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OpenSurface land-use tracking platform launches at COP25

Pioneering AI, satellite and ground-sourced data technology drives more effective climate action at planetary scale

11. December 2019, Madrid – Launched today at the COP25 UN Climate Summit, the OpenSurface platform presents a new way to monitor and forecast land-use change. The press conference venue for the launch at 11:00 is Room Chiloé in Area 10.

Capable of scaling up to cover the Earth's entire surface, the open-source, not-for-profit platform employs sophisticated, new AI techniques and integrates multiple data sources to drive more effective climate action.

A pilot with the Chilean government and the IDB's Natural Capital Lab, funded by IDB Lab and EIT Climate KIC, OpenSurface uses authoritative land records in conjunction with satellite imagery and ground-sourced data to help prioritise resource allocation. The platform combines fourth generation technologies such as artificial intelligence, secure ledgers, remote sensing, and the internet of things to automatically compare planned, authorised activities with how forests are actually being managed or depleted. It then intelligently alerts staff at CONAF (Corporación Nacional Forestal) whenever and wherever the two diverge.

According to the special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), emissions from agriculture, forestry, and land clearing make up around one quarter of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Improvements in land management could not only offer drastic cuts in global emissions, but also enhance agricultural sustainability, improve food security, and safeguard biodiversity.

“OpenSurface stands for next generation digital MRV in land management. Outcomes can be linked to alerts or payments – creating accurate, timely, and automated services for different stakeholders,” says **Nick Beglinger, CEO of Cleantech21**, the foundation that brought the OpenSurface team, winners of Hack4Climate at COP23 in Bonn, together.

“This can scale globally, making monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) more effective and affordable than ever before. This allows for new levels of trust between governments, companies and projects internationally,” continues **Patrick Bürgi, Co-founder of South Pole**, a global climate solutions provider and the Executing Agency behind the multi-partner international initiative that gave rise to OpenSurface. *“It can be a platform for exploring new ways to integrate diverse data sources, and new kinds of co-operation – the more data, the greater the possibilities.”*

“This is an exciting project for CONAF, and indeed for Chile's natural capital and climate commitments. It's a great opportunity and we are looking forward to using this pioneering technology to improve the monitoring of forest activities,” says **Jose Antonio Prado Donoso, Head of the Chilean government's Climate Change and Environmental Services Unit**. *“The OpenSurface platform will be an important tool to reduce deforestation, and particularly forest degradation – the main problem affecting native forests in Chile. We hope, and would support and encourage, other governments to join us.”*

“OpenSurface represents real innovation in MRV. It has potential to scale rapidly, and opens the opportunities for better governance, protection and eventual investments into land use and sustainability,” says **Riyong Kim, Director, Decision Metrics and Finance at EIT Climate-KIC**.

Funded by IDB Lab and EIT Climate-KIC, with support from ETH Zurich and initiated by Cleantech21, OpenSurface is a collaboration between an international team of developers and climate experts, including South Pole Carbon Asset Management, DS3 Lab and Scout Impact R&D. Interested parties are invited to get in touch at opensurface.io to collaborate or to become pilot partners. ###



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About the partners

Cleantech21 – C21, is a Swiss not-for-profit foundation whose core mission is to contribute to addressing the climate crisis. C21's approach is to develop project initiatives offering significant leverage through regulatory and/or technical innovation

CONAF – The Chilean National Forestry Corporation (Corporación Nacional Forestal) administers Chile's national forestry policy, promotes the development of the forestry sector through sustainable principles and is the governing body of all Chile's national parks. <http://www.conaf.cl/>

IDB – IDB's Natural Capital Lab serves as a one-stop shop for the IDB Group to drive innovation in the conservation, landscape, regenerative agriculture, biodiversity, and marine ecosystem finance spaces. It seeks to bridge the gap between traditional environmental and financial actors from the public and private sectors to incubate, accelerate, and scale new solutions to pressing problems. <https://www.iadb.org/en/environment/natural-capital-lab>

IDB Lab is the innovation laboratory of the IDB Group, the leading source of development finance and know-how for improving lives in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its purpose is to drive innovation for inclusion in the region, by mobilizing financing, knowledge, and connections to co-create solutions capable of transforming the lives of vulnerable populations affected by economic, social or environmental factors. <https://bidlab.org/en/about>

EIT Climate-KIC – EIT Climate-KIC is Europe's largest public-private partnership addressing climate change through innovation to build a net-zero-carbon economy. Our response to climate emergency is to focus our efforts on systems innovation to generate options and pathways for radical transformation. We are supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. <https://www.climate-kic.org/>

South Pole – South Pole is a leading provider of global climate solutions, with over 300 experts in 18 global offices. The company's expertise covers project and technology finance, data and advisory on sustainability risks and opportunities, as well as the development of environmental commodities such as carbon and renewable energy credits. South Pole has mobilised climate-finance to over 700 projects in emission reduction, renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable land-use. For more information, visit www.southpole.com.

ETH Zurich, DS3 Lab – DS3 Lab, led by Ce Zhang, explores state-of-the-art data management and machine learning techniques and is among the world's leading hubs for AI research. Situated in the heart of Europe, yet forging connections all over the world, ETH Zurich is pioneering effective solutions to the global challenges of today and tomorrow. <http://www.ds3lab.com/>

Scout Impact – Scout is a small, London-based impact R&D lab, developing next-generation impact instruments. For more information contact Scott Hartop, scott@scoutimpact.com