PANGEA Draft White Paper

[**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS HERE**](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1USQ6QT2ePmF1G68PucHvCO_6cWeVqritkIX1cv3cOMU/edit?gid=21525332#gid=21525332)

***Questions, Hypotheses, Data Needed Table:*** [***PANGEA Questions & Hypotheses***](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IMawYdO6ZRRX0R5MexkIwF3_BZTi52_tHQxmHoxjtNU/edit?usp=sharing)

[NASA Tropical Ecology Scoping Solicitation](https://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/viewrepositorydocument/cmdocumentid=860588/solicitationId=%7BEB63A640-7CE0-70F6-BE80-C12541C56B5F%7D/viewSolicitationDocument=1/A.4%20Terrestrial%20Ecology%20Amend%2036.pdf)

ABoVE White Paper: [ABoVE Final Scoping Report 2010.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r9vFP5H4r7QVy379OSeGuPAWdINTQuRj/view?usp=sharing)

***From Solicitation:***

The main deliverable will be a scoping report that lays out the scientific issues at stake, the logistical framework, and one or more paths forward toward implementation. Scoping studies will be required to address the following elements:

1. The science questions and issues
2. The current state-of-the-science
3. The potential for a major, significant scientific advancement
4. The central, critical role of NASA remote sensing
5. The essential scientific components of the study and why coordinated teamwork is required in their implementation
6. An overall study design identifying the required observational (e.g., spaceborne, airborne, and/or supporting in situ observations) and analytical (e.g., models, data, and information system) infrastructure
7. The feasibility of the proposed project, both technical and logistical
8. The engagement of the broader research community to seek feedback on the ideas, to assess interest, and to foster diversity and inclusion
9. The disciplinary skills needed to conduct the study and engage potential partners in their planning activities
10. Potential use of results for applications and decision support.

Scoping studies must produce a written report that **provides the scientific rationale and an initial study design concept** for a new field campaign or related team project. While this report need not be lengthy, it **must include a thorough presentation of science questions, goals, and objectives; the underlying rationale in terms of state-of-the-art, relevance, and expected advances; implementation concepts**; and other information to enable NASA to fully evaluate the project.

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**The PAN tropical investigation of bioGeochemistry and Ecological Adaptation (PANGEA): Scoping a NASA-Sponsored Field Campaign**

**Draft Report - September 2024**

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**Foreword**

NASA’s Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences released in 2022 called for proposals to conduct scoping studies to identify the scientific questions and develop the initial study design and implementation concept for a new NASA Terrestrial Ecology field campaign. In the spring of 2023, NASA selected two projects for funding, including a project entitled: “*A Scoping Study for the NASA Tropical Terrestrial Ecology Campaign”* (NASA Grant 80NSSC23K1019 to the University of California, Los Angeles). This report contains the recommendations from this scoping study, which presents the **PAN tropical investigation of bioGeochemistry and Ecological Adaptation (PANGEA).** NASA outlined ten expectations to be identified for each scoping study:

1. The science questions and issues.
2. The current state-of-the-science.
3. The potential for a major, significant scientific advancement.
4. The central, critical role of NASA remote sensing.
5. The essential scientific components of the study and why coordinated teamwork is required in their implementation.
6. An overall study design identifying the required observational (e.g., spaceborne, airborne, and/or supporting in situ observations) and analytical (e.g., models, data, and information system) infrastructure.
7. The feasibility of the proposed project, both technical and logistical.
8. The engagement of the broader research community to seek feedback on the ideas, to assess interest, and to foster diversity and inclusion.
9. The disciplinary skills needed to conduct the study and engage potential partners in their planning activities.
10. Potential use of results for applications and decision support.

This white paper provides: 1) the scientific rationale; 2) an initial study design concept for a new field campaign or related team project; 3) a presentation of science questions, goals, and objectives; 4) the rationale in terms of state-of-the-art, relevance, and expected advances; 5) implementation concepts; and 6) other information to enable NASA to fully evaluate the project. We outline the PANGEA campaign concept, including the PANGEA Science Themes (*Section 2*), Science Questions (*Section 3*), the scientific and technical advancement arising from PANGEA (*Section 4*), the critical role of NASA remote sensing (*Section 5*), PANGEA’s research strategy and study design (*Section 6*), technical and logistical feasibility (*Section 7*), ability to enable Earth Action (*Section 8*), and PANGEA’s capacity building and training priorities (*Section 9*).

This concept reflects the voices of many … [cite stats here]

As part of this modular approach, PANGEA prioritizes ground and airborne measurements in a Core Domain that emphasizes the African tropics owing to major data and knowledge gaps in the region, and the tropical Americas for important comparisons. A PANGEA extended domain encompasses pan-tropical forests for satellite remote sensing and modeling analyses (see *Section 1.5* for more information). Candidate landscapes within the Core Domain are included in *Section 6.3*. During the scoping process, the PANGEA team engaged with a broad community of potential partners to ensure that, if PANGEA is selected, the campaign can effectively align and coordinate with ongoing and forthcoming activities.

**Acknowledgments**

The scoping of PANGEA is very much an international community effort. It would not be possible without the contributions of an untold number of individuals. We are deeply grateful to all who have contributed their ideas, time, energy, resources, and funding to scope this urgently needed field campaign. Specifically, we acknowledge additional funding support and resources beyond NASA that made this international scoping effort possible. This includes the USFS-International Programs, the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), the Governors’ Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF-TF), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT, the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Center (CIFOR-ICRAF), the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), University of Yaoundé I, Penn State University, the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia (INPA), the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), the Congo Basin Institute (CBI), the Congo Basin Science Initiative (CBSI), and the NASA SERVIR Southeast Asia Hub. Marcos Longo and Robinson Negrón-Juárez were supported as part of the Next Generation Ecosystem Experiments-Tropics, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Biological and Environmental Research. LBNL is managed and operated by the Regents of the University of California under prime contract number DEAC02-05CH11231.

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## 

## 1. Introduction and Motivation

In response to a call from the NASA Terrestrial Ecology Program, we present the scope of a terrestrial ecology field project, *The PAN tropical investigation of bioGeochemistry and Ecological Adaptation* (PANGEA), that will focus on tropical forest biomes. **PANGEA aims to determine whether tropical forests across different continents will share the same fate or differ in their responses to the effects of climate change.**

PANGEA will:

* **Answer** globally relevant and urgent science questions emphasizing comparison among the major tropical forest formations on our planet through effective interpretation and analysis of space-based measurements and through a combination of ground, airborne, and satellite-based science investigations.
* **Foster** collaborations and build new relationships within the scientific community, with an emphasis on interactions between US scientists and researchers from countries with tropical forests, as well as strengthening relationships with partners from international space agencies and decision-making and action-taking communities.
* **Provide** opportunities for training and educating the next generation of scientists and the broader workforce, including scientists and trainees from countries and territories where field research will be based.
* **Establish** a legacy of open data, open science, and strengthened partnerships between the US, tropical institutions, and international partners as the basis for future research and applications.

PANGEA was developed through engagement with over 400 people during the scoping effort through working group activities, 5 workshops, 10 town halls, 18 conference presentations and symposia, and over 150 bilateral meetings. Workshops were held in Washington DC, Cameroon, Peru, Brazil, and Thailand, including a total of over 275 in-person participants. These efforts converged on the overwhelming need for PANGEA and the timely opportunity it presents in coordination with many existing and forthcoming activites.

Tropical forests account for globally significant carbon, nutrient, water, and energy fluxes, and a large proportion of Earth’s biodiversity. Over 91% of Earth’s terrestrial birds, and over 75% of flowering plants, amphibians, terrestrial mammals, freshwater fish, and marine fish have ranges that intersect tropical latitudes (Barlow et al. 2018). Tropical forests also store vast amounts of carbon; moist tropical forests in particular comprise about 40% of global biomass (Xu et al., 2021) and are currently the largest carbon sink among all the forests globally (Pan et al., 2024). Tropical forests interact with the atmosphere through complex feedbacks regulating weather and climate locally, regionally, and globally.

However, tropical forests are also undergoing rapid change. Forests in the equatorial regions will soon experience the highest known temperatures since the Eocene which combined with land-use change will lead to increasing atmospheric dryness and water stress (Barkhordarian et al., 2019). Through current climate interactions and feedbacks tropical tree mortality rates are rising across the tropics due to increases in drought duration and severity and storm intensity (Allen et al., 2010, McDowell et al., 2018, Choat et al., 2012). Rising temperatures are approaching hypothesized thermal limits of leaf function, although those limits remain much debated (Smith et al., 2020, Doughty et al., 2023, Winter 2024). Unprecedented rates of anthropogenic land-use change in recent decades through rapidly changing socio-ecological systems (DeFries et al., 2004, Gibbs et al., 2010a, Hosonuma et al., 2012) have resulted in the southeastern Amazonia becoming net sources of carbon to the atmosphere (Gatti et al., 2021). Tropical deforestation and degradation accounted for 22% of annual anthropogenic carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions (Pan et al., 2024), although these emissions are partially offset by regrowing secondary tropical forests (Aragão et al., 2014; Rosan et al., 2024). Prolonged hot and dry conditions increase forest vulnerability to fires and already burned forests in turn become hotter and drier leading to a positive feedback that has been called a “gathering firestorm” (Brando et al., 2020). Deforestation, forest degradation, direct exploitation (e.g., hunting, harvesting), and climate change have drastically altered tropical forests disturbance dynamics and now threaten many tropical species with extinction (Feeley et al., 2012; Barlow et al., 2016; Benitze-Lopez et al., 2017; Alroy 2017; Dirzo et al., 2014), and this biodiversity loss could in turn compromise tropical forest structure and function, biogeochemical cycles, as well as socio-ecological systems (Bunker et al., 2005; Peres et al., 2016). Even after factoring in the greater species diversity of the tropics, tropical regions are experiencing defaunation at the highest rate globally (Dirzo et al. 2017). Tropical forests and floodplains, interspersed with wetland and aquatic ecosystems, also play a critical role in the global methane (CH4) and CO2 budgets (Sjögersten et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2022). Tropical wetland and inland freshwater systems contribute the vast majority of natural global aquatic CH4 emissions and make up roughly 20% of the total global CH4 budget of ~575 Tg CH4 yr-1 (Saunois et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2022). Tropical CH4 sources are the most uncertain component of the global carbon budget (Saunois et al., 2020, 2024).

Studies over the past 10 years revealed that the trends and interannual variability of net biome carbon exchange of tropical forests varies markedly across continents. From 1985-2015, the carbon sink of intact African lowland tropical forests measured in forest inventory plots was effectively constant, while the carbon sink in Amazonian lowland tropical forests declined by one-third from 2005 through 2015 compared to the 1990s (Hubau et al., 2020; Brienen at al., 2015). Under El Niño conditions during 2015-2016, tropical America, Africa, and Asia, all temporarily became net sources of CO2 emissions to the atmosphere (Liu et al., 2017). However, these net carbon losses appear to be underpinned by distinct mechanisms that indicate differences in the stability of the carbon sink and will require regionally specific understanding and management to mitigate. The sources of atmospheric CO2 concentrations, as measured by the Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2), suggest that in the tropical Americas, reduced photosynthesis led to reduced carbon uptake reversing the balance to net emissions. In Africa, increased temperatures led to increased respiration, outweighing the sequestration benefits of Central African tropical forests (Liu et al., 2017). In Asia, a hotter and drier land surface resulted in more emissions from fires.

NASA satellites play a critical role in advancing understanding of how forest ecosystems respond to environmental changes such as climate variability and land-use change. However before satellite data can be useful for scientific analysis or operational use, ground-based observations are critical to calibrate and validate these measurements. Yet, the scarcity of observations in tropical regions has led to significant challenges in improving satellite products **and interpreting scientific findings learned from these products**. For instance, the carbon and water cycles in the tropics are strongly dependent on soil moisture dynamics, however, recent ground-based observations revealed that the Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) satellite exhibits strong biases in tropical ecosystems (Cho et al., 2024). Importantly, these same ground-based data have provided an opportunity to improve SMAP’s soil moisture measurements in tropical forests (Wang et al., 2024). Another example is the lack of ground-based validation data for space-based CO2 measurements over the tropics, especially tropical Africa, which led to an ongoing unsettled debate about the magnitude of net biosphere exchanges over tropical Africa (Palmer et al., 2019; Gaubert et al.,2023). Reducing biases in retrievals such as soil moisture and atmospheric column CO2 is critical for enhancing our understanding of the water cycle, carbon fluxes, and ecosystem dynamics. Validating satellite measurements with ground and airborne observations is essential to the success of NASA’s Earth observation missions, particularly with the advent of an exciting new and forthcoming fleet of sensors that have the potential to capture the multi-dimensionality of these systems (e.g., GEDI, EMIT, SWOT, NISAR, SBG). The development of more accurate satellite products, particularly in understudied tropical regions, directly supports NASA’s mission to improve global environmental monitoring and advance predictive models.

| **Tropical forests are the least investigated of all of the Earth’s major terrestrial biomes**. |
| --- |

Inventory plots and flux towers provide valuable insights into forest dynamics (e.g., ForestPlots.net et al., 2021; Anderson‐Teixeira et al., 2014, Davies et al., 2021), but their distribution is sparse and extrapolation from biased plot locations may lead to significant uncertainties and biases (Saatchi et al., 2015). The latitudinal distribution of both forest inventory plots and eddy covariance flux towers reveal that the lowest number of towers and plots are found in tropical forest regions, in contrast to gross primary productivity which is highest there, demonstrating the underrepresentation of tropical forests in global research efforts (Baldocchi, 2020, Schimel et al., 2015) (**Figure X**).

| **Future predictions of the role of the tropical land carbon flux in the Earth system remain highly uncertain**. |
| --- |

Robust remote-sensing-based products describing the carbon, water and energy cycles of tropical forests, as well as improved process characterization, are critical for understanding tropical forest climate interactions and feedbacks and constraining predictions of Earth System Models (ESMs). Predictions from ESMs participating in the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP) diverge markedly on magnitude and even the sign of the carbon land sink (Arora et al., 2020; Friedlingstein et al., 2014; Friedlingstein et al., 2006; Negron-Juarez et al., 2015). Notably, the current uncertainty in terrestrial carbon flux predictions across ESMs is three times greater in the tropics than at other latitudes (Cavaleri et al., 2015). While model development between CMIP5 and CMIP6 resulted in a major step toward constraining tropical carbon flux uncertainty, these reductions were primarily linked to the inclusion of nutrient limitations in models (Friedlingstein et al., 2023). Traditionally, Earth System Models (ESMs) ignore most biodiversity and represent tropical vegetation in simple and aggregated ways that directly contribute to model failure to capture tropical forest responses to climate variation and disturbance (Levine et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2023; Sakchewski et al., 2016; Schmitt et al., 2020). Constraining this uncertainty requires improved representation of ecological processes of diverse ecosystems (Bonan et al., 2024). Newer generations of terrestrial biosphere models—vegetation demography models (Fisher et al., 2018) – such as ED2 and FATES – include more structurally and functionally diverse forest canopies (Longo et al., 2019; Koven et al., 2020). Although vegetation demography models represent forest dynamics processes more directly, the additional complexity creates two challenges for regional and global simulations. First, initial conditions require detailed forest structure and composition data that can be derived from forest plots only for small domains (Marvin et al., 2014). Second, existing model benchmarking systems, such as the International Land Model Benchmarking (ILAMB; Collier et al., 2018) are insufficient, because the newer generation of models may predict reasonable aggregated properties (e.g., total aboveground biomass) via compensating errors in process representation (e.g., overly high productivity and mortality). Recent advances in remote sensing provide a unique opportunity to collect data on the structure, composition, and diversity of tropical ecosystems over landscape scale and thereby better inform models (Schimel et al., 2019; Schimel and Carroll, 2024).

**Earth Action Relevance:** PANGEA’s goals are directly aligned with Earth Action programs, Climate & Resilience, Water Resources, Ecological Conservation, and Agriculture. To take effective, regionally tailored action to mitigate climate and land-use change impacts to ecosstem function and biodiversity and conserve these globally important biomes, action requires improved understanding of the varied ways in which different tropical forests are responding to change. PANGEA wil map and quantify the long-term stability of carbon sequestration and methane fluxes predictions. PANGEA will also focus on mapping biodiversity and processes in the tropics, supporting biodiversity conservation through understanding of biodiversity variation at levels of genes, species, communities, and ecosystems, as well by collaborative efforts with Indigenous and local communities to weave Indigenous, Traditional, and Local Ecological Knowledge (IEK, TEK, LEK) with other forms of data and knowledge. Additionally, PANGEA scientific and technical advances guided by action-taking partners can yield regionally tailored farmer climate change adaptation, development of socio-bioeconomies, improved traceability of agricultural commodities to their origin; the creation of disaster alerts from disturbances and response of agricultural production. These elements cut across PANGEA’s Science Questions (*Section 3*) and Earth Science to Action Strategy (*Section 8*).

| **PANGEA aims to determine whether tropical forests will share the same fate or vary in their responses to the effects of climate change.** |
| --- |

Implementing PANGEA is urgent due to our limited understanding of tropical forest ecosystems. Experts suggest the potential collapse of these ecosystems within decades, which could drastically impact the global carbon and water cycles, exacerbating climate change (Lovejoy and Nobre 2018). Second, there is growing evidence that tropical forests across different continents are responding differently to global change and to climate extremes (Hubau et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2017). Third, existing satellite remote-sensing products that describe forest structure, composition, carbon stocks and function are highly uncertain in the tropics due to limited calibration data. If not addressed, the lack of calibration data and knowledge necessary to fully utilize existing and upcoming satellite data will hinder progress. Lastly, the advances in representation of structurally and functionally diverse forests in Earth System Models over the past 20 years provide a unique opportunity to advance our understanding on how forests will respond to ongoing and future changes in climate and land cover and land use, but the calibration of validation of the novel processes across tropical regions require robust and well-constrained remote-sensing observations. To fully benefit from current and future satellite missions and take effective, regionally tailored action to mitigate potential harm and conserve the globally important tropical forest biomes, immediate action is essential. PANGEA will bridge critical knowledge gaps, enabling timely advancements that directly support NASA’s Carbon Cycle and Ecosystems Focus Area, in alignment with the Water and Energy Cycle and Climate Variability and Change Focus Areas, as well as global climate and biodiversity commitments.

### 1.1 Questions, Objectives, and Science Themes

Understanding tropical forest biogeochemical cycles, biodiversity, climate feedbacks and interactions, socio-ecological systems and disturbance dynamics are critical for predicting the resilience of tropical forests to extreme events is crucial to accurately projecting the future of the Earth system. PANGEA will study the complex interactions of the carbon cycle, climate, biodiversity, disturbances, and social-ecological systems in the tropics to answer: **How vulnerable or resilient are tropical forest landscapes and what are the feedbacks on the global carbon cycle and climate?**

PANGEA’s research questions developed through an inclusive consultative process emphasize resolving uncertainties related to **multidecadal trends** and **responses to extreme events** across five thematic areas:

* **Biogeochemical Cycles** encompass the movement and transformation of essential elements (e.g., carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus) through Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere. In tropical forests, these cycles are highly dynamic, with rapid nutrient and biomass turnover; nonetheless tropical forests play a significant role in global carbon storage.
* **Biodiversity** is the variety of life on Earth, including its variation within and between species and ecosystems (genetic, phylogenetic, taxonomic, and functional diversity). In tropical forests, biodiversity is exceptionally high within and across forests, supporting complex interactions and ecosystem function, and causing heterogeneity in climate responses and resilience.
* **Climate Interactions and Feedbacks** are the bidirectional interactions between climate systems and ecosystems. Tropical forests directly regulate carbon, water and energy cycles. Climate changes (like temperature and rainfall shifts) and land-use and land cover changes (like fires and forest degradation) can alter forest ecosystem dynamics, creating feedback loops that affect global climate stability.
* **Social-Ecological Systems** are interconnected systems of humans and nature, where ecological and social components interact and influence each other. In tropical forests, these systems are shaped by the livelihoods, cultural practices, and resource use of local communities, while ecological changes impact social well-being, creating complex feedbacks between human activities and ecosystem stability.
* **Disturbance Dynamics** vary by type, intensity, and frequency, and involve natural or human-induced events, such as fires, storms, drought, and logging, that disrupt ecosystems and affect their structure and function. In tropical forests, these disturbances can lead to shifts in biogeochemical cycling, biodiversity, and feedbacks to climate and to social-ecological systems.

Addressing this broad question to inform climate mitigation and adaptation strategies and biodiversity conservation requires answering three subsidiary questions:

1. What are the **patterns** of recent (5-30 years) and ongoing change in tropical forest landscape states, dynamics, and feedbacks, and how do they vary geographically?
2. What **processes** control heterogeneity in the vulnerability of tropical forest landscapes to structural and functional change in the Anthropocene?
3. How will ongoing and **projected** future changes in tropical forest landscapes alter feedbacks to local, regional, and global climates and social-ecological systems?

To address the above questions, **PANGEA’s objectives** are to:

1. **Characterize and quantify heterogeneous tropical forest responses** to climate and land-use changes;
2. **Address calibration, validation, and algorithm development needs** to ensure measurements can be accurately retrieved from satellite remote sensing datasets over tropical forests, ultimately advancing the global utility of satellite missions;
3. **Constrain model uncertainty of future predictions of tropical carbon fluxes and other biogeochemical cycles, biodiversity, and forest-climate feedbacks** by improving process understanding and advancing remote sensing data-model integration.

Ideally, PANGEA would be carried out across the entire tropics. In reality, PANGEA will need to be more limited in scope due to budget constraints and prioritization of what is achievable within a 6- to 9-year time frame to achieve PANGEA’s objectives. Limiting PANGEA to one tropical continent, however, prevents PANGEA from attaining within and between continent comparisons. For these reasons, PANGEA research and activities will prioritize the investigation of variation between the Earth’s two largest tropical forests in the **Amazon** and **Central Africa.** Both depend strongly on recycled rainfall but have responded differently to decadal drying trends and have been subject to contrasting land use regimes. The focus on these two continental areas, while integrating datasets and research from existing and complementary activities across the tropics will illuminate the importance of current states and processes more than a focus on a single region.

| **PANGEA is a multi-institutional, transcontinental collaboration with the overarching goal of advancing understanding of the various processes controlling changes across pantropical forests and their feedbacks with global climate.** |
| --- |

### 1.2 The urgent need for PANGEA

Implementing PANGEA is urgently needed. First, there is a real potential for the collapse of tropical forest ecosystems in the next few decades (Malhi et al., 2009; Boulton et al., 2022; Wunderling et al., 2022). Given the critical role of these ecosystems in the global carbon and water cycles, the collapse of tropical forest ecosystems would have potent effects on the whole Earth System, exacerbating current trends in climate change (Wunderling et al., 2024). Second, ground based research remains scarce and there remains a lack of knowledge to adequately understand existing (**GEDI**, **EMIT**, **OCO-2/3**, **ECOSTRESS**) and forthcoming (**NISAR\***, **BIOMASS\***, **EDGE\***, **SBG\***) satellite missions. PANGEA will provide a unique opportunity for obtaining field and airborne data with well-timed international efforts, to understand the signals from those missions, develop and calibrate data synthesis and data assimilation methods, and to drive and benchmark terrestrial biosphere models and social-ecological system models. Failing to do so will be a missed opportunity for reducing uncertainties in regions with the highest carbon stocks and major contribution to carbon, water, energy, and nutrient cycling amongst land ecosystems (Schimel et al., 2015; Schimel et al., 2019). In addition, the risk of critical transitions in tropical forests differs between Africa and the Americas (Hubau et al., 2020; OTHER REFs?) and we are just beginning to understand the mechanisms behind these differences, along with the structural and functional diversity of forests. Given our current understanding of urgency in Amazonia, we can test expectations that the Congo will be the next Amazon, and will soon suffer similar changes.

[placeholder for the PANGEA box and the diagram Robinson draw showing the history of projects]

Immediate implementation of PANGEA as a Terrestrial Ecology Field Campaign is essential to fill knowledge gaps, and coordinate with well-timed international efforts. Delaying efforts to intensively study tropical forests will lead to a mismatch between the abundant data coming from our satellite assets and our ability to interpret those data.

### 1.3 Role of Remote Sensing Observations

[MK IS HERE] We are in an unprecedented data-rich, model-rich, and computationally advanced moment. We now have remote sensing capabilities that allow for more direct measurement of structural, functional, and in some cases taxonomic diversity. In tropical forest regions, surface observations are scarce. Few tropical forest countries have regularly repeated, systematic forest inventories. The limited number of research sites provide critical information on biogeochemical and ecological processes, but because of the scarcity of information it is challenging to scale up to regional, biome-wide, or pan-tropical analysis.

**The constellation of Earth observing satellites available today, those nearing launch, and those in early stages of implementation and planning offer many dimensions of information not previously available and not widely used in tropical forest studies.** The previous tropical forest campaign, LBA, began in 1998 before the launch of EOS Terra and Aqua satellites. Landsat was the primary tool for monitoring deforestation (Skole and Tucker 1993) and through the first decade of LBA research it would be applied to estimate logging (Asner et al., 2005) and understory forest fires (Morton et al., 2011). Remote sensing in early ecological models, such as the Carnegie-Ames-Stanford (CASA) biosphere model (Potter et al., 1993) that used satellite data, were originally designed to incorporate NDVI data from polar orbiting weather satellites (AVHRR) calibrated to net primary production. Understanding this mismatch motivated new linkages with more sophisticated remote sensing data. Interpreting MODIS data led to the observation that the Amazon region has a distinct seasonal signal of green-up and brown-down (Huete et al., 2006). LBA was limited by the type and availability of remote sensing data (e.g., AVHRR, early MODIS data, not yet publicly available Landsat data). New technologies moving beyond *greenness* estimates are providing much deeper insights into the function of tropical forests.

Pan-tropical forest structure and biomass can now be studied using spaceborne lidar from GEDI (Dubayah et al., 2020) and upcoming radar missions including the NASA-ISRO NISAR mission and the ESA BIOMASS mission. There is now opportunity to study detailed foliar chemistry of ecosystems and crops using high-fidelity spectroscopy from current missions including NASA’s EMIT mission and Italian Space Agency PRISMA (Tagliabue et al., 2022; Rogers et al. 2024) and forthcoming SBG and CHIME missions. Canopy solar induced fluorescence, a close correlate of gross primary productivity (GPP), is now measured on several satellite platforms including OCO-2 and OCO-3 and TROPOMI (Köhler et al. 2018). Land surface temperature has long been available at coarse resolution from weather satellites but is now measured at 70 m resolution from ECOSTRESS (Fisher et al., 2020; Hulley et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021) providing new insights on evapotranspiration and GPP. Satellite observations of total column carbon dioxide (e.g. from GOSAT, OCO-2/3 and TROPOMI) and gravitational anomalies (GRACE and GRACE-FO) provide regional constraints on atmospheric carbon and water budgets (Swann and Koven, 2017; Massoud et al., 2022). Similarly, river stages are now available from space through SWOT. High spatial and temporal resolution data on the land surface are now available from sources such as Planet and the GOES-R series of missions. Many of these sources of information have barely been employed for tropical forest studies.

**The knowledge gaps that PANGEA will address cannot be answered without pan-tropical satellite observations, integrative analyses, and models, and NASA satellite missions require validation in tropical forests.**

| **We are currently unable to fully leverage these satellite datasets without coordinated calibration and validation measurements. Major data gaps and process uncertainties in tropical forests currently limit algorithm and product development, preventing the global utility of these sensors from being fully realized.** |
| --- |

### 1.4 The PANGEA Terrestrial Ecology Field Campaign & Study Domain

[Specifically outline what PANGEA is and is not] - section that explicitly defines what NASA PANGEA covers

PANGEA is a multi-phase, multi-year airborne remote sensing and field campaign that will measure a suite of variables relevant to characterize the dynamics and fluxes of structurally and functionally diverse forest ecosystems across the tropics. PANGEA leverages Terrestrial Ecology investment for its core resources. The Ideal, Baseline, and Threshold measurements defined in *Section 6.2.1* represent stand-alone NASA campaign with no dependencies on non-NASA funds and synergistic efforts. However, given the urgency and importance of the topic, and such widespread interest from the community, there is strong potential to augment or even exceed NASA’s contributions (see *Section 7.4* for more details). We derive the **Ideal**, **Baseline, and Threshold Essential Scientific Measurements** from the PANGEA Science Objectives to: 1) understand differences in tropical carbon stocks and fluxes and the forces driving heterogeneity, 2) resolve scaling issues between field and satellite data by advancing process understanding and scaling methods, and 3) forecast varying tropical forest ecosystem responses to climate and land-use change:

* **Ideal:** measurements that capture the dry season onset and the dry season end for ~3-6 tropical African and more than ~3-6 tropical American landscapes.
* **Baseline:** measurements that capture the dry season onset and the dry season end for only 2tropical African and 2 tropical American landscapes.
* **Threshold:** measurements that capture the dry season onset and the dry season end for 2 tropical African landscapes, relying on existing data, planned missions in the American tropics, commercial data-buys, and deployable drones, to utilize satellite data over the Americas for comparisons.

[Placeholder for Free/Pro/Delux type table that has check boxes for what modular options achieve]

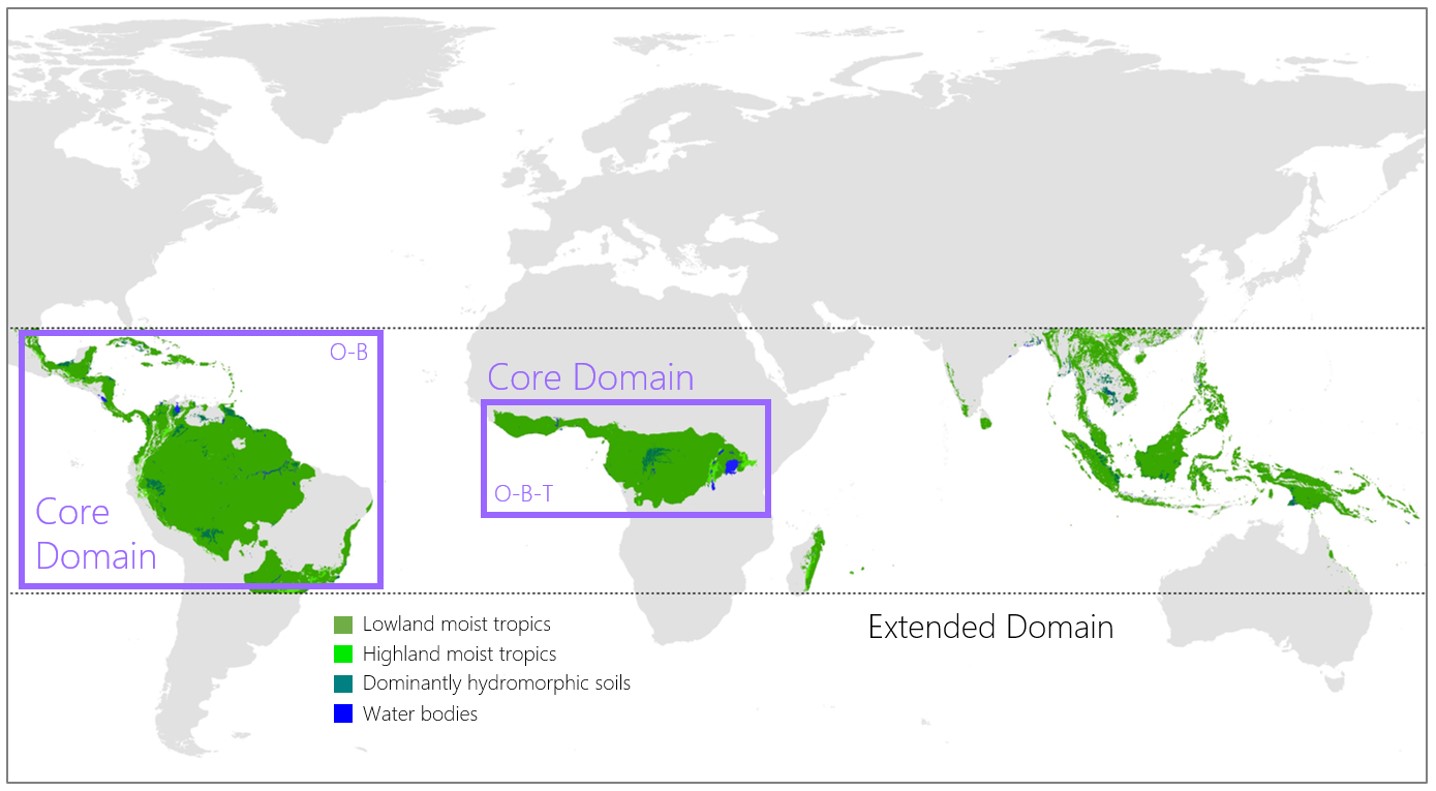
The proposed airborne data (e.g., VSWIR, lidar, SAR, carbon fluxes) has only been collected in a few locations across the tropics to date, at different points in time, by different organizations, and with differing methods. PANGEA allows for direct comparisons and evaluations of the role of tropical forest heterogeneity in ecosystem dynamics. These data include CARAFE data to measure CO2, CH4, sensible heat, and latent heat fluxes at high spatial resolution, VSWIR reflectance and small footprint lidar to measure canopy leaf traits, vegetation structure, thus allowing us to model functionally distinct forest types, and SAR data to measure inundation and disturbance dynamics. PANGEA integrates these with ground measurements and Indigenous and Local Ecological Knowledge on floristic, faunal, and phylogenetic diversity, species interactions, disturbance dynamics, land-use activities, and hydrological and meteorological dynamics. These ground and airborne measurements will advance process-based understanding, the calibration and validation of satellite remote sensing datasets and products, and constrain model uncertainty, including by advancing remote sensing data-model integration to generalize mapping capabilities across the tropics, and model carbon, water, and energy fluxes to examine the stability of tropical forests under future climate projections.

