



AIRBORNE RESEARCH OF THE EARTH SYSTEM

# From the foundations to the big picture of biodiversity on a changing planet

M. C. Schuman, M. E. Schaepman, A. Hueni,  
and the ARES and Spatial Genetics Teams



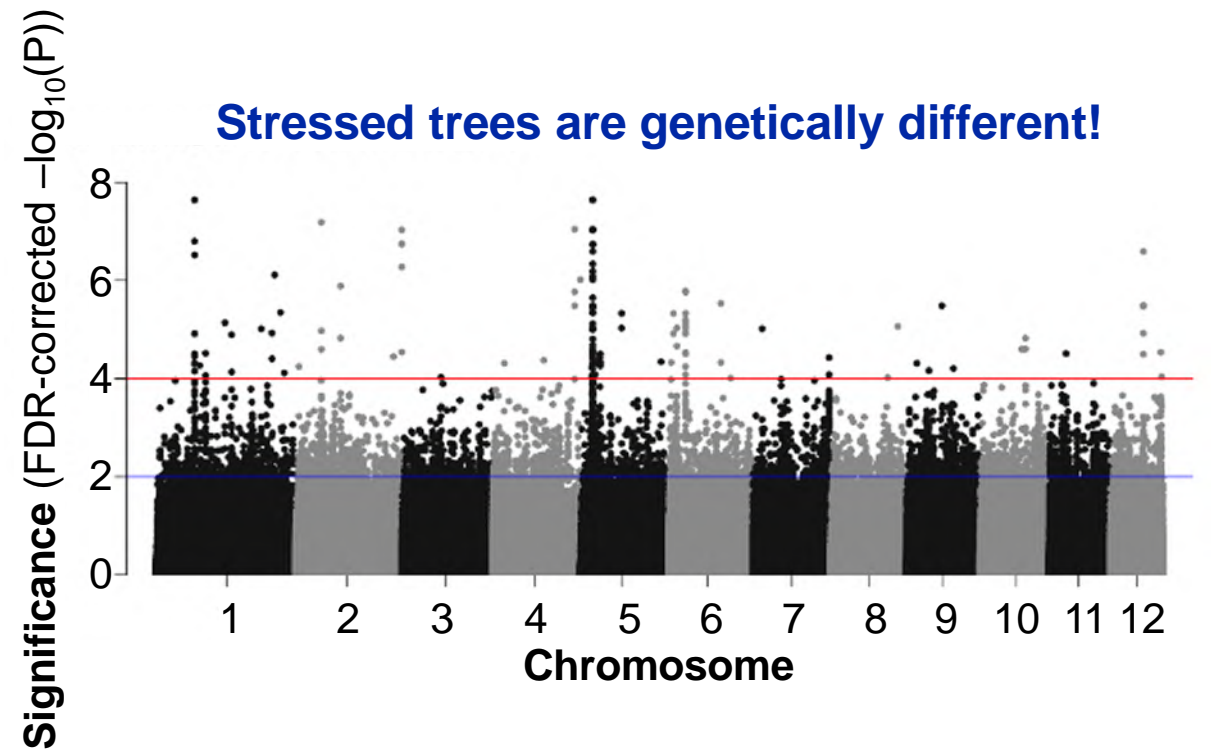
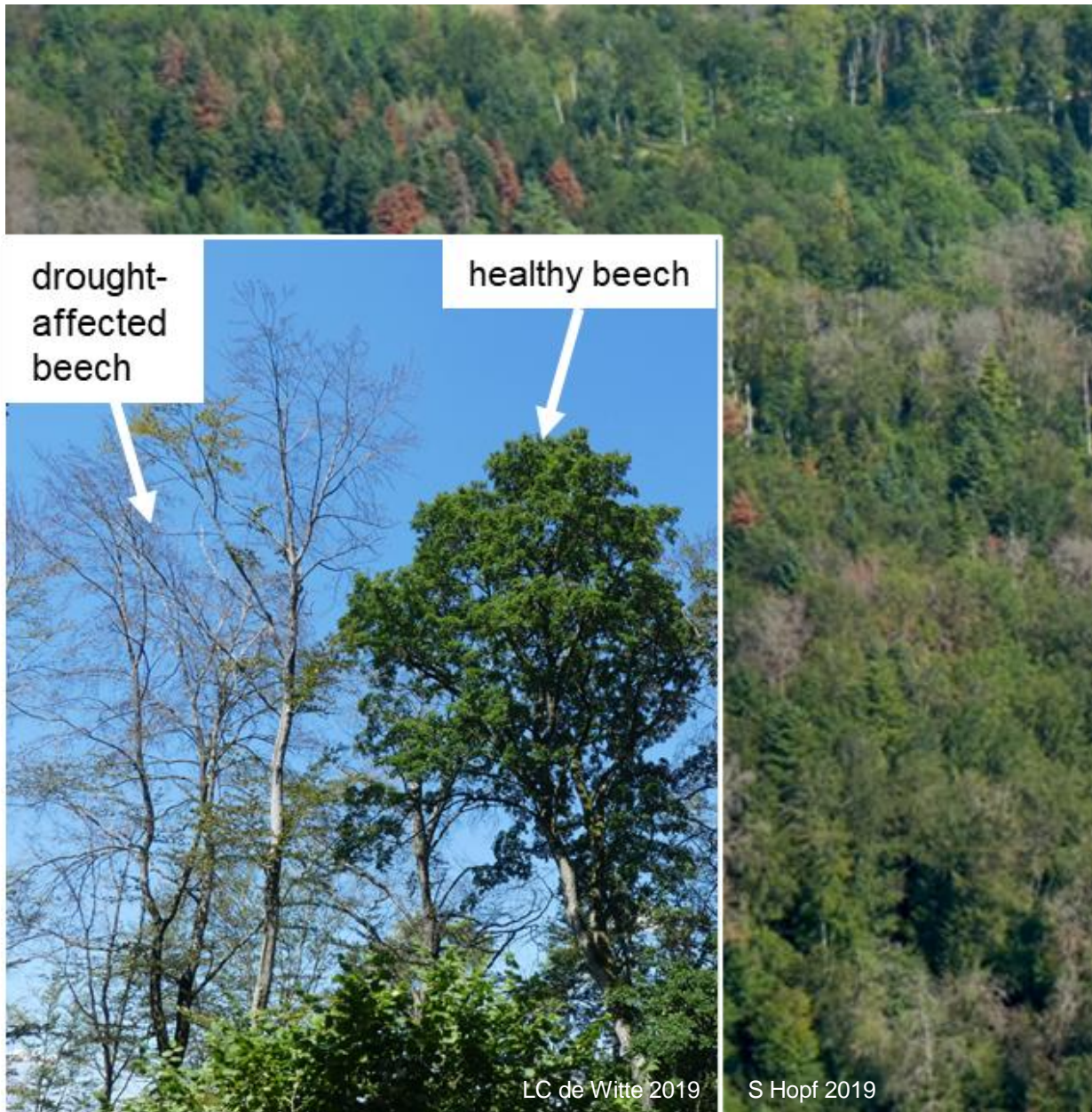


