

# Commercialised in Europe?

Just before Christmas, Google and the UN-FAO announced that they are to collaborate to make geospatial tracking and mapping products more accessible, providing high-technology assistance to countries tackling climate change and much greater capacity to experts developing forest and land-use policies. *"For FAO, this is not just a partnership. This is a strategic alliance,"* said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

This partnership will see Google Maps providing 1200 trusted tester credentials on Google Earth Engine to FAO staff and partners, while also providing training and receiving feedback on users' needs and experiences. Ironically, the software which FAO bring to the partnership (Open Foris) has been developed with the financial support of Finland, Germany and Norway.

The agreement shows the power of geo-information to transform lives; in this case by enabling FAO workers in the field to quickly get access to key information. It is a powerful reminder of the public good benefits which EO technology can bring.

It also shows once again how European investment and innovation is not fully exploited to the benefit of the European industry and this chimed with the recent report which I read from GP Bullhound looking at the relative performance of Internet companies in Europe and the US (see my previous blogpost). It is clear that we do not lack innovation in Europe but we do somewhere lack the ability to turn this into global business – as Google has done and of course the other “FANG’s” (Facebook, Apple, Netflix, Google) which have dominated the US market over the last year, not to mention Uber and Airbnb.