

We would like to thank the editor and the reviewers for their constructive efforts to improve this manuscript. Their suggestions and observations are truly useful. Below we comment on the editor's suggestions.

### **Comments to the Author:**

Dear Authors

Thank you for the reply to the review comments.

I am happy to invite you to submit a suitably revised manuscript. Please take all comments by the reviewers carefully into account during the revision process and please aim to remove potential sources of misunderstanding or confusion when revising the text.

Specifically, I would like to highlight the following issues:

**1) When revising your manuscript, please give appropriate attention to the issue of aggregated versus spatially-explicit estimates as raised by reviewer 1 in his first “technical remarks on p.2 line 52” and as reiterated further in the comment on Figure 2b (“Figure 2b depicts the uncertainties in AFOLU emissions and (coincidence or not) the regions with the highest emissions have also the highest uncertainty. What does this mean for the overall conclusion and robustness about the authors claim that this spatial explicit approach is better than the country level estimates from FAOSTAT and EDGAR, since the uncertainties are so high?”).**

We have addressed these points separately, because they are separate topics.

1. Why spatially explicit is better than non-spatially explicit in the context of mitigation is addressed in lines 85-88. Please be aware that EDGAR also offers spatially explicit (1 degree data), although we chose the Fast Track dataset which is at the country level. This is clearly stated in the database description. Detailed spatial resolution offers subnational information on where to act (emissions are high) and where to promote the most effective mitigation action (uncertainties are low), by addressing the emission sources that emit the most in those areas (largest emitting sources). Moreover, due to assumptions on data correlation (complete data dependence), uncertainties are smaller at more detailed spatial scales than when aggregated to less detailed scales. So, spatially explicit data offer less uncertain data than spatially aggregated (this is explained in lines 323-328, and also in lines 359-360 and 479-486).
2. The fact that the higher uncertainties coincide with the higher emissions has been better explained in lines 358-373. However, the coincidence of these two facts has nothing to do with, and does not invalidate, our statement that more spatially precise data assist more targeted mitigation implementation.

**2) Reviewer 2 raises issues regarding gross versus net fluxes, emissions and the like. As diverse communities are likely to use your data it is important to avoid any misunderstanding. What may be obvious for the authors may not be obvious for others. The terms “net” and “gross” should be carefully explained in the revised manuscript; you provide some indication on how this could be achieved in your reply to comment 6.**

Our AFOLU assessment focuses on gross emissions. We agree with the reviewer 2 that gross and net is a complex topic. We struggled to decide whether to create a separate section to describe it or not, but finally left it in the introduction since it is a core description of our research (lines 103-123). We have also added references for further reading on the gross-net topic (e.g Richter and Houghton, 2011; Houghton et al., 2012; Iversen et al., 2014)

**3) Please also clarify your statement around line 100 here or in the method section in the revised MS. The text in the submitted version reads: “Net land use emissions balance the emissions by the sources with the absorptions by the sinks and offer emission data that are closer to what the atmosphere receives from human activities.”**

This sentence has been removed to avoid confusions. Lines 277-303 describe in more detail the assumptions behind our gross emissions in terms of managed land, direct emissions, legacies, instantaneous emissions and transboundary effects + life-cycle substitution effects for harvested wood products.

**-To which temporal and spatial scales do your definitions of net (and gross) apply?** The material and method section, Lines 140-150 describe that our gross emissions refer to 2000-2005 and to the tropics and subtropics, and justify the selection of this spatio-temporal context. Individual information about the spatio-temporal context of each emission dataset are available at the Material and Method section and in the supplementary material (SOM)

**-Are legacy fluxes (such as regrowth of previously cleared forests or burned areas) included in your definitions or not?**

The topic of legacies is important, but complicated, and it introduces complexity to our method section, which we believe deviates the attention from the main goals of this paper. We have, however, explained the topic of legacies in lines 281-292. We are working with gross emissions and no forest sinks are included for the period 2000-2005 (e.g. forest regrowth of cleared, burned or harvested forests, and associated soil carbon). However, some emission sources used models that included temporal spin-ups to promote emission stability for their time periods under analysis. Some flux legacies are, therefore, included. Readers are invited to search further information in the references of each emission source.

**-Are “net land use emissions” equal to (i) net anthropogenic land use emissions of carbon or GHG from the land to the atmosphere evaluated as difference in the sum of source and sink fluxes relative to a natural reference state or equal to (ii) the sum of fluxes of carbon (or GHGs) to (from) the atmosphere from (to) an area under anthropogenic use or (iii) something else?**

Since we do not work with net emissions, we prefer to concentrate on defining gross emissions, and skipping other definitions to avoid confusions.

**-Is “the absorption by the sinks” natural or anthropogenically-induced?**

Since we do not work with sinks, we would rather avoid including this in the manuscript.

**-Is abandoned land included in your assessment?,**

We do not mentioned it specifically in the text, and prefer not to enter into this level of detail. Managed land could be abandoned or not.

**While I appreciate that this information is largely provided in the manuscript, I recommend to give a clear and explicit explanation of your definitions of net and gross early on in the manuscript. It might also be good to refer to alternative definitions of land use emissions as for example applied by the modelling community to provide additional context for the general reader.**

Our land use definition follows IPCC 2006, as exposed in line 306. Our SOM offers detailed further information on the individual emission datasets and references are given for further information. Specifying what each land use includes in each emission dataset (e.g. fallow land, abandoned land, degraded land, etc) would lead this paper to a level of detail that would unfocus the attention of the readers.

**3) A brief discussion on the interpretation of the fire fluxes from woodlands, forests, and peatlands is required in the main text to avoid confusion. Specifically, you may explain why tropical fire emissions from GFED are taken here as anthropogenic and move the information of the first sentence on top of page 5 in the SOM to the main text.**

Please see lines 293-299.

**4) I recommend to add a brief discussion on potential double counting (reviewer 2: comments 10-12) in the revised manuscript.**

Comments on fire and deforestation double counting, including peat and deforestation are inserted in lines 179-183. Deforestation and wood harvesting double counting are exposed in lines 200-204.

**5) I recommend to add a statement in the conclusion section that gross emissions as determined in this study are not to be confused with the overall net land-to-atmosphere flux due to human land use. This difference arises as important components of the overall terrestrial and atmospheric carbon balance such as legacy effects and changes in litter and soil organic matter are not included in this work.**

We have included some of these comments in lines 286-289 instead of in the conclusions, since we found it awkward to finish with a warning of what our gross emissions were not. Instead, we chose to give the readers the right context of what our gross emissions include, and what they don't, in earlier sections (e.g. lines 103-123)

I would appreciate to receive also a manuscript version where your changes are indicated/highlighted by using track change or similar tools. This would ease the further assessment of your work.

Thank you for submitting your work to Biogeosciences. I am looking forward to read your revised manuscript.

Your sincerely,

Fortunat Joos



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31 **Keywords:** AFOLU, mitigation, greenhouse gases, CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, Land use emissions, tropics.

32

### 33 **Abstract**

34 According to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),  
35 emissions must be cut by 41-72% below 2010 levels by 2050 for a likely chance of containing the  
36 global mean temperature increase to 2 °C. The AFOLU sector (Agriculture, Forestry and Other  
37 Land Use) roughly contributes with a quarter (~ 10 -12 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>) of the net anthropogenic GHG  
38 emissions mainly from deforestation, fire, wood harvesting, and agricultural emissions including  
39 croplands, paddy rice and livestock. In spite of the importance of this sector, it is unclear where are  
40 the regions with hotspots of AFOLU emissions, and how uncertain these emissions are. Here we  
41 present a novel spatially comparable dataset containing annual mean estimates of gross AFOLU  
42 emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O), associated uncertainties, and leading emission sources, in a spatially  
43 disaggregated manner (0.5°), for the tropics, for the period 2000-2005. Our data highlight: i) the  
44 existence of AFOLU emissions hotspots on all continents, with particular importance of evergreen  
45 rainforest deforestation in Central and South America, fire in dry forests in Africa, and both  
46 peatland emissions and agriculture in Asia; ii) a predominant contribution of forests and CO<sub>2</sub> to the  
47 total AFOLU emissions (75%) and to their uncertainties (98%), iii) higher gross fluxes from forests  
48 coincide with higher uncertainties, making agricultural hotspots more appealing for effective  
49 mitigation action, and iv) a lower contribution of non-CO<sub>2</sub> agricultural emissions to the total gross  
50 emissions (ca. 25%) with livestock (15.5%) and rice (7%) leading the emissions. Gross AFOLU  
51 tropical emissions 8.0 (5.5-12.2) were in the range of other databases 8.4 and 8.0 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>  
52 (FAOSTAT and EDGAR respectively), but we offer a spatially detailed benchmark for monitoring

53 progress on reducing emissions from the land sector in the tropics. The location of the AFOLU  
54 hotspots of emissions and data on their associated uncertainties, will assist national policy makers,  
55 investors and other decision-makers who seek to understand the mitigation potential of the AFOLU  
56 sector.

57

## 58 1. INTRODUCTION

59 Currently unabated CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions need effective mitigation action (UNEP, 2015). Emissions  
60 modelling suggests that to maintain the global mean temperature increase on track with the 2°C  
61 target and to remain close to the 450 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2100, global greenhouse gas (GHG)  
62 emissions must be cut in a range of 41-72% below the 2010 levels by 2050, and global emissions  
63 levels must be reduced to zero (a balance between sources and sinks) by 2070 and below zero  
64 through removal processes after that (IPCC, 2014; Anderson, 2015; UNEP 2015). To reach these  
65 ambitious goals, it is imperative to identify regions where the mitigation of key emission sectors  
66 may be most promising in terms of reducing fluxes, reducing emission trends, and/or maximizing  
67 returns on mitigation investments. From all the sectors contributing to the total anthropogenic GHG  
68 emissions, the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector participates with roughly  
69 one quarter (10-12 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>) of the total emissions (49 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>) (IPCC, 2014). Optimistic  
70 estimates suggest that the AFOLU sector -here used as synonym of land use sector- could  
71 contribute 20 to 60% of the total cumulative abatement to 2030 through land-related mitigation  
72 including bioenergy (Smith et al., 2014). However, it is unclear where are the regions with the  
73 largest AFOLU emissions (hotspots of emissions), and how large their associated uncertainties  
74 are.