In partnership with local institutions, PANGEA will prioritize training, capacity building, and education that prepares the next generation to continue this work well after the PANGEA campaign. While the potential applications resulting from PANGEA science are many, the PANGEA campaign will focus on supporting monitoring capabilities to advance:

* Carbon sequestration stability and methane fluxes
* Biodiversity conservation
* Sustainable agriculture and livelihoods

PANGEA will engage with diverse communities to address PANGEA’s science questions and applications, identify synergies with local research priorities, and implement PANGEA in a manner that is broadly beneficial in the landscapes and countries targeted for research. The strategy draws upon the knowledge, expertise, and experiences shared throughout PANGEA’s scoping campaign, which engaged with over 500 individuals and 150 organizations from 42 countries across five continents through consultative workshops, outreach events, working group discussions, bilateral meetings, and web surveys. PANGEA research and applications will complement and expand upon many existing efforts, but is likewise urgently needed to fill gaps left unfilled by these other efforts. PANGEA is actively engaging with partners to avoid duplication, and to ensure complementarity, coordination, and reinforcement.

PANGEA will include a **core** and **extended** domain (Figure X). The core domain, which includes tropical moist forests in Africa and the Americas, is where the NASA-funded component of field campaigns will take place. The extended domain will encompass pan-tropical moist forests and is the broader area of scientific interest, where additional campaigns and projects can take place through partnerships and where satellite-based synthesis studies and modeling-based research will be carried out. Both the core and extended domains will encompass moist tropical forests, including flooded forests, wetlands, peatlands, and mangroves in lowland tropical forests, and highland tropical forests where possible. The PANGEA study region covers the major ecosystems and landscapes found in the tropics and the spatial scale required to address the primary questions in the 5 science themes (see *Section 2*). The extended domain will enable the inclusion of existing datasets and opportunistic collection in Asia and Australia. The focus of PANGEA’s coordinated ground, tower, drone, and aircraft measurements will be at landscapes in the core domain (see *Section 6.3* for more information on *Candidate Landscapes*). The location of these primary research areas will be based on opportunities to conduct integrated research across science themes, the existence of ongoing or planned research funded by NASA, as well as relationships and ongoing activities conducted by local and international partner agencies and organizations. See *Section 6* for more information the PANGEA Research Strategy and Study Design.



**Figure X.** PANGEA core (solid purple lines) and extended (dashed black line) domains. I: Ideal, B: Baseline, T: Threshold. Boundaries were sourced from the following GAEZv4 agroecological zones: lowland humid tropics, highland humid tropics, dominantly hydromorphic soils, and land with severe soil/terrain limitations.

**Figure X.** Variability analysis - cluster results map

**[Placeholder for** variability analysis paragraph - highlights key geographic domains that vary with respect to biotic, abiotic, and disturbance dynamics. - data limitations - early identification of possible priority sites for landscapes that will be explored in more detail during the development of the Concise Experiment Plan]

### 1.6 The need for coordinated teamwork

Earth system science is inherently multifaceted and complex. Recognizing this complexity, NASA scientific leadership embraced the multi-investigator team approach to Earth System Science decades ago (Asrar et al., 2001). The Terrestrial Ecology Program has promoted the multi-investigator model for decades of field campaigns that span FIFE, BOREAS, LBA, and ABoVE. Multiple drivers and interacting processes that cannot be isolated in controlled experiments characterize Earth system investigations. Numerous variables require expert knowledge for acquisition and measurement whether it be through the operation of a high-performance spectrometer or botanical identification of a tree species. No single individual or small group of individuals possesses all the knowledge and tools demanded by an Earth system science investigation. Fulfilling the needs of integrative analyses of the tropical biomes for many variables and models that incorporate the complex interactions of those variables requires a large team of specialists working together. Equitable collaboration is required to assure that measurements are coordinated in time and space to maximize their value in interpretation and modeling. This can only be achieved by a cooperative, coordinated, interdisciplinary team.

Recognizing the deep imprint that colonialism has left on tropical forest research, along with parachute and flyover science (Culotta et al., 2024), PANGEA takes an interwoven approach to equitable and ethical engagement with researchers, governments, institutions, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). Several sections describe PANGEA’s approach to community engagement (*Section 7.2*), an inclusive organizational structure (*Section 7.1*), Earth Action (*Section 8*), capacity building (*Section 9*), open science and data management (*Section 7.5*), and international agreements when conducting airborne campaigns (*Section 6.2.3*).

### 1.7 Earth Science to Action

The interconnected geophysical, biological, and social Earth System is experiencing a particularly unique moment in its history that demands decisive action from incredible advancements in modern tools and infrastructure. Accelerating rates of land-use change and globally consequently climate feedbacks in the tropics drive urgency to apply insights from the frontiers of NASA Earth Science to support climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, biodiversity conservation, forest landscape restoration, food security, water security, and human health around the planet. Since the inception of the Earth Science Enterprise Applications program in 2001 (ESE Strategic Plan) to the launch of the Earth Science to Action strategy in 2024 (ES2A Strategic Plan), NASA has innovated a systems approach to facilitate the collection of Earth Observations and predictions into decision and management support tools for diverse users and collaborators to advance their local initiatives that provide essential services to society.

The 2017 Decadal Survey directs us to “pursue increasingly ambitious objectives and innovative solutions that enhance and accelerate the science/applications value of space-based Earth observations and analysis to the nation and to the world in a way that delivers great value” (Decadal Survey). Now is the time for strategic investment in ambitious international collaborations to bridge the gap between rapid advancements in science and technology and society’s ability to harness them for a more resilient world.

PANGEA is highly relevant to NASA’s strategic goal to advance and integrate Earth science knowledge to empower humanity to create a more resilient world. Specifically, PANGEA supports NASA’s Earth Science to Action strategy by:

* *Investigating the risks of crossing tipping points and the potential for cascading environmental and societal impacts.*
* *Supporting efforts to enhance Earth’s resilience through mitigation strategies, adaptation, and the assessment of risks and contingencies from global change*
* *Developing efficient, interactive end-to-end tools, models, and assessment systems with appropriate latencies, temporal and spatial scales, and uncertainty quantification to enable science-based actions for communities, decision-makers, and policymakers.*

## 2. PANGEA Science Themes

Owing to the inherent complexity of tropical terrestrial ecosystems and their feedbacks with the Earth system, PANGEA takes an integrated, interdisciplinary approach across five science themes. Understanding patterns and processes and constraining the uncertainty of future projections requires diverse expertise and coordinated collaboration. PANGEA bridges disciplines and ways of knowing to co-produce science that will address specific knowledge gaps and support urgently needed applications.

In this section, we parse the current state-of-the-science by thematic area. In *Section 3*, we present PANGEA’s integrated science questions in response to knowledge gaps related to pattern, process, and future projections. *Section 4* describes how addressing these questions will yield major scientific advancements.

### 2.1 Biogeochemical Cycles

***This PANGEA Science Theme will investigate patterns of spatial and temporal variability in carbon stocks and fluxes–including interactions with other biogeochemical cycles–as well as processes that control heterogeneous changes and will improve future projections.***

[Overall carbon in tropics] The terrestrial biosphere is a large sink of atmospheric CO2 with a present-day global net ecosystem exchange (NEE) estimated at 3.3 GtC yr-1, offsetting ~30% of the CO2 emitted by fossil fuels annually (Friedlingstein et al., 2023). NEE refers to the total balance of carbon dioxide (CO₂) exchanged between an ecosystem and the atmosphere. Tropical terrestrial ecosystems contribute up to 0.6±0.4 GtC yr-1 of this sink (Friedlingstein et al., 2023). Tropical landscapes contribute strongly to atmospheric global CO2 interannual variability (Friedlingstein et al., 2023). Over the past three decades about two-thirds of the benefit from the global forest sink was negated by tropical deforestation (2.2±0.5 Pg C yr−1, 1990-2019) (Pan et al., 2024).

[Satellite & CO2 measurements] Improved observational coverage of column integrated CO2 (XCO2) and CH4 (XCH4) used in inverse atmospheric models constrain the tropical CO2 and CH4 budgets (e.g., Liu et al., 2016; Lunt et al., 2019; Crowell et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Gaubert et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Byrne et al., 2024). These studies revealed observational gaps that limit our full understanding of the tropical carbon cycle. The recent OCO-2 model intercomparison project (MIP), based on 14 models, showed net carbon sources over the northeast Amazon and northern tropical Africa, contrasted with net carbon sinks over western Amazon and the Congo basin (Bryne et al., 2023). The net biosphere exchange over tropical South America is close to carbon neutral (Liu et al., 2024), while the tropical African terrestrial biosphere is a net carbon source (REF?).

[Lack validation of Satellites + example] Satellite-based inversion results suffer from inconsistencies in the tropics. For instance, GOSAT and OCO-2 atmospheric inversion results consistently showed a significant carbon source in northern tropical Africa (Palmer et al., 2019), driven by carbon releases during the dry season, when these satellites have better observational coverage of the region. On the other hand, a recent study which combined four instances of aircraft measurements with satellite-based inversions suggested that northern tropical Africa is close to carbon neutral (Gaubert et al., 2023). These conflicting findings underscore the urgent need for additional research to resolve such discrepancies.

[New insights from Satellites] The OCO-2/3 and GOSAT satellite observations have provided new insights into the seasonal cycles and interannual variability of the tropical carbon cycle (Lei et al., 2024; Philip et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2017; 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Interestingly, the seasonal cycle of net biosphere exchange over the tropics, as inferred from OCO-2, exhibits a much larger amplitude than that simulated by state-of-the-art biogeochemical models, suggesting that the tropical terrestrial biosphere responds to seasonal climate variations more dynamically than previously understood (Lei et al., 2024; Philip et al., 2020). Satellite observations have also greatly improved the process-level understanding of the tropical carbon cycle's response to interannual climate variability (Liu et al., 2017; 2024; Wang et al., 2023). For example, Wang et al. (2023) showed that variability in total water storage drives the spatial heterogeneity of the Amazon's carbon cycle response to the 2015-2016 drought, while temperature plays a more important role in influencing carbon flux variability across the entire tropical region.

Tropical carbon stocks and fluxes vary enormously in space and time (Sullivan et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2021; Muller-Landau et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023, Sagang et al., 2024a). Regions with high rainfall typically support dense, evergreen forests with high productivity and large carbon stocks, while areas with seasonal or lower rainfall harbor partially or fully deciduous forests with more seasonal variation in carbon fluxes and relatively lower productivity and carbon stocks (Malhi et al., 2002; Bonan 2008; Muller-Landau et al., 2021). Temperature affects forest carbon cycling, both directly and through interactions with water availability (Taylor et al., 2017; Muller-Landau et al., 2021). Variation in species composition, geomorphology, human activities, water and nutrient availability, and plant species composition, and phenology drive variation in rates of photosynthesis, respiration, tree mortality, woody productivity, and carbon flux across the tropics (Sullivan et al., 2020; Muller-Landau et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023; Townsend et al., 2008; Quesada et al., 2010). Net primary productivity typically increases with soil fertility (Quesada et al., 2012), although there are no consistent relationships between soil fertility and biomass, likely because turnover increases and woody residence time decreases with soil fertility (Muller Landau et al., 2021). Unfortunately, studies based on ground data represent a miniscule fraction of tropical forest area, prompting questions regarding the generalizability of these findings, especially given that monitoring plots constitute a very small and biased subset of tropical landscapes (Malhi et al., 2014; Marvin et al., 2014; Schimel et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2021; Chapman et al., 2024).

Disturbance regimes play a crucial role in shaping tropical forest dynamics, influencing tree mortality, biomass turnover, and carbon cycling. The effects of drought, storms, increasing temperatures, and deforestation are highly variable among ecosystems and can impact tree mortality, respiration, and more. Tropical forests are facing multiple interacting and changing agents of disturbance. Interactions among disturbances can be multiplicative, rather than additive, meaning that we need to explicitly quantify their interactions to understand their effects. Examples include drought amplifying the effects of fire (Brando et al., 2014), deforestation amplifying the effects of wind (Schwartz et al., 2017), and lianas amplifying the effects of lightning (Gora et al., 2023). Concurrent quantification of the effects of all types of disturbance across variation in forest composition, climate, and edaphic factors is needed to understand these interactions and the consequences for forest carbon cycling.

[Methane] CH4 contributes an estimated 30% of the increase in radiative forcing from anthropogenic emissions and is 25 times more potent as a greenhouse gas (GHG) compared to CO2 (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2021). CH4 has experienced recent atmospheric growth rates inconsistent with our current understanding of global sources and sinks of this critical GHG (Turner et al., 2019). Tropical forest wetlands, floodplains, and inland waters like lakes, reservoirs, and rivers are significant sources of CH4 and are sensitive to changes in climate, yet remain the most uncertain contributors to the global CH4 budget (Saunois et al., 2020). The tropics contribute roughly 65% of total (anthropogenic + natural) global methane (CH4) emissions to the atmosphere (364 Tg CH4 yr-1) (Saunois et al., 2024). A significant portion of total CH4 emissions from the tropics are from wetland, floodplains, and inland freshwater ecosystems sources (151 Tg CH4 yr-1), roughly 20% of the total global CH4 budget and responsible for interannual variability in the global atmospheric CH4 growth rate (Feng et al., 2022). Tropical wetland emissions of CH4 estimated using satellite retrievals of XCH4 from GOSAT and TROPOMI (e.g., Parker et al., 2018; Ma et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023).These studies suggest that tropical wetland and aquatic emissions have been underestimated compared to bottom-up inventories, satellite data (Yu et al., 2023) although cloud cover prevalence inhibits satellite retrievals (Ganesan et al., 2019; Melack et al., 2022).

[Tropical wetland & CH4] A large proportion of tropical forests are permanently or seasonally flooded wetlands, which include forested peatlands, swamps, and floodplains (Aselmann and Crutzen 1989). For instance, Amazon River floodplain forests cover up to 250,000 km2 with most flooded six months of the year (Richey et al., 2002; Goulding et al., 2003). Further, the Amazon floodplain represents the greatest natural CH4 emission source in the tropics and rivals CH4 sources from the Arctic (Pangala et al., 2017). In addition to the significant ebullitive CH4 source from inundated soil, Amazon floodplain tree stems also contribute CH4 emissions which are estimated to be 200 times larger than from temperate wet forests (Pangala et al., 2017).

The observational coverage of CH4 fluxes from the tropics is extremely limited compared to temperate and boreal regions (Johnson et al., 2022; Melack et al., 2022; Stanley et al., 2023). Tropical forest wetland emissions are controlled by meteorology, hydrology, vegetation cover, disturbance dynamics, and land-use practices(Parker et al., 2018; Ma et al., 2021). The lack of flux observations has led to poorly quantified tropical wetland and inland water system CH4 emissions (Ganesan et al., 2019; Rosentreter et al., 2021) . Existing mechanistic models have large differences in tropical CH4 emissions (Melton et al., 2013; Bloom et al., 2017) and do not capture observed CH4 seasonality in tropical regions dominated by forested wetlands (Melack et al., 2022). Much of this difference is driven by the lack of fine-scale measurements detailing the drivers of wetland and aquatic emissions (Melack et al., 2022) and the threefold difference in wetland cover and inundation extents applied in individual models (Peng et al., 2022).

[Peatland] Organic-rich tropical peatlands store the largest and highest-density irrecoverable carbon reserves (Noon et al., 2021). Tropical peatlands store approximately 100 Pg C but there remain large uncertainties in the spatial extent and associated carbon stocks in tropical peatlands. For example, the extensive peatland carbon stocks of the central Congo Basin and Pastaza-Marañón Foreland Basin in the Peruvian Amazon were recently mapped, account for more tha a third of the carbon stored in tropical peat soils (Dargie et al., 2017; Crezee et al., 2022; Lahteenoja et al, 2012). Still, substantial undocumented peatland areas likely remain (Hastie et al, 2024). Land use change, through deforestation or drainage, and climate change threaten the carbon sink capacity of tropical peatlands (Page et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2018). In Southeast Asia extensive peatland drainage has turned peatlands of this region into a CO2 source on par with regional fossil fuel emissions (Hoyt et al., 2020). As anthropogenic disturbances continue to threaten tropical peatlands (Hastie et al., 2022; Page et al, 2022), a better understanding of the distribution and carbon stock density of tropical peatlands is needed (Roucoux et al, 2017; Deshmukh et al, 2021).

[Nutrient cycling] Projecting the future productivity of tropical forests relies on understanding interactions of increasing temperature, CO2, and extreme events with soil nutrient availability and plant functional composition. The low soil nutrient availability from highly weathered tropical soils are expected to constrain CO2 fertilization as more nutrients are bound up in plant tissues (Fleischer and Terrer 2022). For example, phosphorus is expected to constrain forest growth responses to increased CO2 by about half (Fleischer et al., 2019; Braghiere et al., 2022), while potassium plays a critical role in regulating plant responses to drought (Manu et al., 2024). Furthermore, land-use change can further induce nutrient limitation by displacing large quantities of nutrients (Bauters et al., 2022;​​ 2018; 2021, Kauffman et al., 1995), leading to local nutrient losses and redistribution of some elements. While phosphorus is largely assumed to be the most limiting nutrient across the lowland tropics (e.g. Cunha et al., 2022), recent observations reveal the heterogeneity of nutrient limitation across tropical forests, including limitation and co-limitation by nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and calcium (Davidson et al., 2004, Wright et al., 2011, Manu et al., 2022). Remote sensing offers opportunities to capture variation in foliar chemistry, functional traits, and canopy structure across large scales (Townsend et al., 2008, Chadwick and Asner 2016; 2018, Martins et al., 2018), as well as projecting the type of nutrient losses based on the disturbance event.

### 2.2 Biodiversity

***This PANGEA science theme will investigate how tropical biodiversity varies spatially and temporally at local, regional, and continental scales, how biodiversity shapes ecosystem function and responds to climate and anthropogenic change, and how it thereby contributes to forest resilience heterogeneity, and feeds back to global climate and socio-ecological systems.***

[Overall biodiversity in tropics] Biodiversity is the variability among all living organisms and ecosystems, including taxonomic, phylogenetic, functional, and genetic diversity within and among species, as well as within and among sites. Tropical forests are the most biodiverse biomes on Earth by all of these measures and are home to more than half of Earth’s described species diversity (Lewis et al., 2015; Barlow et al., 2018; Dinerstein et al., 2017; Pillay et al., 2022; Gatti et al., 2022). The high total number of species found in tropical forests (high gamma diversity) reflects both extraordinary numbers of species within sites (alpha diversity), as well as substantial turnover of species among sites (beta diversity) (Condit et al., 2002; Basset et al., 2012; Jenkins et al., 2013; Slik et al. 2015). At small scales, among-site compositional variation in biodiversity largely reflects environmental filtering and stochasticity (Condit et al., 2002; Fyllas et al., 2009; Condit et al., 2013; Asner et al., 2014; Chadwick and Asner 2018). At continental scales, the divergent evolutionary histories of different tropical continents have resulted in very different species assemblages and phylogenetic compositions (Slik et al., 2018). The high taxonomic and phylogenetic diversity of tropical forests is accompanied by high functional diversity, with species displaying a wide range of life history strategies, functional traits, and environmental responses (Fyllas et al., 2009; Condit et al., 2013; Slot and Winter 2017; Rüger et al., 2018; Homeier et al., 2021; Bialic-Murphy et al., 2024).

[Biodiversity & function structure] Tropical biodiversity is critically important to the functioning of tropical ecosystems and their feedbacks to the earth system (Cardinale et al., 2012; Dirzo et al., 2014; Sakschewski et al., 2016; Berzaghi et al., 2018; Schmitt et al., 2020). Which species are present in an area, and their traits and abundances, affects forest structure, function, resilience, and interactions with local and global climate and social-ecological systems (e.g., Dirzo et al., 2014; Del-Claro and Dirzo 2021). The wide variation in structure and function among tropical forests is closely linked to variation in biodiversity, reflecting not only the influences of abiotic environmental factors on biodiversity, structure, and function, but also interactions *among* biodiversity, structure, and function (Muller-Landau et al., 2021). The species and functional composition of woody plants is particularly important in shaping forest structure and function, which in turn affects microclimates, habitat, and food resources for animals and microbes.

[Woody plant trait variability and trade-offs] Woody plant functional trait distributions are an important manifestation of tropical biodiversity that affect forest structure and function. Important co-variations among traits include adult stature, the fast-slow axes of plant life history, and self-supporting vs. climbing strategies to reach the canopy. Adult stature ranges from small shrubs to giant emergent trees above the main canopy (Rüger et al., 2018; Maynard et al. 2022). Vertical forest structure varies with ecosystem function even when vertically integrated metrics like leaf area index (LAI) do not (**Figure 9**) (Ordway et al., 2022). The fast-slow axis refers to plant species with fast resource acquisition and processing, fast growth, high resource needs, high mortality rates, and low shade-tolerance contrasted to species with slow resource acquisition and processing, slow growth, low resource needs, low mortality rates, and high shade-tolerance (Reich 2014; Rüger et al., 2018). Variation in functional composition among stands thus relates to forest successional status, woody productivity, and woody residence time. Previous research has shown that trait distributions associated with wood, leaves and reproduction can be nearly orthogonal across tropical forest species (Baraloto et al., 2010; Fortunel et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the fast-slow axis still encompasses variation in leaf traits such as leaf mass per area (LMA) and leaf nutrient content (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, and calcium) that can be measured with hyperspectral imaging, enabling quantification of this dimension of plant functional composition from remote sensing (**Figure X**) (Asner et al., 2016; Chadwick and Asner 2016). Recent work has also explored functional diversity and redundancy trends using multispectral imagery (Aguirre‐Gutiérrez et al., 2022).

[liana abundance] Tropical woody plants may be self-supporting like trees and shrubs, or be structural parasites like lianas (woody vines) that rely on other plants for support (Muller-Landau and Pacala 2020). Lianas reduce tree growth and increase tree mortality via competition, and thereby alter forest structure and function (Estrada-Villegas et al., 2022). Liana abundance varies widely among tropical forests in relation to climate, disturbance history, and other factors (Dewalt et al., 2015), and is on average increasing, for reasons that remain unclear (Schnitzer and Bongers 2011, Rueda-Trujillo et al., 2024). Increasing CO2 concentrations have been linked to increasing tree growth (Phillips et al., 2009, Brienen et al., 2015), which is expected to increase tree mortality rates by increasing tree competition, which may favor lianas. Interestingly, lianas have increased in abundance in many tropical forests (Phillips et al., 2002; Schnitzer and Bongers 2011, Rueda-Trujillo et al., 2024) due in part to increasing disturbance rates (Schnitzer and Bongers 2011, Schnitzer et al., 2021). Higher liana abundance leads to slower carbon accumulation in secondary forests, lower woody productivity, lower forest stature, and lower biomass carbon stocks (van der Heijden et al. 2015). Lianas differ from trees in their leaf angles and in the distributions of their leaf traits, making it possible to quantify liana abundance with multispectral, hyperspectral, and lidar remote sensing (van der Heijden et al., 2022).

[Functional diversity and species] We are not certain whether or not tropical forests will remain a carbon sink throughout the 21st century (Arora et al., 2020; Brienen et al., 2015; Hubau et al., 2020; Sabatini et al., 2019). High functional biodiversity may help mitigate negative effects of climate change through increased ecosystem stability and resilience (Sakschewski et al., 2016; Longo et al. 2018; Schmitt et al., 2020), but changing climate regimes could also reduce biodiversity that might feedback on climate through lower carbon sequestration (Thomas et al. 2004; Cavanaugh et al., 2014). In a review of 258 studies of naturally assembled communities, van der Plas (2019) found that, while most studies focused on the effects of taxonomic diversity, metrics of functional diversity were generally stronger predictors of ecosystem functioning. Although the tropics host immense botanical species diversity, most species are rare. In fact, based on forest inventory plot data, 2% of species comprise 50% of the tropical trees in the Americas (n = 174 species), Africa (n = 77 species), and Southeast Asia (n = 172 species) (Cooper et al., 2024). Characterizing the functional diversity of these hyperdominant species is tractable and within the scope of PANGEA.

[Leaf phenology] Tropical plants display diversity of leaf phenological strategies, from evergreen to deciduous, with variation in the duration, timing, and completeness of deciduousness, and whether deciduousness is obligate or facultative (Borchert 1994; Eamus 1999; Kushwaha and Singh 2005; Williams et al., 2008; Kearsley et al., 2024). The high carbon demand needed for flushing new leaves means that most drought-deciduous species in the tropics often have thinner leaves to reduce construction costs, and high nutrient demand to increase photosynthetic capacity in shorter growing seasons (Eamus and Prior, 2001; Oliveira et al., 2021). Leaf lifespans and the seasonal timing of leaf production are also important factors across evergreen and brevi-deciduous species, with implications for seasonal variation in leaf quality and photosynthetic capacity (Wu et al., 2016; Lopes et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2017; Albert et al., 2018). The relative abundance of different phenological strategies varies systematically among tropical forests in relation to climate, geomorphology, soils, and other factors (Condit et al., 2000), and contributes importantly to strong stand-level variation in leaf phenology among sites (Bohlman 2010; Guan et al., 2015; Fisher et al., 2020; Fadrique et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Leaf phenology also varies substantially among years within sites, contributing to interannual variation in forest function (Pau et al., 2010; Detto et al., 2018; Lamjiak et al., 2021). Climate drivers of leaf phenology include water availability and light. Many tropical trees, species, and stands green-up at times of year when they receive the most light (fewer clouds), even when more light is accompanied by drier conditions (Wright and van Schaik 1994; Lopes et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2017; Li et al., 2021). Long-term changes in climate, especially in areas where dry seasons are lengthening, may increase the competitive advantage and abundance of drought deciduous species (Vico et al. 2017; Aguirre-Gutiérrez, 2019).

[Animals and microbes] Though studies of the importance of biodiversity for forest function have focused largely on plants, animals and microbes also drive function. They contribute to essential services such as pollination, seed dispersal, and nutrient cycling, and shape plant biodiversity and forest structure and function both via these mutualistic interactions, as well as through antagonistic interactions including herbivory and disease (Dirzo et al., 2014). Megafauna like elephants (found in Africa, but not in the Americas) have particularly important effects in determining forest structure due to browsing and physical disturbance, as well as redistribution of nutrients and dispersal of large seed, high wood density tree species across the landscape (Berzaghi et al., 2018; 2019; Campos-Arceiz and Blake 2011). Experimental vertebrate exclosures resulted in an increase in understory plant density and seedling abundance (Beck et al., 2013; Camargo-Sanabria et al., 2015; Kurten and Carson 2015). A large majority of tropical tree species and approximately half of liana (woody vine) species depend on vertebrates for seed dispersal, with most of the remaining species relying on wind for seed dispersal (Muller-Landau and Hardesty 2005). Defaunation of tropical forests by hunting and other human activities thus threatens plant regeneration, and may shift plant species composition and carbon cycle dynamics (Wunderly 1997; Estrada-Villegas et al., 2023). Defaunation may ultimately lead to a shift towards lower forest carbon stocks (Brodie and Gibbs 2009; Jansen et al., 2010; Bello et al., 2015; Osturi et al., 2016; Peres et al., 2016). Among sites in Panama, increased defaunation was associated with compositional shifts in the seedling layer including more abiotically dispersed species and more lianas (Wright et al., 2007; Kurten et al., 2015).

### 2.3 Climate Interactions and Feedbacks

***This PANGEA science theme will investigate the complex feedbacks and interactions between tropical forests and the climate system, as well as how changes in these processes will determine whether tropical forests will act as a future carbon sink or source.***

[introduction to the section] Tropical forest land-atmosphere interactions modulate climate and weather both locally and regionally. Tropical forest plants recycle precipitation through evapotranspiration and influence the onset and timing of rainy seasons (Wright et al., 2017; Sori et al., 2022; Worden et al., 2021; van der Ent et al., 2010; Staal et al., 2018; Dirmeyer et al., 2009, Zemp et al., 2017; Nyasulu et al., 2024). Tropical forests also emit biogenic volatile organic compounds that affect cloud formation, albedo, and light availability for vegetation (Artaxo et al., 2022). Forest canopies regulate albedo, latent and sensible heat fluxes, and roughness, which drive biophysical climate feedbacks [(Bonan, 2008; Chen et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/J2Id+7TNp+vM0J). Furthermore, energy and water balances depend upon soil moisture, controlled by roots, soil texture, and structure [(Fan et al., 2017](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/LDiS); [Seneviratne et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2021)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/FPcy+yMq6).

[Weather and climate effects on tropical forests] Temperature and the seasonal distribution of precipitation and light are the critical drivers of forest growth and mortality. Mesoscale convective systems deliver much of the rainfall in Central Africa and the Amazon (Andrews et al., 2024; Rehbein et al., 2017), and influence tree mortality via windthrow (e.g., Negrón-Juárez et al., 2018; Feng et al., 2023). Precipitation controls flooding cycles in lowland forests (Alsdorf et al., 2016; Hawes and Peres 2016), which adapt to submersion and waterlogging that can lower oxygen availability, reduce photosynthesis, decrease water conductance, (Parolin et al., 2004; Parolin et al., 2016; Hawes and Peres 2016), leading to production of CH4 by microorganisms. Rainfall also affects nutrient cycles via wet deposition of nutrients such as Nitrogen (Bauters et al., 2018, 2021), photosynthesis via cloud cover and fog (Philippon et al., 2019; Pohl et al., 2021), and evapotranspiration via dew deposition (e.g., Gerlein-Safdi et al., 2018; Binks et al., 2019).

[Anthropogenic disturbance impacts on weather and climate] Anthropogenic disturbances to forests alter local weather and regional climate. Deforestation and forest degradation increase soil surface warming due to decreases in evaporative cooling [(Devaraju et al., 2018; Li et al., 2015)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/iirc+CruA), with the magnitude of this effect influenced by the amount of forest cover lost [(Alkama and Cescatti 2016)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/MoNo). Higher temperatures can subsequently increase tree respiration, which reduces net primary productivity (NPP) and changes how tropical forests cycle carbon [(Choury et al., 2022; Das et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2017; Lloyd et al., 2023)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/FoUS+HHQU+ZxJz+MUqe). Deforestation and degradation can increase streamflow and sediment fluxes (Levy et al., 2018) by increasing sensible heat flux and decreasing evapotranspiration and infiltration (Costa et al., 2003; Souza-Filho et al., 2016; Longo et al. 2020, de Oliveira et al., 2021; Rangel-Pinagé et al., 2023), leading to changes in the surface water and energy balances. Land cover and land-use change can affect rainfall pattern by altering surface heterogeneity and influencing downstream moisture and heat fluxes [(Mahmood et al., 2014; Snyder, 2010)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/9zs5+pHwu) and cross-continental nutrient cycles [(Li et al., 2021](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/YQKg); Barkley et al., 2019[)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/YQKg). Biomass burning contributes aerosols, affecting cloud formation and their regional dynamics (Liu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2008; Chaboureau et al., 2022; Tosca et al., 2015).

[SES climate interactions] Human activities in the form of agriculture, cattle ranching, and fire, interact with climate change to exert significant feedbacks on terrestrial hydrological cycles (Li et al., 2022; Li et al., 2024). This includes changes at the surface such as river discharge and floods (Ndehedehe et al., 2022; Bogning et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2021), as well as changes in convective development or atmospheric boundary layer dynamic and thermodynamic conditions (Taylor et al., 2022; Commar et al., 2023; Sierra et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2017; Leite-Filho et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2019). Changes in these atmospheric dynamics lead to shifts in tropical storm activity, which has increased by 5-25% per decade over the past half century and seems likely to continue in the future (Taylor et al., 2018; Raghavendra et al., 2018; Lavigne et al., 2019; Harel and Price 2020). Concurrent with increasing storm activity, tropical forests are experiencing longer dry seasons, greater atmospheric water stress, and more frequent droughts (Fang et al., 2022; Boiser et al., 2015; Duffy et al., 2015; Trenberth et al., 2014).

[Drivers of climate interannual variability] Tropical climate is directly impacted by variations in sea surface temperature (SST). SST variability controls the cross-equatorial energy transport (Cook and Vizy 2015; Zhou et al., 2019), which affects precipitation patterns via changes to the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ; Schneider et al., 2014, Byrne et al., 2018), monsoons (Cook and Vizy 2019) and regional-scale dynamic systems (Cook and Vizy 2019; Creese et al., 2019; Montini et al., 2019). Phenomena like El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the Madden-Julian Oscillation, the Indian Ocean Dipole, and Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation add to interannual variability in tropical convection (Raghavendra et al., 2020; Dias et al., 2017; Gu and Adler 2018). Different phases of these phenomena are strongly associated with droughts(Marengo et al., 2016; Ndehedehe et al., 2018; Jiménez-Muñoz et al., 2016), longer dry seasons (Jiang et al., 2019; Staal et al., 2020), shifts in rainy season and intensification of storms (Taylor et al., 2018; Rehbein and Ambrizzi 2023; Balaguru et al., 2018). Storms in turn, affect forest structure, mortality, and functioning (Uriarte et al. 2019; Liu et al., 2017). Responses to climate shifts vary across regions. African forest appear less vulnerable to droughts than Amazon forests (Tao et al., 2022; Asefi-Najafabady and Saatchi 2013; Saatchi et al., 2012; Bennett et al., 2021), and wetter tropical forests show resilience to climatic changes (Bennett et al., 2023).