S Hopf 2019

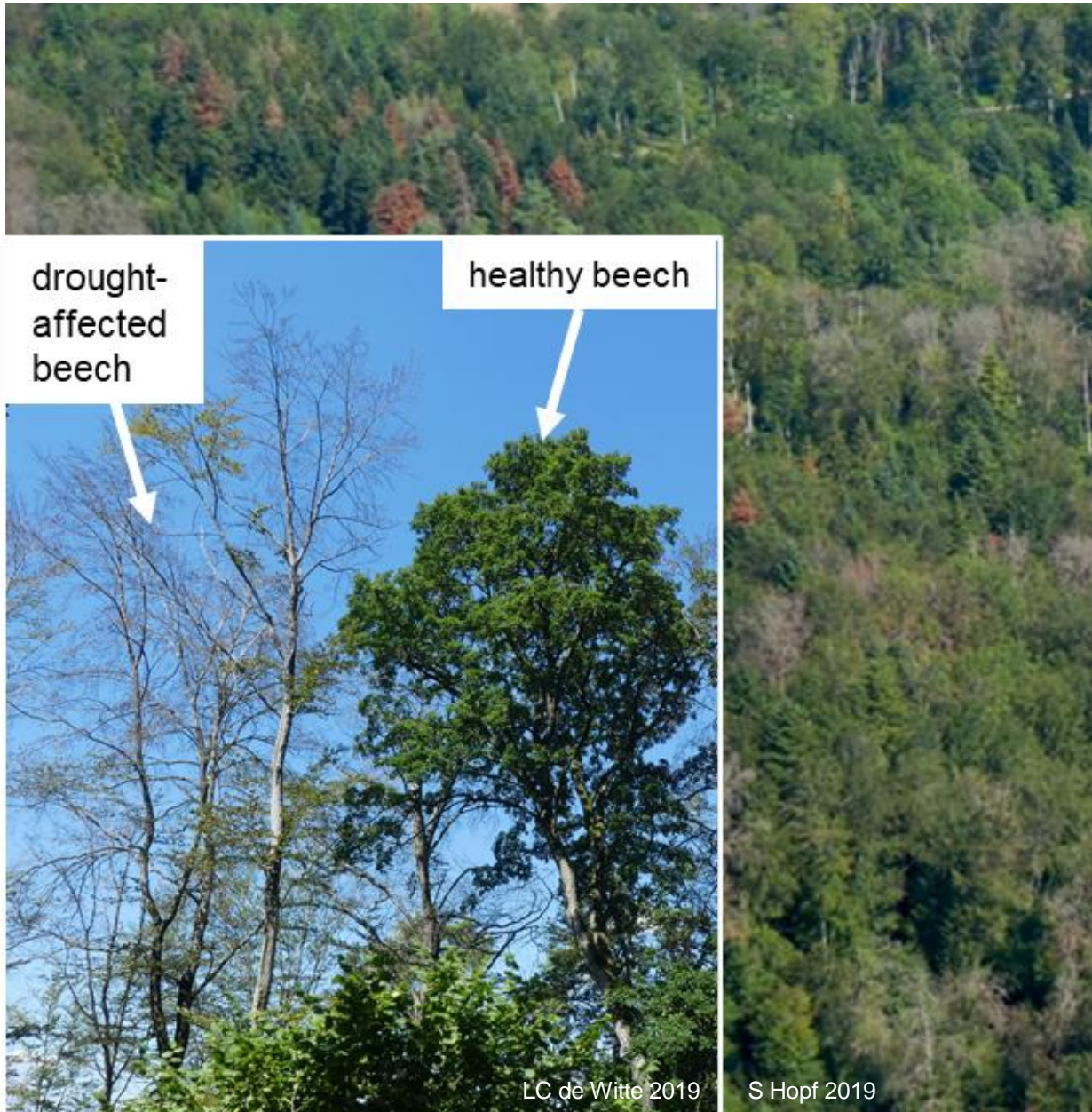




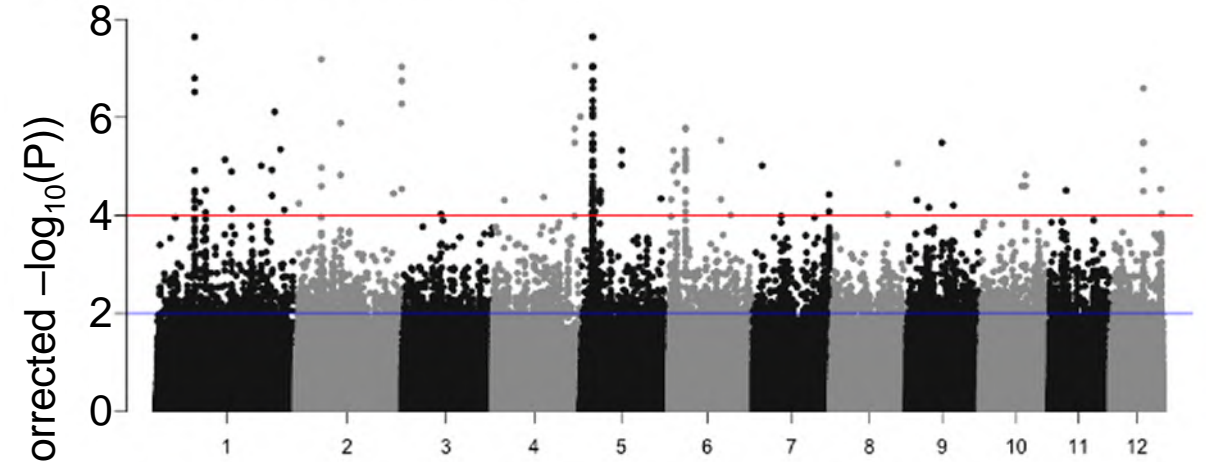




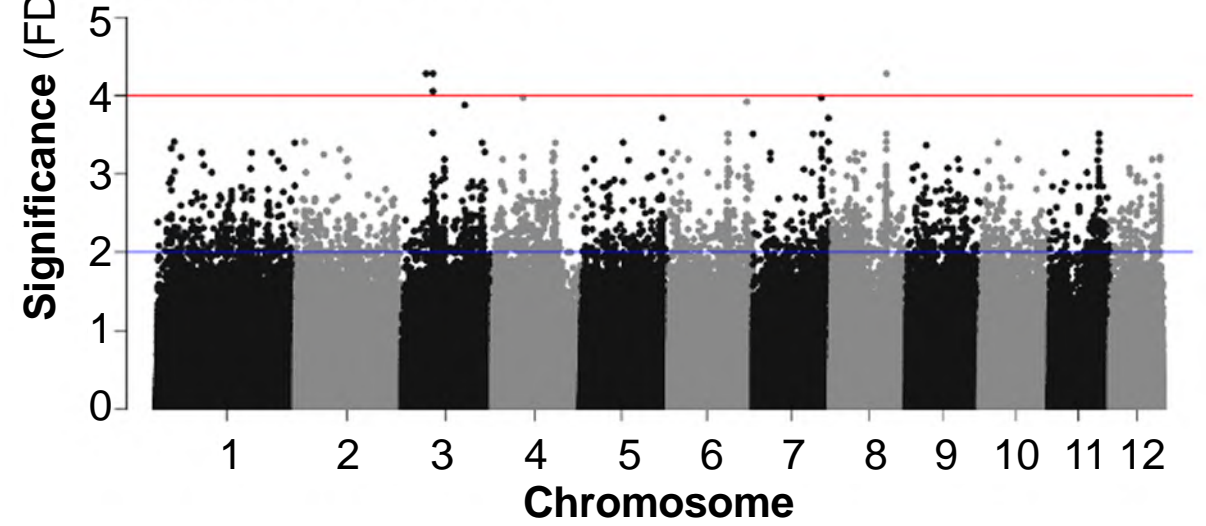




## Stressed trees are genetically different! (population 1)



## Stressed trees aren't very different! (population 2)

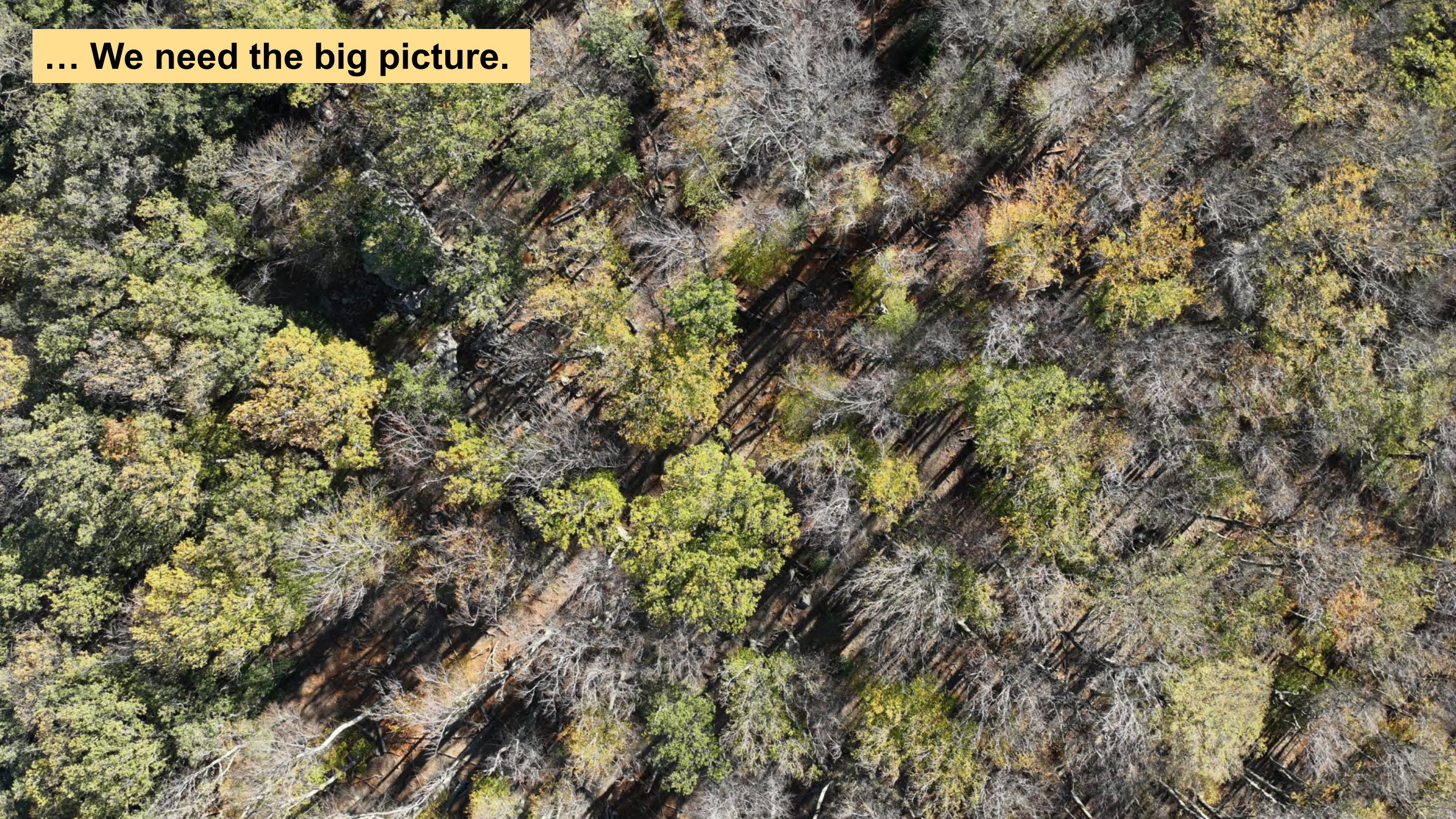


# Instead of one-at-a-time...





**... We need the big picture.**





# Example: Global forest monitoring



**Rondônia, Brasil, Landsat 5, 08 July 1989 (left) and Sentinel-2, 29 June 2022 (right), 30 m**  
See also Global Forest Watch initiative, <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/>



# From monitoring forests, to monitoring genetic potential?



INTERNATIONAL  
SPACE  
SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE

## GENES FROM SPACE

Michael: Marc Latzel, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
via Wikimedia Commons



# Using information about forest habitats to monitor endangered populations beneath the canopy



Global Forest Watch



- Land use change  
2001-2022
- Tree cover
  - Tree cover loss
  - Tree cover gain
  - No tree cover

Google Earth Pro



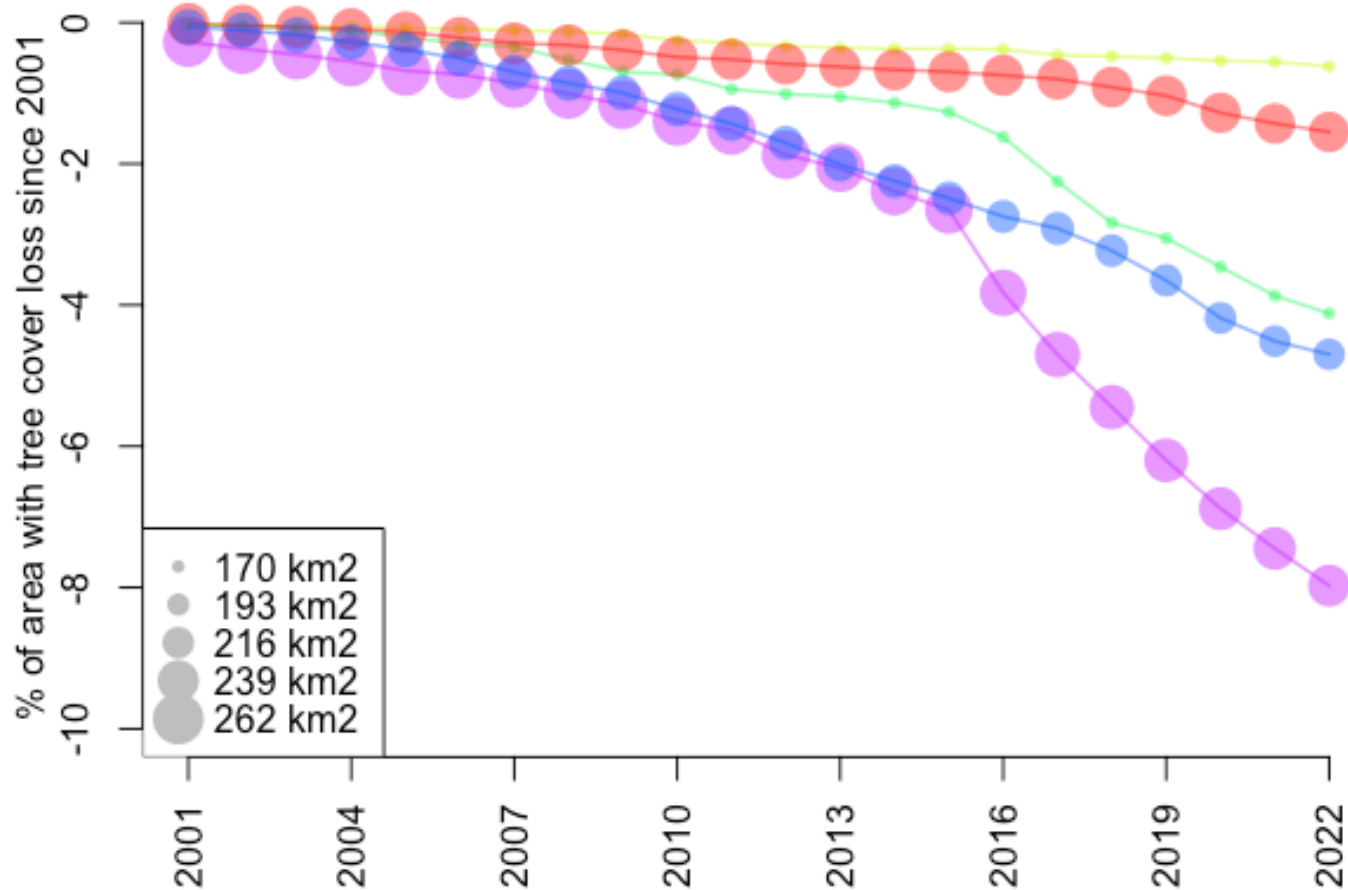
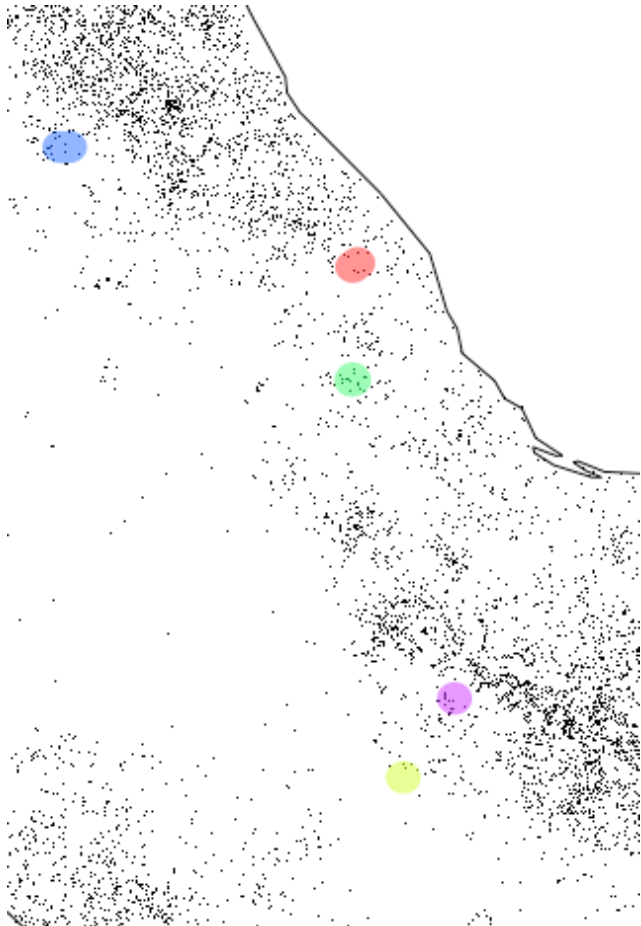
Sentinel-2



