Evaluation of Cross-Forest project developments: preliminary results

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The main objective of the Cross-Forest project is to develop Digital Service Infrastructures (DSI) including services oriented towards forest fires control through precise information from Portugal and Spain on combustible materials, forestry maps and propagation models that need HPC resources to run properly and simulations of the scenarios over forest areas, based on growth and yield models for Spain.

Assessment processes were designed to provide results to measure the level of achievement of the objectives of the Cross-Forest DSI and to identify the criticalities in each project component implementation that need further refinement.

The methodology was based on an evaluation framework designed for the Cross-Forest project. The evaluation framework includes the definition of the different stages referring to evaluation design, execution and analysis of the obtained evaluation results. Two questionnaires were developed and used to collect evaluation information: (1) on the project concept and objectives and its initial results; (2) on the Forest Explorer, a web application to visualize and explore the forest data from both countries.

First evaluation results will be presented and analysed providing a preliminary assessment of Cross-Forest goals, pilots, data and tools and the evaluation of Forest Explorer. The two project evaluations (interim and final) are distinct in practice but conceptually connected: this first interim assessment will be verified by the following iteration of the final evaluation. Moreover, the interim evaluation represents a preliminary round for verifying the evaluation material and process to be applied in the final assessment.

In general, the interim evaluation provided a positive outcome: the project framework, pilots and tools were mostly recognized for the foreseen applications and applicability to further activities. For example, question about project objectives received more than 90% positive answers. In fact, users consider Cross-Forest objectives very relevant, as the project provides public data, of public utility, in an open manner, useful for forest management and forest fires prevention as well as decision making. The harmonization of spatial data from Spain and Portugal is considered one of the contributions of the project and some users highlighted the importance of the articulation of neighbor countries in relation to these matters.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Cross-Forest, forest data, open data, evaluation approach, Surveys, Portugal, Spain.

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