[Climate-induced critical transitions of tropical forests] As new climate records are emerging, shifts of tropical forests to alternate, open-canopy ecosystems, could occur (Hirota et al., 2011; Flores et al., 2024). However, vegetation sensitivity differs among tropical continents, and complex interactions with other changes, such as increased atmospheric CO2, may alter vegetation response (Zhang et al., 2015; Bartlett et al., 2019). For example, African forests, particularly those in West Africa, are often exposed to higher temperatures compared to the relatively cooler, more humid regions of Southeast Asia and therefore may be more adapted to heat stress (Malhi et al., 2013). However, this adaptation might come at the cost of reduced overall photosynthetic capacity under extreme conditions. Overall, exceeding historical climate thresholds in the tropics could lead to future shifts to alternative vegetation states that do not support tropical forest ecosystem services [(Aguirre-Gutiérrez et al., 2020; Flores et al., 2024; Nobre et al., 2016; Scheffer et al., 2001)](https://paperpile.com/c/ovIUza/zrGk+iDoN+6fAo+yCO2).

### 2.4 Social-Ecological Systems

***This PANGEA science theme will investigate the interactions and feedbacks between social and ecological systems related to food production and security, cultural practices, livelihoods, and resilience of tropical systems.***

[Section outline:

1. what are SESs - specifically in the context of PANGEA
2. patterns and drivers of LCLUC (defor, deg)
3. Feedbacks (impacts of ppl in form of extraction/conversion/management + benefits - ecosystem services)
4. Data and knowledge integration (RS data integrated with what - economic approaches, land system science approaches, census, IEK, TEK, LEK)
5. implications - tropics are different - we need to understand the different SESs to develop effective locally and regionally relevant solutions]

[What are SESs] To fully understand the social-ecological complexity of tropical forests and how they are being impacted by global change, PANGEA will take a systems approach to SES that centers the feedbacks that exist between people, climate and the environment (Fig XX). This approach builds on several conceptual frameworks that have been developed to understand and model the relationships between and within social and ecological systems, including the sustainable livelihoods framework (Scoones 1998), SES subsystems and interactions (Ostrom 2009), SES resiliency (Folke 2006), robustness in SESs (Anderies et al., 2004), coupled human-nature systems (Liu et al., 2007), socionature (Swyngedouw 1999), ecosystem services (Costanza et al., 2017; Daily 1997), nature’s contributions to people (Díaz et al., 2018; Pascual et al., 2017), and social-ecological co-benefits (Levis et al., 2024). While these frameworks may differ in their definitions (Colding and Barthel 2019), they converge on key principles and variables that describe the social-ecological system, including a central focus on the interactions and feedbacks that can facilitate or hinder change in SES. Bringing elements of each of these frameworks together, PANGEA will adopt a systems perspective that centers the feedbacks between human systems (including governance, policy, markets, and culteral norms and values) and environmental processes to better understand the vulnerability of tropical landscapes, communities, and carbon stocks, and for charting effective solutions for a more resilient planet.

[patterns and drivers of LCLUC - defor & deg / maybe regrowth] Across the tropics, regionally distinct drivers and patterns of land use change, including deforestation, degradation, and forest regrowth, have the potential to impact the resilience of the tropical carbon sink (Saatchi et al. 2021, Hubau et al. 2020). In the Amazon and South East Asia, deforestation and degradation is primarily driven by the expansion of large-scale commodity based agriculture to meet demand from domestic and international markets (Curtis et al., 2018, Haddad et al., 2024). Specifically, in the Amazon land use change is being driven by the expansion of pasture land for cattle and by industrial soybean production (Barlow et al., 2018, Londres et al., 2023). Soy farming and cattle ranching alter biogeochemical cycles (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus), water cycles and fire regimens, and are aleading cause of deforestation (Mapbiomas 2023). In South East Asia, land use change is driven largely by global demand for oil palm, where large scale plantations are rapidly expanding at the expense of primary forest and peatlands (Koh & Wilcove 2008). In 2020, this expansion was modeled to contribute to about 20% of the region’s carbon emissions (Carleson 2013). Unlike the Amazon and South East Asia, the majority of land use change in the Congo Basin is small- scale and driven by the expansion of subsistence agriculture and local development (Tyukavina et al., 2018). While commodity crops such as oil palm have been expanding across tropical Africa since the 1990s, the expansion has been tied to domestic demand and is fulfilled by smallholders and informal milling processes (Ordway et al. 2017, Ordway et al. 2017). At the international scale, increasing demand for cocoa and timber is shaping land use change in tropical Africa, but small-scale and subsistence based land use change still plays an outsized role in driving land use change (Hosonuma et al., 2012, Kamath et al. 2024, Fuller et al. 2018).

[Overall paragraph] In tropical social-ecological systems, feedbacks play a critical role in maintaining resilience and guiding the trajectory of these systems (Dearing, et al. 2010). Changing social-ecological systems dynamics in tropical forests are driven by a combination of direct and indirect forces (Lambin & Geist 2002, Lambin et al. 2003) including, deforestation and degradation, restoration and reforestation, international policy initiatives, market forces, agriculture and commodity crop expansion, infrastructure development, and local communities and Indigenous peoples forest management (Potapov et al., 2021; Lapola et al., 2023; Bourgoin et al., 2024; Crouzeilles et al., 2017; Jakovak et al., 2021; Gatti et al., 2023; Lambin et al., 2018, Grass et al., 2020, Koh and Wilcove 2008; Bennett et al., 2018; Geist and Lambin 2002; Shapiro et al., 2023; Tyukavina et al., 2018; Garrett et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2015, Lambin et al., 2003; Wiersum 1997, Michon et al., 2007; Sze et al., 2022, 2024; Fent et al., 2019). Each of these interacts with changing climate dynamics to impact carbon stocks, hydrological regimes, seasonality, phenology, ecosystem function, plant-animal interactions, species composition and biodiversity, fire regimes, food security, and local livelihoods (Liu et al., 2017; Hubau et al., 2020; Bennett et al., 2021; Staal et al., 2018; Karam et al., 2023; Wolh et al., 2012; Fu et al., 2013; Couralet et al., 2013; Koltunov et al., 2009; Ordway and Asner 2020; Aguirre-Gutiérrez et al., 2022; Schmitz et al., 2018; Oliver and Moorcroft 2014; Asner et al., 2010; Tyukavina et al., 2022, Williamson et al. 2024; Flachsbarth et al., 2015; Sanchez et al., 2000; Whitfield et al., 2019; Sonwa et al. 2012). While these feedbacks are similar across the tropics, place-specific political, economic, cultural, and management conditions influence the response, resiliency, and adaptations of tropical forests and local communities to global change dynamics (Liu et al., 2017; Hubau et al., 2020; Saatchi et al., 2021; Geist and Lambin 2002; Bennett et al., 2018; Turner 2014). [update this paragraph to include feedbacks such as ecosystem services, NTFP collection, conservation and management]

[Practices good for SES] These human activities create complex feedbacks between social and ecological systems, resulting in a cascade of environmental and social impacts (Lambin & Meyfroidt, 2010). A better understanding of these feedbacks across tropical regions is essential for developing place-based and culturally sensitive management plans that support both ecological sustainability and community livelihoods. Recent research efforts are focused on understanding and scaling social-ecological ‘hope spots’ to highlight the importance of integrating ecological and cultural conservation efforts (Levis, et al., 2024). The case of the Upper Xingu, located in the Brazilian Amazon’s arc of deforestation, demonstrates the power of such integration (Levis, et al., 2024). Indigenous groups like the Kuikuro have enriched biodiversity through millennia of landscape management, including the creation of anthropogenic soils, domestication of diverse crops, and the cultivation of cultural forests. Rather than degrading ecosystems, these practices have created resilient systems that benefit both nature and people. By engaging Indigenous knowledge alongside remote sensing technologies, the Upper Xingu offers a model for conservation that balances indigenous knowledge with modern science.

[What PANGEA will do] PANGEA will advance research on social-ecological feedbacks in the tropics to improve understanding and enable more accurate predictions of the long-term impacts of human actions. This work is essential for forecasting future trajectories of the tropical carbon sink, species loss, changes in ecosystem services, and the resilience of these ecosystems to external pressures (Leclère et al., 2020). Accurate predictions are needed to identify potential tipping points, where small changes could lead to irreversible damage, and to design interventions that might prevent or mitigate such outcomes (Staal et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2024; Flores et al. 2024). PANGEA activities will also empower local communities and decision-makers with the information they need to govern these ecosystems effectively. Tropical regions are home to many Indigenous and local communities whose livelihoods are intimately tied to the health of their surrounding environment. By understanding the feedbacks between human activities and ecosystem health, people can make more informed decisions about land-use, resource management, and conservation efforts that align with both ecological sustainability and their socio-economic needs (Aguiar et al., 2020). Decision-makers at regional and national levels can also use this information to craft policies that balance development goals with the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, ensuring that the benefits of these ecosystems are equitably shared and sustained for future generations (Pörtner et al., 2021). Ultimately, the ability to predict and manage the complex feedbacks in tropical ecosystems is key to fostering both environmental and social resilience in these critical regions.

### 2.5 Disturbance Dynamics

***This PANGEA Science Theme will investigate how disturbance regimes are changing and altering carbon cycle feedbacks via climate, biodiversity, and hydrologic cycling.***

[Human and natural disturbances Two types of disturbance] There are two primary modes of forest disturbance: (1) direct and indirect human disturbance resulting from land cover and land use change, such as deforestation, degradation, and fire, and (2) natural disturbances that are largely associated with water stress, storms, and biotic agents, and is increasingly being exacerbated by indirect human action as a result of climate change. These two modes of disturbance contribute enormously to total forest turnover and carbon emissions from tropical forests (McDowell et al 2020, Qin et al., 2021), but they have distinct spatial distributions, intensities, frequencies, and consequences for tropical forests. [INSERT SENTENCE ON CSILLIK ET AL. HERE?]

[Human disturbance & the role of RS in it] The primary risk to tropical forest persistence and function is direct human disturbance. People clear vast tracts of tropical forest each year and cause degradation through selective logging, hunting, and fire. Direct human disturbances typically involve intense and enduring impacts, such as extensive biomass removal, animal extirpation, and conversion of land to non-forested ecosystems (Lewis 2005; Gibson et al., 2011, Wearn et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2014; Silva Junior et al., 2020, Brando et al., 2014, Flores et al., 2024). Satellite remote sensing has revolutionized rapid detection and quantification of direct human disturbance and deeper understanding of the drivers (see *Section 2.4* for details). Deforestation and land cover change is now actively being mapped in high spatial resolution across the tropics and in association with specific industries and practices driving these trends (Curtis et al., 2018; Maxwell et al., 2019; Qin et al., 2021; Harris et al., 2021; Lapola et al., 2023; McGregor et al., 2024; Csillik et al., 2024). With the advent of small-satellite arrays (e.g., PlanetScope), it is now also possible to quantify both deforestation and degradation within days-to-months (Welsink et al., 2023; Dalagnol et al., 2023). These advances have demonstrated that degradation contributes as much, or more, than deforestation to total tropical forest disturbance regimes (Maxwell et al., 2019; Qin et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of high-resolution and high-frequency data for understanding and monitoring these dynamics. However, like many tropical forest dynamics, we know much more about the effects of degradation and deforestation in American tropical forests than in other regions.

[Fire regime] Fire dynamics often interact with deforestation and degradation in moist tropical forests, where naturally ignited fires are extremely rare, and human-ignited fires are common (Uhl and Kaufmann, 1990; Cochrane, 2003; Brando et al., 2019). From 2003-2018, an estimated 41 ± 14% of all forest loss in primary humid tropical forests was fire-related, although this varied considerably between continents (van Wees et al., 2021). Of all tropical fire-related forest loss during this period, 69% occurred in the tropical Americas, 22% in Southeast Asia, and only 8% in sub-Saharan Africa (REF). Although fires are associated with deforestation, the impacts on deforestation decline in the Amazon since 2005 on fire activity remains uncertain, with studies showing either declines in fire activity (e.g., Andela et al., 2017; Libonati et al., 2021) or decoupling between fires and deforestation (Aragão et al., 2018). While there has been an increase in fire-related forest loss in tropical forests in Africa, the majority of fires in the region are likely going undetected. Satellite and ground measurements have revealed the widespread effects of fires and their major contributions to pantropical carbon cycling (Cochrane 2001; Berenguer et al., 2021). Human-ignited fires commonly spread into the understory of intact tropical forests where they directly cause tree mortality and indirectly make forests more susceptible to subsequent wind-caused disturbance (Barlow et al., 2003; Brando et al., 2014; Silvério et al., 2019; Berenguer et al., 2021). Changes in forest structure associated with fires and forest fragmentation may increase the risk of subsequent fires both through the increased abundance of fuel loads like grasses and understory plants (Silvério et al., 2013, Sagang et al., 2024b) and higher solar radiation reaching the ground, which favors hotter and drier conditions near the surface (Brando et al., 2014; Longo et al., 2020; Nunes et al., 2022). Additionally, periodic droughts amplify the effects of fire by increasing fuel flammability, and thus climate-driven increases in severe droughts are expected to increase the effects of fire (Alencar et al., 2006; Brando et al., 2014; 2019).

[Natural disturbance distribution] Natural disturbances - primarily drought, storms, and biotic agents - present distinct challenges for detection, quantification, and attribution compared to to deforestation and forest degradation (although defaunation remains essentially impossible to detect using remote sensing). Nearly all natural disturbances occur at small spatiotemporal scales, with over 98% of biomass mortality in the Amazon attributable to events less than 0.1 ha in area (Espírito-Santo et al., 2014). Although natural disturbance events are typically small, they collectively cause about 1.5-2% of biomass turnover annually, indicating that natural disturbances release the equivalent to the entire tropical forest carbon pool every 50-75 years (Galbraith et al., 2013; Espírito-Santo et al., 2014). However, natural disturbances vary tremendously in space and time (Galbraith et al., 2013; Sullivan et al., 2020; Hubau et al., 2020; Dalagnol et al., 2021, Csillik et al., 2024, Negron-Juarez et al. 2023), with distinct drivers in different regions and strong evidence that natural disturbance regimes are shifting with climate change (Gloor et al., 2013; McDowell et al., 2018, Gora et al., 2020; Sullivan et al., 2020; Gora and Esquivel-Muelbert 2021; Fang et al., 2022). Given their tremendous contributions to tropical forest carbon cycle dynamics, even small changes in natural disturbance regimes would have a tremendous impact on tropical forest function and the global carbon budget.

[Drought disturbance] Drought events are major drivers of natural disturbance in tropical forests. Atmospheric water stress associated with high temperatures and vapor pressure deficits has been increasing the past several decades (Fang et al., 2022), and episodic droughts are occurring with increasing severity and frequency (Boiser et al., 2015; Duffy et al., 2015; Trenberth et al., 2014). Drought related water stress is associated with increases in tree mortality and decreases in tree growth detectable with both forest inventory plots and satellite remote sensing (Phillips et al., 2009; Saatchi et al., 2013; Qie et al., 2017; Hammond et al., 2022; Bauman et al., 2022; Bennett et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). Detailed physiological and anatomical work has revealed much about the mechanisms underlying forest resilience to water stress (McDowell et al., 2008; McDowell 2011; Trugman et al., 2018; Smith-Martin et al., 2023; Tavares et al., 2023). Drought research in tropical forests provides strong evidence of its importance, but also reveals that the effects of drought are highly variable among ecosystems. For example, the 2015-2016 El Niño had strong effects on the Amazon (Bennett et al., 2023), but only a marginal effect in African tropical forests (Bennett et al., 2021) and caused a substantial increase in GPP in central Panama (Detto and Pacala 2022). Although the differences between drought and non-drought years are clear, the contributions of drought to decadal trends in forest dynamics and the future trajectories of tropical forests remain highly uncertain.

[brief mention of extreme temps?] Worth mentioning Doughty et al. if this does not come up elsewhere. I think so, and in this case cite Smith et al. (2020) and Winter (2024).

[Storm disturbance] Tropical cyclones (hurricanes and typhoons depending on their geographical location) are increasing in intensity and are a dominant form of disturbance in coastal tropical forests 10° north and south of the equator (Hoyos et al., 2006; Lugo 2008), although they play a limited role in pan-tropical disturbance regimes. By contrast, there is abundant evidence that wind and lightning associated with local and mesoscale convective storms are a dominant drivers of tree mortality and forest biomass dynamics (Chambers et al., 2013; Negrón-Juárez et al., 2018; Negron-Juarez et al. 2017, Negron-Juarez et al. 2023, Gora et al., 2020; 2021). Specifically, temporal variation in storm activity predicts canopy disturbance rates (Araujo et al., 2021) and spatial variation in storm activity is a strong correlate of spatial variation in forest biomass, biomass mortality rates, and species composition (Gora et al., 2020; Gorgens et al., 2021; de Lima et al., 2023; Feng et al., 2023). For example, low storm activity is associated with high biomass in the Guiana Shield, whereas high storm frequency is associated with lower biomass and higher disturbance rates across the western Amazon (Gorgens et al., 2021). Storms likely play a similar role across other tropical forests, but storm disturbance analyses from the African and Indomalayan tropical forests are nearly non-existent. This knowledge gap is concerning because all existing data suggest that convective storms have increased in frequency by 5-25% per decade of the past century, and continued increases are expected (Taylor et al., 2018; Raghavendra et al., 2018; Lavigne et al., 2019; Harel and Price 2020).

## 3. Knowledge Gaps & Questions

In spite of the global importance of tropical forests, there remains great uncertainty about basic patterns and processes, limiting our ability to effectively forecast their future role in the Earth system. Importantly, most of the current knowledge gaps are inherently interdisciplinary, and require advancing process understanding of the interactions between climate change, shifts in natural and anthropogenic disturbance regime, and structurally, functionally, and socially diverse and heterogeneous tropical moist forest ecosystems, and their impacts on biogeophysical and biogeochemical cycles. Therefore, PANGEA science questions cut across multiple science themes described in *Section 2.* The questionsaddressing each of the themes XYZ are organized according to considerations of **pattern** (*Section 3.1*), **process** (*Section 3.2*), and **projected future change** (*Section 3.3*). Corresponding measurements are described briefly in this section, and referenced in more detail in **Table 1** in *Section**6.2* and in Appendix X*.*.

### 3.1 Pattern

[editing goals:

* 1 paragraph before each question / group of questions. Move background material back to Section 2
* Ensure measurement approaches following questions don't overlap with Section 6. Research Strategy - move most of the measurements content to Section 6 and retain in brief; possibly just in a summary table that’s an abbreviated version of the STM - condense
  + Create a simple diagram of the STM (with headings only) - explain it in a paragraph]

#### 3.1.1 Carbon Stocks and Fluxes

Current estimates of both carbon stocks and carbon fluxes diverge markedly across the tropics (Sullivan et al. 2020, Xu et al., 2021, Muller-Landau et al., 2021, Wang et al. 2023). Discrepancies emerge because of the limited calibration and validation datasets in tropical forests, particularly in Africa [REFs]. This geographic bias is highly problematic because sparse data suggest that disturbance regimes and forest responses to disturbances are distinct from other continents (Hubau et al., 2020; Bennett et al., 2021; 2023). Second, the spatial and temporal patterns of disturbance dynamics are poorly characterized across the tropics [REFs], which exacerbate the uncertainty for the future of the global carbon budget (Pugh et al., 2020). Therefore, PANGEA will specifically address the following pattern-related questions about carbon stocks and fluxes that are related to overarching question 1 (see *Section 1*):

* ***Q1.*** *How do* ***spatial variations*** *in tropical forest carbon stocks, and carbon dioxide and methane fluxes**relate to spatial variation in climate, hydrological cycling, soils, geomorphology, and social-ecological interactions?*
* ***Q2.*** *How do* ***temporal variations*** *in tropical landscape carbon dioxide and methane fluxes relate to temporal variation in climate change trends and extreme events?*
* ***Q3.*** *How do carbon stocks and carbon dioxide and methane fluxes of tropical forests vary across* ***disturbance regime*** *gradients?*
* ***Q4.*** *How does geographic, spatial and temporal variation in* ***tropical forest phenology*** *co-vary with carbon stocks and fluxes, and how is phenology changing in relation to systematic shifts in forcing processes, including climate, land-use, and disturbance regimes?*

To improve the **spatial characterization** of biomass and changes in biomass across the core and extended geographical domains, PANGEA will integrate forest inventory plot data and airborne lidar with additional measurements at the landscapes scale selected for intensive measurements of tropical biomass and their changes. PANGEA will partner with GEO-TREES, an effort coordinating ground measurements from both forest inventories and terrestrial laser scanning, drones and airborne lidar data collection. PANGEA will leverage information on allometry-based estimates of carbon stocks, and will prioritize collocating landscapes with GEO-TREES sites and support upscaling efforts using **GEDI**, **NISAR**, **BIOMASS**, and **EDGE**\*. To advance the **temporal quantification** of ecosystem fluxes, PANGEA will integrate remote sensing observations of CO2 and CH4 collected using existing eddy covariance flux measurements (Baldocchi 2020) and will also identify areas for implementing new towers to fill knowledge gaps across climatic, biodiversity, and disturbance gradients, and make further measurements with strategic deployment of automated and manual gas chambers. To provide regional and pantropical constraints on CO2 and CH4 fluxes, PANGEA will employ polar-orbiting satellite sensors like the **Orbiting Carbon Observatory** (**OCO-2/3**), **TROPOMI**, **Carbon Mapper**, and geostationary satellites like **GOES-R** (Crisp et al., 2017; Lorente et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021; Ranjbar et al., 2023). **NISAR** and **BIOMASS** will be used for mapping tropical wetlands, and to integrate with **SWOT** surface water data for constraining lateral carbon fluxes measurements. If necessary, PANGEA will fill gaps in the TCCON network, especially in Africa, to resolve debates on continental source and sink estimates. [TEXT EXPLAINING TCCON network and THE STRATEGY TO ADDRESS MEASUREMENTS ALONG DISTURBANCE GRADIENTS]. Lastly, PANGEA will quantify the impact of **canopy disturbance** from wind, lightning, and drought and **tropical forest phenology** on carbon fluxes and stocks through a combination of field observations, phenocams, UAVs, and satellite data to address knowledge gaps related to the divergent leaf phenological responses from individual species and functional types to landscapes across climate and disturbance gradients. PANGEA’s datasets will complement existing efforts to expand geographic coverage of phenology using **Landsat**, **Sentinel-2** and **commercial satellite data** (Guan et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

#### 3.1.2 Biodiversity & Functional Composition

Biodiversity is positively associated with higher net primary productivity in tropical forests (Durán et al. 2019). Understanding the mechanisms that support this relation at regional to Pantropical scales is a gap that PANGEA can help fill. Moreover, biodiversity varies markedly among tropical continents, not just due to climatic differences, but also due to their evolutionary past (Corlett and Primack 2006; Slik et al., 2018; Raven et al., 2020). Yet, we still lack detailed information on the functional diversity of these ecosystems. An initial assessment on tropical forest plant trait data abundance in the American tropics, based on TRY (Kattge et al., 2020); LT-Brazil (Mariano et al., 2021) and NGEE-Tropics (https://ngt-data.lbl.gov/dois/), reveals that a few sites in Central Panama and coastal French Guiana account for the bulk of trait data and most traits are still scarce (Figure X). Data from African landscapes are likely even less abundant [REF]. By addressing these knowledge and data gaps, PANGEA will activate the direct linkage of data from ground, airborne remote sensing and satellite remote sensing to understand the distribution of canopy functional traits and functional diversity across the tropical forest biomes and to investigate the strength and scale-dependence of biodiversity controls on ecosystem function. Responding to the questions below, PANGEA can fill large knowledge gaps in the understanding of biodiversity across spatial scales.

* ***Q5.*** *How does tropical* ***biodiversity*** *vary geographically, and spatially with forest structure and function?*
* ***Q6.*** *What are the plant* ***functional trait distributions in tropical forests*** *on different continents, and how do these differences reflect responses to extreme events and across disturbance and climatic gradients?*
* ***Q7.*** *To what degree are tropical carbon cycle dynamics related to* ***plant functional composition****?*

To relate biodiversity metrics with structural and functional diversity, PANGEA will collect coincident ground and airborne measurements across functional composition and disturbance gradients, building on previous research that demonstrated how this approaches allowed an estimate of the functional composition and diversity of tropical forest ecosystems (Feret and Asner, 2013; Asner et al., 2014; Asner et al., 2017; Chadwick and Asner 2020; Ordway et al., 2022). In addition to airborne imaging spectroscopy, PANGEA will employ **EMIT**, **PRISMA**, **DESIS** and **PACE** data, and advance calibration and algorithm development supporting the **SBG** mission. PANGEA will also characterize forest structural diversity using terrestrial and UAV-based, airborne, and spaceborne lidar (**GEDI**, **EDGE\***) at individual-tree to ecosystem scales (e.g., Decuyper et al., 2018; Momo et al., 2020, Terryn et al., 2022; Schneider et al., 2019; Ferraz et al., 2016; Jucker et al., 2018; Schneider et al., 2020; De Conto et al., 2024). To expand the quantification of biodiversity beyond botany, PANGEA will use animal movement monitoring and bioacoustics detection systems. Moreover, the project will incorporate Indigenous Ecological Knowledge to aggregate novel insights into the structural and functional diversity of tropical forest ecosystems. To investigate the association between shifts in plant composition and shifts in ecosystem functioning (Coverdale and Davies 2023), PANGEA will combine the measurements on structural and functional diversity with in situ and remote sensing observations of CO2, CH4, water and energy fluxes and nutrient cycling, using both time series of measurements and space-for-time sampling across the landscapes. To relate functional diversity with ecosystem responses to extreme events, PANGEA WILL DO XYZ

#### 3.1.3 Land-Atmosphere Interactions and Thresholds

Despite advances in understanding the interactions and feedbacks between the biosphere and the atmosphere in tropical regions from previous NASA campaigns (Davidson et al., 2012), there are still substantial knowledge gaps on how these interactions vary within and across continents (Phillipon et al., 2019; Pohl et al., 2021; Martins et al., 2018; Chakraborty et al., 2019; Jonard et al., 2022). The impacts of deforestation on the transport pathways for recycled atmospheric moisture have been investigated in the Amazon, and to a lesser extent in Central Africa (Staal et al., 2023; Zemp et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2022; Flores et al., 2024; Theeuwen et al., 2023; Baker and Spracklen 2022; Te Wierik et al., 2022; Nyasulu et al., 2024; van der Ent et al., 2010). Hydroclimatic conditions in tropical forests vary significantly along disturbance gradients, from intact forests to heavily fragmented landscapes (Gutierrez-Cori et al., 2021), and there is evidence from modeling and remote-sensing studies that widespread tropical forest degradation can alter energy and water fluxes (e.g., Longo et al., 2020; Rangel Pinagé et al., 2023), yet the effects of degradation on rainfall intensity and recycling remains unknown. Moreover, land-use related fire activities can significantly change the aerosol concentration in the atmosphere and directly impact convective activities in tropical ecosystems (Andreae et al., 2004; Freire et al., 2020). Likewise, there is evidence that Central African tropical forests rely more heavily on moisture recycling to provide atmospheric moisture for rainfall than the Amazon (Worden et al., 2021; Baker and Spracklen 2022). Consequently, there is a need for regionally-specific investigations on how changes in forest and land use affect the carbon fluxes via climate feedbacks (Braghiere et al., 2020; Durand et al., 2021; Adebiyi and Zuidema 2016). In addition, novel technologies have emerged on quantification of vegetation water stress from space. Canopy water content from airborne VSWIR data have illustrated ecologically meaningful patterns related to water stress in Mediterranean systems (Brodrick et al., 2019; Paz-Kagan and Asner 2017), however, the transferability of this approach to the tropics remains to be tested. Vegetation optical depth estimate from microwave remote sensing is another promising technology for quantification of drought-related stress (Konings et al., 2021), but there are still uncertainties on how to scale between leaf- and individual-level response, and how to account for confounding effects, such as the signal being dominated by leaf surface water instead of interstitial water (Xu et al., 2021). [QUICK 1-2 SENTENCES ON THERMAL AND SIF?]. To address knowledge gaps related to land-atmosphere interactions and hydroclimate thresholds, PANGEA will answer the following questions:

* ***Q8.*** *How do* ***land-atmosphere interactions****, including moisture recycling and carbon fluxes, vary with climate feedbacks, disturbances, carbon storage capacity, and resilience of tropical forests under changing environmental conditions?*
* ***Q9.*** *How do hydroclimatic thresholds, such as critical soil moisture levels or thermal boundaries, vary within and among tropical continents?*

To investigate how land-atmosphere interactions vary across continents, PANGEA will build on measurements used for spatial and temporal variation of carbon stocks (Section 3.1.1), and structural and functional diversity (Section 3.1.2), and complement with ground measurements from micrometeorological stations, latent and sensible heat fluxes from eddy covariance towers, soil moisture, canopy ecophysiological measurements, live and dead fuel moisture. PANGEA will scale ground data of soil moisture, canopy water content, hydraulic traits, and thermal stress and evapotranspiration to the pantropics by combining [AIRBORNE MEASUREMENTS?] with **SMAP**, **SMOS**, **NISAR\***, **AMSR-E**, **EMIT**, **ECOSTRESS** and **FLEX**. [SOME SENTENCE ON SIF?]. Ground-based data from PANGEA will further improve **SMAP**’s soil moisture estimates in tropical forests, known to be significantly biased in tropical ecosystems (Cho et al., 2024), by building on recent correction efforts based on maximum entropy production for electromagnetic wave propagation in dielectric materials (Wang et al., 2024). To identify critical hydroclimate thresholds and help differentiate different drivers for canopy water content dynamics, PANGEA will collect canopy leaf-level ecophysiological measurements, as well as tower-based VOD retrieval methods using GNSS microwave signals (Humphrey and Frankenberg 2023).

3.2 Process

#### 3.2.1 Species Interactions and Resilience

Tropical forests are highly biodiverse ecosystems. Yet, the science and technology for quantifying and monitoring biodiversity at large scales, as well as process understanding how structural and functional diversity mediates carbon, water, energy, and nutrient cycling is still incipient. Moreover, most terrestrial biosphere models still represent tropical forests with fewer plant functional types than temperate forests (e.g., Lawrence et al., 2019; Schaphoff et al., 2018), and even when they represent multiple life strategies, obtaining robust coexistence remains a significant challenge (Koven et al., 2020; Li et al., 2023; Powell et al., 2018). Part of this challenge stems from the fact that plants in dense tropical forests must compete for multiple limiting resources (light, water, nutrients) and there are strong trade-offs between resource acquisition, growth and survivorship (Choat et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2021). These trade-offs are characterized by different traits, but most efforts to characterize trait distribution at regional scales have hitherto been markedly different for tropical forests [REF]. In addition, plant communities across different continents have distinct evolutionary histories (Slik et al., 2018), and unique relationships between plants and animals, for example, the role of megafauna in Africa and lack thereof in the Americas [REF]. These differences may have led to different relationships between biodiversity and forest function, but this is a hypothesis that still needs to be tested. Furthermore, most tropical forests are undergoing significant changes through deforestation and forest degradation. Previous research has indicated that even modest levels of degradation can significantly deplete biodiversity in tropical forests (Barlow et al., 2016), and understanding how such losses may impact the ability of forests to recover and respond to intensifying changes in climate is a critical research priority. Therefore, PANGEA will address the following questions:

* ***Q10.*** *What is the role of* ***biodiversity*** *in driving the variation in tropical forest carbon stocks and fluxes at local, regional, and continental scales?*
* ***Q11.*** *How do* ***plant-animal interactions*** *mediate the vulnerability or resilience of tropical forest carbon stocks and fluxes?*
* ***Q12.*** *How vulnerable or resilient to climate and land-use change are the* ***species interactions*** *that underpin tropical forest function ?*
* ***Q13.*** *What* ***plant functional traits and structural attributes*** *confer carbon cycle resilience, and how do they vary across forest types, environmental gradients, and vertically within forests?*

As described in Section 3.1.2, the characterization of biodiversity across scales will combine in situ measurements—e.g., forest inventories, animal movement tracking, bioacoustics sensors, camera traps, environmental DNA, Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK), Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK), airborne remote sensing, satellite imaging spectroscopy (**EMIT**, **PRISMA**, **DESIS** and **PACE**) and satellite lidar and radar (**GEDI**, **EDGE\***, **NISAR\***, and **BIOMASS\***). These datasets will provide initial conditions and benchmarks for process-based terrestrial biosphere models that can represent structural and functional diversity (e.g., BiomeE, ED/ED2, FATES; Section 6.4) to develop process-understanding and attribution of the role of biodiversity on carbon, water, and energy fluxes, and how these relationships vary within and across continents. To investigate how biodiversity and land-use driven biodiversity change impact the resistance and resilience of tropical forests to climate extremes, PANGEA will identify landscapes across disturbance, climate, and edaphic gradients, and use data describing ecosystem function changes. Indicators of water stress and ecosystem function (Section 3.1.3), including data derived from **SMAP**, **SMOS**, **NISAR\***, **AMSR-E**, **EMIT**, **ECOSTRESS**, **FLEX**, [other SIF products too, like TROPOMI, OCO-3, etc.?], will be used to quantify emergent relationships between forest structure and composition and forest sensitivity to climate extremes. These relationships will be applied to constrain inverse models and process-based terrestrial biosphere models, allowing the use of these models to attribute the role of biodiversity in mitigating the impacts of global change in the tropical land carbon sink.