wild avocado -  
*Persea cinerascens*



# Using information about forest habitats to monitor endangered populations beneath the canopy

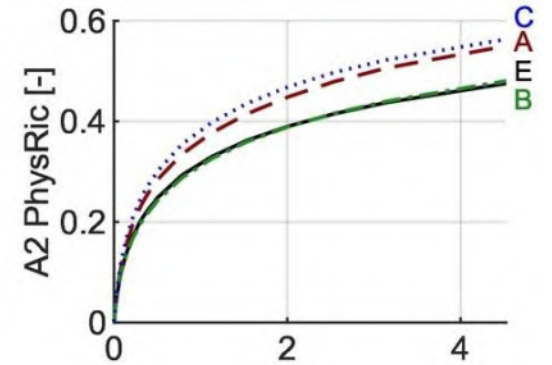
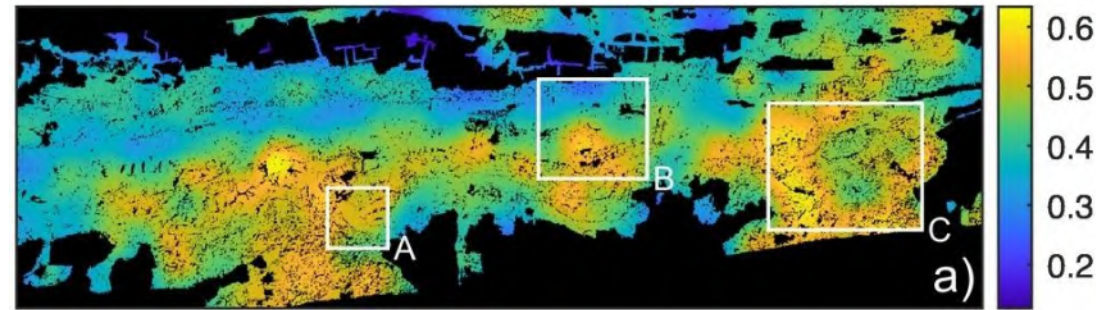




# Assessing the state of forest habitats by remotely sensing canopy diversity

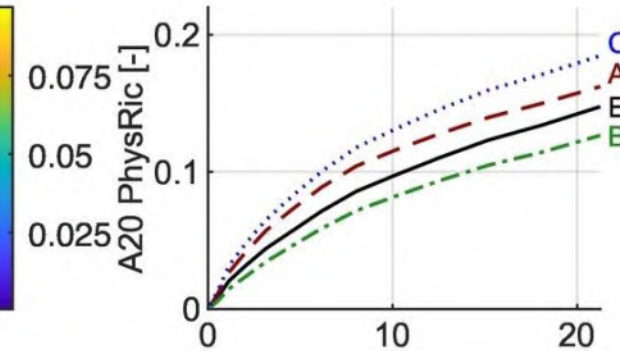
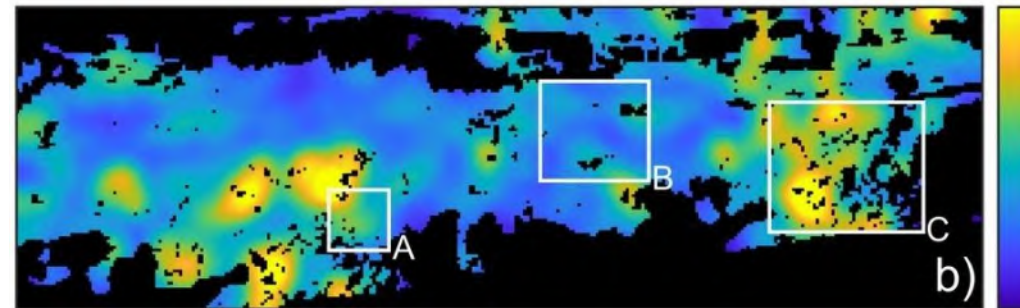
Functional diversity of a forest canopy measured by spectral indices of chlorophyll, carotenoid, and water content at...

**From imaging spectroscopy data**



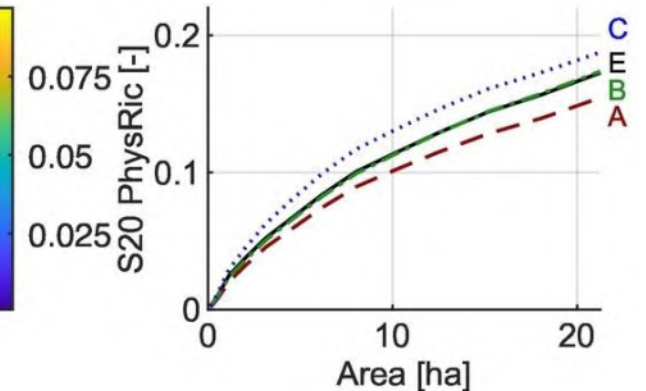
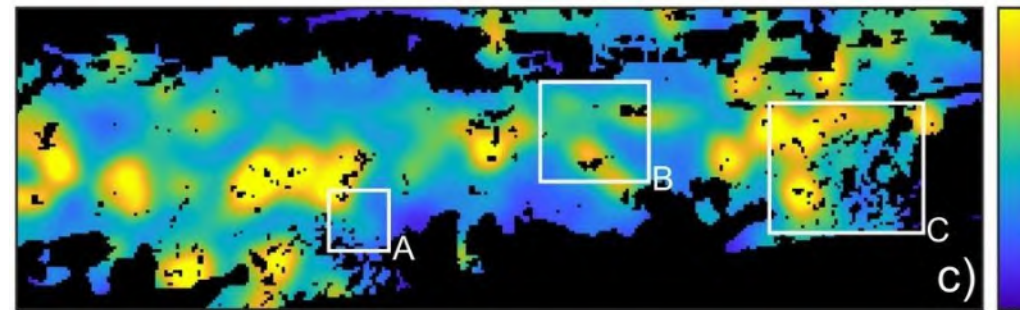
**From imaging spectroscopy data**

20 m



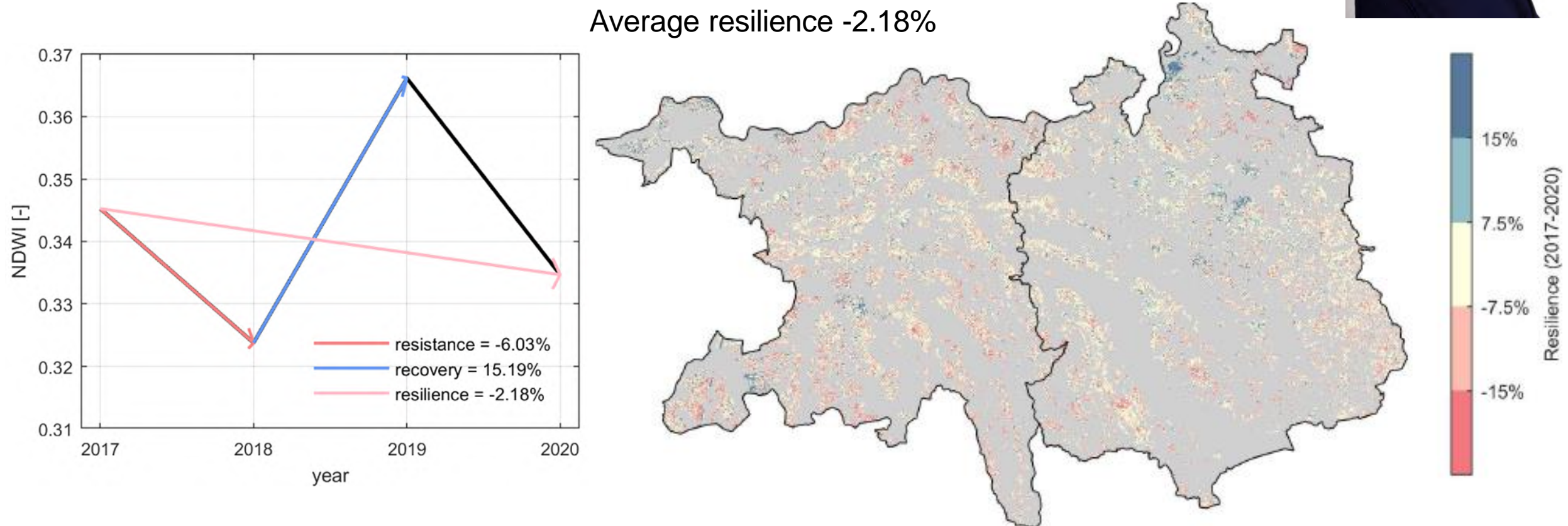
**From multispectral satellite data (Sentinel-2)**