75

76 Modelling efforts by the carbon community have long offered useful data but their focus is rather  
77 global and CO<sub>2</sub>-oriented, which omits other land use gases such as CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O (Schulze et al.,  
78 2009; Houghton et al., 2012; LeQuéré et al., 2012; Canadell et al., 2014; Tian et al., 2016).  
79 Currently, the most used AFOLU data belong to two global multi-gas (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) CO<sub>2</sub>e  
80 databases: FAOSTAT and EDGAR) (Smith et al., 2014; Tubiello et al., 2015). While they offer  
81 very valuable data, they suffer from several shortcomings: they do not provide -uncertainties or

82 uncertainties are not provided at the spatial scale at which emissions are offered; they suffer from  
83 untransparent documentation (e.g. EDGAR) or data are offered at inappropriate spatial scales to  
84 effectively navigate mitigation implementation (e.g. country level in FAOSTAT). Thus, unlike  
85 aggregated estimates, spatially explicit data favour targeted mitigation action and implementation  
86 by identifying where are the areas within a country that hold the largest emissions, and what are  
87 the key emission sources to address in these areas (e.g. deforestation, degradation, livestock,  
88 cropland soils, paddy rice). Spatially explicit ~~sassessments napshts~~ of the location of AFOLU  
89 emissions ~~hotspots (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O)~~ and their associated ~~data on their~~ uncertainties would assist  
90 national policy makers, investors and other decision-makers who seek to understand the mitigation  
91 potential of the AFOLU sector, and which areas to prioritize. This potential is here defined as the  
92 maximum mitigation reduction that could be achieved without technical or economic  
93 considerations. Better understanding of the AFOLU mitigation potentials will also ~~be needed~~  
94 underbe important under the Paris Agreement (PA) since ~~the success of the PA will be measured~~  
95 ~~against~~ the fulfilment of the 2°C target ~~and it~~ is dependent on the mitigation ambition presented by  
96 individual countries in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). To safeguard this  
97 ambition ~~is the a~~ stock-take process has been defined, by which where countries are required to  
98 update their NDCs every five years, starting from 2020, and to enhance their mitigation  
99 commitments from previous submissions (Bodle et al., 2016). It is therefore imperative to improve  
100 our understanding of where and how much could countries enhance their AFOLU ambition from  
101 what ~~is they have~~ currently reported.

102  
103 Mitigation action can be directed to reducing emissions by the sources, or to increasing the  
104 absorptions by the sinks, or to both. While gross and net emissions are equally important, they  
105 offer different information (Richter and Houghton, 2011; Houghton et al., 2012). Net land use  
106 emissions consider the emissions by the sources and the removals by the sinks in a final emission  
107 balance where the removals are discounted from the emissions. Land use sinks refer to any  
108 process that stores GHGs (e.g. forest growth, forest regrowth after disturbances, organic matter  
109 stored in soils, etc) (see Richter and Houghton, 2011, for further details). Countries report their  
110 emissions and their reduction targets based on net AFOLU balances (IPCC, 2006; Iversen et al.,

111 2014; Smith et al., 2014). Gross assessments can consider both the emissions produced by the  
112 sources (gross emissions) and the removals absorbed by the sinks (gross removals), but they are  
113 not offered in a final balance where the sinks are discounted from the emissions. They are offered  
114 separate fluxes, instead. Gross fluxes are -useful to navigate mitigation implementation since they  
115 offer direct information on the sources -and sinks that need to be acted upon through policies and  
116 measures to enhance and promote mitigation. ~~,-~~ However, ~~I~~lack of ground data makes the  
117 assessment of the sinks much more difficult than the assessment of the sources (Lewis et al.,  
118 2009; Houghton et al., 2012; Grace et al., 2014; Brienen et al., 2015) with a particular gap on  
119 disturbed standing forests (Poorter et al., 2016).

120  
121 For these reasons, we present here an assessment of AFOLU gross emissions in the tropics and  
122 subtropics that focuses only on the emissions by the sources, excluding the sinks (e.g. no regrowth  
123 of cleared forests or burned areas, nor soil carbon storage are included for the 2000-2005 period).

124 We offer spatially explicit (0.5°) multi-gas -(CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) CO<sub>2</sub>e gross emission data that help  
125 identifying the ~~of hotspots the of land use~~ emissions hotspots in the tropics and subtropics, and  
126 associated uncertainties, for 2000-2005. Our method uses ~~, using a~~ consistent approach to  
127 overcome problems of different definitions, methods, and input data present in other approaches  
128 (e.g. nationally reported data), allowing data comparability. It is a top-down approach based on  
129 published spatially explicit available published GHG datasets for the key sources of emissions in  
130 the AFOLU sector as identified ~~in by~~ the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC (AR5) (Smith et al.  
131 2014): deforestation, fire, wood harvesting, crop soil emissions, paddy rice emission, enteric  
132 fermentation and manure management. ~~We also provide information on the leading sources of~~  
133 emissions per cell. We address three questions at the landscape, tropical, and continental scales:  
134 1. Where are the hotspots of tropical AFOLU emissions and how uncertain are they? 2. What are  
135 the main GHGs behind these hotspots?, 3. What are the emission sources behind these hotspots?  
136 4. How do our gross AFOLU emissions relate to other AFOLU datasets such as FAOSTAT or  
137 EDGAR?

138

## 139 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

140 Our study area covers the tropics and the subtropics, including the more temperate regions of  
141 South America (33° N to 54° S, 161° E to 117° W). It expands over a diversity of ecosystems that  
142 range from dry woodlands and dry forests such as the African Miombo and South American  
143 Chaco, to rainforests and moist forests such as evergreen broadleaved rainforests or montane  
144 cloud forests. The years considered by our datasets varied, yet we selected the period 2000-2005  
145 as the common temporal range for all the datasets. The exception was the rice emissions dataset,  
146 that took 2010 as its baseline (See Table S2 in supplementary). This time period represents a  
147 useful historical baseline against which countries can contrast the evolution of their AFOLU gross  
148 emission performances. We consider the pixel size (0.5°) appropriate for landscape research, and  
149 useful to visualize emissions hotspots. [More detailed information about each data source and a  
150 descriptive summary is available in the SOM \(Table S2\).](#)

151

## 152 **2.1 Datasets**

153 Deforestation (Harris et al., 2012): Deforestation refers to gross emissions, associated to the area  
154 of forest cover removed due to human or natural disturbances and their above ground and below  
155 ground carbon stocks, at 18.5 km of spatial resolution and aggregated for a 5 year period (2000-  
156 2005). Deforestation areas are based on MODIS data at 18.5 km resolution, while carbon loss  
157 derives from Saatchi et al., (2012) carbon map, at 1 km resolution. The disparate spatial resolution  
158 of these two maps is solved by a randomization procedure (Harris et al. 2012). Information of  
159 uncertainties is expressed as 5<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles, estimated through Monte Carlo simulations  
160 and showed non-Gaussian distributions. Harris et al data defines the spatial and temporal extent of  
161 our tropical AFOLU analysis.

162

163 Fire (Van der Werf et al., 2010): Fire emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) were obtained from the Global  
164 Fire Emission Database (GFED) (www1) at 0.5° resolution, based on the CASA model [which  
165 includes four carbon pools \(above and below ground biomass, litter and coarse woody debris\).](#)  
166 [Only carbon from organic soils was included.](#) Original data were of global coverage for the period  
167 1997-2013. We extracted a subset for the tropics and 2000-2005. Annual uncertainties for different  
168 regions are expressed in Van der Werf et al. (2010) as the 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th

169 percentiles of 2000 Monte Carlo runs.  $1\sigma$  uncertainties (expressed as percentage of the 50th  
170 percentile) were also given, and considered Gaussian distributions. To move to pixel ( $0.5^\circ$ )  
171 uncertainties, we assigned the regional  $1\sigma$  to all the pixels within each region, for each gas. Total  
172 fire emissions ( $\text{CO}_2\text{e}$ ) per pixel were the sum of the annual means. The uncertainties of the  
173 different gases ( $\text{CH}_4$ ,  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  and  $\text{CO}_2$ ) were assumed independent and estimated by square rooting  
174 the sum of their variances. Fire emissions are partitioned into six classes (savannah, agriculture,  
175 woodlands, forests, peatlands and deforestation), which helped us remove  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions from  
176 savannahs and agriculture since the burning of these non-woody land uses is assumed carbon  
177 neutral (e.g. biomass burned gets recovered by biomass growth in the next growing season)  
178 (IPCC, 2006).  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions were, however, retained. We also removed deforestation  
179 fires, to avoid double counting with deforestation emissions [from Harris et al. \(2012\)](#). Some  
180 overlapping of deforestation and soil peat burning might, however, occur in Indonesia, where peat  
181 fires [and deforestation fires](#) show similar fire recurrences [and might be wrongly labelled](#) (Van der  
182 Werf et al. 2010). [Some peat fires might therefore respond to deforestation fires and cause some](#)  
183 [double counting with Harris deforestation emissions in Indonesia, particularly for the year 2005.](#)

184  
185 *Wood harvesting (Poulter et al., 2015):* Wood harvesting is a  $1^\circ$  global gridded data set that was  
186 generated in the frame of the GEOCARBON project. It uses National Forest Inventory data and the  
187 FAO Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). [Aboveground biomass](#) data were downscaled using a  
188 forest mask from the Global Land Cover (GLC) 2000, and assuming that wood harvest was  
189 distributed evenly. The original data was produced at the resolution of the GLC2000 (approx.  $1 \times 1$   
190 km) and finally aggregated to the  $1^\circ$  scale. Wood Harvesting data consisted of five layers: 1.  
191 Round wood Forest Area in hectares for each cell, 2. Fuelwood forest area in hectares for each  
192 cell, 3. Round wood (industrial) harvest volume in  $\text{m}^3$ , 4. Fuelwood harvest volume in  $\text{m}^3$ , 5. Total  
193 harvest volume (round wood + fuelwood) in  $\text{m}^3$ . We chose fuel and industrial round wood harvest  
194 ( $\text{m}^3$ ) as our harvest data. We assumed instantaneous emissions assigned to the place of removal.  
195 Emissions were transformed from  $\text{m}^3$  to  $\text{MgCO}_2\text{.yr}^{-1}$  using an emission factor of  $0.25 \text{ (Mg C/m}^3\text{)}$   
196 (Grace et al., 2014), and a C to  $\text{CO}_2$  factor shown in Table 1. Because the resolution of this layer  
197 was larger than our grid, the original value of wood volume at  $1^\circ$  was equally distributed among the