#### 3.2.2 Disturbance-Ecosystem Function Feedbacks

[lack of knowledge in tree mortality mechanism] Changing disturbance regimes, including drought, fires, storms, and land-use change, are reshaping tropical forests. Tropical regions across continents differ in their responses to similar disturbance events, such El Niño events (Liu et al., 2017). These continental differences may be associated with variation in forest resilience to both human action and climate change [REF], however, the mechanisms underlying differences in forest vulnerability to shifting disturbance regimes remain elusive. Likewise, we lack large-scale quantification of the drivers of tree mortality, as well as attribution of reasons for higher tree mortality on different continents (McDowell et al., 2018; Gora and Esquivel-Muelbert 2021). Part of this difficulty stems from scaling limitations. Many storm-related disturbances occur at very small scales (<0.1 ha) (Espírito-Santo et al., 2014; Negrón-Juárez et al., 2018; Negron-Juarez et al., 2023) which are too small to be detected with contemporary satellite methods (Cushman et al., 2021) and cannot be reliably attributed using traditional forest plot methods because of the typically long intervals between census [REF]. In addition, data describing the mechanisms underlying tree vulnerability to storm-associated winds and lightning are also limited (Gora et al., 2017; 2020b; Jackson et al., 2019; 2021a, 2021b; Feng et al., 2023). [ADD SENTENCES ON KNOWLEDGE GAPS ON HOW DISTURBANCE AND MORTALITY INTERACT WITH CUE AND WUE]. Advancing understanding of distinct ecosystem responses to mortality and disturbance events requires integrated data on tree mortality, carbon- and water-use efficiency, and post-disturbance recovery rates spanning disturbance regimes, patterns of functional composition, and land-use. PANGEA will seek to answer the following questions:

* ***Q14.*** *How are changing disturbance regimes affecting the* ***carbon-use efficiency (CUE)*** *and* ***water-use efficiency (WUE)*** *of different tropical forests?*
* ***Q15.*** *How do* ***tree mortality*** *rates and patterns vary within and across tropical forests in response to systematic shifts in forcing processes, including climate, land-use change, and disturbance regimes? How do temporal and spatial variability of mortality influence the heterogeneity of tropical carbon stocks and fluxes across the tropics?*

To characterize the spatial and temporal distribution of canopy turnover and degradation disturbances across the tropics, PANGEA will leverage ongoing attempts at quantifying fine-scale forest degradation from space using deep learning (e.g., Dalagnol et al., 2023). With this approach, it may be possible to integrate multiple sources of satellite remote sensing—drone and aircraft RGB and lidar measurements, commercial high resolution optical data, **Landsat**, **Sentinel-1**, **Sentinel-2**, **GEDI**, **NISAR\***, **BIOMASS\***, and **EDGE\***— to advance monitoring of tree mortality and natural disturbance regimes from space in ways that have been previously attempted with airborne data (Dalagnol et al. 2021). To train the deep-learning model, PANGEA will combine field measurements of mortality and disturbance at the key PANGEA landscapes (Section 6.3) with existing field data from partners and collaborators. To investigate the emergent relationships between disturbance regimes, CUE and WUE across the different landscapes, PANGEA will combine the mortality and degradation products with high-resolution estimates of WUE from **Landsat** and **ECOSTRESS** and CUE derived from X, Y, Z, and test the robustness of these relationships at sites with eddy covariance fluxes and inventories [ADD SOMETHING ON AIRBORNE?]. The spatial- and time-dependent degradation maps will be used to drive disturbance rates in process-based models and both mortality maps and the emergent relationships between mortality rates and WUE and CUE will be used for model benchmarking along environmental and anthropogenic-influence gradients and across continents.

#### 3.2.3 Recovery Dynamics and Management

Climate change is increasing the recurrence of natural disturbances, whereas the expansion of deforestation and forest degradation is further amplifying the disturbance regimes across the tropics (Armenteras et al. 2006; Portela & Rademacher 2001; Jusys 2018; Hosonuma et al. 2012). More frequent disturbances may pose a real threat of tropical forests experiencing resilience loss and critical transitions to alternate states (Verbesselt et al., 2016,Whitfield et al. 2019, Falk et al. 2022)., although to assess such risks, it is imperative to thoroughly quantify how frequently disturbances occur, the ecosystem resistance to disturbances, and the recovery time from the disturbance impacts [REFs]. While much research has focused on the impacts of disturbances (e.g., McDowell et al., 2018; Brando et al., 2014), large uncertainties remain on recovery rates. Recovering tropical secondary and degraded forests now cover about 10% of the tropical forest area and have a large carbon sink potential (Heinrich et al., 2023). Previous field-based research indicated that post-disturbance recovery time scales and rates of recovery vary considerably across the tropics and depending on disturbance intensity and disturbance type (Poorter et al., 2016; Rutishauser et al., 2015), however how these findings are scaled across continental and intercontinental scales remains unknown. More critically, the geographic connectivity of changes in land management across different scales remains highly uncertain. For example, shifts from intensive cropping systems to agroforestry systems and management (e.g., Indigenous stewardship), as well as interventions aimed at conservation, may result in local restoration and increased resilience of systems relative to adjacent areas and support local livelihoods (e.g. Ebeling & Yasué 2008; Auckland et al., 2011; Santika et al. 2017; Mills et al. 2019, Pienkowski et al., 2024). On the other hand, they can also lead to leakages and displacement of disturbances to other geographies (Ewers & Rodrigues 2008, Gan & McCarl 2007; Henders & Ostwald 2014, Meyfroidt et al. 2020, Hertel et al. 2019). PANGEA proposes to address the following questions:

* ***Q16.*** *How do disturbance type and intensity—including different land uses—influence* ***post-disturbance recovery time scales*** *of forest structure, composition, and function?*
* ***Q17.*** *What* ***human activities and management practices*** *support the resilience of the tropical carbon sink, including protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) such as Indigenous and territorial community practices, agroforestry practices, and selective logging practices?*

To quantify the post-disturbance recovery time scales, PANGEA will integrate data from field inventories in disturbance-impacted regions with disturbance age datasets derived from long-term remote sensing (**Landsat**) and near-present remote sensing of forest structure (airborne lidar, **GEDI**, **EDGE\***, **NISAR\***, **BIOMASS\***), forest composition (airborne imaging spectroscopy, **EMIT**, **PRISMA**, **DESIS**, **PACE**) and ecosystem function (**ECOSTRESS**, **TROPOMI**) at landscapes across environmental and management gradients to build chronosequences. These chronosequences will be used to reduce uncertainties in process-based models that will then be used to attribute the role of environmental drivers and different disturbance characteristics on the recovery time scales across the PANGEA domain. By incorporating constraints on recovery, models could better simulate forest regrowth with the complex interactions among species composition, forest structure, and environmental factors, which ultimately would enhance their ability to project future shifts in carbon stock under an altered disturbance regime and inform conservation and restoration efforts (Hérault and Piponiot, 2018; de Paula et al., 2015; Shi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). Moreover, PANGEA will leverage ongoing efforts to detect human activities, such as a set of innovations that enable detection, mapping and monitoring of natural resources needed to enable livelihoods and human well being (Meemken et al. 2024). To address the diversity of practices across actors in tropical systems as well as different options for management, PANGEA will build on existing global categorization of management regimes (Lesiv et al. 2022) together with local context information on diversity of implementation options for these different regimes, as well as recent approaches on how to extract socio-economic information from satellite data (Yeh et al., 2020), which together with in situ and other auxiliary data can not only enable PANGEA to define tropical social-ecological system components and causal diagrams, fundamental to examine whether SES feedbacks deliver and support the resilience of tropical carbon sink and other ecosystem processes.

#### 3.2.4 Hydrological Cycle Feedbacks

Tropical forests play a fundamental role in the water cycle (van der Ent et al., 2010; Spracklen et al. 2018), and climate projections from CMIP6 indicate increases of both extreme dryness and extreme wetness in different parts of the tropics (Vogel et al., 2020). Yet, the spatial distribution of precipitation across the tropics by Earth System Models is highly uncertain, due to limited ability to represent extreme rainfall events (Negron-Juarez et al., 2024), marked divergence on how models represent rainfall recycling across continents (Baker and Spracklen 2022), and high uncertainty in existing. Moreover, accurate representation of evapotranspiration and sensible heat flux in models is critical for quantifying precipitation recycling. Model benchmarking of evapotranspiration at regional scales relies on remote sensing products, which also must be assessed. Previous studies indicated encouraging agreement between remote-sensing estimates and eddy covariance towers at tropical forests (Melo et al., 2021; Salazar-Martínez et al., 2022), but they rely on a very limited number of sites. In reality, there is considerable spatial variation in magnitude and seasonality of evapotranspiration at regional and intercontinental scales (e.g., Baker et al., 2021; Weerasinghe et al., 2020). Furthermore, tropical forests are becoming increasingly impacted by deforestation and forest degradation (Lapola et al., 2023; Heinrich et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that the impacts of deforestation on tropical forest rainfall depends on the scale of deforestation (Spracklen et al., 2018). Previous research also indicated marked impacts of forest degradation on evapotranspiration and sensible heat fluxes (Brando et al., 2014; Jucker et al., 2018; Longo et al., 2020; de Oliveira et al., 2021; Rangel Pinagé et al., 2023). Widespread degradation-induced shifts in water and energy fluxes could also impact rainfall recycling across the tropics, but this hypothesis has not been tested yet. [TEXT HIGHLIGHTING IMPACTS ON FRESHWATER RESOURCES, WATER QUALITY, RIVER CONNECTIVITY?]. To address these knowledge gaps, PANGEA will answer the following questions:

* ***Q18.*** *What are the direct and indirect* ***hydroclimate controls*** *on tropical forests’ carbon, energy and water cycles?*
* ***Q19.*** *How does* ***precipitation recycling*** *influence the resilience or* ***vulnerability of forest carbon balance*** *with* ***shifting disturbance regimes****, land cover and land-use change, and increasing atmospheric CO2?*
* ***Q20.*** *How are climate and land-use change altering* ***land surface biophysical properties*** *that influence the strength of land-atmosphere feedbacks and teleconnections?*
* ***Q21.*** *How do* ***deforestation****,* ***degradation****, and* ***forest regrowth*** *alter regional* ***hydrological cycles*** *in tropical regions, including precipitation regimes, freshwater resources, and water quality, and river connectivity?*

To investigate the hydroclimate drivers of ecosystem function across the tropics, PANGEA will integrate in situ weather and eddy covariance measurements with satellite measurements of water vapor content and precipitation (**GOES-R**, **GPM**), land surface temperature, evapotranspiration and evaporative stress (**ECOSTRESS**) and SIF (**FLEX\*, TROPOMI, OCO-3**). In addition, PANGEA will employ **SMAP**, **SMOS**, **NISAR**, **AMSR-E**, and **EMIT** data to measure soil moisture, canopy water content, hydraulic traits, and thermal stress. To further quantify land surface biophysical properties, PANGEA will also obtain surface albedo, and other surface radiation fluxes from **VIIRS** and **GOES-R**. Surface hydrological measurements from **SWOT** will be used to characterize tropical terrestrial water bodies (lakes, reservoirs, wetlands) and assess fresh water resources. These datasets will be used in conjunction with forest structural and compositional changes associated with deforestation and forest degradation (*Section 3.2.3*) to assess the emergent relationships between different types of land cover and land use change with shifts in precipitation and water storage across the PANGEA domain. These datasets will be used to both provide initial and boundary conditions to process-based models (*Section 6.4*) on the extent of deforestation and forest degradation, and to provide benchmarks on the impacts of deforestation and degradation on water, energy and carbon cycles at different landscapes. In situ, airborne and satellite datasets obtained and/or constrained by PANGEA will provide critical datasets obtained and to assess the ability of Earth System Models to represent precipitation recycling across the different continents.

### 3.3 Projections

#### 3.3.1 Environmental Controls on the Future Carbon, Water, Energy and Nutrient Cycles

The future of precipitation patterns across the tropics remain highly uncertain, but Earth system model simulations suggest that tropical South America may see mean annual precipitation reductions while total precipitation in Central Africa may remain similar or even increase (Dobler et al. 2024). However, stability in mean annual precipitation does not mean stability in the hydrological cycle. For example, Rainfall seasonality may become more pronounced and with stronger interannual variability (Gloor et al., 2013), and warming trends may increase atmospheric and soil dryness even if precipitation remains similar to historical averages (Cook et al., 2020; Ukkola et al., 2020). In addition, the effects of atmospheric CO2 on hydroclimate depend on multiple interacting factors and remain uncertain. For example, high CO2 may reduce leaf-level transpiration due to lower stomatal conductance (Sampaio et al., 2021), but the ecosystem-level response also depends on changes in leaf area index (Li et al., 2018). Moreover, deforestation and forest degradation have major impacts on evapotranspiration, canopy interception, runoff and water storage (Heerspink et al., 2020), which could potentially impact rainfall across the Amazon (Spracklen et al., 2018; OTHER REF?), although there is great uncertainty on the magnitude of this effect in modeling studies (e.g., Pires and Costa 2013; Swann et al., 2015).

Changes in hydroclimate, atmospheric CO2, land cover and land also interact with changes in the nutrient cycling, and understanding these feedbacks is critical. Previous research suggested that CO2 fertilization effects can be greatly reduced when phosphorus is a limiting factor (Yang et al., 2016; Fleischer and Terrer 2022), phosphorus and potassium availability influence net primary productivity during droughts (Manu et al., 2024), and nitrogen can be an important limiting factor in secondary forests (Davidson et al., 2007). However, our understanding of the feedbacks between nutrient cycling and other drivers (climate, CO2 fertilization and land cover and land use change) come from highly localized manipulative experiments, making the scaling to highly heterogeneous landscapes and continental scales challenging (Townsend et al., 2008). By integrating coordinated measurements across multiple landscapes and scales, PANGEA will address the following questions:

* ***Q22.*** *How will changes in precipitation patterns (e.g., ITCZ displacement), increasing temperatures, and shifting disturbance dynamics in tropical forests alter the* ***terrestrial water balance*** *via changes in seasonal precipitation timing and duration, evapotranspiration, and soil water?*
* ***Q23.*** *How will* ***future changes in vegetation****, including deforestation, degradation, and regrowth, impact local, regional, and cross-continental climate and hydrology?*
* ***Q24.*** *How will increasing temperatures, atmospheric CO2, and extreme events impact* ***nutrient availability*** *and* ***soil-vegetation interactions****?*

Considering that these questions will explore future scenarios of changes across the tropics, PANGEA will rely on process-based models that will be fully integrated with remote sensing (Section 6.4). For example, to initialize cohort- and individual-based mechanistic models with realistic, observed forest structure and composition across environmental gradients, PANGEA will integrate multispectral, lidar, radar, and imaging spectroscopy data collected both through PANGEA airborne campaigns and from satellite measurements (**GEDI**, **EMIT**, **VIIRS**, **Sentinel-3**, **NISAR\***, **SBG VSWIR\***). The emergent relationships based on remote sensing relating forest structure, composition and function (Section 3.1.2) as well as remotely sensed hydroclimate and water stress variables (Section 3.1.3) will be used for assessing and reducing model uncertainty. [SOMETHING ON NUTRIENTS?]. The optimized models will then be applied to scenarios that are representative of a range of scenarios that allow for quantifying and attributing the role of changes in climate, atmospheric CO2, land cover and land use in driving changes in biogeophysical and biogeochemical cycles.

#### 3.3.2 Resilience of Heterogeneous Forests to Disturbances and Climate Extremes

Climate change and the expansion of deforestation and forest degradation across the tropics will likely expose forests to more frequent anthropogenic and natural disturbances (Seidl et al., 2017; Lapola et al., 2023). Widespread shifts in disturbance regimes will have profound effects on ecosystem structure, composition and function, and in turn on the many local, regional, and global ecosystem services that tropical forests provide [REFs]. However, the long-term impact of novel disturbance regimes on tropical forests will ultimately depend several factors that are still poorly understood in tropical ecosystems: (1) the relative impact of intensity and frequency changes in disturbances (Williams et al., 2013); (2) the variability of resistance to disturbances and post-disturbance recovery across species and landscapes (Anderson-Teixeira et al., 2013, Powell et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2022); (3) the interactions between multiple disturbances impacting the same region; (4) the feedbacks between disturbance-driven shifts in forest structure and composition and additional disturbances (Silvério et al., 2019; Brando et al., 2020); and (5) the impacts of disturbances on ecosystem services and people livelihoods (Feng et al., 2013; Mamalakis et al., 2021). Advancing process-understanding and observation-based quantification of these factors is critical for improving modeling capabilities. Therefore, research in PANGEA will address the following questions:

* ***Q25.*** *Which* ***functionally distinct forest types*** *are most vulnerable to becoming net sources of carbon to the atmosphere in a changing climate, which are resistant, and why?*
* ***Q26.*** *How will climate warming and shifting extreme events interact with**land cover and land-use change to influence* ***shifting fire regimes*** *and their feedbacks with forest function and the climate?*
* ***Q27.*** *How will these future changes in climate and extreme events impact carbon cycling within tropical forests, and at what point will this lead to a* ***large-scale transition*** *in functional composition and/or the regions becoming a net carbon source?*
* ***Q28.*** *How will climate and land-use change interact with the changing vulnerability of tropical forests to influence the provisioning of and access to* ***social-ecological co-benefits,*** *including water availability, agricultural production, human health, disaster risk reduction, and cultural practices?*

Similarly to Section 3.3.1, process-based and agent-based models will be used to quantify the impacts of changes in disturbance regimes on hyper-diverse tropical forests, and the consequences for ecosystem provisions and services that may impact economic activities and the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. For process-based models, PANGEA will use the same process described in Section 3.3.1 to generate initial and boundary conditions. Likewise, emergent relationships between functional diversity and recovery rates will be derived using data from airborne campaigns and combined with data streams from SIF (**TROPOMI**, **OCO-2/3, FLEX\***), thermal infrared measurements (**ECOSTRESS, GOES-R**, **MTG-I**) and the remote-sensing based chronosequences of ecosystem recovery (Section 3.2.3). To quantify the impacts of tropical forests on social-ecological co-benefits, PANGEA will conduct integrated social-ecological systems research to better understand the patterns and influence of land use and its change, including deforestation, degradation, restoration, and fire regimes across tropical biomes. PANGEA will also study the feedbacks between social and ecological systems, spanning modern industrial systems to traditional, local, and Indigenous forest management, and how these systems affect ecosystem resilience and the provision of ecosystem services. PANGEA will integrate social and ecological data into existing and new models to capture the feedbacks within social-ecological systems under different economic, cultural, environmental, and governance conditions.

## 4. Scientific and Technical Advancement from PANGEA

PANGEA will leverage decades of scientific efforts, including large programs such as LBA (Avissar et al. 2002, Davidson et al., 2012), international forest inventory plot networks (ForestPlots.net et al., 2021), and multiple model development efforts, including (but not restricted to) NASA’s Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO), NASA’s GISS BiomeE (Weng et al., 2022) and NGEE-Tropics E3SM-FATES ( Koven et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2023; Knox et al., 2024; Shuman et al., 2024). Despite these efforts, attempts to assess the resistance and resilience of tropical forests to disturbance have garnered inconsistent results. Field studies suggest Central African forests may be more resistant or resilient to changing climatic conditions and may offer a longer-term carbon sink compared to other tropical forests (Hubau et al., 2020; Bennett et al., 2021). However, satellite remote sensing studies indicate that Central African forests are just as sensitive to climate anomalies as the Amazon and other tropical forest regions (Liu et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2019). Inconsistencies between field measurements and satellite observations must be reconciled to predict the impact of climate change on the role of these forests in global carbon and water cycles. Several factors may explain these inconsistencies, including: 1) changing rates of tree mortality, 2) different sensitivity of photosynthesis, respiration rates, and other ecosystem processes, (which alter net carbon and water fluxes), to natural and anthropogenic disturbances, 3) differing intensities and patterns of deforestation and degradation on ecosystem structure and function, and 4) different evolutionary trajectories that have resulted in unique biodiversity and species interactions that directly influence ecosystem resilience (e.g., varying megafauna abundances across tropical forests).

PANGEA will investigate these hypotheses, and others to be determined by the PANGEA community, by adding a pan-tropical view gaining new knowledge from enhanced multidimensional remote sensing measurements and analyses. The PANGEA view emphasizes integration of ground measurements, remote sensing datasets, and models, supporting remote sensing algorithm development and model-data integration in tropical forests. We foresee significant scientific advances from a coordinated campaign of collocated remote and ground measurements of ….. PANGEA will:

* **Elucidate** the patterns of recent (5-30 years) and ongoing change in tropical forest landscapes, dynamics, and feedbacks, and their geographic variation with an emphasis on comparisons between the Americas and Africa.
* **Increase**our understanding of processes that control heterogeneity in the vulnerability of tropical forest landscapes to structural and functional change.
* **Provide**improved projections of future changes in tropical forest landscapes encompassing the feedbacks in local, regional, and global climates and social-ecological systems.

*These scientific advances will be enable*d by technical advances in:

* **Integration** of ground and remote sensing measurements leading to more reliable calibrations of remote sensed variables;
* **Development**of data-model-integration that improves the representation of the functionally important components of tropical forest diversity that are scalable with remote sensing.

PANGEA will characterize ecosystem structure and function across multiple dimensions, from intact to degraded and low- to high-diversity tropical forest ecosystems. PANGEA will measure floristic and phylogenetic diversity as well as vegetation demographic rates, using existing ground data from long-term forest inventory plots, and functional and structural diversity using airborne lidar. Coincident airborne VSWIR data and in situ leaf trait measurements will map canopy traits and distinct functional communities, in addition to evaluating scalable models leveraging satellite measurements. Using this output, we will characterize differences across abiotic, land-use, and animal abundance gradients. The resulting improvements in our understanding of trait distributions will improve our models of ecosystem fluxes under climate change and land-use change forcings and evaluate differences in ecosystem responses. With this combination of measurements and models, PANGEA will address how varying tropical forest structure and function influences tropical forest stability in the face of land-use and climate change impacts.

The integration between field and remote sensing data with model development and assessment will be an integral part of PANGEA (*Section 6.4*). In situ and airborne remote sensing measurements across critical gradients will be used for reducing parameter uncertainty and providing initial and boundary conditions for process-based models. PANGEA’s teams will employ artificial intelligence and machine learning models to obtain synthesis datasets that scale measurements at intensive PANGEA sites and partner sites to the core and extended PANGEA domain using satellite remote sensing. These synthesis datasets will be used both for benchmarking process-based models at large scale and to provide boundary conditions for inverse models. [ADD A SENTENCE EXPLAINING HOW PANGEA DATA WILL BE USED BY AGENT-BASED MODELS, OR INCORPORATE AGENT-BASED MODELS IN THE TEXT ABOVE]. Model and data integration will be fundamental for answering PANGEA’s key questions (*Section 3*), which will serve as the basis for studies seeking to (1) understand the role of structural and functional diversity in controlling the carbon, water, energy and nutrient cycles of tropical forests; (2) investigate how increased CO₂ levels and rising temperatures specifically affect carbon sequestration rates in tropical forests; (3) quantify the impacts of extreme events, such as severe droughts, on forest health and carbon emission; (4) advance understanding of the consequences of deforestation and forest degradation on biodiversity, biogeophysical and biogeochemical cycles, ecosystem services and hydroclimate; (5) evaluate the effectiveness of various forest restoration strategies in improving resilience and mitigating climate impacts essential for developing practical responses to ecosystem degradation and climate change; and (6) characterize the risk of tropical forests reaching critical transitions to alternative states due climate change, deforestation, and forest degradation, and determine the role of biodiversity in mitigating such vulnerabilities.

## 5. Critical Role of NASA Remote Sensing

***PANGEA aims to determine whether different tropical forests will share the same fate or vary in their responses to the effects of climate and land-use change, with a particular focus on Earth’s two largest tropical forests***.

Identifying processes that result in tropical forest stability is paramount for constraining uncertainty in predictions of future terrestrial carbon flux dynamics. To reconcile differences between ground and satellite measurements and improve scaling strategies to advance future monitoring, coordinated airborne measurements are necessary to characterize how and why Central African and American tropical forests differ in their ability to remain stable in the face of rapid climate change. For example, sufficiently high spatial resolution (~2-5 m) is needed to adequately scale organismal level leaf and tree dynamics to landscapes, serving as an intermediary between field and satellite observations (**Figure X**). PANGEA builds directly upon the scaling developments and successes from the NASA Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment (ABoVE) in North America (e.g., Virkkala et al., 2021; Peltola et al., 2019; Braghiere et al., 2023), which shed new light on previously understudied Arctic systems.

PANGEA will leverage NASA’s Airborne Science Program to obtain high-resolution data from VSWIR imaging spectroscopy, small footprint lidar, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), and other remote sensing systems over tropical forests in Central Africa and the Americas to address PANGEA’s science objectives. Obtaining high spatial and spectral resolution data in these regions supports unprecedented evaluation of forest dynamics, including fluxes, growth, mortality, and functional strategies (e.g., nutrient- and water-use efficiency, phenology) at the resolution of individual trees across large landscapes that vary in their species composition, soil characteristics, topography, disturbance regimes, and human interactions.

Persistent cloud coverage is a significant issue when using space-based XCO2 and XCH4 to constrain tropical greenhouse gas fluxes (e.g., Rayner et al., 2002; Qu et al., 2021). Even at the higher spatial resolution of the current low earth orbiting satellite sensors retrieving XCH4 (e.g., TROPOMI [3.5 km x 7.0 km]) and XCO2 (e.g., OCO-2 [1.3 km x 2.2 km]) over 95% of retrieved information is filtered due to clouds in the tropics (Qu et al., 2021). Higher spatial resolution XCO2 and XCH4 satellite sensors such as the recently launched MethaneSat (100 m x 400 m) will greatly improve the ability to retrieve tropical flux measurements through cloud gaps. Other point-source mapping satellite sensors (e.g., EMIT, GHGSat, Carbon Mapper, PRISMA) have been launched with very high spatial resolution (<100 m x 100 m). However, these target mode observations will not provide the global coverage needed to constrain tropical greenhouse gas budgets. Cloud cover will likewise affect estimates of land surface surface temperature and evapotranspiration from thermal remote sensing, which will require bias correction approaches (Van Niel et al., 2012).

PANGEA will obtain a large variety of airborne and ground-based observations coincident with overpasses of existing NASA (e.g., OCO-2/3, EMIT, PACE, VIIRS, SMAP, GRACE, SWOT, AMSR-E, AMSR2, ICESat-2, Landsat, GEDI), international (e.g., TROPOMI, GOSAT, GOSAT-2, CO2M, RADARSAT, Envisat, PRISMA, DESIS, BIOMASS), and commercial (e.g., GHGSat, MethaneSat, WorldView, Quickbird/GeoEye, Planet) satellite products. These observations will aid in validation of these satellite’s retrievals of forest structure, foliar traits, forest diversity, inundation, precipitation, disturbance dynamics, and atmospheric composition. They will also assist in assessing the capability of future planned satellite sensors (e.g., NISAR, SBG, BIOMASS, CHIME, GLIMR, FLEX, Carbon Mapper, EDGE) and observation strategies. PANGEA will allow for investigating the required instrument characteristics (e.g., precision, accuracy, spatial/spectral resolution) and observational strategies (e.g., low Earth orbit versus geostationary) for monitoring greenhouse emissions and the many variables driving tropical source-sink dynamics.

## 6. Research Strategy and Study Design

Similar to previous NASA campaigns, PANGEA will enable NASA-funded investigators to investigate the main scientific questions (Section 3) through competed calls for proposals. Research will integrate ground, airborne, and satellite-based science investigations and models to enable effective interpretation of present and future satellite-based data. Building on former NASA campaigns in the tropics, PANGEA will be co-designed with local institutions and partners to facilitate collaborations and build new relationships within the scientific community, with a special emphasis on interactions among scientists from the US and tropical forest countries. Throughout the science definition and campaign years, PANGEA will work to engage and train early career scientists, both from the US and local tropical forest institutions. PANGEA will leave a legacy of open data, open science, capacity building, and strengthened partnerships, providing a strong basis for future research.

### 6.1 Overall Study Design

PANGEA stands on the shoulders of highly successful NASA field and airborne campaigns to Africa and South America, including SAFARI 2000, LBA, AfriSAR-1 and -2, BioSCape, and several Earth Venture Suborbital (EVS) programs. To initiate PANGEA, we will define our Concise Experiment Plan during a 1 to 2 year Science Definition phase. This phase involves selecting priority landscapes, refining ground, airborne, and satellite measurement plans, defining analyses to address the campaign’s science questions, and determining a preliminary budget. This strategy will form the basis for a NASA call for proposals to recruit the PANGEA campaign Phase 1 interdisciplinary science team to provide deeper insights into tropical systems. We expect NASA will solicit proposals for science team participation every three years.

Following the science definition phase and the selection of a Phase 1 science team, the PANGEA project will be executed over 6 to 9 years. The initial focus will be on establishing and augmenting field sites with new instrumentation, as well as satellite-based data analyses and models to optimize future measurements. Early model development analysis of existing data will reveal the greatest sensitivities that will guide the implementation details and scientific emphases of campaign measurements. Peak data acquisition would occur in Phase 2, which will happen during years 2-4 of a six-year project or years 2-7 of a nine-year project, ensuring that resources are spent on measurements with the highest scientific return. In Phase 3, which will take place during years 5–6 of a six-year project or years 8–9 of a nine-year campaign, field campaigns will be kept at minimum. At this phase, the focus of PANGEA will shift from data acquisition to synthesis and modeling studies that extensively use the data acquired during Phases 1 and 2 and that directly contribute to answering PANGEA’s scientific questions. Field and airborne remote sensing data, as well as derived data synthesis products and modeling results, will promptly be made available to the full team following NASA open science guidelines (*Section 7.4*).

### 6.2 Essential Scientific Measurements

| **Addressing this gap requires a coordinated ground and airborne campaign spanning the two largest tropical forests in Africa and the Americas.** |
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PANGEA leverages NASA’s history of successful field and airborne campaigns in the tropics (**Figure X**) to measure ecosystem dynamics and status at the onset (and end) of the dry season, when tropical forest systems are least (and most) stressed, revealing functional differences (Yang et al., 2021). Recent achievements that demonstrate feasibility include the highly successful AfriSAR-2 campaign that collected airborne L- and P-band UAVSAR data over Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, Ghana, the Republic of Congo, and Sao Tome and Principe. Yet there remains a critical need for collocated and coincident measurements across the highly variable tropical landscapes, particularly in Africa, where data gaps are the greatest, and process-based understanding is poorest. Achieving PANGEA’s objectives therefore requires flight campaigns that meet the measurement requirements described in *Section 6.2.1*, based out of multiple countries in Central Africa and the tropical Americas, to span the range of environments present in these systems. These observations will link high resolution process measurements (forest plots, chamber measurements, flux towers, eDNA, animal movement data, Indigenous ecological knowledge) with extensive satellite data providing a baseline for ongoing field and spaceborne measurements, and allowing comparison with past studies.

PANGEA will establish a network of centrally coordinated field and airborne campaigns that are distributed across targeted tropical forest ecosystems to fill data gaps and enable scaling between field and remotely sensed datasets, as well as regional and pan-tropical scale modeling.

| **PANGEA provides a framework for scaling and integrating airborne and satellite measurements with in-situ field observations, eddy-covariance flux tower measurements, and models to advance scientific understanding and remote sensing capabilities across thematic areas that directly address the goals of NASA’s Carbon Cycle and Ecosystems Focus Area, in alignment with the Water and Energy Cycle and Climate Variability and Change Focus Areas.** |
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Using PANGEA measurements, differences will be characterized across biotic, abiotic, and land-use gradients. Integrated output from ground, airborne, and satellite measurements will then be used to model ecosystem structure, function, and fluxes under climate and land-use change scenarios to evaluate differences in ecosystem responses. In doing so, PANGEA addresses how varying tropical forest dynamics influences tropical forest stability in the face of climate and land-use change impacts.

#### 6.2.1 Ideal, Baseline, and Threshold Measurements

We derive the **Ideal**, **Baseline, and Threshold Essential Scientific Measurements** from the PANGEA Science Objectives to: 1) understand differences in tropical carbon stocks and fluxes and the forces driving heterogeneity, 2) resolve scaling issues between field and satellite data by advancing process understanding and scaling methods, and 3) forecast varying tropical forest ecosystem responses to climate and land-use change. The PANGEA Investigation Functional Requirements are described below.

The **Ideal Investigation** fulfills all Science Objectives (*Section 1.1*) and all Science Questions (*Section 3*) at a minimum of 2 American and 2 African tropical forest landscapes. To meet these Ideal Investigation Objectives, we establish the following requirements:

* Collect aircraft measurements via wall-to-wall flightline mosaics and sampling transects over a minimum of two priority landscapes in Africa and two priority landscapes in the Americas.
  + **Note:** Landscapes will be selected from candidate sites during the development of the Concise Experiment Plan.
  + Airborne measurements will include one successful capture of the wet-to-dry transition and one successful capture of dry-to-wet transition at each landscape. Wet-to-dry and dry-to-wet captures can occur in different years on different continents.
  + **Note:** A variability analysis is underway, which will inform important endmembers to capture. This will be included in the final white paper, and will contribute to landscape selection during the development of the Concise Experiment Plan.
* Collect coincident and collocated ground measurements during airborne acquisitions for required measurements (e.g., chemical leaf traits, chamber flux measurements).
* Collect ongoing ground measurements at required temporal frequencies throughout the campaign (e.g., monthly drone- and ground-based tree mortality and phenology acquisitions, sub-hourly flux measurements).
* Develop and apply data synthesis approaches to scale field and airborne observations to the PANGEA’s core domain using satellite data, to obtain constrained estimates (and uncertainties) of variables of interest.
* Evaluate the transferability of data synthesis products across the domain through cross-validation.
* Model carbon, water, and energy fluxes, as well as vegetation dynamics, using terrestrial biosphere models initialized, parameterized, and benchmarked with the remote-sensing based data synthesis products.
* Apply optimized models to test tropical forest stability within and among all investigation landscapes and regionally based on terrestrial biosphere and social-ecological systems model results.
* Model the relative role of climate, soils, and divergent evolutionary histories in determining variation in tropical forests’ stability in the face of climate change impacts.