20 m



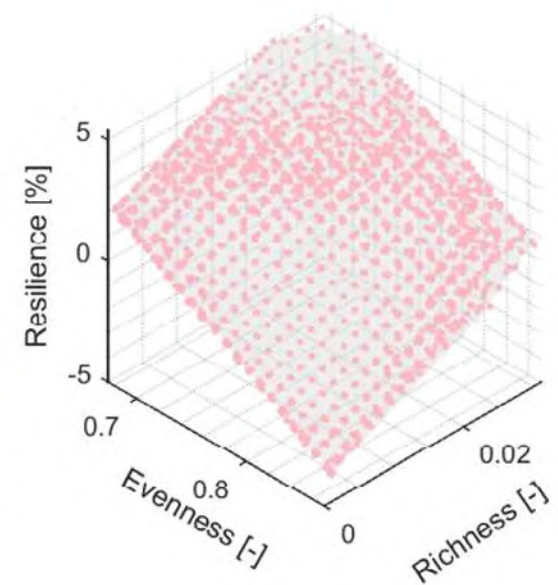
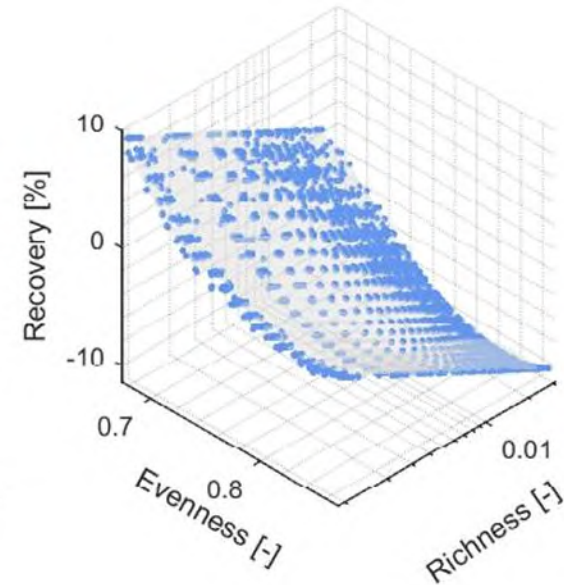
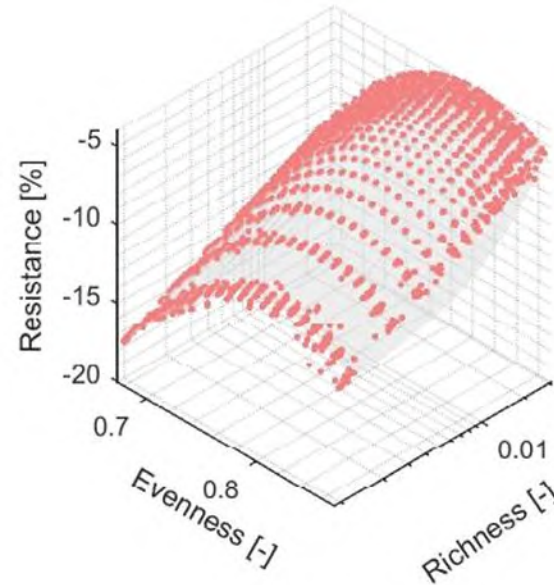
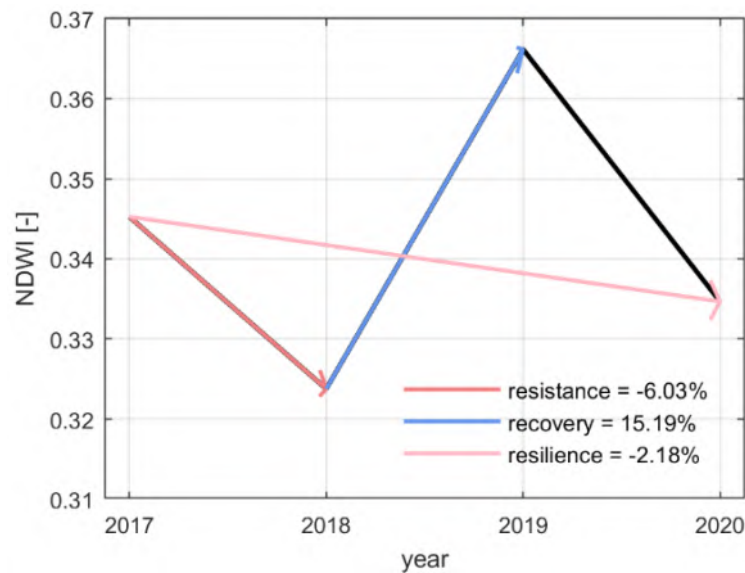


# Remotely sensed canopy diversity is related to drought response



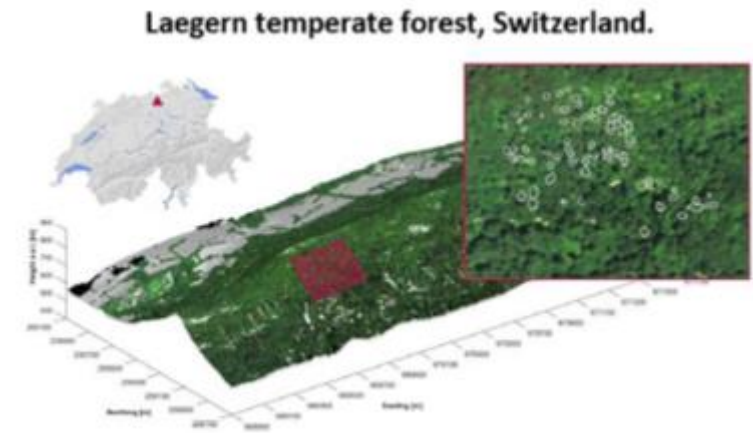


# Remotely sensed canopy diversity is related to drought response





# Remotely sensed canopy diversity is related to genetic potential

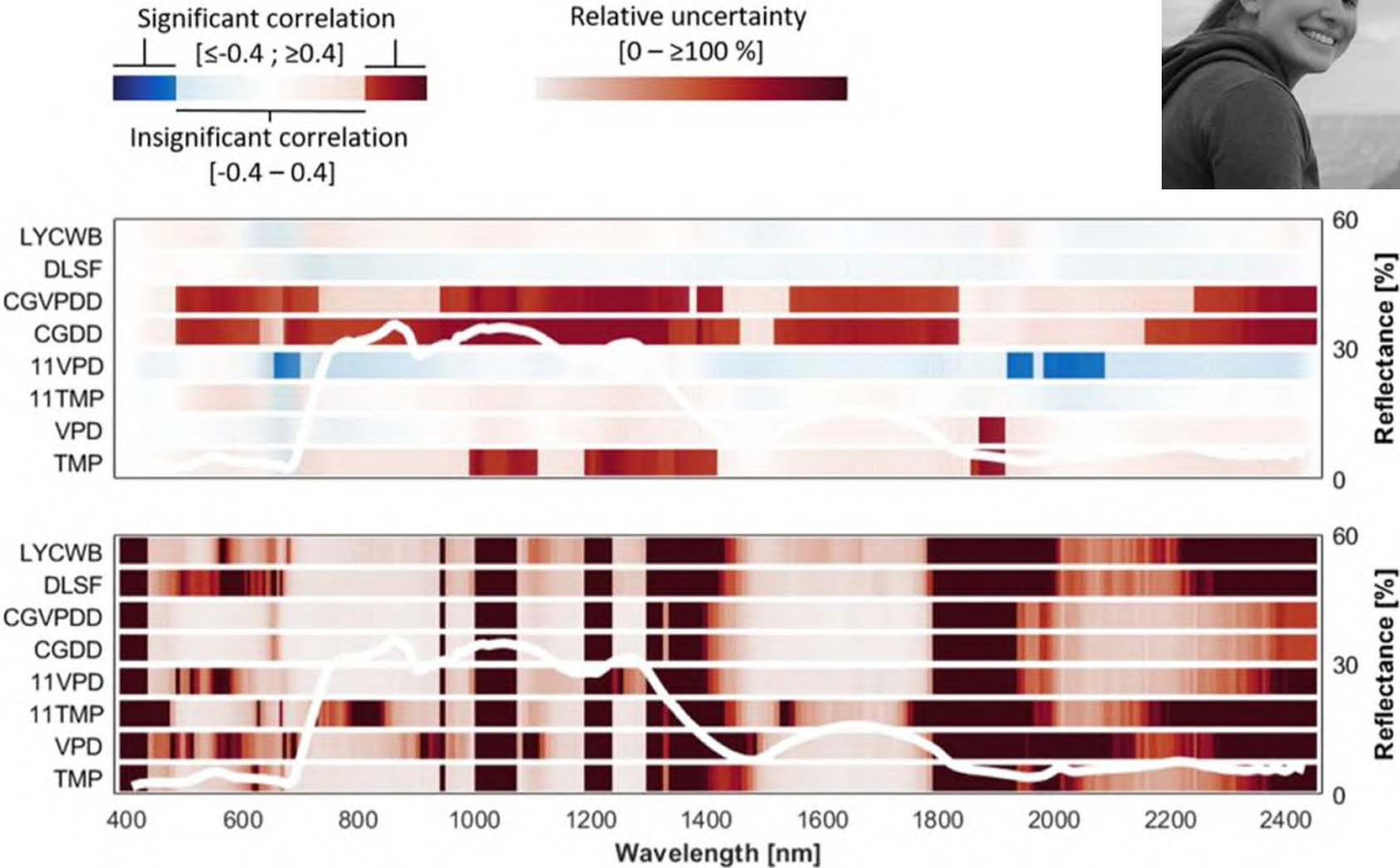


Pearson correlation between

**Spectral-Genetic Similarity** =  
partial Mantel correlation coefficient  
between genetic (Nei's) distance and  
spectral (Euclidean) distance of trees

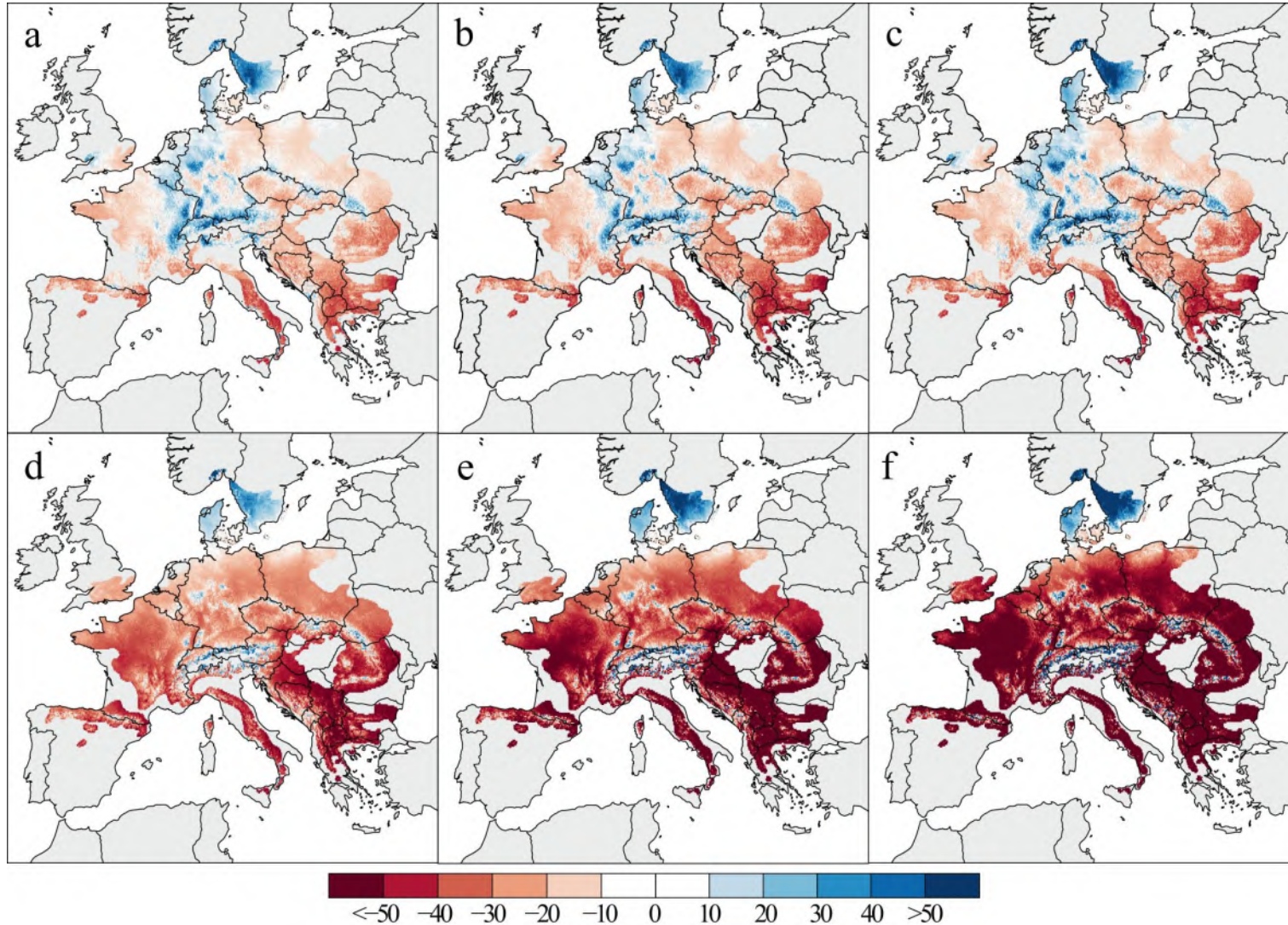
and

values of environmental variables





# Future of beech forests relies on response diversity based in genetic diversity



Modelled future percentage change in basal area increment (BAI) compared to 1986 – 2016 under SSP1-2.6, top, or SSP5-8.5, bottom