198 0.5° grid cells. Uncertainties were not estimated in the original harvest emission data and we rely  
199 on a 20 percent value of the per-pixel harvest emissions, based on the author's expert opinion\_-  
200 Since wood harvesting mainly derives from national reporting to FAO, it was assumed to mainly  
201 come from forests remaining forests (legal logging), and emissions were assigned to forested  
202 areas by Porter et al. (2015). Figure S3 in the SOM shows different spatial locations for  
203 deforestation and wood harvesting emissions. However, this assumption might be wrong and  
204 some, unprecise, amount of emissions double counting may occur.  
205

206 Cropland soils (USEPA 2013): Cropland emissions (N<sub>2</sub>O and soil dSOC) (changes in soil organic  
207 carbon) were produced by Ogle et al., for the Environmental Protection Agency MAC-Report  
208 (USEPA, 2013), at 0.5° resolution, for time periods 2000-2030 with five-year increments, based on  
209 the DAYCENT ecosystem model (Ogle et al., 2007). For our AFOLU analysis we used the annual  
210 mean emission data for the period 2000-2005. The original units (g N<sub>2</sub>O-N.m<sup>-2</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup> and gC.m<sup>-2</sup>.5y<sup>-1</sup>)  
211 were transformed to CO<sub>2</sub>e.y<sup>-1</sup>.grid cell<sup>-1</sup> (Table 1). The original dataset included direct and indirect  
212 emissions from mineral-based cropland soil processes: synthetic and organic fertilization, residue  
213 N, mineralization and fixation). To be consistent with other data sets we did not include indirect  
214 emissions (e.g. NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> leaching, N runoff in overland water flow). Emissions estimated by the  
215 DAYCENT include soil and litter pools and modelled six major crop types only (maize, wheat,  
216 barley, sorghum, soybean and millet) excluding other important tropical crops (sugar, coffee,  
217 cacao, cotton, tobacco, etc). As a result, the cropland area simulated by DAYCENT was about  
218 61% of the global non-rice cropland areas reported by FAOSTAT, which resulted in lower cropland  
219 emissions when compared to other databases (e.g. FAOSTAT and EDGAR). Moreover, due to the  
220 known poor performance of the DAYCENT model over organic soils, cropland emissions over  
221 drained histosols were not part of the estimated emissions. Uncertainties were offered per pixel  
222 (0.5°) as standard deviations per dSOC and N<sub>2</sub>O separately. Final CO<sub>2</sub>e uncertainties per pixel  
223 were propagated as independent data using the squared root of the summed variances. To  
224 complement the emission gap from the organic cultivated soils, we used a Tier 1 approach that  
225 relied on the location of the tropical areas of histosols (ISRIC's global soil database), the location of

226 cropland areas per crop types (Monfreda et al., 2008) and a Tier 1 annual emission factor for  
227 cultivated organic soils (20 MgC.ha<sup>-1</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>) derived from the IPCC (IPCC 2006) (Supplementary).

228

229 Paddy Rice (USEPA 2013): We used data by Li et al., from the USEPA's MAC Report (2013).  
230 Emissions were estimated by the Denitrification-Decomposition (DNDC) model, which simulates  
231 production, crop yields, greenhouse gas fluxes (CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) and organic soil carbon (dSOC) of  
232 global paddy rice, at 0.5° resolution under "business-as-usual" (BAU) condition and various  
233 mitigation strategies as explained in Li et al., (2001, 2006). This model includes soil, litter, above  
234 and below ground biomass as main carbon pools. Model outputs were reported for 2010 as the  
235 baseline, and used 22 years of replications to account for climate variability. The original units  
236 (KgC.ha<sup>-1</sup>.yr<sup>-1</sup> for dSOC and CH<sub>4</sub> and KgN. ha<sup>-1</sup>.yr<sup>-1</sup> for N<sub>2</sub>O) were re-projected to equal-area  
237 values, and transformed to CO<sub>2</sub>e (Table 1). Emissions were estimated using the MSF (Most  
238 Sensitive Factor) method which relies on an envelope approach and estimates maximum and  
239 minimum emissions based on extreme soil properties. No mean values were offered. The  
240 distribution of the data were known to be right skewed, and through the authors' expert judgement  
241 a log-normal approach was considered to be the best –although not perfect- fit, from where to  
242 estimate the mean (50<sup>th</sup> percentile), max and min (10<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile) for each cell.

243

244 Livestock (Herrero et al., 2013): Livestock emission data includes enteric fermentation (CH<sub>4</sub>) and  
245 manure management (N<sub>2</sub>O, CH<sub>4</sub>) for the year 2000, for twenty-eight regions, eight livestock  
246 production systems, four animal species (cattle, small ruminants, pigs, and poultry), and three  
247 livestock products (milk, meat, and eggs), at 0.1°cell resolution. The CO<sub>2</sub>e of enteric fermentation  
248 and manure management were then summed to obtain a total emission value of livestock per grid  
249 cell. Since no spatially explicit uncertainty data were provided, and based on the authors' expert  
250 judgement, we applied a 20% value for livestock emissions per cell and per gas. Per cell livestock  
251 GHG uncertainties were estimated by square rooting the sum of their variances.

252

253 Other AFOLU dDatabases

254 *FAOSTAT database*: covers agriculture, forestry and other land uses and their associated  
255 emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O, following IPCC 2006 Guidelines at Tier 1 (Tubiello et al., 2014).  
256 Emissions are estimated for nearly 200 countries, for the reference period 1961–2012 (agriculture)  
257 and 1990–2012 (FOLU), based on activity data submitted to and collated by FAO (www1).  
258 FAOSTAT includes estimates of emissions from biomass fires, peatland drainage and fires, based  
259 on geo-spatial information, as well as on forest carbon stock changes (both emissions and  
260 absorptions) based on national-level FAO Forest Resources Assessment data (FRA, 2010). FOLU  
261 carbon balances in FAOSTAT are emissions from afforestation, reforestation, degradation,  
262 regrowth, and harvest activities. The FAOSTAT emission estimates are based on annual FAO  
263 emissions updates for AFOLU (Tubiello et al., 2014).

264

265 *EDGAR database*: The Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR) provides  
266 global GHG emissions from multiple gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) at 0.1° and country levels. It covers all  
267 IPCC sectors (energy, industry, waste management, and AFOLU), mainly applying IPCC 2006  
268 guidelines for emission estimations (EDGAR, 2012). We selected EDGAR's 4.2 Fast Track 2010  
269 (FT 2010) data (www2). Emissions cover the period 2000-2010 in an annual basis, at the country  
270 level and are offered as Gg of gas. No uncertainties are provided. Transformation to CO<sub>2</sub>e used  
271 AR4 100year-Global Warming Potential values to be consistent with other datasets. Metadata can  
272 be found at EDGAR (2012), although further transparency and more complete documentation are  
273 required for this database.

274

## 275 **2.2 Methods**

### 276 *Hotspots dataset*

277 Our AFOLU assessment is based on several assumptions: we focused on human-induced gross  
278 emissions only, excluding natural fluxes from unmanaged land (e.g. CH<sub>4</sub> or N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from  
279 undisturbed-unmanaged natural wetlands). We focused on direct gross emissions excluding  
280 indirect emissions whenever possible (e.g. indirect emissions from nitrate leaching and surface  
281 runoff from croplands). Delayed fluxes (legacies) are important (e.g. underestimations of up to 62%  
282 of the total emissions when recent legacy fluxes are excluded) (Houghton et al., 2012) but are

283 frequently omitted in GHG analyses that derive from remote sensing, such as our deforestation  
284 emissions from Harris et al., (2012). Wood harvesting emissions also excluded legacy fluxes.  
285 Therefore, no forest regrowth of cleared, burned, or disturbed forests are included in our AFOLU  
286 2000-2005 assessment. Other important components of the overall terrestrial and carbon balance  
287 such as changes in litter, coarse woody debris and soil carbon, are also not part of the emissions  
288 from deforestation and wood harvesting, since these pools were not considered in the original  
289 datasets (see Table S2, SOM). For the other land uses, fire, agricultural soils, and paddy rice, their  
290 emission models (e.g. CASA, DAYCENT and DCDN) included temporal spin-ups to guarantee the  
291 stability of the emissions for their temporal scales under analysis. Certain legacies have, therefore,  
292 been considered (please see references for further understanding of these models). In the case of  
293 fires, since 90 percent of tropical fires are the result of human activity (Roman-Cuesta et al., 2003;  
294 Van der Werf et al., 2010), we assumed all emissions to be human-induced. This might have  
295 resulted in an overestimation of some fire emissions in drier unmanaged ecosystems (e.g. lightings  
296 over African woodlands) but since we have excluded deforestation fires (to avoid double counting  
297 with deforestation), and we have also excluded savanna and agricultural fires (under the  
298 assumption of carbon neutrality), we are quite certain that our gross fire emissions for 2000-2005  
299 are rather conservative. We assumed instantaneous emissions of all carbon that is lost from the  
300 land after human action (Tier 1, IPCC 2006) (e.g. deforested and harvested wood), with no  
301 transboundary considerations (e.g. the emissions are assigned wherever the disturbance takes  
302 place, particularly important for the Harvested Wood Products). Life-cycle substitution effects are  
303 neither considered for harvested wood (Peters et al., 2012).