The **Baseline Investigation** fulfills all Science Objectives (*Section 1.1*) at exactly 2 American and 2 African tropical forest landscapes. The Baseline Investigation requires one successful airborne capture of the wet-to-dry transition and one successful airborne capture of the dry-to-wet transition at each landscape. Our investigation requirements drive our Measurement, Model, and Functional Requirements (see Tables A1 & A2).

Our **Threshold Investigation** fulfills all Science Objectives (*Section 1.1*) at two landscapes in Africa only. Our Threshold Investigation will rely on existing data, planned missions in the American tropics (see *Section 6.2.3*), commercial data-buys, and deployable drones, to utilize satellite data over the Americas for comparisons.

**Temporal revisit requirements:** Two focused airborne campaigns with wall-to-wall mosaics and transects across multiple landscapes are necessary to capture seasonal transitions (wet-to-dry and dry-to-wet, which will be defined for each landscape) and account for both within- and among-continental heterogeneity in a standardized way. Single airborne campaigns during these transition seasons will capture necessary endmembers for scaling seasonal differences in fluxes, stocks, traits, plant-animal interactions, hydrodynamics, land-atmosphere interactions, and fire and agricultural land-use activities. The time elapsed between the two captures and between different landscapes will not affect the ability to capture these endmembers, building in valuable airborne campaign flexibility. Within landscape level subsections of these airborne acquisitions (e.g., 10-20 km2), high-frequency (≤ monthly) drone measurements of forest structure and spectra will allow for quantification of fine-scale temporal trends (e.g., mortality, phenology) and provide calibration and validation data for the development of satellite methods to monitor these dynamics. In addition, over a 6- to 9-year campaign, it is highly likely that extreme events, such as a major fire, drought, or an El Niño event, will occur, providing further opportunities for analysis.

**Spatial variability requirements:** Ecosystem structure, function, fluxes, and biodiversity are characterized across multi-dimensional gradients of intact to degraded, low- to high-diversity, and low- to high-carbon stock tropical forest systems. **PANGEA implements a sampling-to-scale approach, with a nested sampling design.** Ground and airborne measurements will span gradients within a landscape, and landscapes span climatic and biodiversity gradients within a continent (**Figure TBD**). PANGEA data collection will be conducted at landscapes that encompass intact, disturbed, and degraded conditions across forests, peatland and wetland ecosystems (and mangroves where nearby coastal data acquisition allows), as well as adjacent agro-ecosystems. Coordinated, coincident ground data collection on fluxes, foliar traits, forest structure, tree mortality, faunal diversity, species interactions, soil moisture, and more will be collected across these gradients within each landscape. See *Section for 6.3 Candidate Landscapes* and *Section 6.2.4 Field Observations and Studies* for more information.

| **Table X. Description of ecological and geophysical variables relevant to this campaign, with corresponding observing requirements and existing or forthcoming Earth Observation assets. ET: evapotranspiration; LST: land surface temperature; SIF: solar-induced fluorescence. Purple text indicates satellites from non-US federal agencies. \*Indicates missions that have not yet launched and/or may still be under competitive consideration. \*\* Indicates recently ended missions.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable(s)** | **Science Q’s** | **Ground Measurements** | **Observing Technology** | **Earth Observation Assets** | |
| **Satellite**  **(planned/proposed\*)** | **Airborne**  **(drone & aircraft)** |
| **GPP** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q11, Q13-Q15, Q17, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q26 | Flux towers, leaf-level spectra | Infrared Spectroscopy | OCO-2/3, TROPOMI, GOES-R ABI, AHI, MTG-I, NASA GHG ESE\*, Sentinel 5P/5\*, FLEX\*, CO2M\*, GOSAT-2, GOSAT-GW\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3 + HyTES, MASTER |
| **ET** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q11, Q13-Q15, Q17, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q24-Q26 | Flux towers | Thermal | Landsat, ECOSTRESS, SBG\*, CHIME\*, TRISHNA\*, LSTM\*, VIIRS, Sentinel-3, Commercial\*, GEO weather satellites | NASA HyTES, MASTER |
| **Ecosystem Respiration** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q13, Q15, Q17, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q26 | Flux towers | Infrared Spectroscopy | GOES-R ABI, AHI, MTG-I | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3 + HyTES, MASTER |
| **CO2 & CH4 Fluxes** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q11, Q13, Q14, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q26 | Flux towers, chamber measurements | Imaging Spectroscopy | EMIT, MethaneSat, SBG\*, Carbon-i\*, CarbonMapper\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3, UZH ARES, NEON AOP, GAO |
| Airborne Eddy Covariance (AEC) | NASA CARAFE |
| **Column CO2/CH4/CO** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q11, Q13, Q14, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q26 | TCCON, COCCON, EM27/SUN Spectrometers | Infrared Spectroscopy | OCO-2/3, NASA GHG ESE\*, Sentinel 5P/5\*, FLEX\*, CO2M\*, GOSAT-2, GOSAT-GW\* | NASA CFIS (SIF), DLR CoMet (CO2/CH4) |
| **Aboveground Biomass** | Q1, Q2, Q4-Q8, Q10, Q11, Q13, Q15, Q18, Q20, Q22 | Forest inventory plot data, terrestrial laser scanning | Lidar | GEDI, Icesat-2, MOLI\*, EDGE\* | NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar (drone and aircraft) |
| Radar | Sentinel-1, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\* | NASA UAVSAR |
| **Tree Mortality** | Q9, Q11-Q13, Q15, Q17-Q22, Q25, Q27 | Repeat census forest inventory plot data | Lidar, Radar, Multispectral | Landsat, Sentinel-1/2, Planet, GEDI, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\*, Edge\* | Repeat drone RGB or Lidar |
| **Canopy Height** | Q5-Q7, Q10-Q13, Q15, Q17-Q22, Q27 | Terrestrial laser scanning | Lidar | GEDI, Icesat-2, MOLI\*, EDGE\* | NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar (drone and aircraft) |
| **Vertical Height Heterogeneity** | Radar | NISAR\*, Sentinel-1, BIOMASS\* | NASA UAVSAR |
| **Canopy Gap Dynamics** |
| **Spectral Diversity** | Q5, Q10-Q12, Q15, Q18, Q21, Q27 | Leaf-level spectra | VSWIR Imaging Spectroscopy (IS) | EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, EnMAP, Planet’s Tanager, SBG\*, CHIME\*, FLEX\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3, UZH ARES, GAO |
| **Functional Diversity** | Q5-Q7, Q10-Q13, Q15, Q18, Q21, Q22, Q27 | Plant taxonomic diversity; plant traits; IEK, TEK, LEK |
| **Canopy Foliar Traits:** LMA, N, P, Ca, K, pigments | Q5-Q7, Q10-Q13, Q15, Q18, Q21, Q22 | Plant taxonomic diversity; plant functional traits |
| **Faunal Diversity:** presence/abs., abundance, movement, species interactions | Q5, Q10-Q12, Q18, Q27 | Camera traps; bioacoustic sensors; animal movement tracking; eDNA; IEK, TEK, LEK; plant species inventories | VSWIR Imaging Spectroscopy (IS), Lidar, Radar | EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, EnMAP, Planet’s Tanager, SBG\*, CHIME\*, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3, UZH ARES, GAO, NASA UAVSAR, NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar |
| **Phenology** | Q2, Q4, Q11-Q15, Q18, Q22, Q27 | Phenocams, Long-term ground-based phenological observations; IEK, TEK, LEK | Optical Radiometers (OR) and VSWIR Imaging Spectroscopy (IS) | Landsat, Sentinel-2, Planet, OLCI, EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, EnMAP, SBG\*, CHIME\*, FLEX\* | Repeat drone RGB |
| **Water Stress:** soil moisture | Q1-Q4, Q6-Q9, Q13-Q19, Q22, Q24, Q25 | Soil moisture probes | Microwave radar/radiometry | SMAP, SMOS, Sentinel-1, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\*, LSTM\*, | NASA UAVSAR, AirMOSS |
| **Water Stress:** leaf water content, leaf/ plant hydraulic traits | Q2-Q4, Q6-Q9, Q12-Q19, Q22 | Leaf water content, Leaf/stem water potentials & conductance, tower-based VOD (L-band GNSS) | GNSS-R/Signals of Opportunity, Imaging Spectroscopy | AMSR-E, EMIT, SBG VSWIR & TIR\*, CHIME\*, FLEX\*, SNOOPI\*, CYGNSS, Lemur-2 | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3 + HyTES, MASTER |
| **Thermal Stress:** T50, land surface temperature, emissivity | Q2-Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q12-Q15, Q19 | FLIR cams | Thermal | Landsat, ECOSTRESS, SBG\*, FLEX\*, TRISHNA\*, LSTM\*, Commercial\* | NASA HyTES, MASTER |
| **Active Fire** | Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q12, Q13, Q19, Q20, Q23, Q27 | Life fuel moisture, soil moisture, burn area, burn severity, IEK, TEK, LEK | Thermal | Landsat, VIIRS, Sentinel-3, SBG\*, TRISHNA\*, LSTM\*, Commercial\* | NASA HyTES, MASTER |
| **Biomass Burning Aerosols** | Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q12, Q13, Q19, Q20, Q27 | Fuel type, fuel density, aerosol measurements | UV/Infrared, Photometers, Lidar | OMPS, VIIRS, EMIT, PACE, OLCI, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\*, CALIPSO-CALIOP\*\*, AOS\* |  |
| **Land-Use and Land Cover** | Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q12-Q14, Q16, Q19-Q20, Q25, Q27 | Agricultural activity (crop type, yield, rotation), logging severity, fire practices, IEK, TEK, LEK, conservation management practices | Optical Radiometers (OR), VSWIR IS, Lidar, Radar | Landsat, Sentinel-2, Planet, VIIRS, OLCI, EMIT, PRISMA, EnMAP, SBG\*, CHIME\*, FLEX\*, CarbonMapper\*, PACE\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3, UZH ARES, GAO, NASA UAVSAR, NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar |
| **Provisioning & Cultural Ecosystem Services:** food, freshwater, medicine, spiritual and ceremonial practices | Q27 | Crop and NTFP harvest areas and yield, culturally and spiritually important forest type identification, water quantity and quality | Optical Radiometers (OR), VSWIR IS, Lidar, Radar | Landsat, Sentinel-1/2, Planet, VIIRS, OLCI, EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, EnMAP, SWOT, SMAP, SMOS, GRACE-FO, SBG\*, CHIME\*, FLEX\*, CarbonMapper\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3, UZH ARES, GAO, NASA UAVSAR, NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar |
| **Surface Water:** quantity, flows (discharge), inundation, Q24 | Q1-Q4, Q6-Q9, Q14, Q16-Q19, Q24, Q25, Q27 | Water-surface height, inundation extent, discharge characterization | Altimeter, Radar, Radiometer | SWOT, Sentinel-1, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\* | NASA UAVSAR |
| **Groundwater & Terrestrial Water Storage** | Q1-Q4, Q6-Q9, Q14, Q16-Q19, Q24, Q25, Q27 | Well measurements | Gravimetric | GRACE-FO, MC\* |  |
| **Atmospheric Moisture, VPD** | Q1-Q4, Q6-Q9, Q14, Q17, Q19, Q22, Q24, Q25, Q27 | Weather station | Microwave, infrared sounders, imagers | ATMS, GeoXO\*, AOS\* |  |
| **Wind** | Q1-Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q14, Q17, Q19, Q22, Q24, Q25 | Weather station | Doppler wind lidar | Aeolus | Radiosonde measurements |
| **Soil nutrients and texture** | Q21, Q22, Q24, Q25, Q27 | Soil samples | VSWIR Imaging Spectroscopy (IS) | EMIT, PACE, SBG\*, CHIME\* | NASA AVIRIS-NG/3 |
| Note: PANGEA will explore correlative relationships with remotely sensed variables, not direct measurements. | |
| **Topography / Geomorphology** | Q1, Q8, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q24, Q25, Q27 |  | Lidar, Radar | SRTM, Copernicus GLO-30 | NASA UAVSAR, NASA LVIS, small-footprint lidar |

#### 6.2.2 Satellite Remote Sensing Observations

There are a wealth of NASA satellite platforms that will contribute to the science and applications goals of PANGEA, as well as an ever-increasing ecosystem of sensors from other space agencies and non-governmental entities (**Table 1**). PANGEA is well-poised to leverage the Earth Observing System (EOS) missions for understanding patterns of tropical ecosystem properties and their changes in the recent past, as well as to advance the way we use spaceborne sensors in the age of the Earth System Observatory (ESO) missions. PANGEA is also poised to contribute to the improvement and refinement of ESO algorithms to better represent tropical ecosystems and address user needs in these globally important regions. The in situ work carried out by PANGEA paired with satellite remote sensing observations will allow tropical forest biomes and the people living in these regions to become part of the Earth Science to Action virtuous cycle, ensuring their inclusion in the process.

In **Table 2** below, we highlight a variety of operational and forthcoming NASA spaceborne sensors, their needs for advances in the tropics which PANGEA can address, and the science that the PANGEA team will be able to advance with the use of these sensors in concert with planned PANGEA activities. This table also includes some sensors that are operated by non-NASA space agencies where data are openly available. PANGEA will also explore commercial datasets available through NASA’s Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition (CSDA) program during the Science Definition and Campaign phases of the project.

| Table X. Examples of satellite remote sensing observations and advances. Purple text indicates satellites from non-US federal agencies. \*Indicates missions that have not yet launched and/or may still be under competitive consideration. | |
| --- | --- |
| Satellite Observations | Calibration, Validation, and Algorithm Advances from PANGEA |
| Sentinel-1, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\* | PANGEA will contribute to efforts underway to calibrate and validate biomass mapping along gradients of carbon stocks and disturbance. This work will demonstrate NISAR capabilities and support data product development from both NISAR and BIOMASS in dense, closed-canopy tropical forests. |
| EMIT, CHIME\*, SBG-VSWIR\* | Algorithms that leverage VSWIR data to understand vegetation canopy traits and chemical properties are currently trained on datasets that have poor representation of tropical forests. PANGEA collections will support improved L3 vegetation products from SBG VSWIR and could also support community-generated products for EMIT that are focused on tropical regions. |
| OCO-2/3, TROPOMI, MethaneSat, EMIT, CarbonMapper | Persistent cloud cover impedes space-based XCO2 and XCH4 measurements of tropical greenhouse gas fluxes (e.g., Rayner et al., 2002; Qu et al., 2021), resulting in the filtering out of over 95% of retrieved information (Qu et al., 2021). Higher spatial resolution XCO2 and XCH4 satellite sensors (e.g., MethaneSat) will greatly improve tropical flux measurements retrievals through cloud gaps, as will other point-source mapping satellite sensors (e.g., EMIT, GHGSat, Carbon Mapper, PRISMA), although these target-mode observations will not provide the global coverage needed to constrain tropical greenhouse gas budgets. PANGEA measurements will support L3 product development, including scaling between target-mode observations and sensors with broader spatial coverage. |
| *Carbon-I\** | Carbon-I is currently being proposed in the Earth System Explorer program. If Carbon-I is selected, PANGEA measurements would be valuable for validation of GHG fluxes from wetland systems and water cycle monitoring as observed by Carbon-I, whose mission plan has a focus on resolving the data drought in tropical regions due to cloud cover. |
| GEDI, ICESat-2, EDGE\* | Retrieval of tree- and crown-level structural attributes from lidar is necessary to link organismal processes and dynamics to ecosystem responses observed at landscape scales, as is vertical variation in forest structure. Spaceborne lidar yields community scale observations that, although incredibly valuable, remain insufficient to pair with tree level in situ measurements. PANGEA collections will support improved L3 GEDI products and EDGE calibration and validation (if selected). |
| SMAP, SMOS | SMAP exhibits a notable bias in tropical forests (Cho et al., 2023). However, significant advancements have been achieved by employing the Maximum Entropy Algorithm on SMAP (Wang et al., 2023). The scarcity of ground-based soil moisture observations remains a critical barrier to further enhancements, which PANGEA field measurements would help to alleviate. |
| Geostationary: GOES-R ABI & AHI (Americas), MTG-I (Africa) | Geostationary satellites offer opportunities for diurnal measurements of ecosystem dynamics. With imagers that now have VNIR spectral resolutions comparable to polar-orbiting sensors, important ecosystem dynamics like GPP and ecosystem respiration can be retrieved (Khan et al. 2021, Losos et al. 2024). PANGEA will support direct calibration, validation, and product development of these metrics over the Americas and Africa. |
| VIIRS, Sentinel-3 | Fires in standing tropical forests typically burn through leaf litter and woody fuels in the understory. Although tropical forest fires can severely degrade carbon stocks, biodiversity, and forest structure, their extent and frequency are poorly understood due to limitations in satellite fire detection algorithms, which struggle to capture low-intensity fires under dense canopies, leading to misconceptions about fire activity in these regions. PANGEA will support L3 product development to improve the accuracy of fire detection, including small-scale fires. |

#### 6.2.3 Airborne Remote Sensing Observations

PANGEA airborne observations will include instrumented aircraft and drones. Based on learned experience from ABoVE, recent recommendation from the AfriSAR-2 team, numerous international airborne NASA campaigns, and information gathered during the PANGEA scoping effort, flight plans will be co-designed with local partners. All requests for country clearances and flight permissions will be coordinated by NASA and JPL airborne programs working with the NASA Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR) and the US Department of State (see **Box 1**). When using a NASA aircraft or NASA-contracted aircraft all appropriate airworthiness processes and flight approval and releases will be coordinated at the PANGEA project level with the appropriate centers, NASA HQ and JPL. Exact sensors and aircraft will be determined during the development of the Concise Experiment Plan.

| **Box 1. International and Other Agreements**  PANGEA international partners will be engaged at the outset and continuously to ensure strong relationships that will support the success of field and airborne campaigns. For each PANGEA landscape, formal agreements and/or permissions will be obtained from relevant governments and Indigenous community leaders. As soon as PANGEA is selected, the PANGEA Science Team will begin to engage institutional partners to support the development of formal discussions on the required diplomatic agreements that will be needed to conduct field work and deploy aircraft in support of the NASA TE campaign. As pathways with each foreign government are established, the PANGEA Science Team will work with NASA SMD via the TE Program Manager to develop proper diplomatic arrangements for conducting field work and airborne campaigns in each country. Diplomatic agreements (such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOU’s), Implementing Agreements (IA), and/or flight clearances) will need to be created between the US Government and the given Foreign Nation as early as possible. When such documents are required between NASA and a Foreign Government, the PANGEA Science Team and the TE Program Manager, in collaboration with NASA’s OIIR, SMD, NASA Centers including JPL, the CCE Support Office, and the US State Department, will work through the proper diplomatic channels and protocols to establish the needed documents for a successful field and airborne campaigns. The PANGEA Science Team will also consult with NASA, the State Department, USFS and USAID to identify and pursue synergies between PANGEA activities and U.S. diplomatic objectives, including scientific cooperation and country-to-country ties. The PANGEA Science Team, TE Program, and CCE Support Office will work closely to guarantee that Indigenous land and sovereign territories are co-developers in any diplomatic approval processes. The current PANGEA Science Team’s experience with numerous international field and airborne campaigns will be utilized in establishing the proper international agreements for the PANGEA program.   * In order to fully engage international partnerships all PANGEA documents are [being co-written in multiple languages can be found here](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1Gw5jlwLzT7Z_KHRGMwto6nnl4nSpxRIX) on this hyperlink. |
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PANGEA leverages NASA’s history of successful international airborne campaigns, including many in the tropics. Most recently, NASA successfully executed the 2016 AfriSAR and 2023/2024 AfriSAR-2 campaigns to Gabon, where AfriSAR-2 expanded on the initial scope and successes of AfriSAR in Gabon to additionally collect data over Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, the Republic of Congo, and Sao Tome and Principe. In 2023, the BioSCape (Biodiversity Survey of the CapeBiodiversity Survey of the Cape) campaign successfully flew two NASA aircraft integrated with four airborne remote sensing instruments, acquiring contemporaneous observations from the UV through the VSWIR and thermal range as well as full waveform LiDAR data. This combination of instruments was accompanied by an extensive field observation campaign, executed by a diverse science team with ~50% local participation. BioSCape, through thoughtful co-development of the campaign with local partners, secured letters of support from 18 public institutions including numerous government departments. Afri-SAR and BioSCape’s success and continued capacity building has served as an excellent example of science diplomacy and has positively influenced the public’s perception of NASA and the United States in Africa.

A number of Earth Venture Suborbital (EVS) and other international NASA airborne campaigns have also demonstrated feasibility of NASA aircraft and NASA-contracted aircraft deploying internationally with in-situ and remote sensing instruments in support of multi-year large-scale campaigns in both Africa and Latin America. In 2023, NASA JPL had a successful campaign in Latin America with AVIRIS-NG collecting remote sensing data with a NASA contracted aircraft over Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador in South America for methane point source measurements in coordination with each country. Both the AVIRIS and UAVSAR program have decades of experience flying campaigns in South America. Over the last decade, NASA has flown several highly successful campaigns in India with the AVIRIS-NG sensor on an Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) aircraft for data acquisitions over India. All of these aforementioned campaigns represent decades of experience of NASA HQ and the centers (including JPL) working together with university and international collaborators to successfully acquire airborne remote sensing and in-situ data during global field campaigns.

| **When PANGEA develops the Concise Experiment Plan, we will continue to leverage the experience of team members from the international campaigns described above.** |
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Importantly, PANGEA airborne data collection does not necessarily require NASA assets or NASA aircraft to be deployed. Commercial data-buys and flights on foreign and commercial aircraft are also viable options for PANGEA airborne acquisitions. NASA sensors can be flown on commercial aircraft. For example, sensors from the AVIRIS program often fly both domestically and internationally on a Dynamic Aviation aircraft. The EVS Oceans Melting Greenland (OMG), Delta-X and Coral Reef Airborne Laboratory (CORAL) programs all successfully deployed NASA JPL contracted aircraft with JPL instruments and team members. Commercial data-buys will also greatly expand airborne capabilities. For example, US-funded commercial lidar transects span the entire countries of Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrating feasibility in important PANGEA geographies. The Airborne Research Facility for the Earth System (ARES), run by Professor Michael Schaepman and Dr. Andreas Hueni out of the University of Zürich, is another important partner supporting PANGEA airborne acquisitions. ARES has successfully acquired data for collaborative NASA and ESA campaigns. Sensors onboard ARES include the AVIRIS-4 imaging spectrometer, a full waveform LiDAR, and a high-performance photogrammetric camera.

There is strong alignment with and interest from partner space agency airborne data acquisitions. A series of Amazon 2025/26 campaigns coordinated between Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and the European Space Agency (ESA) will collect airborne fluorescence, methane, and in-situ measurements, as well as possible carbon flux and species measurements, including CO2 and CH4 by means of a HELIPOD carried by a helicopter. The German Aerospace Center (DLR) is planning a coordinated campaign in Brazil in 2026 with the goal of deploying a methane lidar (CHARM-F) and imaging systems for methane detection. The French Space Agency (CNES) is involved, with a similar focus on methane, using airborne and ground-based measurements. ESA is also planning airborne campaign activities over Africa focused on validating satellite greenhouse gas observations. ESA plans are ongoing and will be further defined following an ESA-led workshop in Morocco in the spring of 2025. Many current PANGEA team members are working closely with the INPE, ESA, DLR and CNES teams. PANGEA stands to greatly benefit from and contribute to these types of international collaborations.

PANGEA will also leverage rapidly advancing technologies, including drone capabilities, to supplement aircraft data collection. Drone data acquisitions will be particularly valuable for capturing measurements that require higher temporal frequency acquisitions (e.g., tree mortality, phenology). PANGEA will utilize TRL 9 lidar and RGB UAV instruments. Current commercial UAV-based hyperspectral offerings often present challenges and tend to cover the VNIR range only, losing the shortwave portion of the spectrum which is important for relevant ecosystem measurements. However, these technologies are advancing rapidly and can be harnessed for some valuable scientific insights. The PANGEA team will continue to track the availability and utility of these technologies and will build in protocols to employ them as appropriate to support science activities.

Some PANGEA measurements will require contemporaneous field observations and airborne observations. This will require advance planning of field observations and clear, reliable methods of communication between the flight and field teams. Clear lines of communication will be established at the outset between field teams and flight teams. Field teams will be oriented to the flight campaign at the beginning of each PANGEA flight campaign and will be required to develop a plan that builds in timing flexibility. In preparation for and during the campaign, PANGEA will rely on near-real time quicklooks and flight tracking tools, which will optimize airborne data collection and facilitate better field match-ups and will also increase transparency, as used in BioSCape (Cardoso et al., 2024).

**Flight planning to support inclusive international collaboration:** When planning flights, PANGEA will prioritize transparency and accessibility for the community for the duration of the campaign, including frequently reminding the science team and local partners that no airborne data is guaranteed, and that all proposed acquisitions are tentative until successfully executed. Transparent flight planning and decision-making processes will help build trust across the science team and preserve relationships with local partners. Borrowing from BioSCape’s success in this regard, PANGEA will work to implement a transparent prioritization scheme for science team regions of interest, and will solicit feedback on the prioritization scheme in advance of the airborne campaign. PANGEA will also share preliminary flight plans in advance and implement an iterative feedback process so that the science team and local partners can provide input. While all final flight decisions will ultimately be made by the PANGEA leadership, aircraft, and instrument teams in daily go/no-go calls, the lead-up to these decisions will be participatory and open. Information about daily flight activities will be conveyed promptly once daily decisions have been made.

#### 6.2.4 Field Observations and Studies

Ground-based measurements are necessary for 1) validation of spaceborne measurements of ecosystem properties from both the NASA program-of-record and newly launched missions; 2) uncovering mechanistic drivers of observed fluxes and patterns, which can then inform model development and the interpretation of spaceborne observations; and 3) evaluating the scale dependencies of ecological processes. Despite the importance of tropical ecosystems, they are dramatically underrepresented with respect to field observations, which can lead to poor representation in higher-level data products from satellite missions (see **Table X**), underscoring the importance of PANGEA field-based measurements and studies. Field observations broadly include the following:

* **Manual In Situ Data** includes all data that must be directly measured by individuals with boots-on-the-ground, and cannot be easily automated. Examples include leaf traits, terrestrial laser scanning, chamber flux measurements, species identification, eDNA, animal movement data, and Indigenous, Traditional, and Local Ecological Knowledge (IEK, TEK, and LEK). These data are important for understanding the mechanistic relationships between pattern and process and for the validation of drone, aircraft, and satellite measurements.
* Long-term forest inventory plots, enabling re-censusing to support new measurements (e.g., canopy traits, bioacoustics, camera traps) that build on rich forest demographic rates information (mortality, growth and recruitment rates).
* Partnerships with Indigenous and/or Local Communities.
* **Automated In Situ Data** includes all ground measurements that support validation and understanding of ecologic processes but does not require frequent site visits and is more easily automated. Examples include dendrometer and sap flux measurements, camera trap and bioacoustics data. Similar to biological sampling, these observations are important for developing and understanding processes and validating remote measurements.
* **Flux and Meteorological Data** include all data collected at a flux-tower or weather station, including carbon, water, and energy fluxes, air temperature, soil temperature, soil volumetric water content, relative humidity, and precipitation. The eddy-covariance technique uses scaffolding towers above the forest canopy and measures high-frequency wind and scalar (gas concentration, energy, momentum) data to estimate ecosystem water and carbon fluxes–where carbon refers to CO2, CH4, and later fluxes. The eddy-covariance technique is the accepted ‘gold standard’ for site level fluxes and provides critical ground truthing for spaceborne and modeled estimates of carbon, water, and energy fluxes. Eddy-covariance data have also dramatically improved understanding of the drivers of carbon and water fluxes and the infrastructure around flux towers will be highly beneficial for the installation of additional support data. Tower-based CO2 and CH4 measurements can be extended with chambers.
* **Tower-based Proximal Remote Sensing** includes all data collected at the site/stand level that can be observed optically from airborne or spaceborne platforms. These measurements will supplement drone and aircraft remote sensing measurements to more directly link ecosystem traits and fluxes with satellite observations. PANGEA tower-based proximal remote sensing measurements include visible-to-shortwave infrared (VSWIR) hyperspectral reflectance, solar-induced fluorescence (SIF), thermal infrared radiation (TIR), microwave backscatter, lidar, VOD (L-band GNSS), and PhenoCams.
* **Drone-based Proximal Remote Sensing** includes lidar, RGB images for both structure and spectra, multispectral data, and the potential development of a drone-based hyperspectral sensor. There are two key aspects of drone-based monitoring: (1) it allows for high-frequency data collection and continuous monitoring of temporal trends in a manner that is not possible with aircraft, and (2) it provides the ability to capture trends even during cloudy conditions, which are common in tropical forests. When paired with ground validation, drone-based acquisitions are critical to quantification of phenomena like tree mortality, carbon fluxes, phenology, and changes in functional traits with seasonal variation.

At present, field observations in the tropics are limited by the following:

* **Accessibility**: Dense, difficult-to-navigate terrain and remote areas with limited infrastructure limit the ability to deploy and maintain field equipment in the tropics.
* **High Biodiversity**: Tropical ecosystems are highly biodiverse, limiting the generalizability of field studies from one location to another and requiring more detailed knowledge about a broad variety of species in a particular location.
* **Seasonality and Climate**: Extreme weather such as heavy rainfall during monsoon seasons and extreme heat and humidity, create harsh working environments which can limit the duration and extent of fieldwork.
* **Funding and Resources**: The vast majority of funding and resources for science comes from the global north, limiting resources to directly fund research, and especially fieldwork, in the tropics.
* **Political and Social Instability**: Many tropical regions are in countries that experience political instability, conflict, or land-use disputes, which can pose risks to researchers and make it difficult to conduct long-term studies.

PANGEA will address these limitations by building lasting, mutually beneficial, collaborative partnerships with local tropical organizations to leverage, reinforce, and gap-fill existing infrastructure and efforts. Partners have been engaged in the scoping process and will be involved throughout PANGEA, including during the development of the PANGEA Concise Experiment Plan. See *Section 7.2 - Community Engagement Strategy* for more information. The following partnerships will be essential to the success of PANGEA field observations and studies:

* **Alliance for Tropical Forest Science (ATFS)**, including sub-organizations **AfriTRON**, **ForestGEO**, **GEM**, and **RAINFOR,** comprises an international network-of-networks. The goal of these 11 tropical forest research networks is to advance tropical forest science and help build a new generation of scientists to achieve a more complete understanding of how tropical forests contribute to a healthy, functioning Earth. Forest inventory plots in the ATFS network includes 11,656 plots in 56 countries, including more than 50% of the world's tree species.
* **AndesFlux:** The Western Amazon forests span a climate gradient from areas with no dry season to areas with up to a six month dry season.However, ecohydrological studies across this climatic range do not exist, limiting understanding of forest responses to climate change. To fill this gap, the AndesFlux network, led by the Catholic University of Peru (Professors Eric Cosio and Norma Salina), established six eddy flux towers and permanent plots in the western Amazon, the region predicted to face the greatest climate change impacts. The eddy flux towers are Tambopata (PE-TNR, operational since 2017), Panguana (PE-PAN, 2023), Los Amigos (PE-AMG, 2023), Breo (PE-BRE), Sucusari (2024), San Francisco (2022).
* **Congo Basin Institute:** The Congo Basin Institute (CBI) has been dedicated to promoting transdisciplinary scientific collaborations in the Congo Basin since 2015. CBI operates two biological field stations in Cameroon and maintains environmental and phenology datasets, some dating back decades. CBI also has deep organizational networks in the region, and can facilitate getting research permits, working with local research institutions, and collaborating with local and Indigenous communities through CBI’s School for Indigenous and Local Knowledge (SILK).
* **Congo Basin Science Initiative:** The Congo Basin Science Initiative (CBSI) is an independent scientist-led platform that promotes long-term investment in science in the Congo Basin. Its mission is to transform our understanding of the world’s second largest extent of tropical forest, build scientific capacity in the region, and use this knowledge to support sustainable development.
* **CongoFlux:** CongoFlux is a tropical research station centered around an eddy covariance flux tower at INERA research center in Yangambi, in the heart of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since 2019, the tower has measured the long-term exchange of greenhouse gases (e.g., CO2, N2O, CH4, H2O) between the forests and the atmosphere using the eddy covariance method. The CongoFlux research team also continuously collects meteorological data, phenological observations, atmospheric O3 concentrations, and ancillary data such as tree species composition, net primary productivity, leaf area index, and GHG emissions from the soil using chambers.
* **FLUXNET**, including sub-organizations **AmeriFlux** and **ICOS**, is another international network of networks. FLUXNET connects regional networks of primarily field-based Earth system scientists and research sites. FLUXNET has produced consolidated data across sites processed following a standardized pipeline.
* **GEO-TREES:** Building on decades of work from the global research community including the Rainfor, ForestGeo, GEM, and AfriTRON forest plot communities, with a strong representation of partners from the Global South, the GEO-TREES initiative aims to fund high-quality ground and airborne measurements from a global network of long-term forest inventories, and to make these data open access in support of efforts to estimate forest carbon stocks from space. In addition to engagement with the European Space Agency, GEO-TREEs recently acquired $24 million USD in support from the Bezos Earth Fund and Moore Foundation to carry out this work.
* **LBA:** The Large-Scale Biosphere Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia is a permanent program of the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. LBA promotes cooperation in research and maintains infrastructure to answer questions related to the function of Amazonia in the Earth System.
* **NGEE-Tropics** is a 10-year, multi-institutional project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). NGEE-Tropics’ primary goal is to develop a predictive understanding of how tropical forest carbon balance and climate system feedbacks will respond to changing environmental drivers in the 21st Century. NGEE-Tropics has focused on data collection in the tropical Americas and Asia (Brazil, Panama, Puerto Rico, Malaysia, and Australia).

