

GEOGLAM RAPP

(Rangelands And Pasture Productivity)

Newsletter #3

Dear RAPP colleagues,

We are pleased to present Newsletter #3 of GEOGLAM RAPP (www.geo-rapp.org).

As we announced earlier, RAPP held its 4th international workshop in South Africa a few weeks ago (20-22 June, in Pretoria – city of Tshwane). The workshop brought together key RAPP members and researchers/institutional from the global community and especially from South Africa.

And other activities have kept us busy too, of course:

- GEOGLAM RAPP Map/Visualizer: online!
- Vegetation cover anomaly product
- National Pilot sites - increasing
- Focus on... ESA free online course
- Communication and next key dates for RAPP

Read below to get more information!

Community-of-Practice and workshops

- **4th RAPP international workshop - City of Tshwane (Pretoria) in South Africa, 20-22nd June 2016**

Our 4th international RAPP workshop was held in South Africa (city of Tshwane, Pretoria), late June 2016.



Opening remarks - Day 1 - From left to right: Phil Mjwara (DG of DST), Sandile Malinga (SANSA's CEO), Jane Olwoch (Managing Director, SANSA) and Alex Held (CSIRO, Group Leader, and CEOS Chair 2016)

The workshop was co-organised and hosted by SANSA (South African National Space Agency) and CSIRO, and also supported by the South African DST (Department and Science Technology) and the City of Tshwane in South Africa.



The workshop provided a great chance to bring together key RAPP members and researchers of various institutions, from the global community and especially South Africa.

The audience included 35 attendees coming from countries such as South Africa (CSIR, SAEON, SANSA, etc), Namibia, China (RADI), Austria (IIASA), Australia (CSIRO) and others. We also had the chance hear three remote presentations (from INRA in France, FAO in Italy, and CORPOICA in Colombia), who kindly accepted our invitation to present their work. The INTA representative (Argentina) also prepared a presentation for Dr Juan Guerschman (CSIRO) to give on his behalf.

We heard very interesting [presentations](#) including RAPP products, pilot site updates and modelling activities, which led to fruitful and engaging discussions on the next steps in this global initiative: to further reinforce our current partnerships, search for new collaborations, and develop the initiative's products (such as the global rangelands monitoring system).

The agenda published [online](#) includes links to most of the PDF presentations.

Minutes have also been taken and are being reviewed, so please contact us if you wish to have a look at them.



GEOGLAM RAPP workshop group photo in Pretoria – Hotel Protea Centurion

Please see more information on our RAPP website [here](#)

We would like to sincerely thank again our local hosts, SANSA, with the support of DST and City of Tshwane, for their outstanding welcome (including the gala dinner) and help in the organisation.

- **Strengthening international collaborations (FAO, ESA, IIASA)**

The recent RAPP workshop in South Africa helped reinforce collaborations with international organisations such as FAO, ESA and IIASA.

RAPP can count **FAO** as a key collaborator, and especially through the group of Dr Anne Mottet (Team coordinator of the Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model ([GLEAM](#))), on livestock productivity and modelling aspects.



The **ESA** (European Space Agency) has also expressed their interest in working with GEOGLAM RAPP especially by helping us to get access to satellite data from the Copernicus program (Sentinel 1 and 2).



Another strong European partner that will be a critical partner in RAPP is **IIASA** (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, based in Austria). Dr Steffen Fritz, the lead of the [Earth Observation System Group](#), attended our workshop in South Africa, and gave a very interesting presentation on "Using Crowdsourced Validation Data to Produce a Best Global Grassland Mask for Rangeland Monitoring" and gave an overview of the [SIGMA project](#), a major European contribution to GEOGLAM.



• **Other international activities for RAPP**

LTAR-GEOGLAM-JECAM workshop: outcomes
Ames, IO USA, 24-26 May 2016.

Four RAPP members were invited and attended the workshop “The role of site-based measurements in agricultural monitoring” aiming at better engaging the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) project in the USA with the activities in place in GEOGLAM, particularly Joint Experiment for Crop Assessment and Monitoring (JECAM) and RAPP. Dr Juan Guerschman (CSIRO) found it extremely