304  
305 Figure 1 describes the steps followed to produce our spatially explicit layers of gross AFOLU  
306 emissions and uncertainties. We first assessed all possible emissions, and land uses and human  
307 activities under the framework of the IPCC 2006 AFOLU guidelines. We then selected the key  
308 AFOLU emissions sources as identified in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) (Smith et al.,  
309 2014). There were seven key emission sources, three within the forest sector: deforestation, fire,  
310 and wood harvesting (these last two were considered as forest degradation), and four within  
311 agriculture: cropland soils, paddy rice, enteric fermentation and manure management (aggregated

312 as livestock). We chose 100-year global warming potentials as provided in the Fourth Assessment  
313 Report (AR4) (IPCC, 2007) (Table 1) because all emission datasets were prior to the launching of  
314 AR5. We have preserved their choice to be consistent with their published estimates and with  
315 emissions that could not be reproduced. To promote the spatial assessment we produced an  
316 empty grid with cells of 0.5°x0.5° in a World Geographical reference System (WGS-84, lat-lon). To  
317 correct for the unaccounted Earth distortions that come with a geographical system we used equal  
318 area re-projected values whenever we needed area-weighted estimates of the emissions. This grid  
319 was then populated with the seven emission sources, unit transformed and quality controlled and  
320 assessed (see Supplementary). We used Monte Carlo simulations to aggregate the gross AFOLU  
321 emissions and their uncertainties and produced four final estimates, per cell: mean annual AFOLU  
322 emissions (50<sup>th</sup> percentiles) (CO<sub>2</sub>e.y<sup>-1</sup>), associated variance, and 5<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> confidence intervals.  
323 Data were then aggregated to continental, and tropical scales. When aggregating uncertainties at  
324 the pixel level we assumed emission sources to be mutually uncorrelated. However, when the  
325 aggregation of the uncertainties included a change of spatial support (e.g. pixel to continental, or  
326 pixel to tropical) we assumed data complete dependence, which offered a conservative (worst-  
327 case) scenario approach for the final aggregated uncertainties (see supplementary for further  
328 information). To understand which emission sources (e.g. deforestation, degradation, livestock,  
329 paddy rice, etc) contributed the most to the final uncertainties at the continental scale, we used the  
330 variance data produced per pixel and aggregated them using the dependence assumption  
331 expressed above. The attribution of the uncertainty was then estimated as percentages of the final  
332 aggregated variance, for each emission source.

333

#### 334 *Database comparison*

335 We contrast our hotspots of gross AFOLU emissions against the FAOSTAT and EDGAR  
336 databases. We run the comparisons at the country level, and produce the estimates selecting the  
337 same countries, years, emission sources, assumptions (e.g. carbon neutrality of grasslands and  
338 agricultural waste), and rules (e.g. only direct emissions) to guarantee comparability.

339

### 340 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### 341 | **3.1 AFOLU hotspots of emissions and uncertainties**

342 Tropical AFOLU hotspots were located on all continents but spatially concentrated in a few areas  
343 only, with 25% of the tropical area responsible for 70% of the tropical AFOLU emissions (Figure  
344 2a). Gross fluxes reached values of up to  $90 \text{ MgCO}_2\text{e ha}^{-1} \text{ yr}^{-1}$  in the hotspots, with Brazil, India,  
345 Indonesia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Central African Republic, Mozambique,  
346 Zambia, Malaysia, Sudan and Bangladesh, as the major contributors of tropical AFOLU emissions.  
347 Hotspots were mainly led by forest emissions, both by deforestation and degradation, with large  
348 hotspots over humid rainforests in the arch of deforestation in Brazil, and over the Miombo-Mopane  
349 dry forests of Africa. Deforestation and peatland fires were important in Indonesia, combined with  
350 agricultural hotspots from livestock and paddy rice. Agricultural emissions contributed less to the  
351 hotspots, with Asia, particularly India and Bangladesh, as main emitting regions with different  
352 relative contributions from livestock, paddy rice and cropland emissions (Figure 3). Southern Brazil,  
353 northern Argentina and southeastern Paraguay also showed agricultural hotspots, mainly related to  
354 livestock. Main GHGs followed these patterns, with  $\text{CO}_2$  dominating the emissions from forest  
355 activities, turning this gas into the main target for mitigation action.  $\text{CH}_4$  dominated rice and  
356 livestock emissions, while  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  explained high cropland emissions (Figure 4).

357  
358 Emissions uncertainties were the highest for the hotspot regions, reaching values of up to 30% of  
359 the mean AFOLU emissions (Figure 2b), which is lower than the reported uncertainties for global  
360 AFOLU values (e.g. 50 percent) (Smith et al., 2014). The coincidence of high AFOLU emissions  
361 and high uncertainties is not surprising since the emissions from the hotspots were led by forests,  
362 and forests host the largest emission uncertainties, in particular -humid tropical forests undergoing  
363 deforestation, such as Brazil and Indonesia, and forests with high fire emissions such as dry  
364 Miombo ecosystems in Africa or peatlands in Asia. Deforestation has long been identified as a  
365 main source of emissions uncertainties in the tropics due to the combined effect of uncertain areas  
366 and uncertain carbon densities (Houghton 2010, Baccini et al., 2012, Houghton et al., 2012).  
367 ~~However, similar uncertainties for biomass burning were unexpected. These high uncertainties~~  
368 ~~values in fire emissions relate to~~ are due to the contribution of biomass, burned soil depths, and  
369 combustion completeness, which are the most uncertain components of Van der Werf et

370 ~~al.(2010)'s the fire emission model. s components and are key in woodland fires in Africa and~~  
371 ~~peatland fires in Asia. Consequently, e~~Equatorial Asia and the African continent ~~were the regions~~  
372 ~~with hosted~~the largest fire uncertainties of ~~the globeall the regions~~ (Van der Werf et al., 2010) (Fig  
373 S5 in Supplementary).

374

375 Areas with high gross emissions ~~but that~~ also ~~host~~ high uncertainties (e.g. forests) complicate the  
376 effectiveness of the mitigation action. Thus, while these areas have higher mitigation potentials  
377 (e.g. high emissions that could potentially be reduced) their uncertainties affect the reliability of  
378 their emissions estimates and, therefore, the effectiveness to implement actions to stabilize  
379 atmospheric GHGs (Grassi et al., 2008). For this reason, from a climate mitigation perspective and  
380 without economic nor technical considerations, optimal mitigation scenarios would rather focus on  
381 areas with large gross fluxes and low(er) uncertainties. ~~These~~ areas ~~would include~~ agricultural  
382 hotspots (croplands, paddy rice and livestock) ~~without much contribution from forest emissions~~  
383 ~~such as parts of -in~~India, Southeastern Brazil, Northern Argentina, and Central and Southern  
384 Africa (southern DRC, Zambia, Angola) (Figure 5). Carter et al. (2015) identified that agricultural  
385 intensification and the use of available non-forest land offer opportunities for agricultural mitigation  
386 of up to 1 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e. This value coincides with sectorial analyses of mitigation targets for 2030 that  
387 would keep agricultural emissions in line with the 2 degree target (Wollenberg et al. 2016).  
388 However, food security and economic development in countries with agro-businesses make  
389 supply-based agricultural mitigation challenging (Smith et al., 2008; 2013). Moreover, as discussed  
390 in Wollenberg et al. (2016) more transformative technical and policy options will be needed to help  
391 agriculture achieve this 1 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e target. Mitigation in the agricultural sector is further complicate  
392 by being technically more complex and more expensive than forest mitigation (USEPA, 2013,  
393 Smith et al., 2014). For these reasons, and in spite of their higher uncertainties, forests still remain  
394 high in the mitigation agenda, as recently seen in the Paris Agreement, associated COP decisions,  
395 and the New York Declaration on Forests.

396

397 **3.2 Tropical AFOLU emissions**

398 AFOLU data from the AR5 (e.g. Figure 11.2 in Smith et al., 2014) show how the tropics have  
399 contributed with  $\geq 70\%$  of the global AFOLU emissions in the last decades, making this region the  
400 right place to search for hotspots of land use emissions. Our aggregated gross AFOLU emissions  
401 estimates of 8.0 (5.5-12.2)  $\text{PgCO}_2\text{e.yr}^{-1}$  were in the range of other gross estimates for the same  
402 region and time period: 8.4, and 8.0  $\text{PgCO}_2\text{e.yr}^{-1}$  for FAOSTAT and EDGAR respectively (Table 2).  
403 In spite of this good agreement, databases disagreed on the relative contribution of the leading  
404 emissions sources (Figure 6). Forests emissions showed the largest divergences, particularly  
405 forest degradation (fire and wood harvesting emissions). This outcome was expected since forest  
406 emissions were responsible for  $\geq 70\%$  of the tropical gross AFOLU emissions in all the databases  
407 (Table 2). Gross degradation emissions –rather than deforestation- led the forest emissions in our  
408 AFOLU gross emissions (39% vs 36% of the tropical emissions, respectively) (Table 2), with a  
409 degradation to deforestation emission ratio of 108%, reinforcing the great importance of reducing  
410 degradation for effective mitigation. Ratios above 100% for gross degradation vs deforestation had  
411 already been reported by Houghton et al. (2012) and Federici et al. (2015). Lower ratios have been  
412 observed in smaller areas (e.g. 40% Amazon, 47% Peruvian Amazon) (Asner et al., 2010;  
413 Berenguer et al., 2014) or when the ratio focuses on net fluxes of degradation (e.g. 25-35% of the  
414 net LULCC flux, if wood harvesting and shifting cultivation were not considered, and an extra 11%  
415 over the net LUCC flux when excluding peatland fire emissions in Southeast Asia alone)  
416 (Houghton et al., 2012).

417

418 In our hotspots analyses, fire led forest degradation in the tropics with almost a quarter (24.6%) of  
419 the gross AFOLU emissions. Since we had excluded deforestation fires, most of our fire emissions  
420 relate to woodlands and forest degradation. Their exclusion or incomplete inclusion would  
421 therefore result in large emission omissions in gross AFOLU assessments, and their management  
422 are key for reducing tropical emissions. Fire degradation emissions are recurrently omitted in  
423 global AFOLU assessments under the assumption of carbon neutrality of the affected burned  
424 areas (e.g. whatever carbon is emitted through fire will be fixed again by regrowth and recovery).  
425 (Houghton et al., 2012; Le Quéré et al., 2012; Canadell et al., 2014; Smith et al. 2014). This  
426 assumption does not consider current evidence of non-steady states after fire due to climatic

427 pressures, humanized landscapes (fragmented, multi-disturbed), and increased frequencies of  
428 fires (Cochrane et al., 1999; Roman-Cuesta et al., 2014; Alencar et al., 2011, 2015; Brando et al.,  
429 2014; Oliveras et al., 2014; Pütz et al., 2014). Halted successional pathways and vegetation shifts  
430 represent a large, yet unknown proportion of the burned forest ecosystems in the tropics that  
431 require further research. Recent estimates suggest that post-fire carbon recoveries in the Amazon  
432 are leading to degradation emissions in the order of  $46 \pm 29.9 \text{ MgC} \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$  (Balch et al., under review).  
433 In spite of our uncomplete knowledge of forest post-disturbance recovery pathways (e.g. poorly  
434 understood processes, omitted emissions, missing pools, unconsidered GHGs), the importance of  
435 the forest sector for mitigation action is evidenced by the large amount of countries explicitly  
436 mentioning it in their INDCs (60%) (Grassi et al., 2015). Moreover, countries count on financial  
437 support to minimize their forest emissions and enhance their sinks, at national scale, through the  
438 REDD+ mechanism, which has now become part of the Paris Agreement (Climate Focus, 2015).

