

Data sources and quality

Most of the data reported in this and other FRA 2015 publications come from Country Reports. FRA 2015 provides reports on 234 countries and territories, of which 155 are Country Reports prepared by national correspondents nominated by government agencies responsible for forestry. The remainder come from desk studies, which since FRA 2000 have been used to provide estimated values for forest statistics in countries or territories that have not nominated a national correspondent or that have not provided a Country Report. While the number of desk studies is high, in total they report on only 1.3 percent of global forest area.

Data collection and reporting leading up to 2015 was guided by a series of workshops and training sessions designed to maximize consistency between reports. For FRA 2015, data were also acquired through the Forest

Resources Information Management System (FRIMS), the online data collection portal of FAO. Countries were given templates with data they had submitted for FRA 2010.

Countries were requested to revise and update the former figures when new data were available and then estimate the figures for 2015. In addition to providing the data reported by countries, FAO has worked with national correspondents to provide data assembled from other sources. Most of these are sources previously provided by national governments to the United Nations, including data on population, land area and wood removals.

It is important to note that all Country Reports were independently peer-reviewed by FAO staff, partners in the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire and external experts. Peer-review comments were provided to national



correspondents for inclusion in the Country Reports and, where necessary, corrections of individual Country Reports were made before the data were included in the final FRA 2015 database.

The reporting format for countries encourages them to provide data for references and calculations. In some cases, countries have provided excellent documentation that allows the reader to examine and recalculate values submitted for FRA 2015. Readers may refer to the Country Reports for details, references and descriptions.⁹ Publications and documents describing terms and definitions, as well as the guide to FRA 2015, can also be found on the FAO website.¹⁰

FRA 2015 employed a set of tier categories similar to those used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Tiers were requested for all variables that potentially had more than one source of data. Tiers were defined by countries for each of the included variables for both status (i.e. the most recent report) and trend (i.e. for two or more reporting periods). Countries were asked to assign a tier value to each qualifying variable: Tier 1 (expert estimate), Tier 2 (low intensity or incomplete surveys, older data) or Tier 3 (high reliability, recent sources with national scope). Specific definitions for each tier were provided in FRIMS following this general pattern and are available in the Country Reports.

⁹ See www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/current-assessment/country-reports/en/.

¹⁰ See www.fao.org/forestry/fra2015.