PANGEA plans to build upon relationships with all of these partners to address the campaign’s Science Objectives. We note in particular that flux sites, such as those in the FLUXNET, typically have sufficient infrastructure and power supply to host additional support measurements such as proximal remote sensing instruments. Because of this PANGEA will prioritize field observations that are partnered with FLUXNET sites to make use of existing infrastructure and build collaborations with existing sites. We also note NGEE-Tropics will be sunsetting by the time PANGEA enters its most active phase*.* PANGEA will build directly on NGEE-Tropics data collection efforts, by extending similar measurements to Africa and collecting collocated remote sensing data, in addition to building on NGEE-Tropics modeling efforts (see *Section 6.4*).

### 6.3 Candidate Landscapes

PANGEA will collaborate closely with in-country partner institutions to ensure the smooth execution of field and airborne activities across selected Landscapes. **PANGEA’s nested sampling design supports a sampling-to-scale approach, with a nested sampling design.** Ground measurements span gradients within a landscape, and landscapes span climatic and biodiversity gradients within a continent (**Figure X**). PANGEA will prioritize countries that encompass landscapes where there is a confluence of intact, disturbed, and degraded forest, peatland, wetland, and mangrove ecosystems, with adjacent agro-ecosystems within roughly 100 km2 area. Coordinated, coincident ground data collection will be collected across these gradients within each landscape. **Table X** summarizes candidate landscapes based on information provided by partners. PANGEA landscapes will prioritize locations where the measurements described at the top of 6.2.4 are already being collected or where additional measurements can be extended under PANGEA.

PANGEA will coordinate landscape selection closely with efforts that are actively in the process of selecting sites for complementary data collection and investment in infrastructure. These include GEO-TREES, the INPE-ESA Amazon campaign, One Forest Vision, Moore Foundation and NSF funded tropical methane and peatland field measurements, as well as multiple Schmidt Science Virtual Institute for the Carbon Cycle proposals focusing on the tropics. A landscape and site selection process will be formalized during the Concise Experiment Plan to ensure transparent selection and approval of landscapes and sites within landscapes for ground and airborne data collection. This process will build on ongoing discussions with local institutional partners and site managers that began during the scoping process, and will include co-design with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (see Section 7.2 for more information).

| **Table X:** Candidate PANGEA Landscapes. | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Landscape** | **Country** | **Data Type** | | | | |
| **Ground** | **Tower** | **Socioeconomic** | **Drone** | **Aircraft** |
| ***Potential African Tropical Forest Landscapes*** | | | | | | | |
|  | Dja Reserve | Cameroon | X |  | X | X | X (NASA) |
| Mbalmayo | X |  |  | X | X (NASA) |
| Korup | X |  |  |  |  |
| Campo Ma’an | X |  |  |  |  |
| Luki | Democratic Republic of Congo | X |  |  | X |  |
| Mai Ndombe (Malebo) | X |  | X | X | X (NASA) |
| Yangambi | X | X |  | X |  |
| Yoko Reserve | X |  | X |  |  |
| Bia Tano | Ghana | X | X |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lopé | Gabon | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Mondah | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Mabounié | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Rabi | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Bokatola | Republic of Congo | X |  |  |  |  |
| Kolongomba | X |  |  |  |  |
| Lac Tele | X |  |  |  |  |
| Odzala-Kokoua | X |  |  | X | X (NASA) |
| Makera | Rwanda | X |  |  |  |  |
| Rubona | X |  |  |  |  |
| Sigira | X |  |  |  |  |
| ***Potential American Forest Landscapes*** | | | | | | | |
|  | Amazónica | Bolivia |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vida Silvestre |  |  |  |  |  |
| km 34 (Manaus) | Brazil | X | X |  | X | X |
| km 67 (Santarem) | X | X |  |  | X |
| Rebio Jaru | X | X |  |  |  |
| Tanguro | X | X |  |  | X |
| Caxiuana | X | X |  |  |  |
| Amacayacu | Colombia | X |  |  |  |  |
| Amazonas | X |  |  |  |  |
| La Planada | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Guancaste | Costa Rica | X | X | X | X | X (NASA) |
| Santa Rosa | X | X | X | X | X (NASA) |
| Turrialba | X |  |  | X | X (NASA) |
| Tiputini | Ecuador | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Yasuní | X |  |  |  | X (NASA) |
| Paracou | French Guiana | X | X |  | X | X (NASA) |
| Agua Salud | Panama | X |  |  |  |  |
| BCI | X |  |  | X | X (NASA)\* |
| Darien | X |  | X |  |  |
| Iquitos | Peru | X |  |  |  |  |
| Huánuco | X | X |  |  |  |
| Los Amigos | X | X |  |  |  |
| Madre de Dios | X |  |  |  |  |

### 6.4 Modeling, Data Synthesis, and Integrative Analyses

#### 6.4.1 Modeling and Data Integration Approach

Modeling and data syntheses are fundamental components of PANGEA. The goals are to:

* Identify key processes that are poorly represented and regions within the PANGEA domain that drive uncertainty of key variables and processes in existing models.
* Synthesize and scale measurements from Landscapes to the Core and Extended PANGEA domains.
* Implement new processes and techniques, as well as improve existing ones in models and apply them to answer PANGEA’s scientific questions.

. Improved agreement between historical simulations and observations may indicate that model components can be refined to better represent processes, thereby increasing confidence in future projections. Nonetheless, as models evolve, addressing future challenges such as acclimation, nutrient limitation, shifts in functional composition, accounting for methane emissions, and carbon allocation partitioning between above and belowground biomass will be increasingly important for maintaining model accuracy. Data collected through PANGEA will be used to expand benchmarking tools using integration of ground based observation and remote sensing data, and assess and improve model performance.

Over the past decades, terrestrial biosphere models have expanded scope and incorporated many new processes that could not be addressed during LBA (**Figure X**). For example, processed-based models now resolve structural and functional diversity, a broad variety of natural and anthropogenic disturbance dynamics, and strong coupling with biogeochemical cycles (Fisher et al., 2018; Fisher and Koven 2020; Negron-Juarez et al., 2020). We are now in a time in which ecological processes in diverse ecosystems driving energy, water, carbon and nutrient cycling on Earth must be accounted for (Bonan et al., 2024). Likewise, several classes of models have been increasingly leveraging the broad range of remote sensing observations, and throughout PANGEA we will have participation of a broad range of models that can use remote sensing for initialization, uncertainty quantification, and data assimilation. Examples of such models include, but are not limited to:

* **Process-based vegetation demography models** such as BiomeE (Weng et al., 2022); ED2 (Antonarakis et al., 2014; Longo et al., 2020; Schneider et al., 2023), ED/ED3 (Hurtt et al., 2004; Ma et al., 2023) and FATES (Negrón-Juárez et al., 2020);
* **Data-driven hybrid models** that solve processes with a strong data assimilation approach such as CARDAMOM (Bloom et al., 2016; 2020) and CliMA (Braghiere et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023);
* **Top-down inverse modeling approaches** that link column measurements with fluxes through atmospheric transport models such as CarbonTracker (Peters et al., 2007) and CMS-Flux (Liu et al., 2020);
* **Artificial Intelligence and machine learning models** (Schneider et al., 2017; Reichstein et al., 2019; Eyring et al., 2024); and
* **Agent-based models** that incorporate social and ecological components in tropical forest systems (Andersen et al., 2017; Chaplin-Kramer et al., 2024; von Essen and Lambin 2023).

The integration of high-performance computing (HPC), including advancements in GPU-based computing, cloud computing, and exascale computing, has become critical for scaling the complexity and resolution of Earth system models (Wang et al., 2020; Pressel et al., 2023). As the scale of data generated by both field observations and remote sensing expands, leveraging HPC resources will be key to accelerating model development, improving simulations, and addressing the challenges posed by the large spatiotemporal scales of tropical ecosystems.

**Table X** provides more information on several opportunities for which models can be used to investigate processes and answer PANGEA Science Questions. PANGEA measurements will also further advance both the representation of processes relevant to tropical forests under a changing Earth (**Figure X**) and methods for remote sensing data and model integration.

| **Table X. Classes of models, along with a non-exhaustive list of model examples, that can (1) produce spatial and temporal estimates of variables of interest across the PANGEA domain, (2) leverage remote-sensing and in-situ observations for initialization, assessment and benchmarking and (3) help answer science questions and test PANGEA hypotheses. Classes of model: PBM, Process-based terrestrial biosphere models; HM, Data-driven hybrid models; TDM, top-down models; AIML, Models based on Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning; and AB, Agent-Based Models. Sub-classes of PB models: IBM, Individual-Based Models; CBM, Cohort-Based Models; DGVM, Dynamic Global Vegetation Models (excluding IBMs and CBMs). Science questions marked with \* mean that models could be used if coupled with other models, and science questions marked with \*\* mean that models have the potential to answer, although implementing new processes is required.** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | **Examples of Data–Model integration opportunities** | | **Science Questions Addressed** |
| **Class** | **Sub-class** | **Examples** | **Examples of processes of interest** | **Airborne/Spaceborne Remote sensing** | **Field measurements** |
| PBM | IBM | FORMIND  TROLL | • Carbon stocks and fluxes  • Structural and functional diversity  • Demographic rates  • Disturbance rates | **Forest structure/Carbon Stocks:**  **• Airborne lidar**  **• GEDI, EDGE\*, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\***  **• Landsat, Sentinel-1, Sentinel-2**  **Forest composition:**  **• Airborne imaging spectroscopy**  **• DESIS, EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, Sentinel-3, SBG\***  **Ecosystem Function:**  **• Water/Energy fluxes: ECOSTRESS, GOES-R, MTG-I, VIIRS**  **• Carbon fluxes: CarbonMapper, FLEX, OCO-2/3, TROPOMI**  **Other**  **• Soil water: SMAP, SMOS, SWOT**  **• Canopy water content: AMSR-E, EMIT**  **• Phenology: Landsat; Sentinel-2**  **• Cloud/Precipitation: GOES-R, GPM**  **• Land Cover: Landsat; Sentinel-2**  **• Burned Area: Landsat, Sentinel-2, VIIRS** | • Forest inventory plots  • Litter/Coarse Woody Debris  • Terrestrial laser scanning  • Plant functional traits  • Meteorological data  • Eddy covariance fluxes  • Flux partitioning data (COS, Isotopes)  • Sapflow  • Soil moisture/temperature  • Soil flux chambers  • Tower-based GNSS data  • In-situ disturbance information  • Phenocams | **Q1–Q7; Q8\*; Q9–Q10; Q11\*\*; Q12\*\*; Q13; Q14\*; Q15; Q16\*; Q17–Q20; Q21\*\*; Q22; Q23\*; Q24–Q27** |
| VDM | BiomeE  ED/ED3  ED2  Ent TBM  FATES  LPJ-GUESS | • Carbon stocks and fluxes  • Structural and functional diversity  • Demographic rates  • Disturbance rates  • Water/Energy storage and fluxes  • Nutrient Cycles  • Land cover/land use state and dynamics  • Burned area and fire emissions |
| DGVM | CLM  ELM  JULES  JSBACH  ORCHIDEE  LPJ | • Carbon stocks and fluxes  • Disturbance rates  • Water/Energy storage and fluxes  • Nutrient Cycles  • Land cover/land use state and dynamics  • Burned area and fire emissions |
| HM | | CARDAMOM  CliMA | • Carbon stocks and fluxes  • Water/Energy storage and fluxes  • Land cover/land use state and dynamics  • Burned area and fire emissions | **Q1–Q2; Q3\*\*; Q4; Q6\*\*; Q8\*; Q9; Q14\*; Q15; Q16\*; Q18; Q22; Q23\*; Q24; Q25\*; Q26; Q27\*** |
| TDM | | CarbonTracker  HYSPLIT  STILT-VPRM | • Carbon fluxes  • Water/Energy fluxes  • Burned area and fire emissions | **• Carbon fluxes: CarbonMapper, FLEX, OCO-2/3, TROPOMI**  **• Water/Energy fluxes: ECOSTRESS, GOES-R, MTG-I, VIIRS**  **• Burned Area: Landsat, Sentinel-2, VIIRS** | • Eddy covariance fluxes  • Meteorological data  • Flux partitioning data (COS, Isotopes)  • Soil flux chambers  • In-situ disturbance information  • Phenocams | **Q1–Q2; Q4; Q6; Q9; Q14\*; Q17** |
| AIML | | MetaFlux | • Carbon stocks and fluxes  • Water/Energy fluxes  • Burned area and fire emissions | **Carbon stocks:**  **• Airborne lidar**  **• GEDI, EDGE\*, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\***  **• Landsat, Sentinel-1, Sentinel-2**  **Ecosystem Function:**  **• Water/Energy fluxes: ECOSTRESS, GOES-R, MTG-I, VIIRS**  **• Carbon fluxes: CarbonMapper, FLEX, OCO-2/3, TROPOMI**  **Other**  **• Burned Area: Landsat, Sentinel-2, VIIRS** | • Plant functional traits  • Meteorological data  • Eddy covariance fluxes  • Flux partitioning data (COS, Isotopes)  • Soil flux chambers  • Tower-based GNSS data  • In-situ disturbance information  • Phenocams | **Q1–Q2; Q4; Q6; Q9; Q14\*; Q17** |
| ABM | | ABSOLUG  SimPachamama  Repast EAABM | • Land cover/land use state and dynamics  • Household state and dynamics  • Bioeconomics metrics  • Cattle reproduction rate | **Carbon stocks:**  **• Airborne lidar and imaging spectroscopy**  **• GEDI, EDGE\*, NISAR\*, BIOMASS\***  **• DESIS, EMIT, PACE, PRISMA, Sentinel-3, SBG\***  **• Landsat, Sentinel-1, Sentinel-2**  **Other**  **• Land Cover: Landsat; Sentinel-2**  **• Burned Area: Landsat, Sentinel-2, VIIRS** | • Forest inventory plots  • Plot-scale management data  • Crop and timber harversting yields  • Cattle dynamics data  • Territory boundaries  • Human census data  • Survey data  • Choice experiments data | **Q21; Q28** |

PANGEA modeling activities will cut across all Science Themes. Modeling efforts early in PANGEA will help inform which key areas, variables, and mechanisms drive uncertainty in patterns, processes and predictions of relevant quantities in tropical moist forests. During PANGEA ground and airborne campaigns, measurements will be prioritized that can be directly used by models either for initialization, boundary conditions, or assessment. This approach has been successfully implemented in previous model and data-integration projects (e.g., ABoVE and NGEE-Tropics), and we plan to build on these projects.

| **Box 2. Example of PANGEA Modeling and Remote-sensing Data Integration Approach**  Using PANGEA’s Question 6 (cross-continent functional trait variability and effects on the tropical carbon cycle) and the FATES model as one example, PANGEA’s team will use parameter uncertainty approaches (e.g., through simulation ensembles using PEcAn) to identify which measurable foliar and hydraulic traits drive the model sensitivity of CO2 and H2O fluxes in FATES (henceforth key traits). The team will then prioritize measurements of the key traits in field sites and by remote sensing across disturbance and climate gradients in both continents, and use the collected data to constrain parameter distributions across the gradients of interest, by using measurements of fluxes from towers and remote sensing, and emergent relationships between trait gradients and remote-sensing derived fluxes across the same gradients as references. The constrained model will then be used to investigate how ecosystems at different precipitation regimes and disturbance severities respond to extreme droughts, and which processes (e.g., soil moisture limitation or vapor pressure deficit) drive the responses to extreme droughts. By using an integrated approach between models and data acquisition, PANGEA will enable significant advancement of the model's predictive ability to quantify the vulnerability of tropical forests to global change. |
| --- |

PANGEA data synthesis activities are integral to PANGEA’s scientific approach, facilitating the upscaling of landscape ground and airborne measurements to regional and pan-tropical scales. By measuring key variables using airborne remote sensing paired with ground measurements (e.g. soil moisture, plant functional traits, fluxes), we can establish robust empirical relationships using statistical models to interpolate wall-to-wall variations in critical variables. As an example, ground measurements on biomass carbon losses due to droughts across multiple sites, can be used to develop statistical models that predict biomass changes in response to varying soil moisture, VPD, drought frequency, and plant functional groups. This model can then be used to map pan-tropical impacts on forest biomass following specific drought scenarios, enhancing our understanding of ecosystem responses to environmental stressors across diverse tropical landscapes.

PANGEA will leverage multiple data synthesis approaches to enhance our understanding of tropical forest dynamics. For example, there is great potential to use artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) models for data synthesis due to their robustness in handling non-linearities and interactions among predictors, which are particularly critical in the complex ecosystems of tropical forests dominated by multi-factorial processes. AI/ML can be further used to emulate process-based models (Swaminathan et al., 2024) and more efficiently explore models’ parametric space or run short/long-term forecasting (Li et al., 2023; Meunier et al., 2024). To improve the interpretability of these AI/ML models, PANGEA will implement several known techniques, such as Feature Importance Analysis, which quantifies and highlights the most influential factors driving the model's predictions, and Partial Dependence Plots, which can be employed to visualize how changes in specific variables impact predicted outcomes, providing insights into the underlying ecological processes. Additionally, incorporating non-AI techniques like Causal Inference can help us understand cause-and-effect relationships within PANGEA data, offering a complementary perspective that enhances our mechanistic understanding. These strategies will not only improve our grasp of tropical forest dynamics but also provide valuable insights that can be integrated into process-based models for more accurate predictions.

Another powerful data synthesis technique is the space-for-time substitution approach, which, despite its limitations, can be particularly useful for understanding long-term dynamics in the absence of extensive temporal data series, whether remote-sensing or field-based, and used for constraining models as well (Ma et al., 2017). One significant challenge in understanding tropical forest dynamics is the limitation of current satellite biomass products. For example, while recent products like GEDI offer high spatial resolution, they only cover the past few years, restricting our ability to monitor long-term biomass changes. To overcome this challenge and obtain long-term, high-resolution forest biomass regrowth data, previous work used a space-for-time substitution approach, which calculates biomass carbon recovery from a single snapshot of current biomass data in areas that experience disturbance in different years (Heinrich et al., 2021; Rappaport et al., 2018). This approach, coupled with AI/ML models and traditional data synthesis techniques, ensures that PANGEA can robustly assess and predict tropical forest dynamics across various scales and timeframes, supporting use of long-term satellite records as a result of PANGEA data acquisitions and methodological advances.

#### 6.4.2 Coordination with other modeling and data integration communities

Coordination with established modeling and data integration communities is crucial to extend the impact of PANGEA beyond field and satellite observations. An important PANGEA partnership is with the International Land Model Benchmarking (ILAMB) project (Collier at al., 2018). Data collected through PANGEA can become new benchmarking datasets, critical for model development. These datasets will be highly valuable for evaluating and improving models used in global efforts, including the land components of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP). This partnership will enhance the representation of tropical ecosystems in Earth system models by providing benchmarks specifically tailored to tropical forests, helping global models achieve higher accuracy in their predictions. Another key partner is NGEE-Tropics, which, while scheduled to sunset around the time PANGEA enters its most active phase, provides a rich foundation of knowledge, modeling tools including the FATES model (Functionally Assembled Terrestrial Ecosystem Simulator; Koven et al., 2020) , and data. Leveraging the outputs from NGEE-Tropics during the transition phase will align methodologies and objectives, ensuring continuity in tropical forest research.

Collaboration with the Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO)can provide PANGEA with advanced data assimilation techniques, facilitating the integration of PANGEA acquisitions and satellite data into predictive models of tropical forest dynamics. GMAO’s established frameworks for atmospheric and land data assimilation could significantly enhance PANGEA’s capacity to model tropical forests under current and future climate scenarios (REF). The TRENDYproject, which coordinates global carbon cycle simulations, represents another important partnership. PANGEA’s detailed site-specific data for tropical forests will be critical for improving the parameterization and performance of TRENDY models, particularly for regional carbon dynamics and fluxes in tropical biomes (Sitch et al., 2024). Lastly, the CMIP initiative, a global leader in climate modeling, will benefit from PANGEA’s observations, especially in the context of improving the representation of tropical ecosystems. By coordinating with CMIP, PANGEA can ensure that its data and findings contribute to ongoing efforts to enhance land model performance and reduce uncertainties in global projections as a result of tropical forest responses to climate and land-use change.

In addition to these well-established communities, PANGEA aims to collaborate with newer initiatives. For example, Inverse modeling will play a critical role in PANGEA’s coordination strategy, offering a framework for reconciling discrepancies between observed and simulated ecosystem fluxes. This technique will help assimilate large-scale satellite-derived datasets with field measurements, allowing for refined predictions of carbon and water dynamics in tropical biomes (Liu et al., 2016). PANGEA also aims to collaborate with innovative modeling efforts such as CARDAMOM(CARbon DAta-MOdel fraMework; Bloom et al., 2020), which combines satellite and ground-based observations for carbon cycle data assimilation and modeling, and PEcAn(Predictive Ecosystem Analyzer; LeBauer et al., 2013), which focuses on leveraging field and satellite datasets to optimize model parameters and improve carbon and water flux predictions (Dokoohaki et al., 2022; Meunier et al., 2021). Finally, collaboration with CliMA(Climate Modeling Alliance; Schneider et al., 2017), which is developing a cutting-edge Earth system model that integrates machine learning and data assimilation techniques, will enhance PANGEA’s ability to scale tropical forest observations and better represent their role in the Earth system . These collaborations will help bridge the gap between field data collection and predictive modeling, driving new insights into the functioning of tropical ecosystems and their role in the Earth system.

#### 6.4.3 Scaling Strategy

Scaling approaches were similarly central to following field campaigns such as BOREAS, LBA, and ABoVE.

| **PANGEA’s nested sampling design, with a sampling-to-scale approach, provides opportunities for advancing satellite monitoring, product development, and assimilating data and benchmarking various processes in next-generation ecosystem models, which can significantly advance the ability of applying these models for process understanding and long-term prediction.** |
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To ensure processes are captured across a broad diversity of environmental conditions and multiple data sources—ground, tower, drone, and aircraft sensors, PANGEA field and airborne campaigns will include sampling across gradients in nutrient availability, ecosystem structure and function, climate, and disturbance regimes. Incorporating this variability is critical for regional and pan-tropical scaling and for informing models and ensuring that they can be assessed and benchmarked under different limitations, and thus reducing the risk of equifinality (right answers due to compensating wrong reasons). The choice of priority gradients will consider the current uncertainties in models, and novel processes that have not been assessed with remote sensing data at scale to date (e.g., temporal changes in canopy structure and composition and their impacts on energy, water and carbon fluxes; plant hydraulic responses to climate variability).

PANGEA will also coordinate with existing scaling frameworks, facilitating the standardization of data collection methods. For example, the NASA EMIT team is actively working with NEON to develop scaling workflows between NEON and satellite data in preparation for NASA's upcoming Surface Biology and Geology (SBG) mission. PANGEA ground and airborne acquisitions will extend these workflows to the tropics. PANGEA will also coordinate with existing NASA funded efforts like [CMS4D](https://carlos-alberto-silva.github.io/silvalab/cms4d/cms4d_workshop.html), a multi-scale data-fusion prototype system for carbon dynamics monitoring from space. CMS4D is a case study in the Brazilian Cerrado focused on fire dynamics led by Carlos Alberto Silva, which has many workflow parallels with PANGEA. Coordinating with these efforts to standardize and harmonize data collection and scaling workflows will help ensure consistent and high-quality data, enabling broader collaboration and cross-validation of results. An excellent example of this type of collaborative work is the High-Latitude Drone Ecology Network (HiLDEN) (<https://arcticdrones.org/>), which PANGEA aims to emulate in tropical biomes. In addition to drone lidar, PANGEA will draw upon other field-based collaborative efforts, such as the SPUN (Society for the Protection of Underground Networks) initiative, which has focused on mycorrhizal fungi sampling in historically under-sampled areas (<https://www.spun.earth/>). These networks demonstrate the power of coordination and ground-level engagement to bridge gaps in ecosystem data, an approach that PANGEA will adopt across its multiple scales of study. This multi-layered approach to field, airborne, and satellite measurements will advance satellite monitoring and the capacity of next-generation models to simulate key processes and improve long-term ecosystem predictions.

#### 6.4.4 Modeling and data integration timeline

Modeling and data synthesis activities will occur throughout the entire duration of PANGEA. However, such tasks will shift focus as the campaign progresses. To reflect the changes in the role of modeling and data synthesis within PANGEA, we describe the activities in three phases.

**Phase 1 (Y1–Y2):** A Modeling and Data Synthesis Working Group (MDSWG) will be established. This group will identify key areas and processes that currently drive uncertainty in process-based models related to carbon, water, energy, and nutrient cycles, as well as biodiversity and human interactions in tropical moist forests. To this end, the group will develop model intercomparison efforts using established benchmarking (e.g., TRENDY, FLUXCOM) and tools (e.g., ILAMB). This effort will inform the campaign design, including which environmental gradients and processes drive the uncertainty and therefore could benefit the most from PANGEA measurements. These efforts may take a non-trivial amount of time, therefore the MDSWG will also seek rapid responses through the use of Observing System Simulation Experiments (OSSEs) based on existing models and drivers to provide a first assessment of key areas of uncertainty and areas that lack representativeness in existing observations.

**Phase 2 (Y3–Y6):** MDSWG efforts will focus on multiple, complementary goals. Activities linked to process-based models will focus on implementing key missing mechanisms identified during Phase 1, which will advance understanding of the drivers of observed patterns on carbon, water, energy, and nutrient cycles in the field campaign. Activities linked to synthesis will enable the upscaling of findings from local and regional to the global scales. Data synthesis research will focus on using PANGEA datasets to generate products at scale that can be assimilated by inverse and hybrid models, as well as used for benchmarking of process-based models. Projects and datasets collected within the peak data acquisition period, primarily located in tropical Africa and the Americas will be reviewed and synthesized. This process will integrate individual site-level measurements with regional-scale airborne and spaceborne remote sensing imagery to upscale key variables to a pan-tropical level and create wall to wall maps. Additionally, novel inter-comparisons across basins will be conducted. Synthesis approaches will include, but not be limited to, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and space-for-time substitution. Group members working with inverse and hybrid models will use PANGEA data sets and derived synthesis products for quantifying uncertainty in scaled quantification of state variables and fluxes. Importantly, the efforts in this phase will not focus on a single set of models and techniques, but rather bring together methods that allow for scaling of space- and time-limited measurements to the entire pan-tropical region along with robust estimates of uncertainty.

**Phase 3 (Y7–Y9)** will focus on studies that use the constrained and improved models and data products developed during Phase 2 to directly address PANGEA Science questions and test the key hypotheses. Research using process-based models in Phase 3 should identify and attribute the causes and drivers of changes in forest functioning by leveraging PANGEA datasets for initialization and uncertainty quantification. Data synthesis and inverse modeling efforts will focus on describing how the major axes of variability in tropical moist forests drive the heterogeneity of carbon, energy, water and nutrient fluxes as well as biodiversity within and across continents. Together, these activities will advance understanding of the resilience of tropical forests under global change, and provide integrative answers across all Science Themes.

## 7. Technical and Logistical Feasibility

PANGEA will leverage NASA’s history of successful international field and airborne campaigns, including recent campaigns in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Specifically, NASA has done extensive research in Africa, including SAFARI, AfriSAR-1, AfriSAR-2, and BioSCape. [ADD SOUTH AMERICA?] In addition, there are immense investments in Africa currently that will support important feasibility elements of PANGEA, including the Congo Basin Science Initiative (CBSI), CongoFlux, One Forest Vision, the Science Panel for the Congo, Africa Master’s of Machine Intelligence (AMMI) via the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), existing NASA collaboration with the Gabonese Space Agency (AGEOS) and Central Africa Satellite Observatory (OSFAC), and GEO-TREES. The PANGEA team has been in contact with the US State Department’s Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, which is enthusiastically supportive of the PANGEA campaign and the benefits it would have for environmental and scientific diplomacy.

PANGEA will require international deployments potentially taking place in several countries.

Anticipated challenges include deploying and maintaining in situ instrumentation, obtaining international flight permission for airborne data acquisition, obtaining visas and research permits for US and international investigators, access to field sites, human-animal interactions/conflict, political or other unrest, and health and safety of scientists and participants (see *Section 7.7 for Risk and Risk Mitigation*). Building necessary relationships to obtain flight clearances for the selected countries and field sites that are part of the PANGEA domain will be an early priority (see *Section 6.2.3 Airborne Remote Sensing*). To obtain flight clearances, PANGEA will work with NASA OIIR to develop the diplomatic clearance packages needed for international airborne deployments. Prior to requesting flight clearances, PANGEA will work closely with NASA and the US Department of State to build relationships with in-country partners such as government agencies, NGOs, and leaders of Indigenous territories to develop agreements that will ensure proper flight clearances and field permits.

In cases where NASA aircraft cannot obtain overflight permission or acquire data using its own instrumentation, PANGEA will deploy commercial or other assets, such as commercial ALS, commercial UAV-based instrumentation, or local instruments and aircraft to acquire the required airborne datasets. This is particularly important in Brazil, where NASA has historically encountered restrictions for ground observations using non-Brazilian instruments and aircraft. PANGEA will build on precedents employed by NASA and the US government of using commercial airborne data providers to collect the required datasets (see *Section 6.2.3 Airborne Remote Sensing*).

### 7.1 Organization and Management

The organization and coordination of PANGEA will be determined by NASA Program Management. We present a concept for organization and management that reflects a successful model used in the ABoVE and LBA-ECO campaigns. This structure will enable the organization and management of a long-term project with significant investment from interdisciplinary partnerships and collaborations at the national and international scale.

#### 7.1.1 Program Management

The NASA Terrestrial Ecology *Program Management* will organize and oversee PANGEA with the support of the PANGEA *Project Office*. They will work within the NASA Earth Science Division to select and fund research projects conducted by the PANGEA *Science Team* for participation in PANGEA and to allocate resources to the PANGEA *Project Office* including the PANGEA *Project Scientist and Deputy Project Scientist* (jointly the *Scientific Leadership (SL))* who are also selected by Program Management. Program management will be responsible for representing PANGEA activities within NASA including to other NASA Programs that may support PANGEA activities. Program management will coordinate PANGEA activities with other research partners from domestic and foreign agencies.

#### 7.1.2 Project Office

Implementation of PANGEA will be supported by a *Project Office* led by the *Project Manager*  appointed by Program Management and supported by a project staff member. The PANGEA *Project Scientist* and *Deputy Project Scientist* will serve as *ex-officio* members of the Project Office. The Project Office will (a) oversee and manage PANGEA field and airborne research activities and projects sponsored by NASA’s Terrestrial Ecology Program and other NASA program offices; (b) coordinate and provide logistical support for NASA-sponsored field research and airborne remote sensing campaigns including oversight of safety and risk management; (c) provide logistical support to the PANGEA working and coordinating groups, including support of meetings and workshops; and (d) develop and maintain the PANGEA Information System. The Project Office will have important interactions with local and regional stakeholders and will share responsibility for those interactions with the Scientific Leadership. The Project Office will assist Science Team members with permit applications to appropriate authorities. Depending on the needs of the Science Team, the Project Office may also arrange for the collection of core variable data and installation of infrastructure at field sites. The Project Office will be responsible for managing the airborne science campaigns. Science Team Members will work closely with the Project Office and rely upon guidance from its staff for field activities, communications with local and regional stakeholders and authorities, and utilization of PANGEA cyberinfrastructure.

PANGEA will prioritize close coordination between the PANGEA Science Team and Earth Science to Action activities. The Project Manager will designate a point of contact (POC) in the Project Office for science applications of PANGEA. This POC will monitor expectations that applications partners have of the PANGEA science team. Regular and transparent communication with potential application partners will continue at all stages of PANGEA, and updates on decisions to pursue or not pursue potential applications will be communicated promptly. NASA’s international reputation depends on carefully matching user needs with NASA investment and capabilities, as well as managing expectations of all partners.

7.1.3 Science Definition

Prior to the initiation of the PANGEA science investigations, a group of scientists and scientific leadership selected by the Program Office will work with the Project Office to design the *Concise Experiment Pla*n. This plan will present a refinement of the ideas presented in this scoping document. The purpose of the refined plan is to match scientific scope with available resources. Specific recommendations regarding research sites, field scientific infrastructure needs (including instrumentation), and requirements for airborne remote sensing will be defined in the concise plane. The Concise Experiment Plan will serve Program Management’s needs to solicit science investigations and will serve the selected Science Team as a guide for their integrated investigations to answer PANGEA science questions.

#### 7.1.3 Project Implementation

The PANGEA project will be implemented by the selected PANGEA Science Team supported by the Project Office over a nominal period of six to nine years as called for in the NASA announcement A.4 of 2022. A Project *Implementation Plan* will be elaborated based on the Concise Experiment Plan. The Project Office shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan including regular updates the frequency of which will be determined in consultation with the Science Team and Program Management. The implementation plan shall detail the research activities to be conducted and specify roles and responsibilities for investigators involved in those activities during the execution of PANGEA. A notional timetable for project implementation is presented in *Section 7.6* (**Figure X**). At the outset of the project, roughly one year will be spent preparing for field and airborne data collection activities. The main period of data collection will extend from three to six years depending upon the overall project duration and scope. Analysis of the data collected will be continuous throughout the project. We expect data collection to draw gradually to a close one to three years prior to the conclusion of the project to allow time for data analysis, integration, and synthesis. PANGEA will leave a legacy of data and open science that will support future scientific investigations that will respond to the PANGEA science questions and to new science themes.