439

440 In the agricultural sector, our emissions reached estimates of  $1.9 (1.5-2.5) \text{ PgCO}_2 \cdot \text{yr}^{-1}$ , in the  
441 range of the other databases ( $2.5, 2.1 \text{ PgCO}_2 \cdot \text{yr}^{-1}$  for FAOSTAT and EDGAR respectively). These  
442 values, represent a relatively small part of the AFOLU emissions in the tropics (25-30%) but an  
443 attribution of the forest emissions to their drivers would highlight back the importance of agriculture  
444 as the main engine behind tropical forest loss and emissions. Thus, for the period 1980-2000,  
445 83% of the agricultural expansion in the tropics was at the expense of forests (Gibbs et al., 2010),  
446 calling for integrated mitigation programmes that simultaneously include forestry and agriculture  
447 (Carter et al., 2015). Our agricultural estimates represented only ca. half of the agricultural  
448 emissions reported globally for 2000-2009 ( $5-6 \text{ PgCO}_2 \cdot \text{yr}^{-1}$ ) (Smith et al., 2014; Tubiello et al.,  
449 2015). This highlights the major role of agriculture in non-tropical countries and emergent  
450 economies like China, although agricultural emissions are rising faster in developing countries than  
451 in developed ones (Smith et al., 2014). The agricultural sector is the largest contributor to global  
452 anthropogenic non- $\text{CO}_2$  GHGs, accounting for 56 % of emissions in 2005 (USEPA, 2013). Enteric  
453 fermentation and agricultural soils are globally the main sources of agricultural emissions (Smith et  
454 al., 2014), and show a strong rising trend since the 70's (1% per decade) due to increases in  
455 animal heads and the use of synthetic fertilizers (Tubiello et al., 2015). Areas with growing

456 emission trends are attractive for land-based mitigation action and countries are engaging in  
457 agricultural mitigation in their INDCs through climate smart initiatives (Richards et al., 2015).  
458 However, more transformative technical and policy options and higher level of financial support will  
459 be needed for further achievements in this sector (Wollenberg et al., in press). The most prominent  
460 agricultural mitigation practices include improved cropland and grazing land management,  
461 restoration of degraded lands, and cultivated organic soils. Lower, but still significant mitigation  
462 potential is provided by water and rice management, livestock management and manure  
463 management, set-aside, land use change and agroforestry (Smith et al., 2008).

464  
465 In terms of gases, CO<sub>2</sub> led the AFOLU emissions in the tropics with ca.70% of the tropical  
466 emissions 5.5 (3.3-9.5) PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup> (Table 2, Figure 4). The remaining non-CO<sub>2</sub> contribution (30%)  
467 was mainly led by CH<sub>4</sub> 1.5 (1.1-1.9) PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>, due to livestock and rice. Non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
468 from biomass burning (N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub>), represented 15-34% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the tropics  
469 (Table 2). These values reinforce the need to run multi-gas assessments (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) for the  
470 AFOLU sector in order to gain a more coherent understanding on how the land affects the  
471 atmospheric composition and forces the climate. Thus, while temperature rise by around the end of  
472 this century will relate to the total emissions of long-lived greenhouse gases between 2000 and  
473 2100 (e.g. CO<sub>2</sub>) (Anderson 2012) recent research concludes that cumulative warming capacity of  
474 concurrent biogenic CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions is about a factor of 2 larger than the cooling effect  
475 resulting from the global land CO<sub>2</sub> uptake in the 2000s (Tian et al., 2016). This results in a net  
476 positive cumulative impact of the three GHGs on the planetary energy budget, which calls for  
477 shorter-term mitigation initiatives (Tian et al., 2016).

478  
479 At the aggregated tropical scale, uncertainties were higher (up to 50% of the mean emissions) than  
480 at the landscape scale (0.5°) (30%), in line with other reports (Smith et al., 2014; Tubiello et al.,  
481 2015). The spatial scale of the emission assessments influences, therefore, the final uncertainty  
482 estimates due to assumptions about the spatial correlation of the errors. Several authors have  
483 suggested the importance of working at more detailed spatial scales (e.g.30m) to reduce the  
484 uncertainties, particularly of forest emissions, by having more accurate data on forest area

485 changes and carbon densities (Houghton, 2005; Grassi et al., 2008; Asner et al., 2010; Baccini et  
486 al., 2012; Houghton et al., 2012).

487

488 To better understand the uncertainty role of the different emission sources at the tropical  
489 aggregated scale, we ran a partitioning of the tropical uncertainty. We found a disproportional  
490 contribution of deforestation to the tropical uncertainty budget (92.5%) (Table 2), which agreed with  
491 the results from other researchers (Morton et al., 2011) but left the remaining emission sources  
492 with a surprisingly modest contribution to the final uncertainty (7.5%). As it was the case for the  
493 hotspots, untangling the relative contribution of the emission sources to the tropical uncertainty  
494 budget brings in trade-offs between prioritizing mitigation action on sources that are large emitters  
495 but are highly uncertain (e.g. deforestation is responsible for 36% of the emissions but carries  
496 almost all the tropical emission uncertainty (92.5%) (Table 2) or choosing emitters that contribute  
497 less to the total emissions but are more certain (e.g livestock contributed less to the tropical  
498 emissions (15%) but had a very small part on the uncertainty budget (1.4%) (Table 2) (Figure 5).

499

### 500 | **3.3 Continental AFOLU emissions**

501 Continents contributed similarly to the tropical AFOLU gross emissions: 2.7 (1.8-4.5), 2.8 (1.9-4.0),  
502 2.5 (1.7-3.8) PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>, for Central and South (CS) America, Africa, and Asia, respectively  
503 (Table 2). Area-weighted emissions would, however, turn Asia into the largest continental source  
504 with a mean of 3.2 MgCO<sub>2</sub>e.ha<sup>-1</sup>. yr<sup>-1</sup> followed by Africa and CS America with 1.3 and 1.35  
505 MgCO<sub>2</sub>e.ha<sup>-1</sup>. yr<sup>-1</sup>, each. The leading sources for the continental emissions disagreed among  
506 databases but our hotspot research suggested that African emissions were dominated by fire over  
507 dry forests (52.6% of the African emissions, Table 2) which corroborates its description as “the fire  
508 continent” (Figure 7) (Mbow, 2014). Any effective mitigation action will therefore need to consider  
509 fire management, particularly in Miombo dry forests and Sudano-Sahelian woodlands, which are  
510 the most affected forests and the largest contributors to emissions hotspots. Contrastingly, Central  
511 and South America were mainly led by deforestation (60% of the continental emissions) and forest  
512 degradation (20%), mostly affecting humid forests. And while deforestation in Brazilian rainforests  
513 has since reduced, it has increased in dry forest in the region (e.g. the Chaco region in Argentina,

514 Paraguay, and Bolivia) (Hansen et al., 2013), and forest degradation has also increased (Brando et  
515 al., 2014; Federici et al., 2015). The Asian emissions were the most diverse and were similarly led  
516 by different sources: i) paddy rice (Asia is the world's largest rice-producing region and is  
517 responsible for over 80% of the total CH<sub>4</sub> emissions) (USEPA 2013); ii) livestock activities  
518 (Tubiello et al., 2014); iii) deforestation (Hansen et al., 2013), and iv) fire over peatlands,  
519 particularly in Indonesia (Van der Werf et al., 2010; Gaveau et al., 2014) (Table 2). Moreover, the  
520 Asian continent has the peculiarity of emitting almost half of the tropical non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (47%,  
521 Table 2), as observed by other authors (USEPA, 2013) and still has positively growing emission  
522 trends (Tubiello et al., 2014). Effective mitigation action on non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is therefore key for  
523 Asian and global mitigation.

524

525 The partitioning of the tropical AFOLU uncertainty at continental level showed that CS America  
526 contributed with half of the variance (48%, Table 2), which was expected since the emissions of  
527 this continent are led by the most uncertain source (deforestation). Africa and Asia contributed  
528 similarly to the rest of the uncertainty (27.3% and 24.7% respectively). Based on the uncertainty of  
529 the emissions, mitigation investments in CS America, would be, therefore, less effective than  
530 investing in Africa and Asia, particularly out of the forests.

531

#### 532 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

533 Our dataset offers novel landscape scale information on the spatial distribution of hotspots of  
534 AFOLU emissions and their uncertainties, disaggregated by gases and by leading emission  
535 sources. As countries improve their technical capacities, new more accurate data will be produced,  
536 however, this AFOLU analysis can be useful as a benchmark against which counties can assess  
537 their progress on reducing AFOLU emissions, in a comparable and comprehensive manner. These  
538 datasets can also support countries in identifying mitigation measures and setting priorities for  
539 mitigation action within their AFOLU sector. Moreover, this study contributes to the debate on  
540 tropical mitigation potentials of agriculture and forestry. Thus, even if global estimates of agriculture  
541 and forestry emissions have roughly similar mitigation potentials (Smith et al., 2014; Tubiello et al.,  
542 2015), economic feasibilities differ. Thus, the forest sector has two to three-fold greater economic

543 mitigation potentials than agriculture (e.g. 0.2-13 vs 0.3-4.6 PgCO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup> respectively), at prices up  
544 to 100 USD/MgCO<sub>2</sub>e (Bajzelj et al., 2014; Havlik et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2014). This means that  
545 for the same price, more emission reductions can be achieved in the forest sector. These unequal  
546 results relate to the forest sector being much more carbon dense and also to the lower costs per  
547 area unit of monitoring/implementing actions to avoid deforestation and degradation. While at least  
548 100 countries reported agricultural mitigation action under the Paris Agreement through their  
549 National Determined Contributions (Richards et al, 2015), agricultural mitigation suffers from  
550 concerns about food security and adaptation needs, which makes it unlikely that supply-side  
551 mitigation options alone (e.g. agricultural intensification) will help keep in track with the 2 degree  
552 target, and creative ways to avoid waste and include demand-side mitigation are required (e.g.  
553 change in societal diets) (Smith et al., 2013; Havlik et al., 2014, Wollenberg et al, 2016). Thus,  
554 notwithstanding the importance of agricultural mitigation, forests are more cost effective  
555 alternatives and, although uncertain, their multiple ecosystem services will keep them high as  
556 desirable mitigation targets in the political arena.