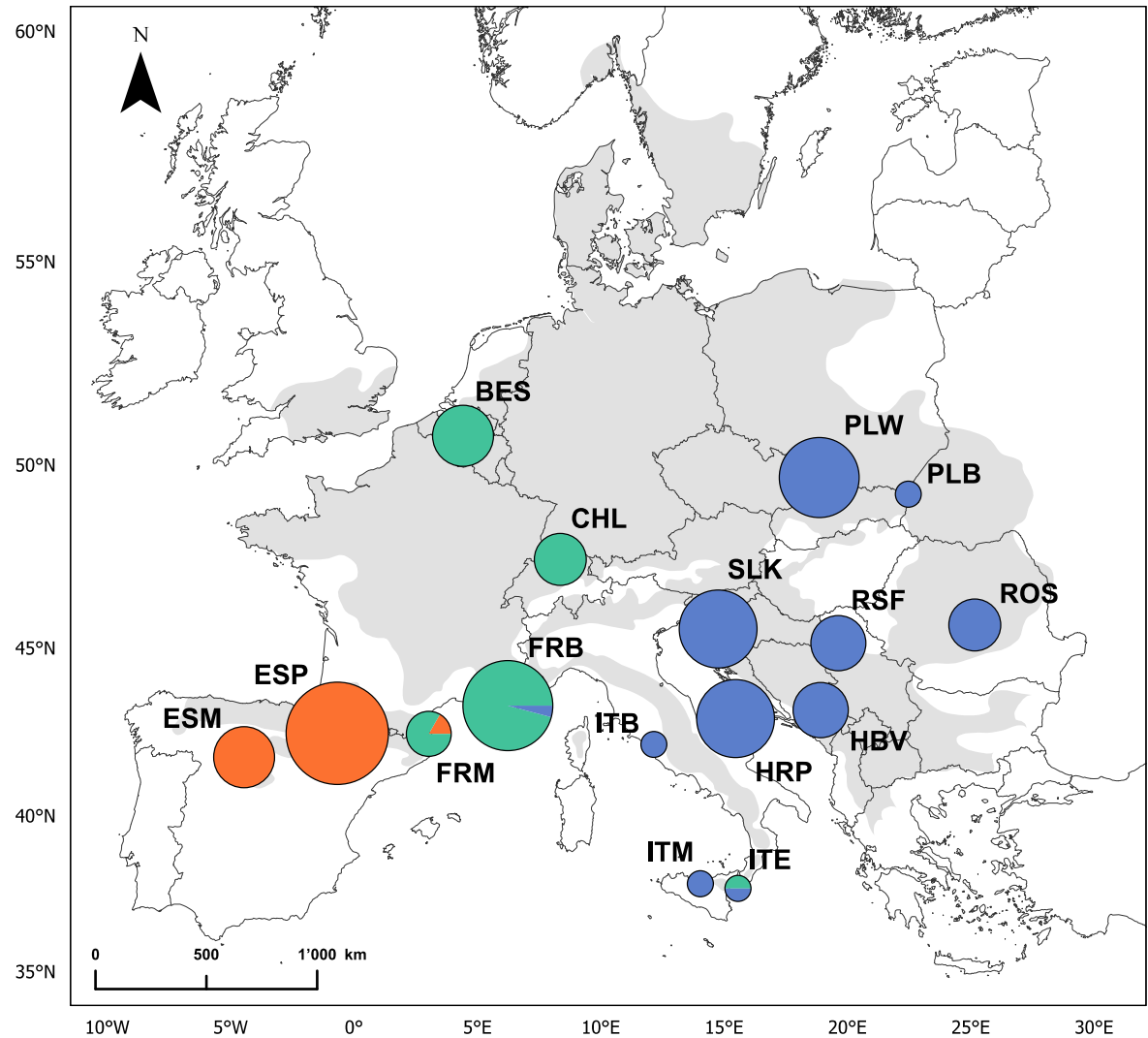
# Beech common garden at UZH for testing diversity – response relationships

180 young trees (saplings)





# Beech saplings in the experiment are from three genetic groups



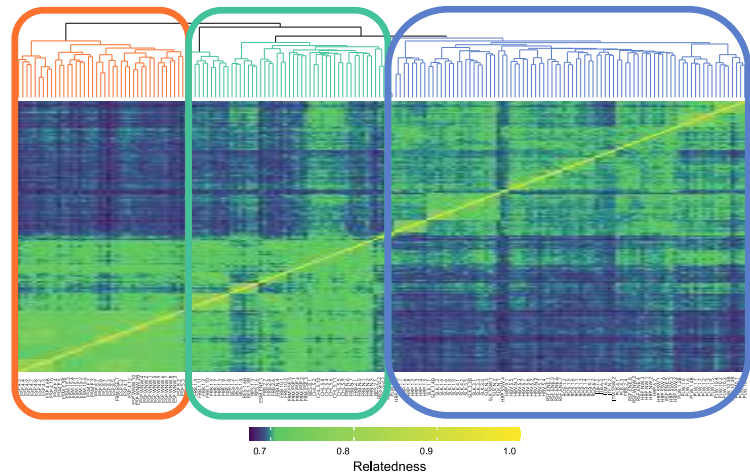
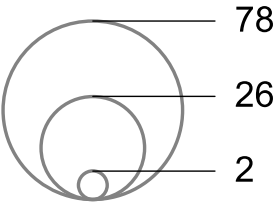
Natural distribution range

Genetic cluster 1

Genetic cluster 2

Genetic cluster 3

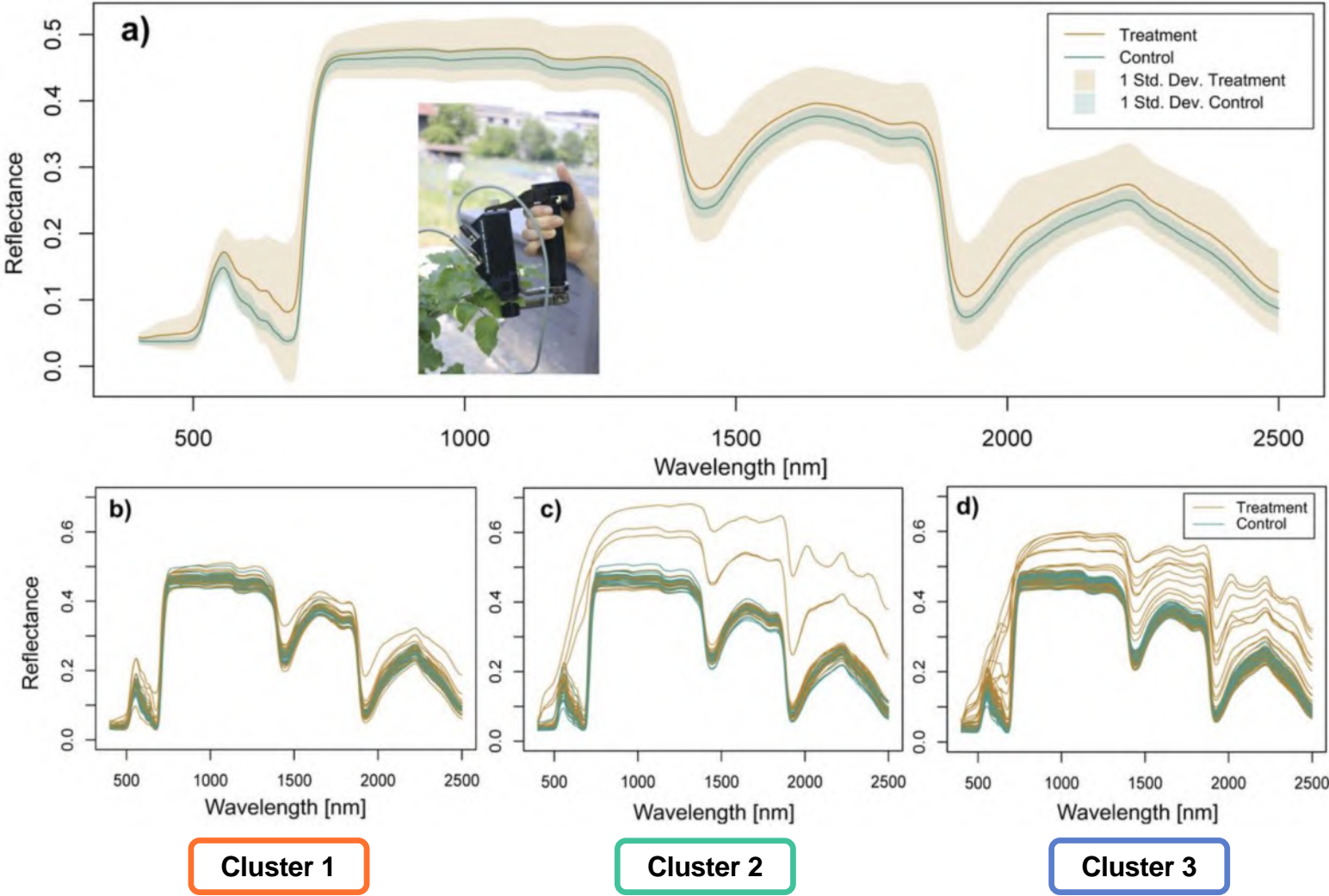
Sample size



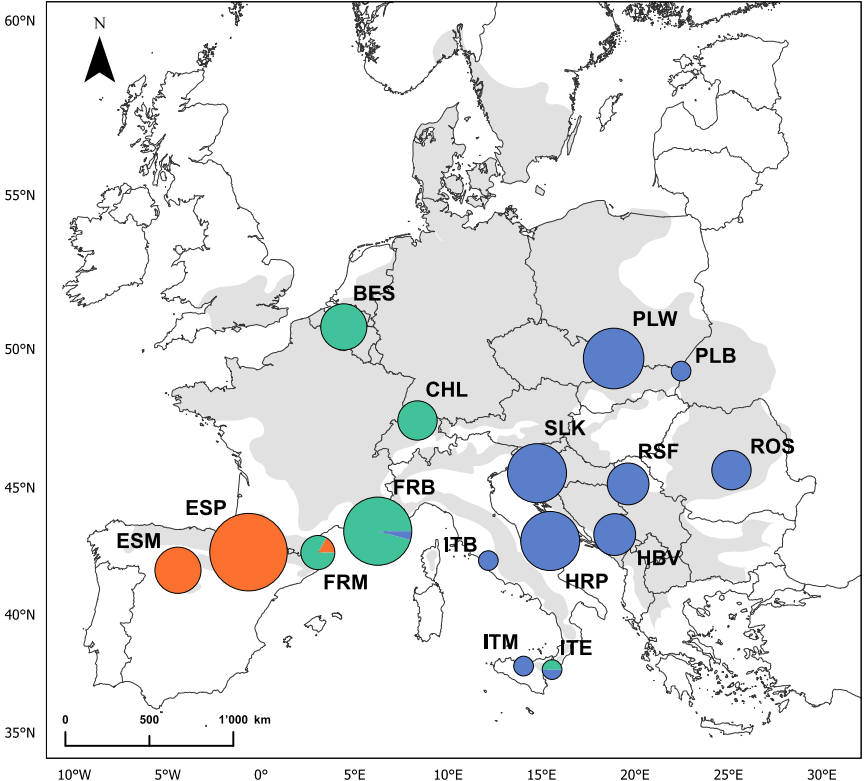
Based on reference-free  
kmer approach (Voichek  
Y and Weigel D, [doi:  
10.1038/s41588-020-  
0612-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41588-020-0612-7))