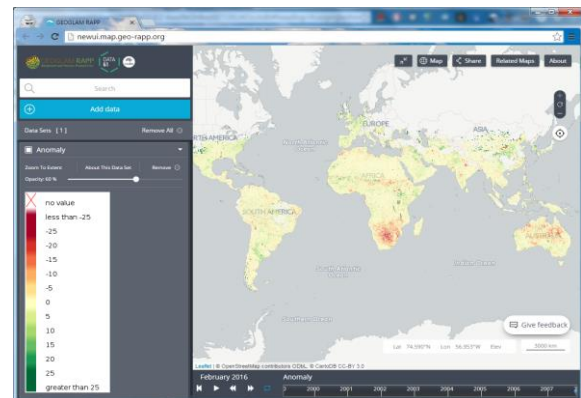
Field trip at the USDA workshop in Iowa, by Peter Scarth from University of Queensland

useful to strengthen RAPP involvement with the USA-based activities, to connect more with JECAM (Ian Jarvis) and to promote RAPP as well. All four rangeland LTAR sites (representing a good sample of the variability in the US rangelands) present at the meeting showed interest and willingness to join the RAPP initiative. The official RAPP pilot sites for the US will be announced soon. See more on a [post](#) on RAPP website!

GEOGLAM RAPP Map or visualizer: map.geo-rapp.org online

The GEOGLAM RAPP Map is now available online!

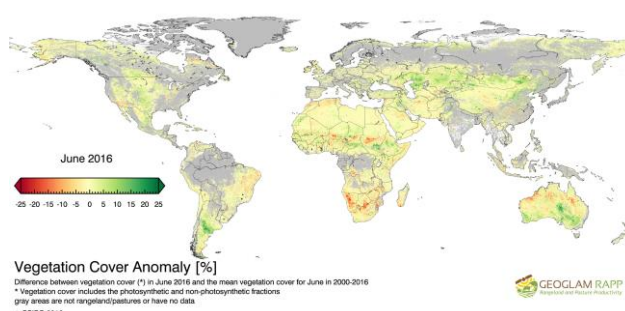
This tool provides an interactive way to visualise and interrogate global and regional data on rangeland and pasture condition, climate and livestock statistics.



The beta version release includes monthly global vegetation cover and anomalies from 2000 to present at 5km resolution. The same layer at **500 meter is currently being processed** and will be available soon. A separate document will be available soon to explain more in details about the interactive Map, and to describe its functionality and planned improvements.

We look forward to **hearing from you to get your feedback** to help improve the system and make it more and more useful to researchers and managers of rangelands and grassland worldwide. Your inputs are welcome, so please send your comments today to Dr [Juan Guerschman](#).

Vegetation Cover Anomaly



The monthly **vegetation cover anomaly product** can also be viewed on its own, and downloaded [here](#). The latest maps of May and June have just been published (website and Twitter).

National Pilot sites: updates

In recent months RAPP has been collecting additional information on national pilot sites. The dedicated pages on RAPP website have been updated, especially for [Argentina](#), [Colombia](#) and [Mongolia](#).

South Africa confirmed the nomination of 2 pilot sites (Kruger National Park and Cathedral Peak) during the workshop and more information will be available online soon.

A new country, **Namibia**, has also expressed an interest to join the initiative through its [Namibia Rangeland Monitoring Project](#), which was presented at the workshop in South Africa late June.

RAPP is also exploring new possibilities with FAO to include other African countries such as Senegal and Zambia as FAO is already working with them on similar activities.

Focus on.... Earth Observations and training

- **Free online courses from the European Space Agency (ESA)**

Earth Observation from Space: the Optical View (starting 12 September)



You can now discover how optical earth observation data is gathered and used thanks to this free online course delivered by ESA.

Earth observation (EO) encompasses a series of techniques that use remote sensing to monitor changes to our climate, and natural and built environment. This free online course

will provide an introduction to optical Earth observation - monitoring our planet from satellites, using photography, imaging in various wavelengths, LiDAR and other optical sensing technologies.

If you are interested in taking this course, please visit the online learning platform [Future Learn](#).

Communication

Besides regular communications with our key partners, RAPP communicates through the [website](#) which is regularly updated with news, events and information on RAPP pilot sites.

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter ([@geoglamRAPP](#)) as news and products, such as the monthly Vegetation Cover anomaly, are published there as well.

- **Next key steps for GEOGLAM RAPP**
 - RAPP at CEOS SIT-32 meeting + GEOGLAM side meeting, in the UK (Oxford, mid-Sept.)
 - RAPP at the CEOS 30th Plenary + GEOGLAM side-meeting, in Australia (Brisbane, early Nov.)
 - A new workshop planned for early 2017 has been proposed, which would possibly focus around coordination of national pilot sites, data acquisition strategy and field protocols. (venue and dates will be announced in coming months)

We wish you all great summer holidays for those who are in the Northern hemisphere!

You are receiving this email because you have participated in an event, or you are a member of the RAPP community. If you are not interested in getting these emails anymore, please let us know (fkerblat@yahoo.com and juan.guerschman@csiro.au), and you will be removed from our list.