557

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## 760 **Websites**

761 www1: <http://faostat3.fao.org/home/E>

762 www2: <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=42FT2010>

763 www3: [http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/IEA\\_PARTIII.pdf](http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/IEA_PARTIII.pdf)

764

## 765 **6. CONTRIBUTIONS**

766 RMRC, MR, MH1, KBB, TR, JS, LV designed the study. RMRC, MH2, CM, CL, SO, BP provided  
767 data and ran quality control, quality assessments and uncertainties expert judgements on the data  
768 sets. SdB guided on statistics and developed all the scripts for the Monte Carlo aggregation of the  
769 data. JS assisted with GIS analyses and scripts. RMRC, MR, MH1, KBB, TR, SdB, LV, CM, JS,  
770 MH2, CL, SO, BP, discussed the results and contributed to writing.

771

772 **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

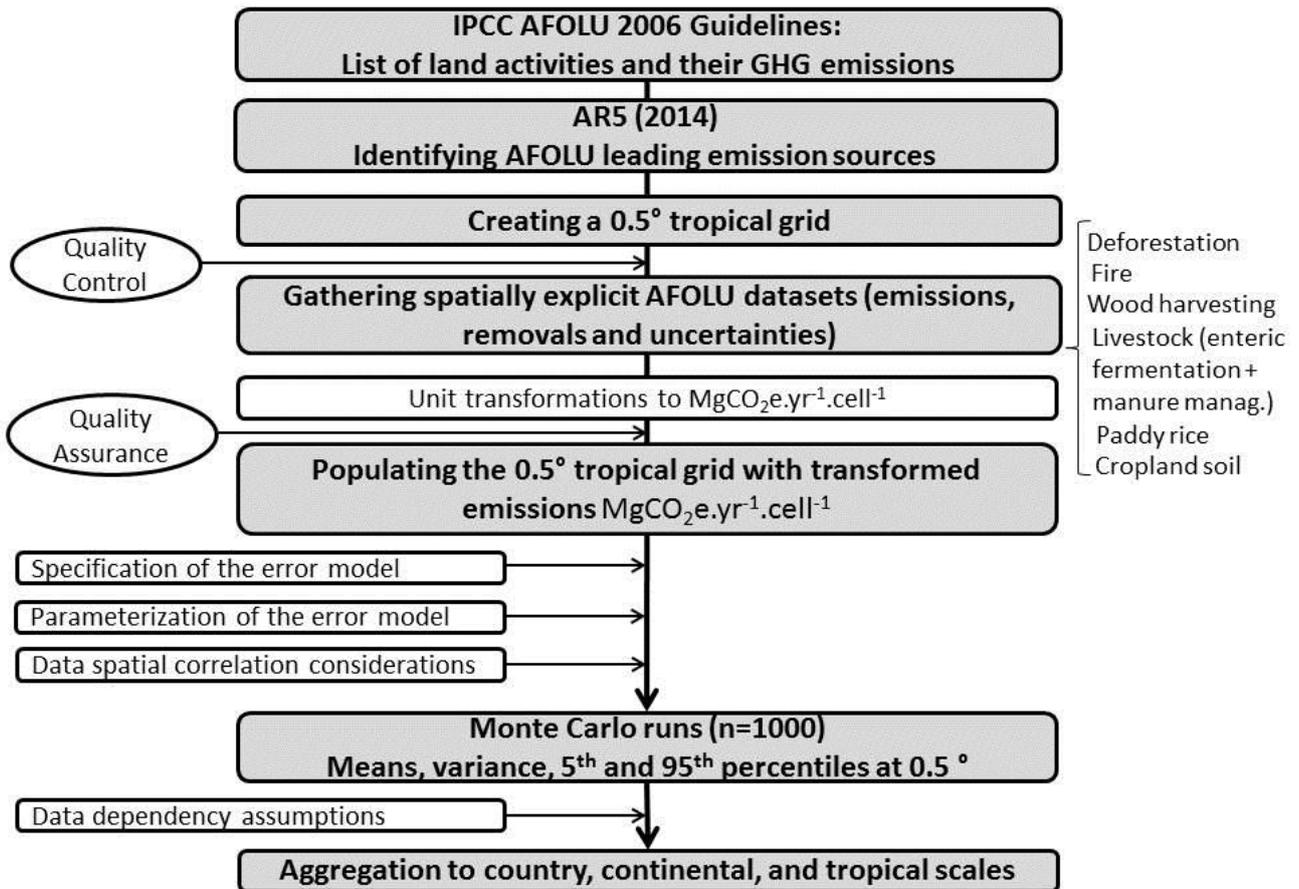
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779 Changsheng Li. The authors of this manuscript would like to homage Dr. Li for his life-long  
780 dedication to science.

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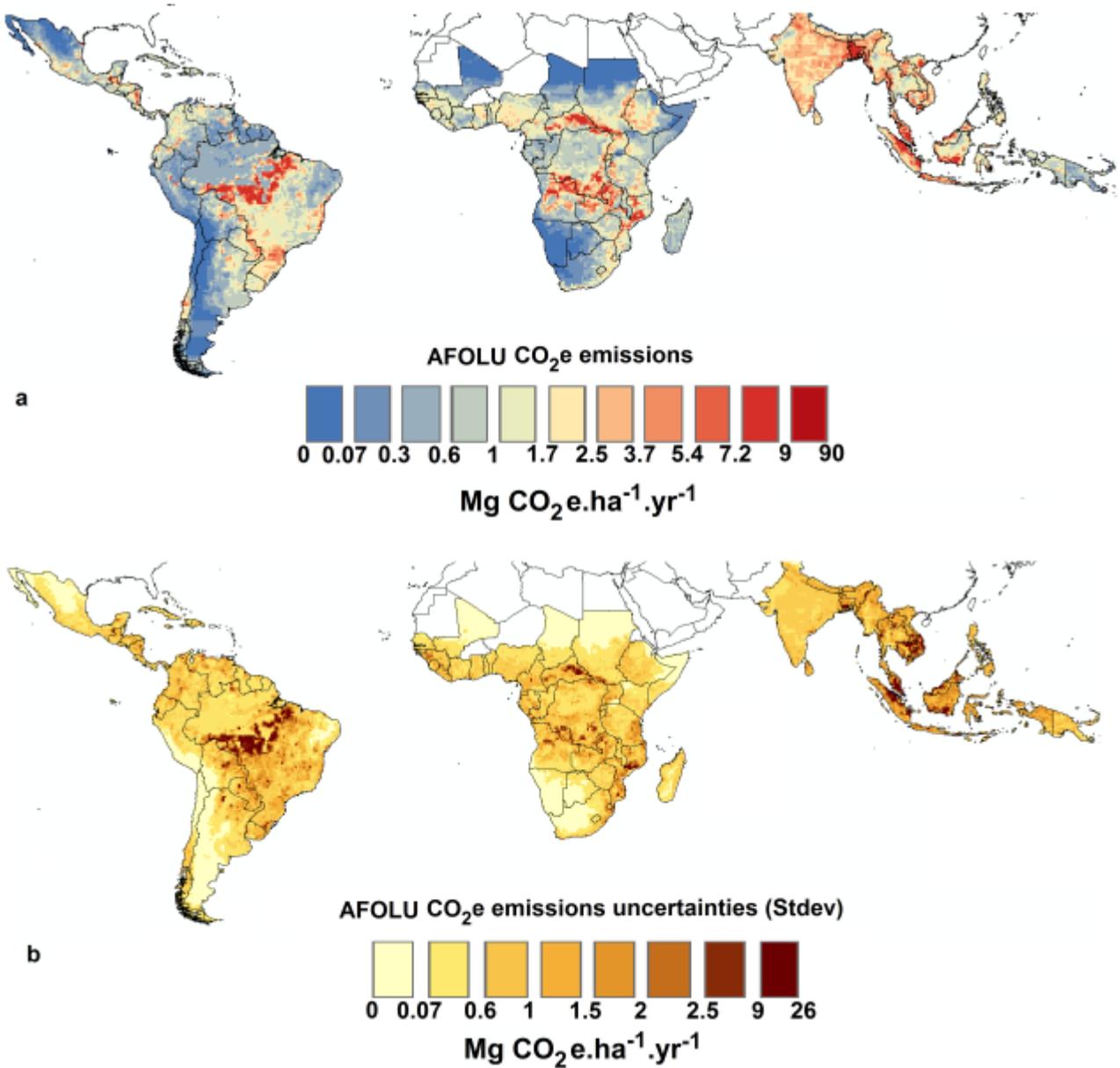
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787 **Figure 1:** Methodological framework used to estimated the aggregated AFOLU emissions (annual means)  
 788 and associated uncertainties (variance, 5<sup>th</sup>, 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles) at 0.5° resolution, for 2000-2005.

