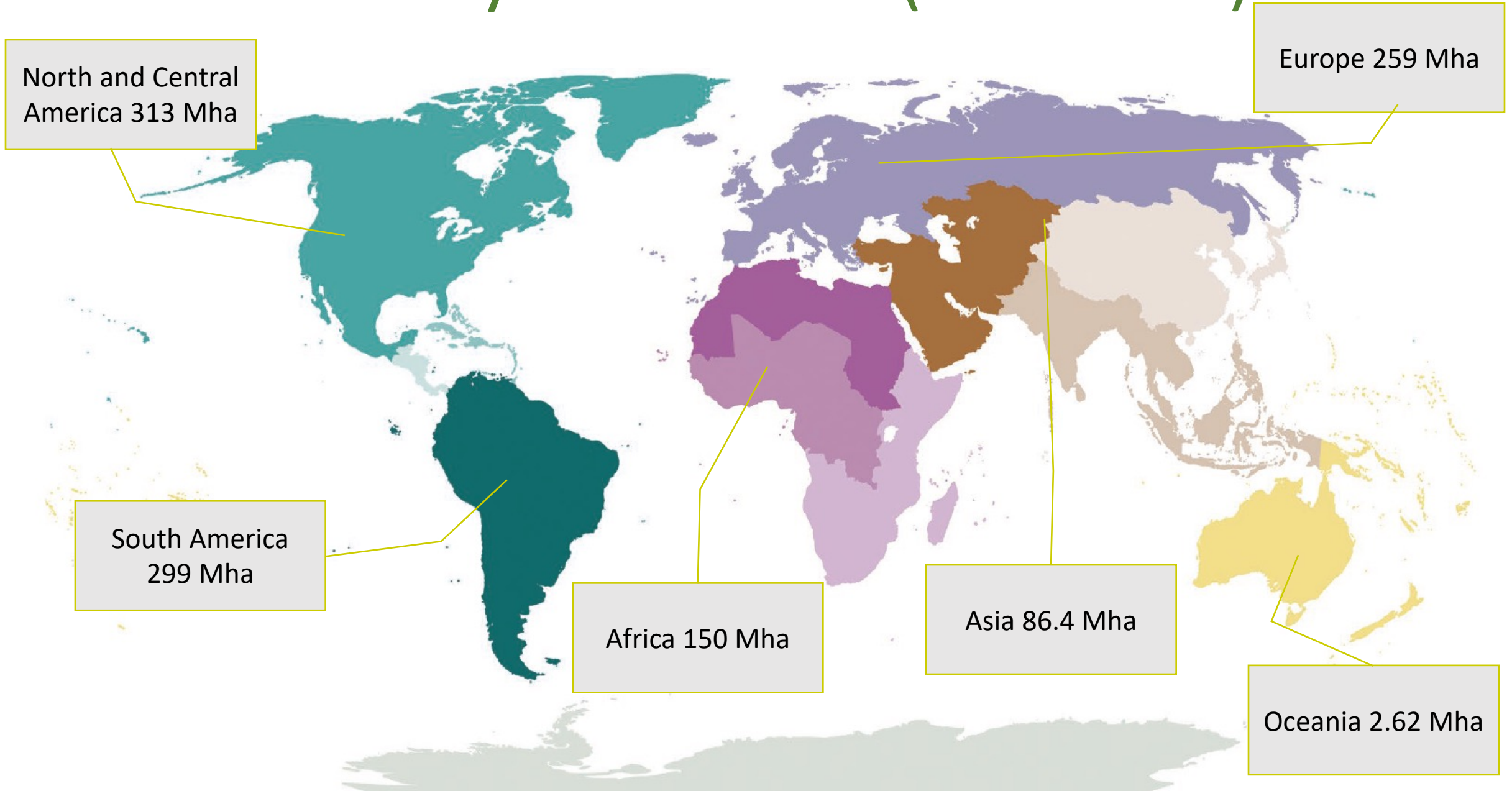
*(source: [Terms and Definitions, FRA 2020, 2018](#))*

## **Explanatory notes**

- Includes both pristine and managed forests that meet the definition.
- Includes forests where indigenous peoples engage in traditional forest stewardship activities that meet the definition.
- Includes forest with visible signs of abiotic damages (such as storm, snow, drought, fire) and biotic damages (such as insects, pests and diseases).
- Excludes forests where hunting, poaching, trapping or gathering have caused significant native species loss or disturbance to ecological processes.
- Some key characteristics of primary forests are:
  - they show natural forest dynamics, such as natural tree species composition, occurrence of dead wood, natural age structure and natural regeneration processes;
  - the area is large enough to maintain its natural ecological processes;
  - there has been no known significant human intervention or the last significant human intervention was long enough ago to have allowed the natural species composition and processes to have become re-established.