#### 7.1.4 Science Team and Science Leadership

The *Science Team* led by a Project Scientist and a Deputy Project Scientist will be composed of PIs and Co-Is of selected investigations, as well as scientists recruited by those PIs and Co-Is including post-doctoral scientists and students. In close coordination with the PANGEA Science Team, the Project Office, and Program Management the Project Scientist and Deputy will call and organize the program for regular PANGEA Science Team meetings. The Project Scientist and Deputy will meet with Program Management and the Project Office management, at a minimum, quarterly, to review progress, resolve issues, and discuss implementation next steps.

Experience with past campaigns informs us that timely communication is important to manage the expectations of the PANGEA Science Team and researchers from partner projects and organizations. The PANGEA Science Leadership (SL) will communicate the research objectives and outputs of the NASA-funded science team to diverse audiences. The SL will work with local partners to set expectations of PANGEA. The SL will accurately and promptly communicate project updates to local research partners. Presentations, webinars, and town halls will employ interpretation services and project materials will be made available in the languages of participating countries. After PANGEA data has been collected and as science data products become available, the SL will be responsible for ensuring that local partners continue to receive regular updates. The SL will set the tone of PANGEA, and will be mindful about setting an example to the rest of the Science Team about inclusive and respectful collaboration and the value of co-producing research. The SL and all members of the PANGEA Science Team will adhere to the PANGEA Community Guidelines[[1]](#footnote-0).

PANGEA science investigations will be executed by the Science Team. As noted, membership in the Science Team will include investigators selected by NASA and investigators who are recruited by Science Team PIs and Co-Is. PANGEA investigations will concern a number of countries throughout the humid tropics. Based on NASA experience in the Large-Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia, we recommend that *all* investigations have counter-part investigators humid tropical forest countries and endeavor to train early career scientists and technicians from countries where PANGEA research is active and other countries of the humid tropics. This should apply even to investigations that have no field component. During LBA, NASA learned that this approach had many benefits. Practically, it offered an incentive for host countries to support the work of NASA in-country, because of the capacity being built by the researchers. Researchers found that host countries often provided significant leverage for their research projects through in-kind and funded contributions, especially student fellowships. Decades after the NASA presence in South America for LBA concluded, NASA still has a large network of friendly collaborators in the South American scientific community. The impact of those investigators on science in their home countries has been vast. See *Section 9 - Capacity Building, Training, and Education* for more information.

| **PANGEA will emphasize and prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the campaign, including diverse representation in its leadership.** |
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PANGEA’s Science Team will prioritize diverse representation in terms of scientific expertise, technical specialties, national origin, race, gender, native language, different career stages, and more. Early career researchers will be included from the beginning, as will representatives from participating countries where field research will take place. Team members must commit to cultural sensitivity, with respect for local collaborators and extra care taken to uphold NASA’s reputation internationally.

| **Leadership and engagement in the PANGEA scoping process demonstrates diverse support for the campaign and diversity of candidates who have the capacity to and interest in contributing to PANGEA.** |
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The scoping effort also exemplified PANGEA’s ability to implement scientific diplomacyinternationally. The Science Team will meet regularly, and for virtual meetings will endeavour to arrange meetings considerate to the time zones of persons represented.

#### 7.1.5 Disciplinary Skills Required

PANGEA is conceived as an interdisciplinary campaign. Scientists involved in PANGEA research may identify themselves with one discipline or with several. We expect participation from scientists connected with physical, biological, and social sciences. The skills and knowledge associated with an array of disciplines will be represented in the PANGEA Science Team. As part of the Terrestrial Ecology program we expect that ecology at various levels of organization (ecosystem, community, population) will be strongly represented. Biogeochemistry and atmospheric chemistry have long been associated with NASA TE campaigns as are plant physiology and ecophysiology. The science team will include the skills and knowledge of other related disciplines including land systems, meteorology, hydrology, and social sciences. Remote sensing specialists will be well represented in the science team.

### 7.2 Community Engagement Strategy

PANGEA will engage with diverse communities to address science questions, identify synergies with local research priorities, and implement PANGEA in a manner that is broadly beneficial in the landscapes and countries targeted for research. The strategy draws upon the knowledge, expertise, and experiences shared throughout PANGEA’s scoping campaign, which engaged with over 500 individuals and 150 organizations from 42 countries across five continents through (a) consultative workshops, (b) outreach events, (c) working group discussions, (d) bilateral meetings, and (e) web surveys. A more detailed description of engagement methods used during the scoping campaign is provided in **Appendix A**. We present a list of the communities prioritized for engagement in PANGEA, the principles that underpin PANGEA’s engagement efforts, and PANGEA’s strategy for engaging local communities and cultivating a long-term, positive legacy during and beyond the campaign.

#### 7.2.1. PANGEA Partners

PANGEA research on tropical forests will complement and expand upon many existing efforts. Some of these efforts are limited to small geographical domains or represent networks of individual sites. Others, such as One Forest Vision and GEO-TREES, have pantropical ambitions like PANGEA. The range of partnership opportunities is illustrated with examples in **Table X**. **Appendix X** describes the different communities that PANGEA will engage in greater detail, lists all PANGEA partners according to community type, and discusses more specific engagement considerations for each.

PANGEA interprets the word *community* broadly to encompass a wide variety of formal and informal groups of people who perceive themselves as members of a group, which may share interests, experiences, resources, activities, professions, livelihoods, culture, geography, origins, language, or any combination of the above. The scoping campaign identified ten types of communities with which PANGEA will prioritize engagement: (1) NASA; (2) other US government agencies; (3) international space agencies and support facilities; (3) foreign government agencies and national research institutes; (4) scientific institutions; (5) coordinated international research initiatives; (6) civil society organizations (CSOs); (7) Indigenous peoples and local community alliances and organizations; (8) the donor community; (9) the private sector; and (10) intergovernmental agencies.

PANGEA will commit to engage communities in an inclusive and non-hierarchical way. Each community will play a role in PANGEA’s planning, implementation, and its long-term legacy. Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and CSOs, for example, is essential for accessing research sites, empowering long-term, ground-based data collection, and connecting PANGEA’s research to local land management decision-making. PANGEA must engage with local and international scientific institutions to build upon their work, identify synergies, and leverage co-funding and resources to collaboratively accomplish more, and invest in formal training and curricula so that current and future generations of scientists may benefit from PANGEA. The support of government agencies will be critical to PANGEA’s airborne data collection efforts and Earth Action strategies. National and sub-national government agencies are also well positioned to immediately apply the key findings of PANGEA’s research to improve country-wide, climate and biodiversity monitoring and reporting, and to develop more informed climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Collaboration with climate-concerned intergovernmental organizations and donors may enable PANGEA to support activities that would not be possible using NASA funding alone, including engaging with local institutions in a more financially inclusive and equitable manner. Many private companies and industry associations are eager to learn more about their changing environments and collect ground-, air- and space-borne data to understand their impact and ensure the sustainability of their supply chains. Although the interests, objectives, and potential points of engagement and collaboration vary widely, all of these communities can contribute to the success and positive long-term legacy of PANGEA.

#### 7.2.2. Principles

PANGEA will prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across all its activities, including community engagement, by ensuring accessibility, promoting DEI training, and establishing feedback mechanisms. PANGEA developed Community Guidelines and a Code of Conduct for the scoping study which serve as foundational material for a campaign Code of Conduct. Organizations like the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) have established similar standards specifically for the tropical research community, which spans many languages, cultures, customs, and norms. Upon selection, PANGEA will Code of Conduct in light of existing precedents. PANGEA is also committed to gender balance and will implement targeted efforts to ensure inclusivity, such as promoting female leadership roles and providing mentorship opportunities. PANGEA aims to make significant strides by fostering gender-responsive practices and tracking key performance indicators like gender representation in leadership and participation over time. PANGEA will also engage Indigenous peoples and local Communities. In doing so, PANGEA will implement and build on principles adapted from the CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) Principles for Indigenous Data Governance’ to ecology and biodiversity research based on work by (Jennings et al., 2023) and (Carroll et al., 2020). **Table X** outlines PANGEA’s principles of engagement based on CARE. See *Section 7.5* for integration of these principles with PANGEA’s Open Science strategy.

| **Table X.** PANGEA Principles of Engagement based on CARE. Adapted from Jennings et al. 2023 and Carroll et al. 2020. IPLCs: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities | | |
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| CARE Principles | Priorities | PANGEA Strategy |
| Collective benefit | Research that benefits communities | Prior to research, explain and demonstrate how research and potential results are relevant and are of value to the interests of the community and individual members; PANGEA research will work to support community-led initiatives and help secure funding for long-term investments in community. |
| Data grounded in community values, aspirations and well-being | PANGEA will co-develop and/or link to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) data classification and analysis frameworks that reflect community values, needs and aspirations; local community experts will be included in research teams. |
| Data for self-determined development | PANGEA will collect and code data using categories that identify information and individuals using community norms; Where possible, data will be disaggregated, especially from global or large geospatial datasets, to increase relevance for IPLCs |
| Compensate local experts | PANGEA will work hard to locate funding sources to be able to compensate community experts throughout the research process, including research proposal development, data collection, manuscript writing and community review of prepublication manuscripts. |
| Authority to control | Recognize IPLC’s rights to and interests in their knowledges and data | Principles and protocols for research development, data management and publication that support IPLC’s Data Sovereignty will be co-developed; These will include metadata fields available for disclosure of Indigenous rights and interests. |
| Recognize the rights of IPLCs to free, prior and informed consent | PANGEA will ensure data use is consistent with individual and community consent provisions and ensure ongoing consent processes, including the ability to refuse, withdraw and reconsent. |
| Data available for IPLC governance | PANGEA will ensure IPLCs, and the appropriate tribal authorities, have access to data, metadata about their people, communities and non-human relations in a usable format. |
| Develop and enact IPLC Data Governance protocols | IPLC partners will co-develop data and data protocols, and will use and/or incorporate IPLC frameworks and principles to inform data management protocols and processes; IPLC guidance will influence how, what, who and where research is conducted and data is managed, as well as publication standards, which will document community support, participation and approval for publishing data and authorship. |
| Responsibility | Enable capability and capacity sharing for research design and digital infrastructure | PANGEA will create and expand opportunities for community capacity through (1) participatory methodologies including planning and design, knowledge management and data workforce capacity building, and (2) initiatives to enable the design, collection, management, storage, security, governance, collective privacy and application of data. |
| Respect reciprocity, trust and mutual understanding with those to whom data relate | PANGEA will record Traditional Knowledge and biocultural labels in metadata and will establish a system to ensure local review of draft publications before dissemination; PANGEA will also identify and address sensitive data, including privacy issues for individuals and communities. |
| Data-generating resources for languages, worldviews and lived experiences | PANGEA will work hard to use the local and Indigenous languages, link research to community worldviews, and upload data with appropriate metadata labels in culturally accessible formats (digital storytelling, seasonal calendars, visual art forms, etc.). |
| Community-defined benefit sharing | PANGEA will conduct research that is of mutual benefit, consent driven, inclusive and relevant to the needs of IPLCs and individuals. |
| Ethics | Align with Indigenous and local ethical frameworks | Indigenous ethical frameworks will be used in the co-development process and community-defined review process will be developed for activities delineated in data management plans. |
| Maximize benefits from the perspectives of IPLCs | PANGEA researchers will include IPLCs and PANGEA researchers will explain benefits to IPLCs, including identifying and contributing to community-defined benefits. Potential financial gain will be disclosed and benefits will be shared with communities from research outputs and/or economic value of data. |
| Minimize harms from the perspectives of IPLCs | PANGEA's community-defined code of conduct will be accessible and incorporate IPLC ethical frameworks; Data-access protocols will consider the potential for community harm, which will be remedied through sharing data; ensuring ongoing consent. |
| Data governance accounts for potential future use | Community protocols will be applied for infrastructure, metadata and secondary use; Traditional Knowledge and biocultural labels will be included in metadata fields, as will community and/or tribal affiliation; Community guidelines will be established for the use and reuse of data; Provenance will be recorded and recognized. |

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#### 7.2.3 Engagement Strategy

PANGEA activities will coordinate with existing and future projects from other agencies and other nations. Building on lessons learned from the Brazil-led LBA program, PANGEA will promote an international scientific steering committee (SSC). The SSC will reinforce and coordinate with existing organizations, alliances, and activities to ensure that PANGEA supports the development of a long-term network of networks that will enhance and sustain the accessibility, usability, transferability and benefits of the data, methods, models, and knowledge about tropical ecosystems. PANGEA’s SSC will co-develop strategies to ensure that scientists, local institutions, and communities work together throughout the PANGEA campaign to effectively collaborate in diverse geographic and cultural contexts. During LBA, the SSC met twice annually and served as a clearinghouse for information across national projects. This committee had a number of attributions including the recommendation of projects for inclusion in LBA based on criteria such as subject matter, adequacy of counterpart arrangements, and capacity building plans. The SSC shouldered much of the burden that may have otherwise fallen to national agency managers. Existing organizations such as the Congo Basin Science Initiative and the extant Brazilian LBA are primed to serve as partners for coordination of PANGEA scientific studies. Similarly, relationships established with the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) during the scoping process will support PANGEA’s ability to engage Indigenous communities in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way. The GATC, built over 10 years by tropical Indigenous communities, represents 24 countries and over 35 million people who occupy over 958 million hectares of land.

During ABoVE, the NASA Carbon Cycle and Ecosystems Office began consultations with Canadian First Nations and Alaskan Indigenous groups before the science definition team was brought together. ABoVE proactively engaged with First Nations members to finalize the experimental design in Phase 1, before field activities began. The ABoVE team continued engagement with first nations members to update them on activities, particularly related to relevant disturbances (e.g., fires). For example, ABoVE prioritized revisiting burned areas and providing information to help communities understand, adapt to, and overcome disasters. PANGEA will build on important lessons learned from the ABoVE campaign.

| **The process of co-production began during the scoping of PANGEA and the writing of this white paper, which has been carried out in collaboration with Indigenous leaders from the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC). If PANGEA is selected, co-production with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities will begin immediately and will be sustained throughout.** |
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PANGEA will also partner with many scientific institutions located in or with research expertise in tropical forests. PANGEA will establish a trailblazing network of research experts, early career scientists, and scientific institutions. A particular interest of this partnership is to facilitate the co-development of knowledge and support technology transfer to generate capacity in local and regional institutions. A particular focus of the PANGEA network will be to include, engage, and train the next generation of scientists and technical workforce. PANGEA will engage partner scientific institutions in the following ways:

* Co-develop research, analysis, and potential applications.
* Identify field sites, research infrastructure, and capabilities critical to PANGEA’s research goals.
* Co-produce, share, and manage data; support the development of data infrastructure, equipment, and management expertise at local and regional institutions; support the creation of regional or national data banks to curate field and remote sensing data and numerical model outputs so that emerging knowledge can be integrated with and applied to regional and national demands for the socioeconomic development and policy development.
* Strengthen and broaden research infrastructure and instrumentation for local and regional scientific institutions to be able to develop and carry out long-term research.
* Design and implement strategies to support faculty and early career researcher capacity building at local and regional universities and research institutes.

PANGEA’s applications also have strong potential to engage the private sector, including, but not limited to: (a) agribusinesses cultivating and/or harvesting agricultural, timber and forest non-timber products; (b) extractive industries; (c) energy companies; (d) big data companies; (e) conglomerates and financing institutions that invest in, buy, and/or sell any of the aforementioned types of companies; and (f) companies involved in ecotourism. The profile of companies present in each landscape where PANGEA is implemented will vary ranging from corporations to small and medium-size enterprises, cooperatives, and associations.

### 7.3 Co-funding Opportunities

The Ideal, Baseline, and Threshold measurements defined in *Section 6.2.1* represent stand-alone NASA campaigns with no dependencies. However, given the urgency and importance of the topic, there is strong potential to augment or even exceed NASA’s contributions. During the scoping effort, the PANGEA leadership team has made significant strides towards securing diverse sources of funding to build on a NASA investment. Multiple U.S. government agencies, private foundations, international governments, and philanthropies have expressed interest in supporting PANGEA-related activities that are both within and outside of NASA’s scope, including direct support for international partners and implementation of Earth Science to Action. Opportunities to leverage additional support from partners interested in teaming up with NASA include example partners listed in Table X. For further details, see Appendix X - Letters of Support.

As in other TE field projects such as BOREAS, LBA, and ABoVE, the PANGEA team will work with non-NASA sponsors to incorporate their contributions into the PANGEA Concise Experiment Plan. This process will include 1) defining activities and funders to ensure support is complementary and not duplicative; 2) streamlining management, communication, and oversight among sponsors; and 3) addressing data security concerns. PANGEA will build on past TE experience that successfully blended NASA and non-NASA resources to address critical Earth science knowledge gaps, and serve as a prototype for NASA to advance such partnerships in the future.

| **Table X.** PANGEA co-funding opportunities | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Area** | **NASA Programs** | **Other US Government** | **International Governments** | **Other** |
| Remote Sensing | TE |  | AGEOS, ESA, INPE |  |
| Data Hosting | TE | DAACs, AmeriFlux (DOE) | ICOS | MoveBank |
| Research | TE, Related Programs | NSF, DOE | UK NERC, EU, CNPq, FAPESP, Belmont Forum | Schmidt Sciences, Moore Foundation |
| Capacity Building | ARSET, DEVELOP, SERVIR, Harvest | USAID, USFS-IP | FCDO (UK) | Philanthropies, Donors, CBSI, R2FAC |
| Applications | SERVIR, Earth Action | USAID, USFS-IP, USGS |  | Bezos Earth Fund, NICFI, WRI, Moore Foundation |

### 7.4 Open Science - Data Management and Sharing

PANGEA will facilitate open source science, promote collaboration, and maximize the value of PANGEA data broadly and for the long term, in alignment with NASA’s Strategy for Open Science (Strategy for Data Management and Computing for Groundbreaking Science 2019-2024). This strategy will adhere to community principles and practices, and keep ethical guidelines and cultural sensitivity in mind. PANGEA will also coordinate closely with Indigenous partners to ensure data sovereignty, specifically including Indigenous data sovereignty (IDS). PANGEA will build on the success from past field campaigns and leverage new advances in open science and data management concepts and technologies.

PANGEA will integrate data streams from multiple measurement systems, partners, countries,

and paradigms (e.g., Western science paradigm, Indigenous ecological knowledge, Traditional ecological knowledge). PANGEA data management will adhere to the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) guiding principles to improve data discoverability and accessibility, promote data interoperability and integration, and enhance data reusability and reproducibility (Wilkinson et al. 2016). PANGEA data collection, management, and use will also align with the CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) principles, which emphasize the importance of considering the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples when managing data related to their communities, lands, and resources. The CARE principles for Indigenous Data Governance complement the FAIR principles by focusing on the ethical, cultural, and social dimensions of data management, and reflecting the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination (Caroll et al., 2020).

PANGEA data collection, management, and use also acknowledges the importance of data sovereignty, which requires active partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Data sovereignty is the management of information in a way that is consistent with the laws, practices, and customs of the nation-state in which it is located. Indigenous data sovereignty is the “right of Indigenous Peoples and Nations to govern the collection, ownership, and application of their own data, deriving from the inherent right of Indigenous Nations to govern their peoples, lands, and resources,” and is positioned as a collective right within international Indigenous rights frameworks (Cannon et al., 2024). Indigenous knowledge-holders retain culturally sensitive information and data. To ensure that PANGEA’s data collection and management efforts are ethical and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, PANGEA will work with partners and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) following CARE principles as described in **Table X**.

Participation in the PANGEA science team will require a commitment to provide free, open, and transparent access to all data that are acquired as part of the PANGEA campaign in concordance with FAIR and CARE principles. In collaboration with NASA Program Management, the PANGEA Science Team, led by a PANGEA Open Science Coordinating Group, will work with government agencies, foreign government partners, and Indigenous partners to establish data and information gathering, sharing, and handling agreements and workflows at the national, international agency, and territorial level to outline data ownership, usage rights, and storage plans compliant with Open Science, FAIR, and CARE principles. PANGEA will prioritize first-authored publications by early- and mid-career researchers from the tropics and advancing Indigenous-led research.

PANGEA will follow guidelines from the NASA Earth Science Data Preservation Content Specification[[2]](#footnote-1) to prepare and preserve data as well as associated information beyond the lives of a project. This will enable future users to understand how the data were used for deriving information, knowledge, and policy recommendations, and to ensure reproducibility to ascertain the validity and possible limitations of conclusions reached in the past, and to provide confidence in long-term trends that depended on data from multiple projects. The Preservation Content Implementation Guidance document[[3]](#footnote-2) provides guidelines and checklists to address the PCS needs for different types of Earth science research projects, including airborne and field investigations.

In collaboration with partners, the PANGEA Project Office will develop a publicly accessible **PANGEA Information Portal (PIP)**. This Information Portal will outline PANGEA’s data management and sharing strategy, provide direct links to data, models, and information on the planned and ongoing activities of PANGEA investigators and collaborators, including inventories of the location, timing, and types of data collected. The PANGEA Science Team and Project Office will work closely with data owners when collating and linking to existing data sources to ensure data sharing is collaborative and ethical, and respects the rights and ownership of data already collected in concordance with FAIR and CARE principles. The PIP will provide easy discovery and access to data collected by PANGEA and also existing data useful for PANGEA research.

Visualization and GIS support will be critical to maximize the value of PANGEA data to a broader audience. PANGEA will work with action-oriented partners like Global Forest Watch and the Rights and Resources Initiative to develop applications that ensure data are accessible to non-scientists. Additional data and results reporting mechanisms will be an important part of PANGEA to ensure accessibility to Indigenous and local community partners. Specific modes of communication will be determined in collaboration with Indigenous and local community partners, and will likely be landscape specific.

Data provenance and reproducibility are important aspects of open-source science. Sampling protocols, metadata, data cleaning, codes, algorithms, and workflows associated with data creation, processing, and validation for PANGEA will be made openly available. PANGEA will establish consistent formats and practices for data and metadata and optimization for cloud-based access and analysis, especially for emerging types of data, like drone-based datasets. These activities will work with, rather than attempt to replicate, existing data- and disciplinary-specific efforts. Existing networks and programs such as FLUXNET, NEON, ICOS, OzFlux, TERN, and SAEON have invested in the definition of standards in the processing and data distribution and are moving toward the FAIR implementation. The Regional Networks have also activities in tropical areas; for example ICOS is coordinating the KADI project (Knowledge and climate services from an African observation and Data research Infrastructure, <https://kadi-project.eu/>) that has the aim of design and move toward a pan-African climate observation system.

| **Table X. Examples of coordinated data management and sharing activities with partners.** | |
| --- | --- |
| Partner(s) | Data Management and Sharing Activity |
| LBA | PANGEA will X - needs to be finalized |
| Alliance for Tropical Forest Science (ATFS) | Coordinate with ATFS tropical forest plot network partners to ensure that ground and drone data collection and management follows existing standards and protocols. |
| Indigenous and Local Community partners (e.g., GATC, RRI) | Engage with IPLC partners during the development of the Concise Experiment Plan, well before data collection is conducted. Determine who is responsible for granting permission for external parties to access data and/or Indigenous territories for research. Create steps or policies for researchers and/or IPLCs for data sharing and/or requesting permission to access data or IPLC territories. Establish a plan for data collection and/or monitoring. Build capacity and work with partners, including IPLCs to secure funding for IPLC-led storing and managing of Indigenous data. Provide training to create tools for IPLCs that would support data collection, management, and dissemination. |
| NEON, SBG & NISAR Science Teams | Harmonize protocols across research communities to support scaling. Examples of existing intitaives that PANGEA will engage with include the SBG VSWIR Terrestrial Vegetation algorithm team and the NISAR cal/val network. PANGEA will contribute to developing data collection protocols, airborne data extraction and processing strategies, and database structures that will allow community generated joint airborne-field data collection to be more easily integrated into the model training datasets needed to improve algorithms for underrepresented ecosystems. |

Conversations to ensure alignment with these efforts have already begun. Coordination will deepen upon selection to ensure ground data, flux tower data, drone data, camera trap data, bioacoustics data, Indigenous and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and more are collected, stored, and shared appropriately and according to the best available practices. PANGEA will leverage and integrate with existing and emerging capabilities and systems offered by NASA Earth Science Data Systems as much as possible. These include the Distributed Active Archive Centers (DAACs) for airborne data, DAAC tools and services to make airborne and orbital data easier to use for terrestrial ecology research, NASA’s Visualization, Exploration, and Data Analysis (VEDA) platform (<https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/esds/veda>), and ongoing efforts to coordinate data standardization and protocols.

PANGEA will also adopt an open-source approach for models. Models participating in PANGEA-related activities and projects will be expected to have the source code openly available through collaborative platforms (e.g., GitHub), and released with permissive licenses consistent with the SMD Open-Source Science Guidance. We promote model governance for community engagement including a code of conduct, technical notes and user’s guides, active forum for discussing code issues, and pathways for contributions with model development from the broad scientific community. The exact version of published models will be deposited in long-term repositories with a DOI along with parameter and data information needed to reproduce results.

PANGEA will develop an open **cloud-based data analysis platform** for PANGEA investigators to support open and collaborative research. PANGEA’s data analysis platform will be based on successful science clouds implemented by ABoVE, SHIFT, BioSCape, and NASA’s Multi-Mission Algorithm and Analysis Platform (MAAP, <https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/esds/maap>). These efforts demonstrate successful international data collaboration, including between NASA and ESA (MAAP), and by leveraging Amazon Web Services’ Social Responsibility Program (BioSCape). PANGEA’s cloud-based computing platform will lower barriers to entry, especially for international partners who are likely to be limited in bandwidth, data storage capacity, and computing power. The cloud computing platform will also allow PANGEA science team members to easily share early versions of data products (before they are ready for archiving) and troubleshoot data analysis problems communally. Additionally, capacity building materials, especially coding notebooks, can be developed specifically for the cloud computing environment, allowing anyone anywhere in the world to run them and apply similar approaches. The importance of a cloud computing environment was demonstrated during BioSCape, whose South African science team members would otherwise have been severely limited in their ability to access, analyze, and apply the campaign’s data.

PANGEA will provide open-source science and data management capacity building throughout the campaign, including through trainings and workshops on data management in collaboration with the DAACs, FLUXNET, LBA, Indigenous and local community partner organizations like the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, ATFS, and more. Many of these partners have existing training programs that will be leveraged. PANGEA will prioritize trainings and workshops with partners to support independent and coordinated data management efforts, which: 1) enhances the capacity of Indigenous peoples, local communities, and tropical institutions; and 2) ensures international alignment that will serve as a foundation for datasets and collaboration to continue beyond the PANGEA campaign. [sentence about Co-funding being sought to support investment in infrastructure / from partner efforts]

### 7.5 Timetable

The PANGEA team has worked to utilize virtual and hybrid meetings for early engagement of a diverse science scoping team. We have time saving approaches and believe we can greatly reduce the timeline needed to develop the Concise Experiment Plan and move on to the Implementation phase. **Table X** outlines the proposed timeline, assuming PANGEA’s next activities begin in Fiscal Year 2025.

| Table X. Proposed PANGA timetable. SDT: Science Definition Team; TE: Terrestrial Ecology; CEP: Concise Experiment Plan; PAC: PANGEA Airborne Campaign; Science and Applications Team and Stakeholder Meeting (SATSM). | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Phase I | | | Phase II | | | Phase III | |
| **Study Year** |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| **Project Office Activities** | FY25 | FY26 | FY27 | FY28 | FY29 | FY30 | FY31 | FY32 | FY33 |
| PANGEA selected. Detailed planning begins: Selection of Science Definition Team. Concise experiment plan (CEP) drafted, open for community review, and completed. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The PANGEA announcement of opportunity (NRA) released by NASA. Project Office initiates preparations based on CEP. PANGEA Phase 1 Proposals awarded. 1st SATSM. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2nd SATSM and Airborne Campaign Planning Workshop. PANGEA Airborne Campaign I (PACI) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3rd PANGEA SATSM and Airborne Planning. PANGEA Airborne Campaign II (PACII). NASA NRA PANGEA Phase 2 proposals and selection. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4th PANGEA SATSM and Airborne Planning. PANGEA Airborne Campaign III (PACIII). |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5th PANGEA SATSM. PANGEA Airborne Campaign IV (PANIV). |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6th PANGEA SATSM. PANGEA Backup Airborne Campaign V (PANV). NASA NRA PANGEA Phase 3 Proposals and selection |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7th PANGEA SATSM. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8th PANGEA SATSM. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### 7.6 Risk Assessment

PANGEA will use proactive risk management to mitigate the risk of operating airborne and field measurements across the wide tropical study range required to deliver high-impact science. The Project Office will compile a comprehensive list of project risks and assess them with a standard Risk Assessment Matrix. For high and medium risk cases, the project will develop and implement a mitigation plan, which will be reviewed with the NASA Program Office. PANGEA expects most risks will fall into three categories: (1) health and safety; meeting science objectives; and (3) meeting community engagement and applications objectives.

**Health and Safety:** The project will follow health and travel safety guidelines issued by the US Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs. PANGEA will also engage with local US Embassies, Consulates and their Regional Security Offices for guidance. Given the remote nature of many of the study sites, the project will develop plans for safe transportation to the field study sites, whether by off-road vehicle, boat, or other methods. The project will also develop plans for the safety of the airborne crew and instrument operators during the campaign, following NASA guidelines for aircraft operations and on the ground. Some potential study regions include risks for malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases; the project will ensure participants are advised on relevant vaccines and other prophylaxis prior to field visits.

**Meeting Science Objectives:** The Project Office will work proactively to engage institutional partners and develop formal MOU’s, with the help of NASA’s OIIR office, ESPO, and the US State Department. International airborne campaigns have been repeatedly plagued by slow landing clearances and associated bureaucracy, and much of this can be avoided by beginning the formal MOU process early. While using NASA aircraft for airborne measurements have benefits, use of these aircraft require diplomatic clearance in both the country with the study area and during transit. Diplomatic clearance can sometimes only be obtained near its need-by date so portions of campaigns or entire campaigns may be cancelled on short notice. In addition, because NASA aircraft are operated by US civil servants, there is a demonstrated risk of a US government shutdown delaying or canceling science flights, especially in the October-December timeframe. The PANGEA Project Office will consider these and other risks, and may consider using commercial aircraft to mitigate these risks.

Weather is also an important consideration in successful field and airborne measurements for PANGEA, especially for optical measurements that require cloud-free conditions for optimal measurements. During the science defintion phase, PANGEA will run a climate analysis to determine the best time of year for airborne measurements. During the airborne campaign periods, PANGEA will work with local weather forecasters who understand the local climate to facilitate successful airborne and field measurements.

[add a paragraph for field risks including transportation, facilities, disease, violence, political instability]

Field work presents multiple risks. Surprisingly for those who have not been involved, the riskiest activity historically for NASA has been transportation to-and-from field sites. Car, truck, off-road vehicle, and boat accidents are not uncommon. Risks can be mitigated by assuring that drivers are trained and that vehicles are properly maintained. Other risks in the field include loss of equipment through theft and violence against research team members. These risks can be mitigated by establishing good relations with local communities. Hiring from local communities helps to maintain good relations. Illness and accidents are possible and risks to personnel can be mitigated by proper training, first aid, and good reliable communications and provision for evacuation of sick or wounded researchers when needed.

**Meeting Community Engagement and Applications Objectives:** Engaging with local communities, and developing science and applications outcomes that will be useful to a wide variety of people requires coordination and genuine effort. A risk of PANGEA is that engagement efforts are not successful and/or applications are not useful. PANGEA will take several actions to mitigate these risks. PANGEA will co-produce engagement plans for each landscape during the Concise Experiment Plan development that includes milestones, objectives, and metrics to evaluate success regularly throughout the project. PANGEA will embrace inclusivity and will actively work to develop and promote inclusive and co-developed practices throughout. Co-developing projects and working equitably with all partners, including Indigenous peoples and local communities can take a long time. PANGEA will continue to work hard to build on long-standing relationships. However, given the limited duration for PANGEA field work in each location, there is a risk that the project will not meet these goals. PANGEA will work with partners to develop plans for continued support beyond the duration of the project. PANGEA will work to maintain relationships with community partners throughout the campaign, and will work with international and industrial partners to secure additional funding to support these efforts in order to increase the depth and meaningfulness of these relationships.

## 8. Enabling Earth Science to Action

There are two main requirements for effective application of NASA research: (1) substantive overlap between NASA science and user needs; and (2) a process that brings potential users and scientists together. By meeting science and measurement objectives, PANGEA is well positioned to advance monitoring capabilities in the tropical forest biomes, where data gaps and limited process understanding will otherwise limit the utility of new and forthcoming satellite sensors. This section presents the ways PANGEA will enable Earth Science to Action (ES2A) in critical fields like climate change and carbon monitoring, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable agriculture and livelihoods. It also details the current and future processes that the project employs to ensure uptake of research outputs by users. PANGEA’s early, intensive, and diverse engagement of partners during the scoping phase for co-design is foundational to ensure the uptake and use of data products. Based on feedback from the scoping phase, PANGEA data products will be highly accessible and user friendly, and will include information on scaling approaches, offer educational materials, and continue a bidirectional dialog that raises awareness about PANGEA and its products while collecting feedback on user needs. PANGEA plans to advance methodologies to weave local, traditional, and ecological knowledge with remote sensing data, which offers both opportunities for improved scientific understanding, and unearths novel routes to put PANGEA products in the hands of decision makers and action takers.