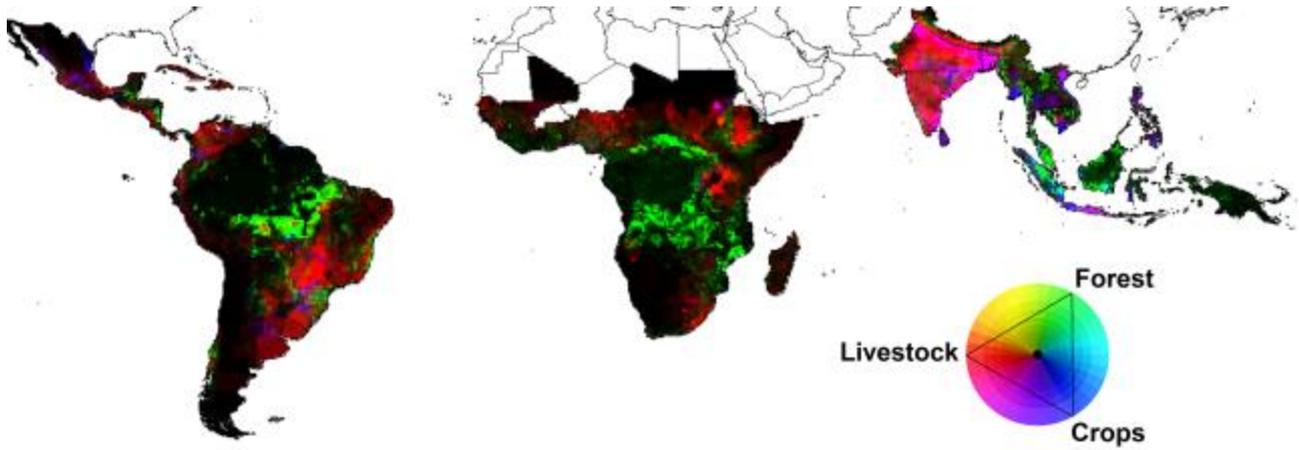
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Figure 2: (a) Hotspots of annual AFOLU emissions (red cells) and (b) associated uncertainties ( $1\sigma$ ) in  $\text{MgCO}_2\text{e.ha}^{-1}.\text{yr}^{-1}$  for the tropical region, for the period 2000-2005, at  $0.5^\circ$  resolution. Emissions are the result of 1000 Monte Carlo simulations for the leading AFOLU emission sources (deforestation, degradation (fire, wood harvesting), soils (crops, paddy rice), livestock (enteric fermentation and manure management))

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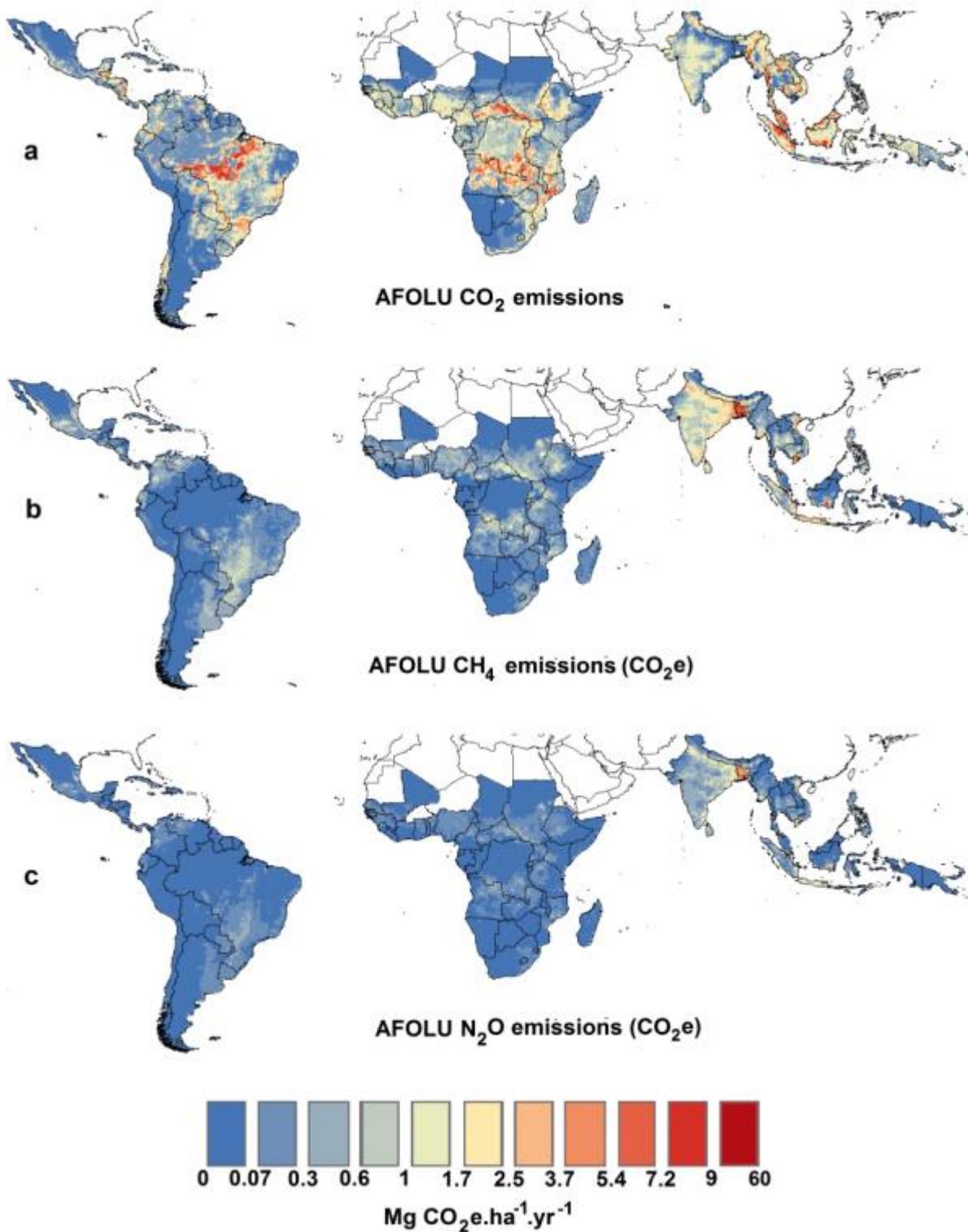
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801 Figure 3: Contribution of the leading emission sources in percent of total emissions (grouped into forests,  
802 crops and livestock) to the per pixel (0.5°), for 2000-2005. Forest emissions include fire, deforestation and  
803 wood harvesting. Crops emissions includes paddy rice, cropland soil and croplands over drained histosols.  
804 Livestock includes enteric fermentation and manure management emissions. This figure is an RGB image  
805 where final colours represent the strength of the emissions for the three sources (e.g, fuchsia colours in Asia  
806 represent equal emissions from livestock (red) and crops (blue). Dark represent areas of low emissions.

807

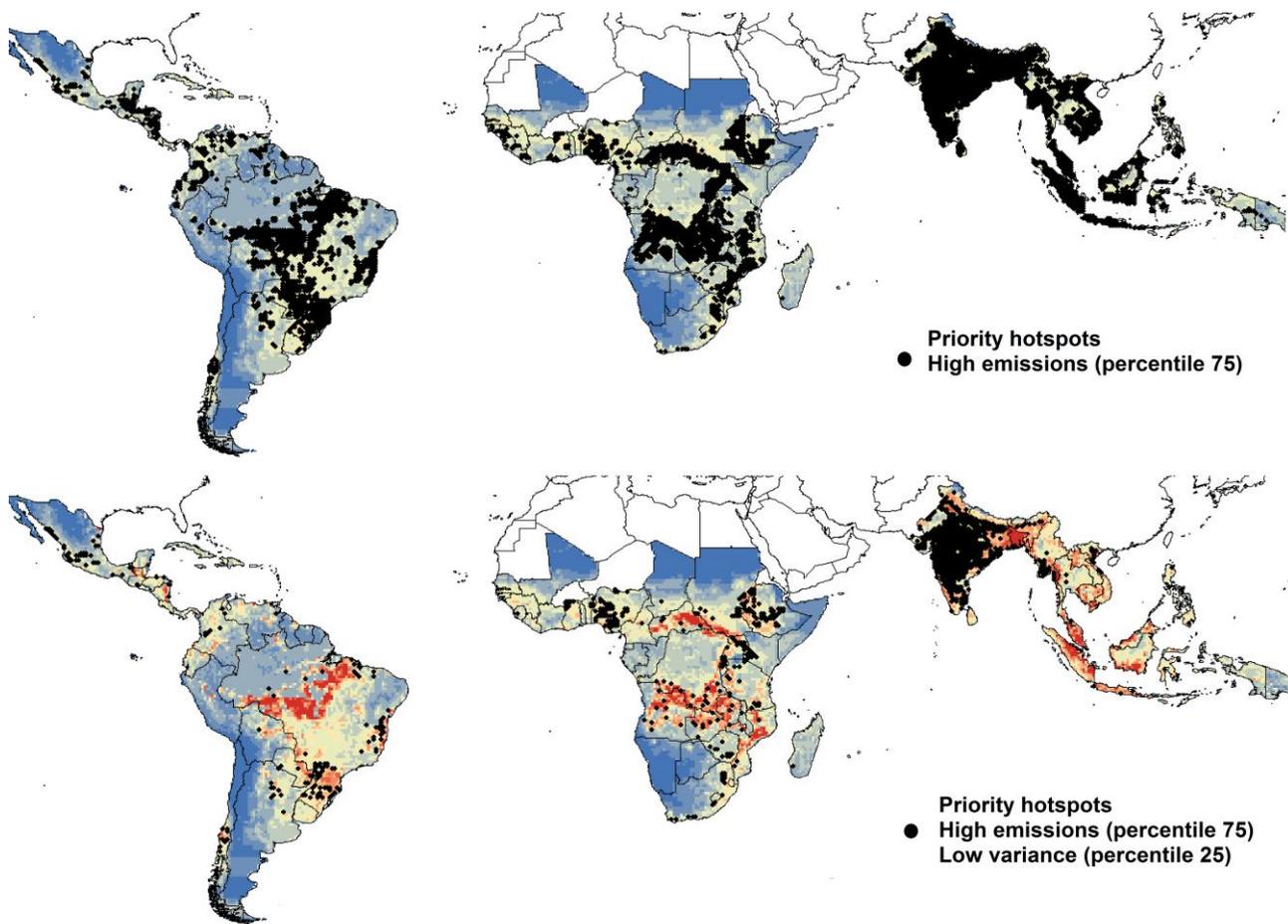
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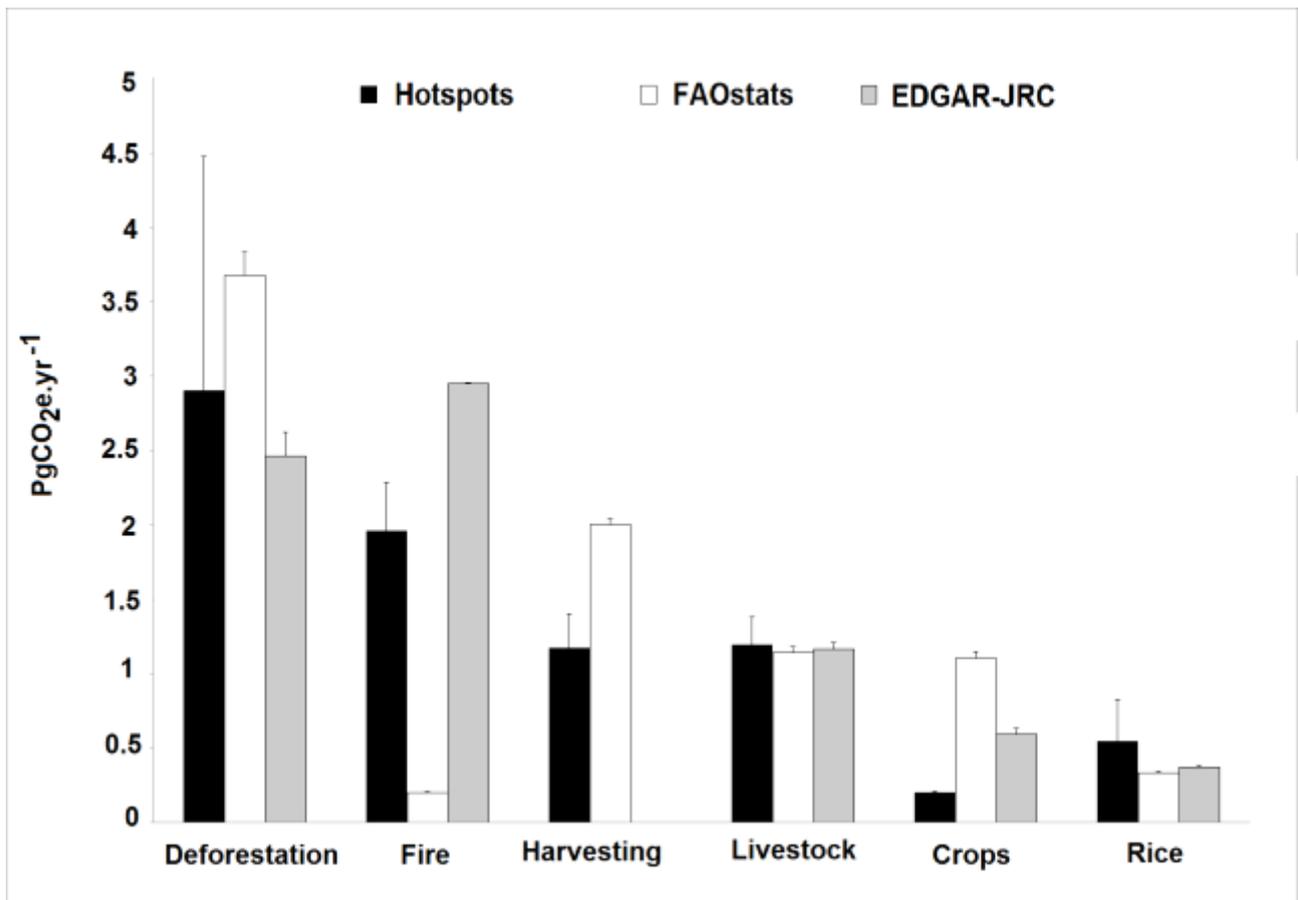
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**Figure 4:** Mean annual AFOLU emissions (MgCO<sub>2</sub>e.ha<sup>-1</sup>.yr<sup>-1</sup>), for the period 2000-2005, disaggregated by greenhouse gases: a) CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which are a proxy of forest emissions, (b) CH<sub>4</sub>, and (c) N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, which are proxies of agricultural emissions. Emissions are the result of 1000 Monte simulations for the considered leading AFOLU emission sources.