# Drought responses of beech seedlings as measured by their leaf spectra



20 measurements per leaf  
(black and white backgrounds),  
2 leaves per seedling



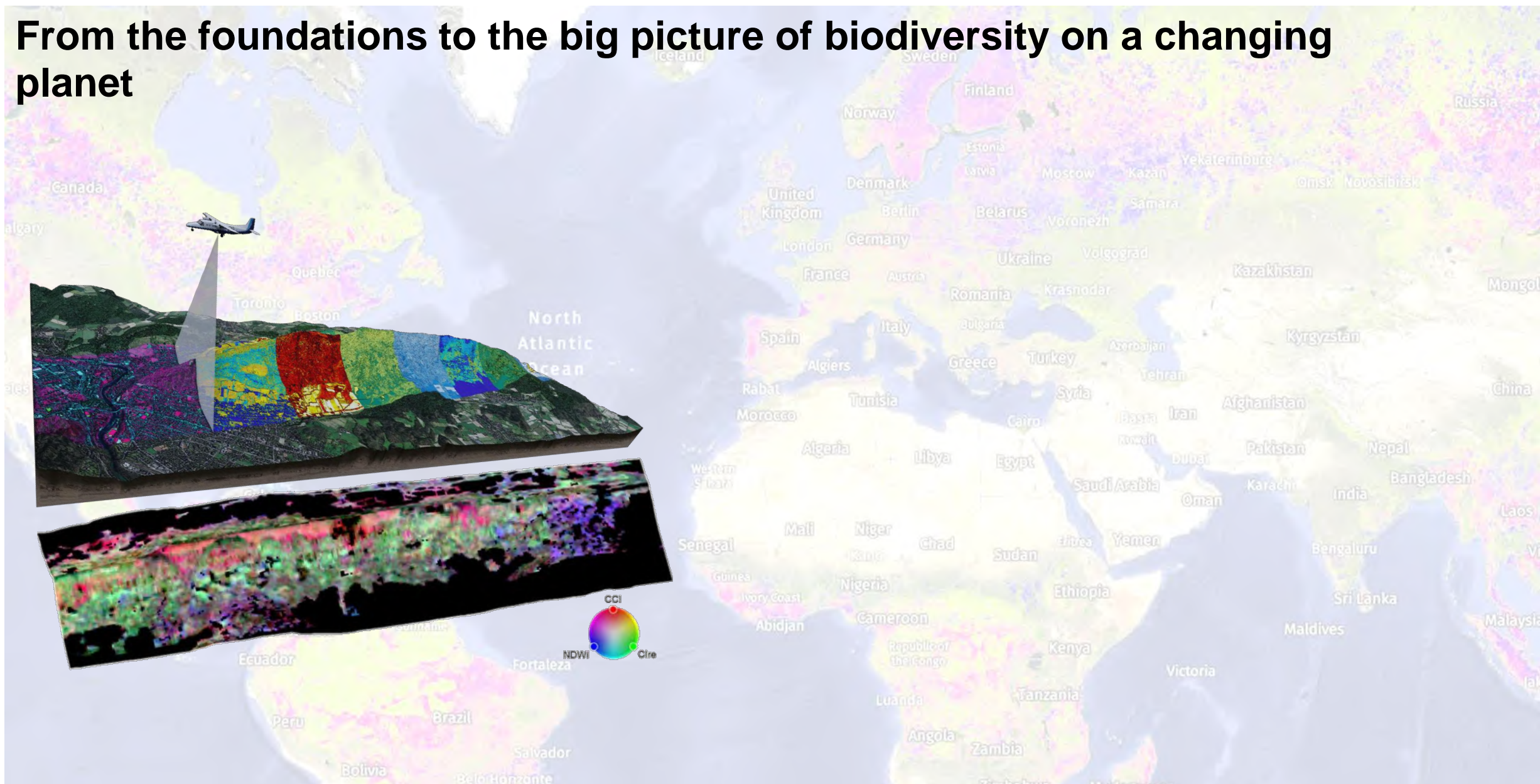


# From the foundations to the big picture of biodiversity on a changing planet

Background: Global Forest Watch, airplane: F. Morsdorf



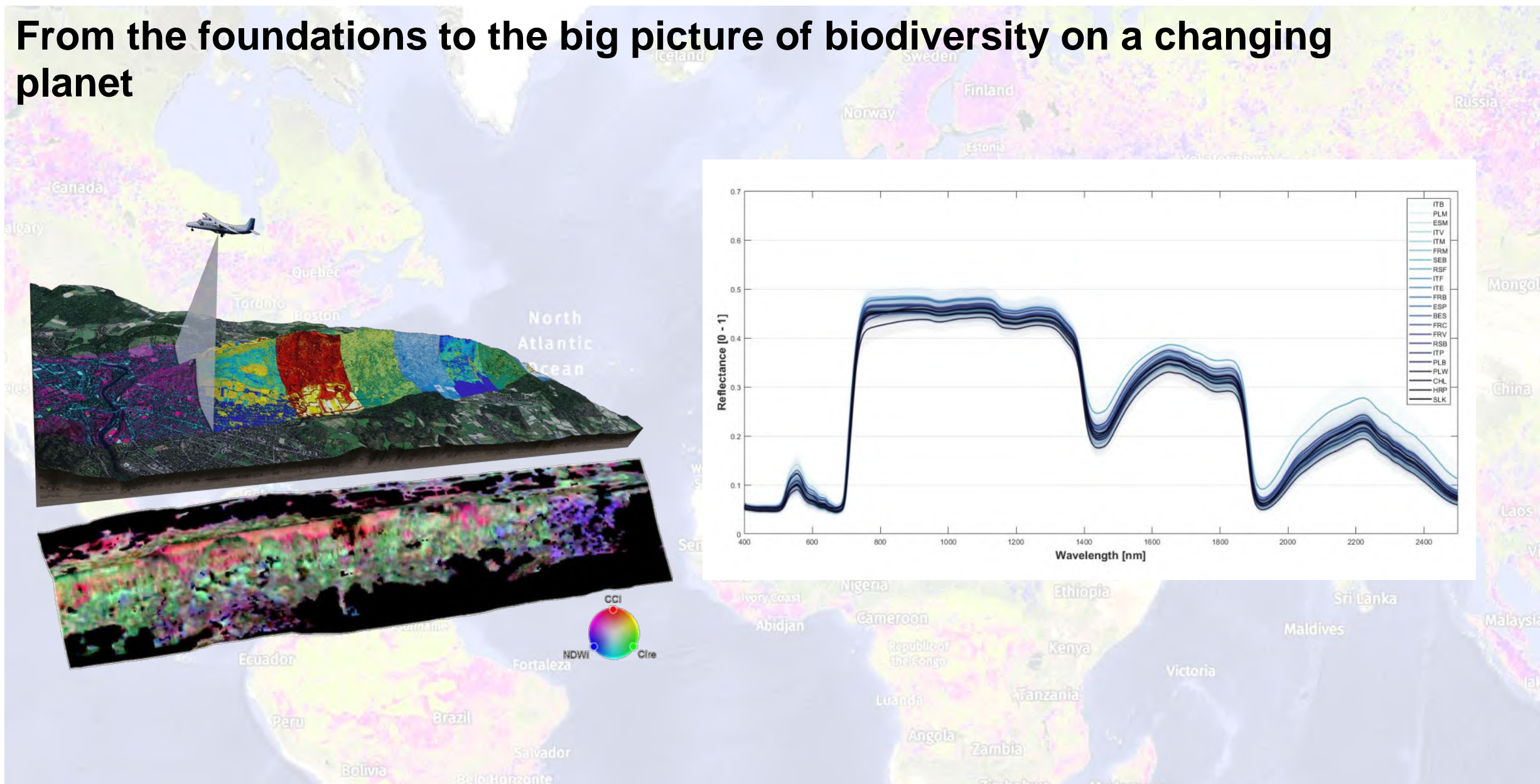
# From the foundations to the big picture of biodiversity on a changing planet



Background: Global Forest Watch, airplane: F. Morsdorf  
Trait landscape modified from Helfenstein *et al.* (2022) Assessing biodiversity from space... [doi: 10.1016/j.rse.2022.113024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2022.113024)