# Primary forest area (FRA 2020)





# Main issues in current primary forest reporting

- Poor fit between primary forest definition and available country data
  - Use of proxies (protected areas, age, ...)
  - Methodologies used differ greatly from country to country
- Poor metadata
- Trends:
  - No trends reporting (some countries report same area since 1990)
  - Countries assess trend in proxy not actual PF forest area: e.g. Protected area or old growth increase > primary forest area increase

**INCONSISTENT REPORTING**







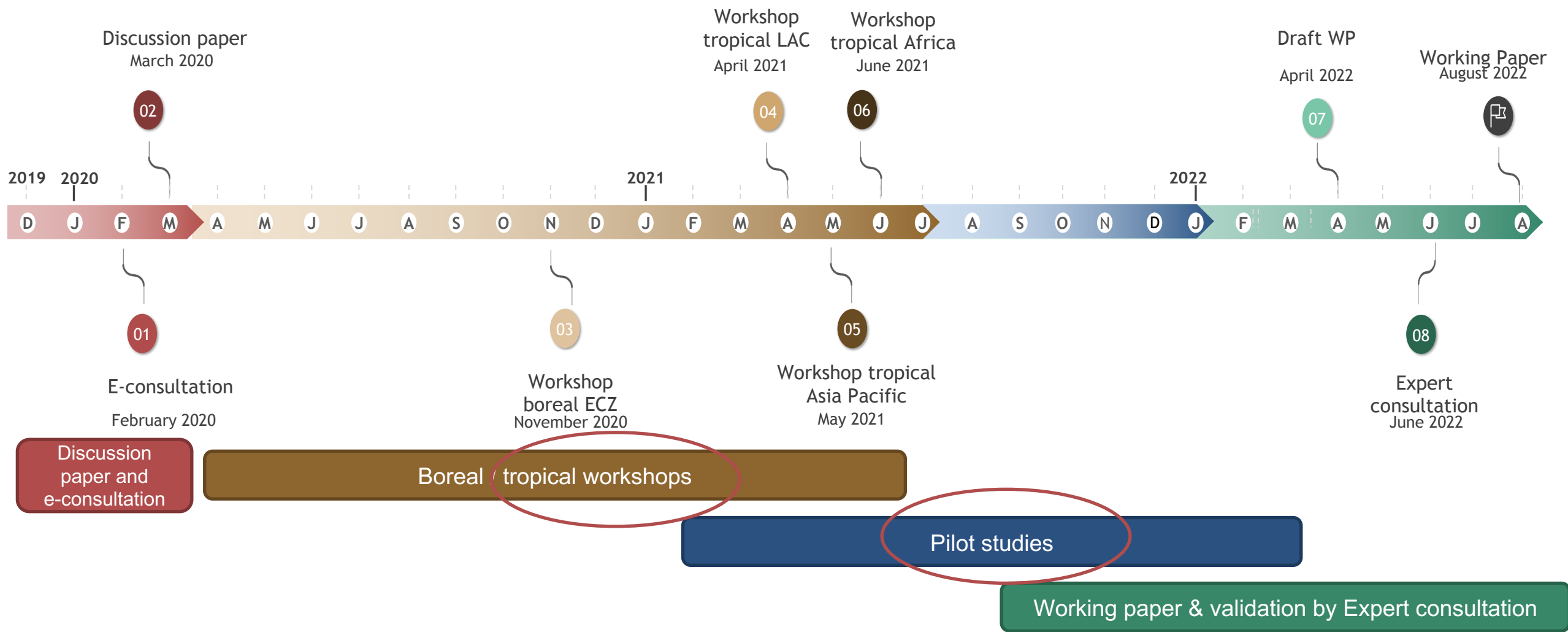
# FRA Special study on improving primary forest reporting

- Objectives

- review existing definitions of primary forest and **provide further guidance on how to interpret / operationalize the primary forest definition** adopted by FRA in different contexts/biomes
  - review existing methods for primary forest monitoring, and propose **operational methods** for improved data collection and reporting on the extent of primary forests
  - provide further guidance and recommendations to **increase the consistency and comparability among countries** for estimates of the extent of primary forests
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- In **collaboration** with many partners: countries, CBD, Griffith University (Queensland, Australia), JRC, UNEP-WCMC, UNECE, CIFOR...



# Improving Primary forest reporting special study





# Status and results

- *Background paper - A Review of Definitions, Data, and Methods for Country-level* » prepared by independent experts (Brendan Mackey, Eloise Skinner and Patrick Norman - Griffith Climate Change Response Program, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia).
- **Open on-line consultation**
- **Boreal** forest workshop help on November 2020 - **Decision tree developed** -
- Now moving, through the **pilot phase**, in further elaborating & testing the decision tree (what is remote /what is large enough to be PF, what criteria can support identification of PF) + use of available **geospatial datasets**

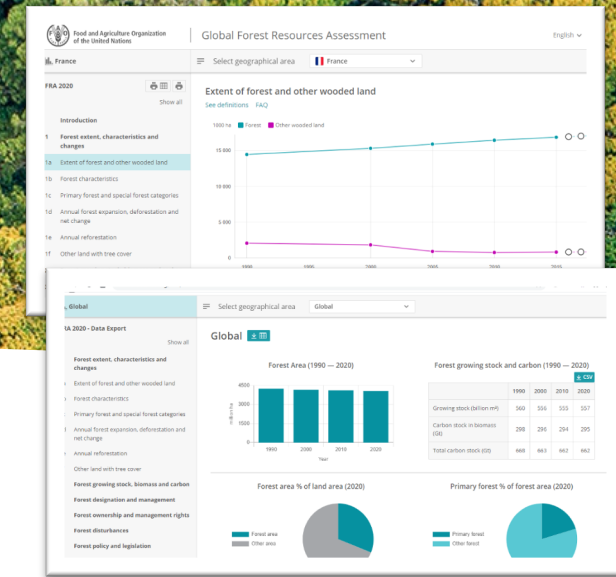








# Thank you!



<http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment>

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

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