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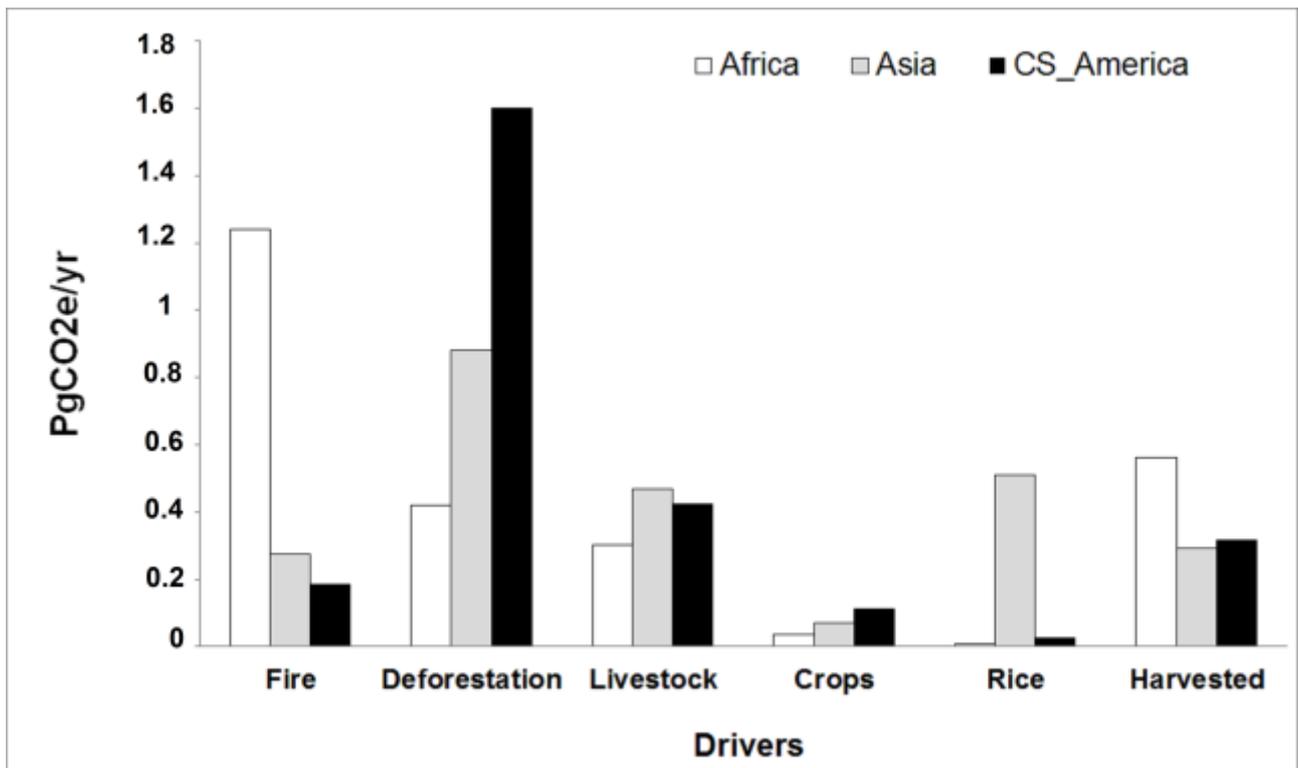
817 **Figure 5:** Identification of priority regions for mitigation in the AFOLU sector in the tropics, for 2000-2005  
 818 considering mitigation potentials only (higher emissions, percentile 75), and degree of certainty of these  
 819 potentials (low uncertainties, percentile 25 of the variance). Economic feasibility would lead to different  
 820 priority regions.



821  
 822 Figure 6: Distribution of mean annual emissions per sources of emissions for the three data bases, in the  
 823 tropics, for 2000-2005. Bars indicate uncertainty estimates for the hotspot data base, and standard  
 824 deviations for FAOstats and EDGAR-JRC estimated from country data variability since no uncertainty data  
 825 exist for these two data bases.

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827



828

829 Figure 7: Continental contribution of the leading emission drivers for our hotspot data base, in the tropics, for  
 830 the period 2000-2005.

831

From units	To units	Molecular weights conversion	Global Warming Potentials 100-yr
kgC (dSOC)	kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq.	kgC * 44 / 12	1
kgC (CH <sub>4</sub> )	kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq.	kgC * 16 / 12	21
kgN (N <sub>2</sub> O)	kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq.	kgN * 44 / 28	310

833 **Table 1:** Data conversions to CO<sub>2</sub>e for different chemical elements (C, N). dSOC is the change in Soil  
834 Organic Carbon. Molecular weights and global warming potentials use values from the Fourth Assessment  
835 Report (IPCC 2007)

836

Gross AFOLU emissions (PgCO <sub>2</sub> e.yr <sup>-1</sup> )						
		CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	
Tropical		8.0 (5.5-12.2)	5.5 (3.3-9.5)	1.5 (1.1-1.9)	1 (0.8-1.2)	
Central & South America		2.7 (1.8-4.5)	2.1 (1.3-3.8)	0.35 (0.25-0.45)	0.25 (0.2-0.3)	
Africa		2.8 (1.9-4.0)	2.1 (1.4-3.2)	0.39 (0.27-0.5)	0.3 (0.22-0.39)	
Asia		2.5 (1.7-3.8)	1.3 (0.7-2.4)	0.74 (0.56-0.95)	0.41 (0.35-0.47)	
Contribution of leading emission sources to the tropical AFOLU emissions (%)						
	Deforestation	Fire	Rice	Wood Harvesting	Livestock	Crops
Tropical	36.3	24.6	6.9	14.6	15	2.5
Central & South America	59.6	8.2	1.1	11.9	15.9	3.4
Africa	15.2	52.6	0.3	20.3	11	0.7
Asia	34.8	11.3	20.2	11.5	18.5	3.7
Contribution of leading emission sources to total uncertainty (%)						
	Deforestation	Fire	Rice	Harvesting	Livestock	Crops
Tropical	92.5	4.5	0.2	1.4	1.4	0.0
Central & South America	98.4	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.0
Africa	69.8	25.5	0.0	3.7	1.1	0.0
Asia	91.4	2.4	2.1	1.1	2.9	0.0
Contribution of gases to the tropical AFOLU emissions (%)						
		CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	
Tropical			69	19	12	
Central & South America		34	78	13	9	
Africa		35	75	14	11	
Asia		31	53	30	17	
Contribution of gases to total uncertainty (%)						
Tropical			98.3	1.3	0.4	
Central & South America		48	99.4	0.5	0.1	
Africa		27.3	98.2	1.1	0.7	
Asia		24.7	95.5	3.9	0.6	

837

838 **Table 2:** i) Contribution of the different greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O) to continental and tropical  
839 AFOLU annual mean emissions for the period 2000-2005 (in parenthesis are the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles  
840 of the aggregated AFOLU emissions). ii) Contribution of the different leading emission sources to the tropical  
841 and continental AFOLU emission emissions (expressed as % of emissions). And iii) partitioning of the  
842 AFOLU emissions uncertainties among the leading emission sources and the considered GHG gases  
843 (expressed as % of variance) AFOLU emissions are the result of 1000 Monte Carlo runs for the leading  
844 emission sources.