# From the foundations to the big picture of biodiversity on a changing planet

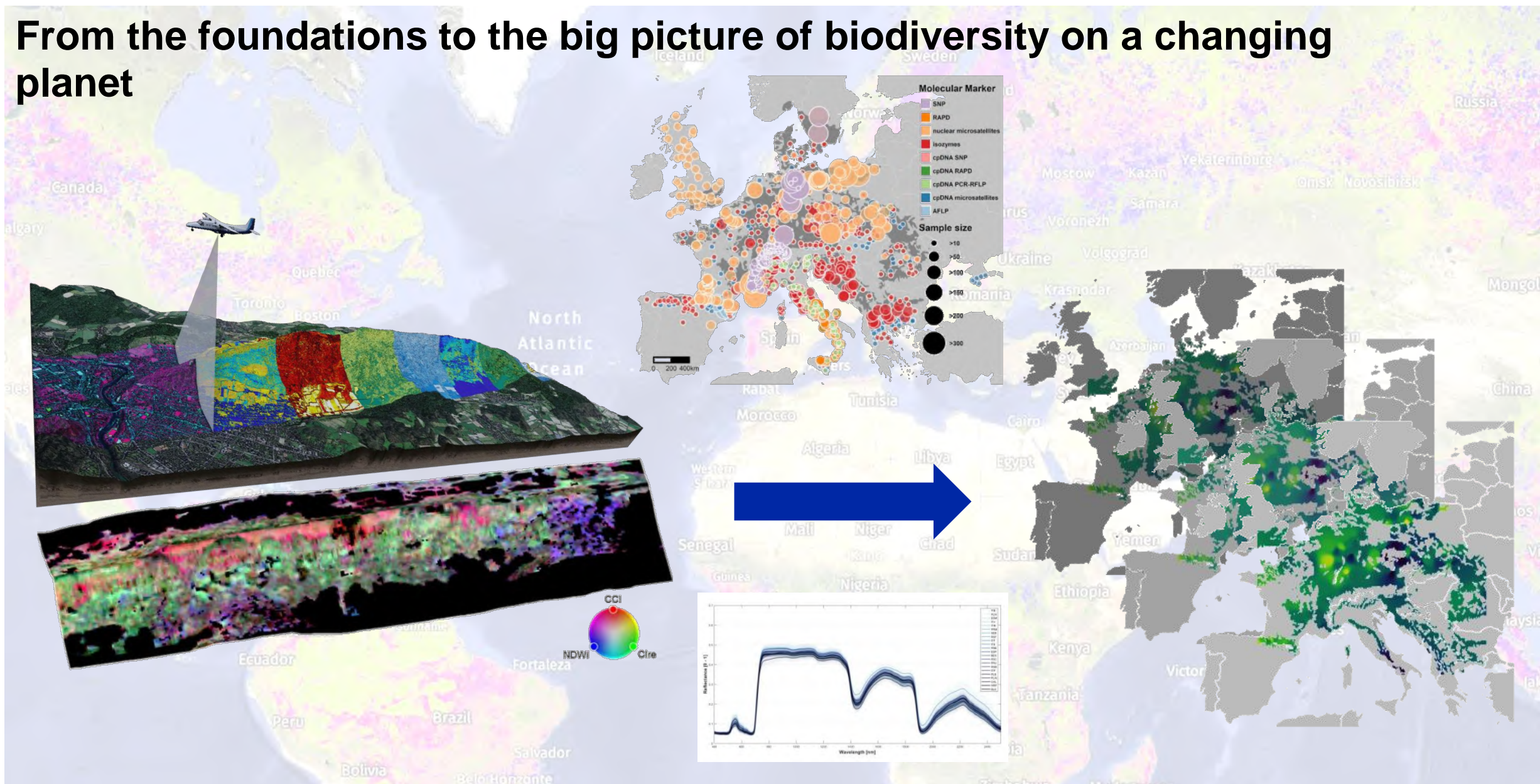


Background: Global Forest Watch, airplane: F. Morsdorf, spectra: E. Czyż

Trait landscape modified from Helfenstein *et al.* (2022) Assessing biodiversity from space... [doi: 10.1016/j.rse.2022.113024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2022.113024)



# From the foundations to the big picture of biodiversity on a changing planet

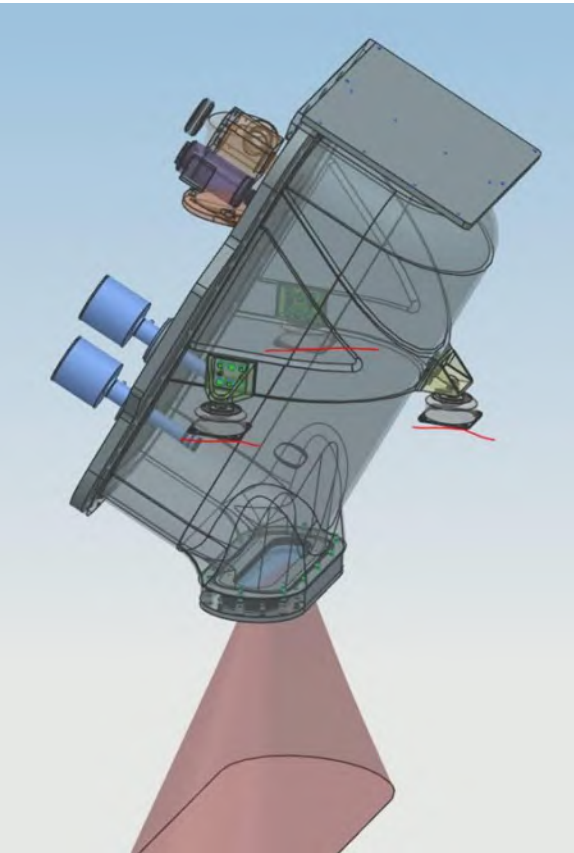
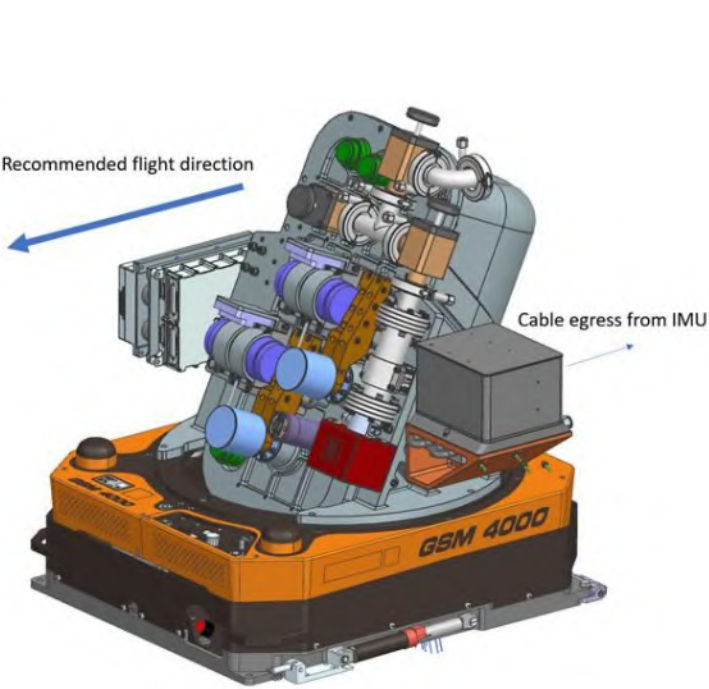
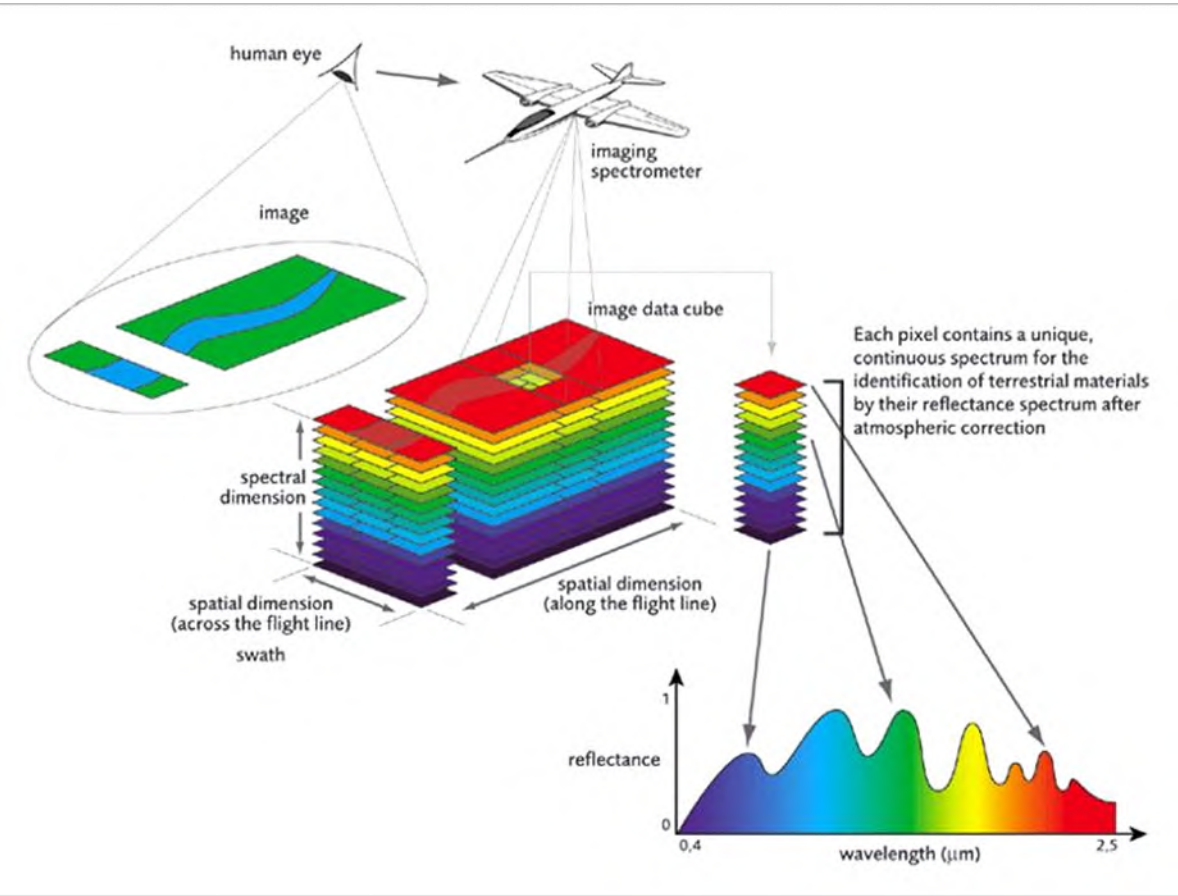


Background: Global Forest Watch (<https://www.globalforestwatch.org/map/>), airplane: F. Morsdorf, , spectra: E. Czyż  
Trait landscape modified from Helfenstein *et al.* (2022) Assessing biodiversity from space... doi: 10.1016/j.rse.2022.113024  
Maps modified from Stefanini *et al.* (2023) A novel synthesis of two decades... doi: 10.1007/s11295-022-01577-4



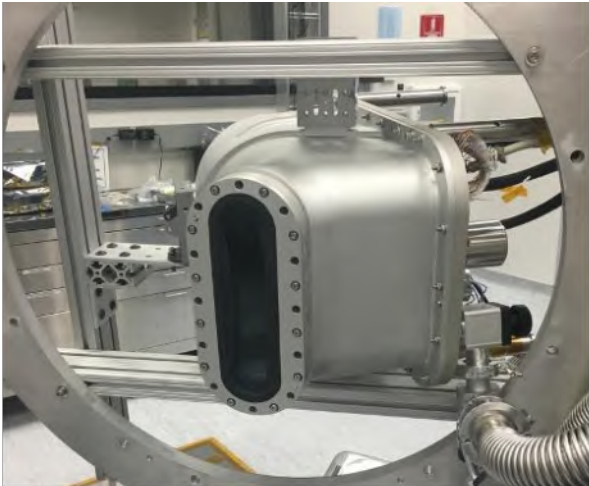
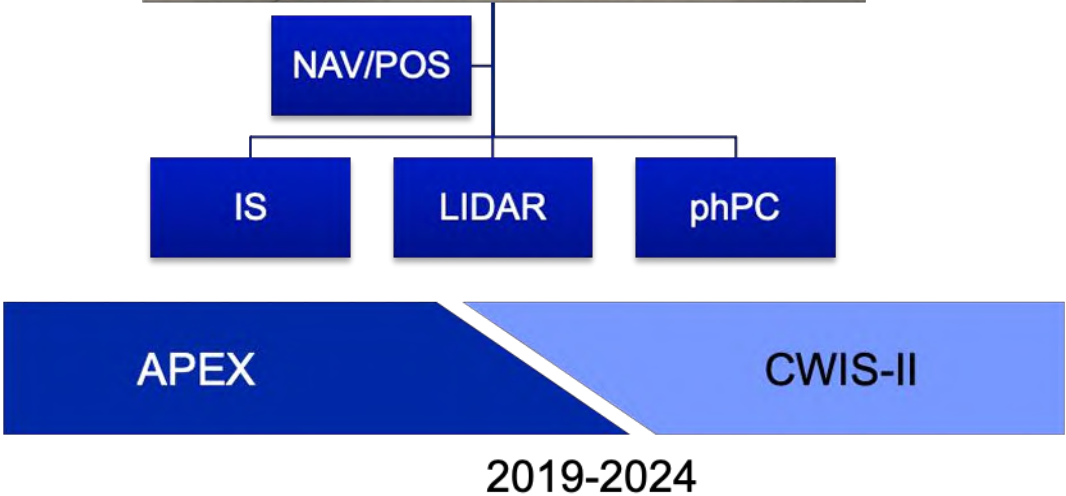
# ARES – Airborne Research Facility for the Earth System

AIRBORNE RESEARCH OF THE EARTH SYSTEM





# ARES – Airborne Research Facility for the Earth System



New Imaging Spectrometer CWIS-II to replace APEX is built in cooperation by NASA/JPL and UZH.