PANGEA will prioritize strategic NASA Earth Science to Action efforts that close the gap between rapidly advancing technology and the needs of society to access science-informed decision-making platforms. PANGEA emphasizes a historically understudied tropical biome to empower one of the planet’s most vulnerable regions to the consequences of climate and land use change while also acknowledging the global contributions of tropical biodiversity to resilience in the interconnected Earth System.

### 8.1 Applications of PANGEA research outputs

#### 8.1.1 Carbon Sequestration Stability and Methane Fluxes

| Science question | Research application | Potential partners and/or outlets for impact |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Q1, Q2, Q8, Q15, Q18, Q19, Q26 | Mapping and quantifying **carbon sequestration long-term stability** (i.e., permanence in carbon markets) | US GHG Center, GEO-TREES, CTrees, Land and Carbon Lab (WRI), OSFAC, GCF-TF, Woodwell, SilvaCarbon |
| Q1, Q2, Q4, Q15, Q26 | Mapping and quantifying tropical **methane flux predictions** | US GHG Center, SERVIR, WRI |

Mapping and monitoring tropical carbon stocks and fluxes is critical for closing the global carbon budget, constraining future climate change projections, and for improving measurement, reporting, and validation (MRV) of carbon credits. Improving climate change projections, especially decreasing uncertainty around carbon fluxes of tropical forests, tropical land use change, and tropical forest responses to climate change are critical. While PANGEA will not focus on carbon accounting, results from PANGEA can improve our understanding of the changing carbon content of tropical forests, specifically related to the long-term stability of tropical carbon sequestration and CH4 emissions, currently significant sources of uncertainty in the global carbon budget. PANGEA will coordinate with the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Center activity to determine areas of alignment and opportunities for PANGEA to contribute data and understanding that meet stakeholder needs (National GHG MMIS Strategy 2023).

***Carbon sequestration long-term stability:*** Carbon financing approaches have gained popularity across tropical communities and involve polluting entities transferring payments to local governments and communities for various carbon emission remediations including forest protection, reforestation, enhanced forest management, and the establishment of forest plantations (Anderegg et al., 2020; Morita & Matsumoto, 2023). However, the long-term viability of relying on tropical forests as natural climate solutions remains uncertain in the face of direct and indirect climate-driven risks (Anderegg et al., 2020). PANGEA’s advancements of process-based understanding, tropical carbon stocks and flux mapping, and constrained spatially explicit model predictions of the future tropical land sink can directly support tools for mapping and quantifying the long-term stability of tropical forest carbon sequestration. PANGEA will work closely with the Governors’ Climate and Forests Task Force, a network of high-level government officials, network partners, private sector companies, civil society organizations, researchers, and Indigenous Peoples, to ensure appropriate and effective tool development.

***Mapping and quantifying methane flux predictions:*** Uncertainty in predicting future methane emissions from the tropics could lead to inaccurate global climate predictions, making it difficult to assess the full scope of climate change impacts. By improving our understanding of tropical methane fluxes, we can refine global carbon budgets, better anticipate future climate shifts, and inform more effective mitigation strategies to curb greenhouse gas emissions. This is crucial for achieving international climate goals and stabilizing the Earth's climate system. PANGEA’s science activities will advance our ability to constrain tropical methane flux uncertainty. PANGEA will align with needs and activities emerging from the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Center in collaboration with partners like SERVIR regional hubs to advance local technical expertise in and with partners like the World Resources Institute to advance mapping and monitoring tools.

#### 8.1.2 Biodiversity Conservation

| Science questions | Research application | Potential partners and/or outlets for impact |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Q5, Q6, Q7, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q19 | Biodiversity mapping to support **landscape connectivity** and **corridor implementation** and **tropical forest restoration** (in alignment with Ecosystem Atlas) | Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute, Alliance Bioversity CIAT, Central African Satellite Observatory (OSFAC), Conservation International, European Space Agency, IUCN Regional Offices, AFR100 |
|
| Q5, Q10, Q11, Q12 | Empowering and elevating Indigenous, local, and traditional communities through the **integration of IEK, LEK, and TEK with remote sensing** | NASA Indigenous Peoples Initiative, Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, Rights & Resources Initiative, Congo Basin Institute School for Indigenous and Local Knowledge, MapBiomas, Woodwell Climate Research Center |

The first Global Biodiversity Framework 2030 target is to “Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss” while respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities (CBD 2030). Doing so requires a campaign on the scale of PANGEA. Targets 2 and 3 are to restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems, and conserve 30% of all land, water, and sea. To assist in the ability to meet these targets, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) *Global Ecosystems Atlas*effort, supported by the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNFCCC, is working to unite high-quality global, regional, and national ecosystem maps into a single, open, online resource. The Global Ecosystem Atlas is prioritizing mapping “structure and function of the world’s ecosystems in unprecedented detail.” **PANGEA will fill major calibration and validation data gaps in Earth’s most diverse biome and will directly support this effort in collaboration with the USGS, European Space Agency, IUCN, ESRI, and others.**

Biodiversity conservation can make considerable progress with large-scale observations across disturbance gradients. Participatory land-use planning with NASA Earth Observation monitoring capabilities that will result from PANGEA are needed to support collaborative decision-making between land-users and governments to design corridors and improve landscape connectivity. Similarly, forest restoration efforts require improved understanding of plant-animal interactions, and what species can effectively support restoration efforts, and where. Understanding of the complex processes that sustain regrowing tropical forest landscapes will be advanced through PANGEA, with science activities directly guided by these applications. PANGEA will enable the mapping of biodiversity and diverse processes in the tropics where methods and approaches are currently insufficient. This work is critical for efforts like AFR100, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative to restore Africa’s degraded and deforested land, and 30x30. NASA remote sensing of Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) like the biological effects of fire and irregular inundation are among the highest priority identified by the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON; Skidmore *et al.*, 2021).

In addition, partnerships with key collaborators identified in the scoping campaign will accelerate the development of user platforms for protecting biodiversity and its contributions to people. In June 2024, a joint PANGEA workshop with the Governor’s Climate and Forests Task Force included a presentation from MapBiomas proposing science-informed biodiversity management and conservation strategies with mapping and monitoring of land cover, land use, surface water, and fire scars. Partners like MapBiomas, the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute, Conservation International, and other tropical and international organizations will support the development of user-friendly platforms that are accessible from local to global scales. PANGEA will specifically prioritize engagement with Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Alliances and Organizations to empower and elevate Indigenous, local, and traditional communities through the **integration of Indigenous, local, and traditional knowledge (IEK, LEK, TEK) with remote sensing.** PANGEA will support efforts initiated and led by the Global Alliance of Tropical Communities, whose women’s movement is already conducting drone data collection training, and the Rights and Resources Initiative, who has partnered with Woodwell in the past to quantify and estimate the carbon stored in Indigenous, Afro-descendent, and local community lands (policy brief, research report). There is strong interest in similar initiatives emphasizing biodiversity.

#### 8.1.3 Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods

| **Science questions** | **Research application** | Potential partners and/or outlets for impact |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Q6, Q9, Q14, Q17 | **Intensifying agricultural** production and improving yields | SERVIR, IITA, NASA Harvest, Land and Carbon Lab (WRI) |
| Q14, Q16, Q17, Q19 | Advancing **sustainable agricultural production**, including under climate change | SERVIR, IITA, Alliance Bioversity & CIAT |
| Q3, Q16, Q19 | Improving **supply chain traceability** of agricultural commodities | Alliance Bioversity & CIAT, WRI, private sector, certification bodies, regulators |
| Q3, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q27 | Improving **disaster alerts & response** (e.g., fire, flooding, drought) | SERVIR, IITA, Alliance Biodiversity & CIAT, MapBiomas, Cameroon National Observatory for Climate Change |

Tropical ecosystems are home to 3 billion people and produce agricultural commodities that are exported and consumed globally. Intensifying agriculture in tropical regions, making it more sustainable and resilient to climate change, and enhancing abilities to trace agricultural commodities to their origin are all critical to reduce deforestation pressure on tropical forests while meeting growing global demands. PANGEA will support these efforts in the following ways:

***Improved intensification*:** Satellite monitoring of crops offers the possibility to assess production levels in near-real time, comparing intervention and control areas across significant distances to provide critical data on the efficacy of intensification efforts and support farmer decision-making. In the Congo Basin, where most farms are small, interspersed in a mosaic with forest, and difficult to reach, remote sensing can help understand the penetration of new methods and technologies remotely. PANGEA will advance the capacity to use satellite remote sensing for precision agriculture in the tropics, including improved crop type mapping, nutrient- and water-use efficiency mapping, and yield estimation. This work will be done in collaboration with key partners working in this area, including working with the World Resources Institute (WRI) to support the Land and Carbon Lab.

***Increased sustainability and capacity for adaptation:*** Agriculture under climate change will require farmers to grow more food under increasingly unpredictable circumstances, including shifting precipitation regimes and periods of intense heat. As a major contributor to climate change, there is also a movement to make agriculture more sustainable, through decreased use of fertilizers and pesticides, curtailed water use, and increased efforts to control erosion. Colleagues from IITA, Alliance Bioversity-CIAT, and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) have already shared input into how PANGEA products advance these efforts, informing science questions that directly underpin opportunities for action. These include improved capabilities to support spatially explicit farm-scale crop health monitoring.

***Improved traceability*:** There is globally increasing demand to link agricultural commodities with the exact farm where they were grown, driven by both consumer demand and regulatory pressure from new policy regimes like the European Union Deforestation Free Commodities Regulations and a similar bill under consideration in the U.S. PANGEA’s advancement of the use of new sensors like NISAR, BIOMASS, and SBG to detect multiple forms of agricultural expansion into tropical forests will provide necessary monitoring tools for ensuring deforestation free supply chains. Methodological improvements from PANGEA’s data acquisition may also improve our ability to use remote sensing tools to distinguish between complex agroforestry and secondary forests, currently a major gap that undermines the ability to recognize and map coffee and cocoa farms that use more sustainable shading methods, allowing them to prove compliance with deforestation-free commodities requirements. These activities also position PANGEA to impact other livelihood sectors, like payments for ecosystem services and non-timber forest products*.*

***Improving disaster alerts and response:***Droughts, floods, pests, and extreme heat all threaten agricultural production in the tropics. In places where agricultural sector adaptation to climate change is insufficient, policies and practices like early warning systems, disaster alerts, and improved insurance products for smallholder farmers are critical. PANGEA’s efforts to map land-use activities and land-use change, understand climate impacts on phenology, estimate plant chemical traits remotely will all support these policy solutions. For example, enhanced remote sensing of boundaries, crops, and yields in farm fields will lower monitoring costs for climate-driven insurance products for smallholder farmers.

To deliver on potential gains for food security and livelihoods, PANGEA has engaged agricultural research partners like NASA Harvest, NASA SERVIR, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), including the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and partners working at the nexus of forests and agriculture, including the Alliance Bioversity and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), World Resources Institute and Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Center (CIFOR-ICRAF). Information shared by these partners during the PANGEA scoping process directly informed PANGEA’s science questions to potentiate Earth Action outcomes. Partners such as IITA specialize in translation of findings from research into practice, and build on decades of experience with private sector and government partners.

### 8.2: Process to enable Earth Science to Action

#### 8.2.1 Partner Engagement

Substantive interest alone is insufficient to guarantee that NASA products will be used. Effective research application requires that end user communities be identified and engaged early, and must be partners in research design and tool development. This requires advanced planning, intent, and resources. That is why PANGEA has invested since the inception of the scoping phase in laying the groundwork for research translation. Specifically, PANGEA addresses the following Guiding Principles from NASA’s ES2A Strategy (2024-2034):

* **Amplify impact through partnerships:** PANGEA’s investment in community engagement has attracted a diverse array of partners, including international governments, donors, and local communities (see *Section 7.2* for details about community engagement). These partners include potential users, data contributors, and potential funders for applications—the last of which will help make PANGEA’s work cost effective by supplementing NASA’s Earth Science resources with funds to support capacity building, community engagement, and research translation (see [*Section 7.4*](#_w90m76cd6k00): *Co-funding Opportunities* for additional information). PANGEA also brings extensive international partnerships, ranging from national space agencies that could provide complementary data to tropical communities who will participate in data collection and potentially in use and action. PANGEA engaged these partners early in the process to increase their investment and their input in co-development of potential end products.
* **Engage a diverse workforce and broader Earth Science community:** PANGEA’s inter- and transdisciplinary goals are supported by a diverse team that ranges from data scientists to economists and hail from NASA, academia, non-profit organizations, other federal agencies, and governments from around the world. PANGEA’s extensive international engagement also offers opportunities to work with and recruit the best minds globally to NASA’s Earth Science efforts, while the capacity building and training efforts (see [*Section 9*](#_8t6ay0v9gizk)) help ready the next generation of scientists.

During the Scoping Phase, PANGEA led extensive outreach to potential users (see *Appendix B*), and engaged with potential users about what questions and data are most valuable to them. As a result, PANGEA has worked since its inception to bridge the difficult gap between what science questions are being asked and what end users need for decision making. Community engagement is central to PANGEA’s ES2A strategy (see *Section 7.2* for details on how PANGEA will engage the community). We are aware that community engagement comes with the risk of creating expectations that cannot be met by the project, largely because the airborne data being collected is spatiotemporally limited in scope and will be more episodic than is needed to meet many user applications and decision-making needs. PANGEA will make every effort to repeatedly and clearly convey the limitations of project data which are necessarily limited spatially and temporally. PANGEA will also endeavor to leverage the momentum created by a brief but intense project period to create, grow, and strengthen a new and more diverse user community for NASA Earth data. The depth and reach of PANGEA’s engagement will be contingent on funding and is a priority in co-funding opportunities.

Specifically, PANGEA will ensure that all community engagement activities emphasize the links between PANGEA’s field and airborne data and NASA’s Earth Observatory satellite sensors (both current and planned). Because users will benefit from products derived from spaceborne observations, PANGEA ES2A priorities focus on advancing specific monitoring needs and capabilities that utilize ongoing services, i.e., satellite missions. Airborne campaign data will support partner training focused on operational data before, alongside, and after PANGEA scaling advances can be used to retrieve satellite-derived products. Examples include SAR and hyperspectral training and readiness in collaboration with SERVIR. In doing so, PANGEA will build NISAR and SBG early adopter communities in the tropics.

PANGEA has also prioritized seeking a diverse range of funding partners, recognizing that NASA is well-suited to support data collection, analysis, and tool/platform development, while other sponsors are better positioned to support conservation projects that apply data and application-specific forms of training and capacity building. The Scoping Phase also included a visioning exercise, where diverse teams collaborated to draw translational pathways that included data acquisition, potential uses cases, the co-development of products, and identification of partners.

#### 8.2.2 Supporting Application of PANGEA research

PANGEA will harness its existing and planned partner engagement to integrate ES2A holistically into the campaign. This includes conducting a user needs assessment as part of the Concise Experiment Plan, and conducting an environmental scan to identify existing tools that could integrate data. This is particularly important because integration into existing tools usually increases the likelihood of uptake, use, and maintenance in the long term. **Figure X** demonstrates PANGEA’s approach to advancing campaign results through NASA’s Application Readiness Levels (ARL), which will hinge on combining strong subject matter alignment with thoughtful, early, and inclusive partner engagement. While the example is displayed as a linear process using NASA’s ARL framework, PANGEA expects our ES2A activities to be iterative, and at times non-linear, which is representative of the complexities that define real-world policy and decision making.

NASA, along with other domestic and international agencies, are increasingly playing a leading role in the development and implementation of decision support systems. These systems are designed to incorporate the results from research activities within a modeling framework in order to provide information to land managers, regional governments, among others who require information in a specific context. The PANGEA Information Portal (PIP) will provide a platform to conduct further research on the use of satellite information products to support decision making. It will be a critical platform for PANGEA researchers to interact at multiple levels with scientists and managers at agencies who are responsible for assessing the impacts of climate change in tropical regions, as well as the media and general public. PANGEA’s Integrated Modeling Framework will provide another scaffold for ES2A activities by creating unique information products based upon integrated assessments.

There is increasing recognition by NASA and other U.S. and international agencies of the need to co-develop decision support systems to exchange information and analysis with land managers, regional governments, and other policy and decision makers. PANGEA will co-develop products with these partners who are responsible for the provision of data required for climate and land cover change monitoring. The process-driven models that will be the focus of research in PANGEA align well with the program missions of these offices. Researchers from these offices were involved in the PANGEA scoping process, and their input has informed research questions and seeded ideas for research application of PANGEA’s results.

PANGEA also offers the opportunity to engage in transdisciplinary work and application, particularly given the inter-related nature of climate change, biodiversity conservation, and agricultural production, which are some of the main applications for PANGEA products. **Figure X** demonstrates the potential overlap in these topics, and highlights a small selection of the partners who are already engaged in work at the intersection of the different subject matter.

## 9. Capacity Building, Training, and Education

Strengthening capacity and investing in education associated with PANGEA is central to this aim, and critical to preparing the next generation with the necessary expertise and tools. PANGEA capacity building, training, and education will target not only US-based research and workforce communities, but also local and national communities in tropical forest countries partnering with PANGEA. Experience gained during prior TE field projects, especially LBA, demonstrated that capacity building built in longevity to the projects and justified the projects in our host countries. PANGEA will partner with existing NASA programs, as well as with local and international collaborating institutions, to plan and execute training activities that are appropriate for a range of potential trainees, including students, early career scientists, the broader workforce, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Training, Capacity Building, and Education will focus on educating a cohort of graduate students, workforce development training, and Indigenous peoples and local community specific training and capacity building.

PANGEA capacity building, training, and educational activities will be targeted by audience. During the development of the Concise Experiment Plan, and then intermittently throughout PANGEA, assessments will be carried out to appraise what different members of the PANGEA community require and desire in terms of capacity building, training, and educational activities. The assessment will identify potential beneficiaries, and align them with available resources. Training is a preferred target for many co-funding opportunities (see *Section 7.4* Co-funding Opportunities).

**Educating a Cohort of Graduate Students:** During LBA capacity building was mutually beneficial to the NASA LBA-ECO efforts and to NASA’s South American hosts. Brazil required a training and education component for every LBA investigation, defined by available resources and generally linked to academic programs within Brazil. The largest group of students trained within LBA were Brazilian undergraduate students who were paid to engage in science projects. While, these students mainly did technical work, many became co-authors on papers, and some were even primary authors. This program helped identify students capable of completing masters and doctoral degrees. About 500 Brazilian students earned MS and Ph.D. degrees associated with LBA projects. While a small portion of the funded students were paid by NASA research projects (mainly for students who did their degrees in the US), most scholarships were awarded through traditional Brazilian mechanisms from their national education and science ministries and through state level research foundations. While the total investment in dollar terms was probably less than 5% of the NASA investment in LBA-ECO and other foreign research activities, the immediate payoff was enormous. In Brazil, many LBA graduates went on to do important work in the environmental field in universities, in municipal, state, and national government agencies, and in non-governmental organizations, exceeding Brazilian expectations for the impact of the LBA training and education program.

PANGEA’s biggest opportunity for capacity building and training is within the science team. Following LBA and BioSCape models, NASA can encourage or require that proposals be co-developed with local researchers. Roughly 50% of the BioSCape science team was from South Africa. Similar to LBA, PANGEA funding announcements can require or strongly encourage training, education, and capacity building as part of the proposed activities.

| PANGEA’s approach to equitable science, capacity building, and training will directly confront the issue of flyover campaigns and parachute science. Based on successes from LBA, we believe that PANGEA can publish 100 first-author papers from scientists in Africa, contributing to closing the Parachute Index gap in Central Africa as described in Culotta et al. (2024). These African scientists will continue the legacy of the PANGEA campaign, in collaboration with international peers across the tropics, well after the end of the campaign. |
| --- |

Another important goal of PANGEA’s capacity building strategy is to strengthen and grow the NASA Earth data user community in the tropics, including Indigenous peoples and local communities. PANGEA’s airborne activities will generate a lot of excitement around the potential of remote sensing for many applications, including applications focused on climate change mitigation and carbon monitoring, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture and disaster risk prevention and monitoring. The diverse user group will benefit greatly from PANGEA’s methodological advances for using NASA’s satellite assets. PANGEA will use the momentum created by the airborne campaign to catalyze and promote broader application of NASA spaceborne datasets, particularly those that are well suited for examination alongside the airborne data products, e.g. NISAR, EMIT, PACE, ECOSTRESS, GEDI, and in the future SBG. Working with regional partners, PANGEA will collaborate with host countries on the development of national data banks so that the emerging knowledge from PANGEA can be integrated with and applied to regional and national demands for socio-economic promotion and policy development. PANGEA’s approach to capacity building intends to build NASA Early Adopter user groups in the tropics - particularly for NISAR and SBG, as well as for ESA missions like BIOMASS, CHIME, and FLEX.

PANGEA will draw upon NASA Earth Science’s strategy to “build capacity through an extensive and diverse set of partnerships, both traditional and new… [including with] national and international governmental agencies, academia, non-governmental and international organizations, the private sector, and philanthropies.” PANGEA will partner with existing NASA programs and training efforts led by partners. Some examples are included in **Table X** below.

| **Table X.** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner/**  **Provider** | **Activity** | **Target Audience** |
| ARSET | Multi-part training webinar series, building on the in-person training model trialed during BioSCape. | Conservation decision makers, university lecturers, researchers |
| DAACs | Training notebooks and workshops modeled on those already presented at professional conferences (e.g., AGU, ESA, ATBC, EGU) for access to NASA Earth data. | Researchers at all career stages |
| DEVELOP | DEVELOP partners with decision makers who are interested in using NASA Earth data to support their work. Each partner would have a DEVELOP team of 4-5 people work with them over 10 weeks (renewable) to develop capacity to use NASA Earth data to address their needs. | Decision makers and the broader workforce |
| GLOBE | Locally tailored educational activities for K-12 students, teachers, and citizens including train-the-trainer elements allowing multiplication. Opportunity to channel excitement of airborne campaigns and Earth Observation data. | K-12 students, teachers, and citizens |
| SERVIR | Coordinate with SERVIR regional hubs to develop custom services to serve the specific decision-making needs of local partner organizations. This includes building on SERVIR’s Planning Toolkit, which provides regionally targeted instruction on how to assess and deliver impactful interventions related to agriculture, forest restoration, and more. | SERVIR hubs, implementing partners (e.g. local and national governments, NGOs) |
| Indigenous Peoples Initiative | Collaboration with Indigenous communities to enhance the use of Earth Observations for informed decision-making and actions. PANGEA has developed partnerships with Indigenous alliance organizations in the tropics, including the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) and the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI). PANGEA will coordinate with NASA’s Indigenous Peoples Initiative to extend efforts to engage these communities to co-develop trainings, support Indigenous-led projects, and strengthen relationships and creates opportunities for Indigenous voices within NASA’s Earth Science Division. | Indigenous communities |
| ATBC | PANGEA will work with the ATBC, a global scientific society and professional organization promoting research, education, and communication on tropical biology and conservation to develop trainings and workshops and foster networking among researchers across the tropics. ATBC has around 1,000 members from 70 countries, and supports capacity building and hosts international meetings. | ATBC members from over 70 countries |
| FLUXNET | Training and tools on how to use and analyze eddy covariance flux tower data, including in multiple languages. FLUXNET has already translated their extensive training materials to Spanish. PANGEA will work with FLUXNET to extend translation to French and Portuguese and develop new training materials that integrate NASA remote sensing data and flux tower data. | Researchers and students |
| AIMS African Master’s in Machine Intelligence | Post-graduate training, research and public engagement in the mathematical sciences and machine learning. The AIMS network has five centers of excellence teaching a Masters in Machine Intelligence (AMMI), including in Cameroon, Ghana, and Rwanda. Currently, the AIMS network has over 2,400 alumni from 44 African countries of which 33% are women. | African students |
| NSF RISE | Foster transdisciplinary collaborations that engage the broader geosciences community to drive discoveries and innovations in workforce development. | Researchers and students |

| **Ultimately, PANGEA is an opportunity to improve understanding, leave legacy datasets, and support direct action now. Perhaps its longest-lived legacy will be the foundational core of experts trained and supported who will contribute to leading the next generation in scientific and technological advances and solutions-oriented action to tackle Earth’s most pressing challenges.** |
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## 10. References

[References Google Doc](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O6XpISwtJ2ere9_OnkLi6uvaFm01RWqjYj7SE8xy4ZQ/edit)

## 11. Figure and Photograph and Credits

## 12. Glossary

***Anthropocene -*** A proposed new geological epoch resulting from significant human-driven changes to the structure and functioning of the Earth system, including the climate system. Originally proposed in the Earth system science community in 2000, the proposed new epoch is undergoing a formalization process within the geological community based on the stratigraphic evidence that human activities have changed the Earth system to the extent of forming geological deposits with a signature that is distinct from those of the Holocene, and which will remain in the geological record. Both the stratigraphic and Earth system approaches to defining the Anthropocene consider the mid-20th century to be the most appropriate starting date (Steffen et al., 2016), although others have been proposed and continue to be discussed. The Anthropocene concept has already been informally adopted by diverse disciplines and the public to denote the substantive influence of humans on the Earth system. ([IPCC AR6 WGI & WGII](https://apps.ipcc.ch/glossary/))

***Biodiversity***- The variety of life on Earth, including its variation at the level of genes, species, functional traits, and ecosystems. In tropical forests, biodiversity is exceptionally high within and across forests, supporting complex interactions and ecosystem function, and causing heterogeneity in climate responses and resilience.

**Community** - Formal and informal groups of people who perceive themselves as members which may share interests, experiences, resources, activities, professions, livelihoods, culture, geography, origins, language, or any combination of the above.

***Carbon stocks and fluxes*** *-* Carbon stocks refer to the total amount of carbon stored in a system (e.g., in vegetation, soils, or oceans), while carbon fluxes represent the movement of carbon into and out of these stocks through processes such as photosynthesis, respiration, and decomposition, and includes fluxes of carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and lateral flows of carbon.

***Co-benefits*** - Joint positive contributions of biodiversity and cultural diversity for humans and other species. These contributions are associated with the concepts of nature’s contributions to people and people’s contributions to nature (Levis et al, 2024).

***Ecosystem*** - PANGEA uses the IPCC working definition of ecosystem, which includes people as key organisms, thus including agro-ecosystems and more broadly social-ecological systems. A functional unit consisting of living organisms, their non-living environment and the interactions within and between them. The components included in a given ecosystem and its spatial boundaries depend on the purpose for which the ecosystem is defined: in some cases they are relatively sharp, while in others they are diffuse. Ecosystem boundaries can change over time. Ecosystems are nested within other ecosystems, and their scale can range from very small to the entire biosphere. In the current era, most ecosystems either contain people as key organisms or are influenced by the effects of human activities in their environment. → directly from [IPCC AR6 WGI, WGII, WGII](https://apps.ipcc.ch/glossary/))

***Ecosystem Services*** - Ecosystem services are the benefits that humans derive from natural ecosystems, including provisioning (e.g., food, water), regulating (e.g., climate regulation, flood control), supporting (e.g., nutrient cycling, soil formation), and cultural services (e.g., recreation, spiritual value).

**Forest degradation –** A forest is degraded when the rate of exogenous disturbance greatly exceeds the long-term average rate of exogenous disturbance for the ecosystem and the effects of that disturbance can be distinguished from old-growth forest structure and/or composition. Logging, fire, mining, and fragmentation are common causes of forest degradation.

***Forest-friendly activities*** - Economic activities that utilize forest resources in a way that preserves the forest's ecological integrity and supports the sustainable livelihoods of local communities IUCN (2021).

***Forest function*** - Forest function refers to the ecological roles of forests, such as regulating climate, supporting biodiversity, cycling nutrients, and providing habitat, which contribute to the overall health and stability of ecosystems. Forest functions include gross primary productivity (GPP), woody productivity, ecosystem respiration, and evapotranspiration.

***Forest structure***- Biomass, canopy height, stem density, vertical height heterogeneity, and vertical plant area density distributions

***Human activities -*** Formal, informal, legal, illegal and traditional economic, subsistence, cultural, and development practices and behaviors by humans that lead to the exploitation, alteration, and degradation of forest ecosystems, including logging, infrastructure development, agriculture, livestock rearing, fire, mining, hunting and wildlife exploitation, and charcoal production.

***Land-use change*** - Land use and land cover change refers to the alteration of the Earth's surface, including changes in how land is utilized (e.g., agriculture, urbanization) and shifts in its physical cover (e.g., deforestation, reforestation, urban expansion).

***Resilience -*** The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for adaptation, learning and/or transformation (Arctic Council, 2016). → directly from [IPCC AR6 WGI, WGII, WGII](https://apps.ipcc.ch/glossary/))

***Vulnerable communities*** - Communities that are most likely to experience the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, including Indigenous peoples, low-income communities, and those reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2020).

***Vulnerability*** - The propensity of social and ecological systems and their practices to be adversely affected by changes, encompassing their sensitivity to such changes and their ability to adapt. Adapted from (FAO 2013).

## 13. List of Acronyms

**ABoVE** - Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment

**AGEOS** - Gabonese Space Agency

**AI/ML** - Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

**AmIT** - Amazon Institute of Technology

**AMSR-E** - Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for EOS Mission

**ATBC** - Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

**ATFS** - Alliance for Tropical Forest Science

**BioSCape** - Biodiversity Survey of the Cape

**BRDF** - Bidirectional Reflectance Distribution Function

**CARE** - Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics

**CBI** - Congo Basin Institute

**CBFP** - Congo Basin Forest Partnership

**CBSI** - Congo Basin Science Initiative

**CC&E** - NASA Carbon Cycle and Ecosystems Office

**CENAREST** - Gabon National Center for Scientific and Technological Research

**CEOS** - Committee on Earth Observation Satellites

**CH4** - Methane

**CGIAR** - Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research

**CHIME** - Copernicus Hyperspectral Imaging Mission for the Environment

**CIAT** - International Center for Tropical Agriculture

**CIFOR/ICRAF** - Center for International Tropical Forestry Research-World Agroforestry Center

**CMIP** - Coupled Model Intercomparison Project

**CNES** - French National Space Agency

**CO2** - Carbon dioxide

**CSDA** - NASAs Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition

**DEI** - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**DLR** - The German Aerospace Center

**DGPA-DRC** - Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones

**EMIT** - Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation

**ENSO** - El Niño Southern Oscillation

**ESA** - European Space Agency

**ES2A** - NASA’s Earth Science to Action Strategy

**ESMs** - Earth System Models

**FAIR** - Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable

**FAPESP** - São Paulo Research Foundation

**FLEX** - Fluorescence Explorer Mission

**GATC** - Global Alliance of Territorial Communities

**GCF-TF** - Governors’ Climate and Forests Task Force

**GEDI** - Global Ecosystem Dynamics Investigation

**GEO** - Group on Earth Observations

**GHG** - Greenhouse gas

**GPP** - Gross Primary Productivity

**IEK** - Indigenous ecological knowledge

**IITA** - International Institute for Tropical Agriculture

**ILAMB** - International Land Model Benchmarking

**IPLCs** - Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

**INPA** - Brazil National Institute of Amazonian Research

**INPE** - Brazil's National Institute for Space Research

**IPCC** - Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change

**IPBES** - Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

**IRD** - French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development

**ISRO** - Indian Space Research Organisation

**ITCZ** - Intertropical Convergence Zone

**IUCN** - International Union for Conservation of Nature

**JAXA** - Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency

**LCLUC** - Land Cover and Land-Use Change

**LBA** - Large Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia

**LEK** - Local ecological knowledge

**MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding

**NEE** - Net Ecosystem Exchange

**NISAR** - NASA-ISRO SAR Mission

**NSF** - National Science Foundation

**OFVi** - One Forest Vision

**OIIR** - NASA Office of International and Interagency Relations

**ONACC** - Cameroon National Climate Change Observatory

**OSFAC** - Central African Satellite Observatory

**PACE** - Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem Mission

**PANGEA** - PAN tropical investigation of bioGeochemistry and Ecological Adaptation

**RRI** - Rights and Resources Initiative

**SBG** - Surface Biology and Geology Mission

**SMAP** - Soil Moisture Active Passive Mission

**SIF** - Solar Induced Fluorescence

**SPUN** - Society for the Protection of Underground Networks

**SSC** - Scientific Steering Committee

**SST** - Sea surface temperature

**SWOT** - Surface Water and Ocean Topography Mission

**TBD -** To Be Determined

**TEK** - Traditional ecological knowledge

**TRL** - Technology Readiness Level

**TIR** - Thermal Infrared

**UAV** - Uncrewed Air Vehicle

**UNFCCC** - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**USAID** - U.S. Agency for International Development

**USFS** - U.S. Forest Service

**USGS** - U.S. Geological Survey

**VSWIR** - Visible to Shortwave Infrared

**WRI** - World Resources Institute

## 14. Appendices

[**Appendices Google Doc here**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EIzwIZK0uF6_y0lzz7i8TMb0EHxecDYDWX4mQEinWXY/edit)

### A - PANGEA Partners

### B - Engagement during the Scoping Campaign

### C - Planned and Ongoing Research and Monitoring Activities

### D - PANGEA Core and Extended Domains Detailed Table

### E - Potential PANGEA Training Activities

### F - Letters of Support

1. The PANGEA Community Guidelines is a living document found at <https://tropicalforestscoping.com/community-guidelines/>. The guidelines derived from existing institutional guides can be vetted by NASA and modified according to the needs of program management. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. <https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/esdis/esco/standards-and-practices/preservation-content-spec> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. <https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/s3fs-public/2022-07/ESDS-RFC-042VERSION1.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)