University of Zurich



UNIL | Université de Lausanne



UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG  
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG



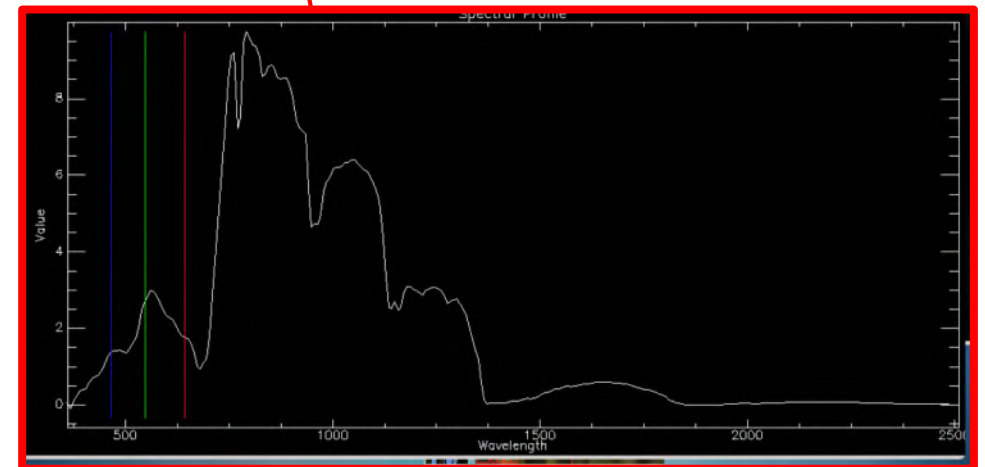
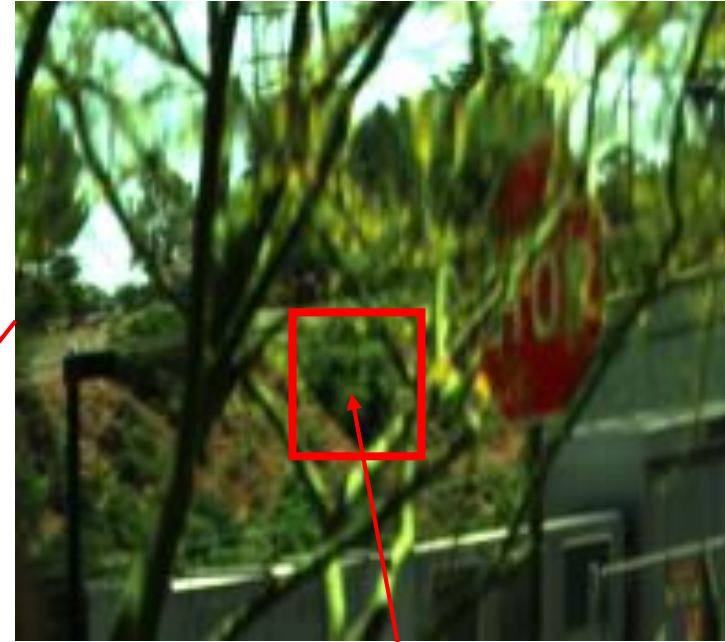


# Test of imaging spectrometer CWIS-II (AVIRIS-4) at NASA-JPL





# Test of imaging spectrometer CWIS-II (AVIRIS-4) at NASA-JPL



Solar-illuminated spectrum extract from the research group picture

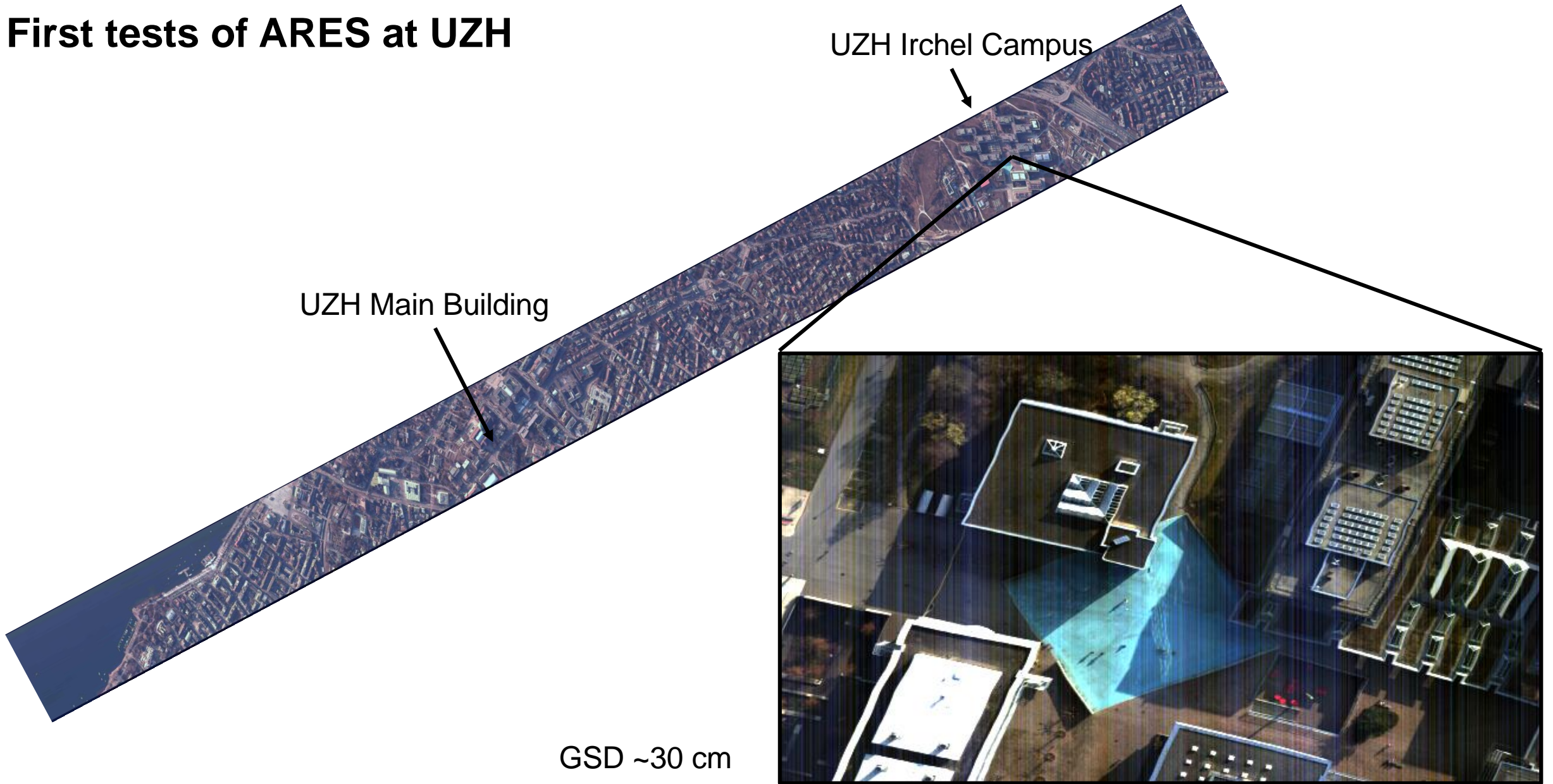


# First tests of ARES at UZH (spring 2024)



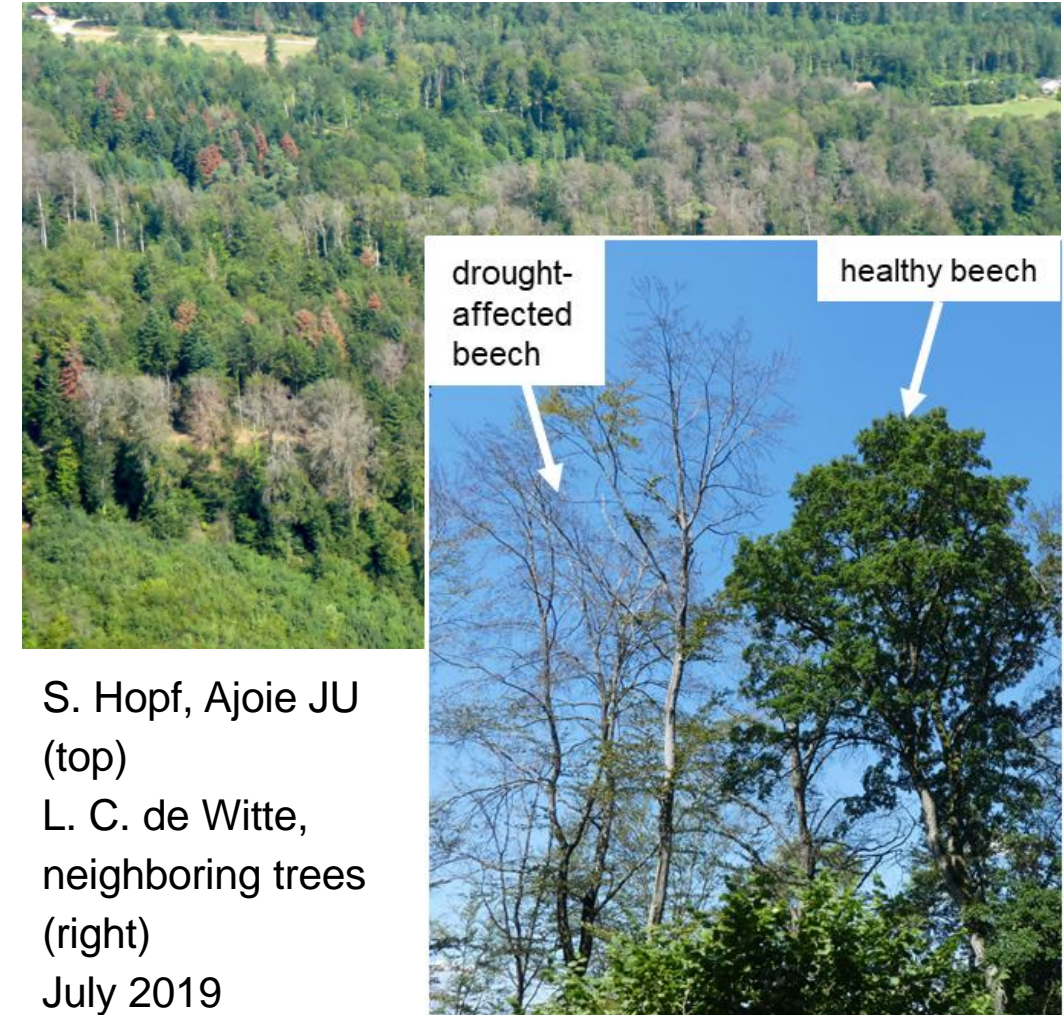


# First tests of ARES at UZH





# ARES: Getting the big picture without losing the important details



S. Hopf, Ajoie JU  
(top)  
L. C. de Witte,  
neighboring trees  
(right)  
July 2019

K. Mason, AVIRIS-NG reprocessed to high-res (RGB projection)



# Thank you



“It is better to have a vague concept that may act as a bridge across a void of ignorance, than to come dejectedly to a halt at the brink.” – Philip Ball (2023) *How Life Works*, Prologue