

LAND-USE/LAND-COVER CHANGE OF BISTRISHKO BRANISHTE BIOSPHERE RESERVE USING SENTINEL-2 SIMULATED DATA

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Abstract

The aim of this study is the evaluation of changes in land-use/land-cover on the territory of Bistrishko Branishte biosphere reserve (UNESCO, MAB), Vitosha; with the use of simulated Sentinel-2 data. For this purpose the CHRIS/PROBA image acquired on 22 June 2012, and on 28 September 2012 are geometrically and atmospheric corrected and co-registered. The topographic normalization is applied to the second image due to shadows cast on the slopes of the Valley of the river Bistrica. In order to simulate the Sentinel-2 bands, the spectral channels of the CHRIS/PROBA are spectrally resampled to spectral width of the Sentinel-2 bands. The spatial resampling of the Sentinel-2 bands is done using a Landsat 7 ETM + panchromatic band (15 m). On the classification of land-use/land-cover an accuracy assessment and cross-validation is made by using ground-based data. The results show that between 60 ha and 72 ha of coniferous plants were devastated by a forest fire in 2012. the results obtained demonstrate the ability of the Sentinel-2 mission to detect sudden changes in land-use/land-cover caused by forest fires.

1. Introduction

In recent decades the Land-Use and Land-Cover (LU/LC) change detection is used as one of the main tools to detect changes of Earth surface. With the advancement of preparation of *Sentinel-2* mission within the COPERNICUS Programme the LU/LC will become even more important tool to get insight of the changes that take place in Europe (Copernicus – observing the world, 2014). The protected forests in Europe are 39 million ha (nearly 19 %) (FOREST EUROPE, 2011) and *Bistrishko Branishte* biosphere reserve is part of them. Its protected area was designated to preserve a high-value Norway spruce (*Picea abies L.*) forests.

Present study aims at revealing LU/LC change of *Bistrishko Branishte* biosphere reserve using simulated *Sentinel-2* high-resolution satellite data. The time frame of the study is June – September 2012. During this period a significant change in the biosphere reserve's LU/LC took place due to a wildfire (Filchev and Dimitrov, 2013; Filchev *et al.* 2014).

1.1. Study area

The *Bistrishko Branishte* biosphere reserve was included in the UNESCO Man And Biosphere (MAB) Programme in 1977. It is located in the upper *Bistrica* river basin in the *Vitoshka* Mountain between 1430 and 2282 m a.s.l. The designated protected area is 1061.6 ha (Georgiev, 1995), and according to official statistics 52 % of the reserve is occupied by forests, while the rest is covered with sub-alpine meadows, rocks, and rock screes. The dominant tree species is Norway spruce (*Picea abies* L.), represented by 7 forms and varieties. By 2010 > 27 % (~300 ha) of the reserve's territory was devastated by a tornado which occurred on 22 May 2001 (Gikov and Pironkova, 2005) and the successive European spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) infestation (Filchev, 2012; Filchev *et al.* 2013; Panayotov *et al.*, 2011; Panayotov and Georgiev, 2012). Following a wildfire in 2012 part of the dead tree stands (i.e. between 0.60 km² and 0.72 km²) were burned (Filchev, 2012; Filchev *et al.* 2013, Filchev and Dimitrov, 2013; Gikov and Dimitrov, 2013; Panayotov and Georgiev, 2012; EUFODOS Newsletter, 2013).

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Data

The data used in this study consists of: 1) raster data: two Landsat 7 ETM+ and two CHRIS/PROBA Mode 1 images, a subset from ASTER GDEM V. 2; 2) vector data: a boundary (shape-file) of the *Bistrishko Branishte* biosphere reserve. Software used: BEAM VISAT (Brockmann Consult & ESA under GNU license), ArcGIS/ArcInfo 9.2 (ESRI Inc. under Academic License), ENVI 4.7 (Exelis ITT VIS under Academic License). The methodology of this study is presented on a flowchart (Fig. 1).

2.2. Sentinel-2 simulation procedure

Prior to simulation of *Sentinel-2* from CHRIS/PROBA a higher Spatial Resolution (SR) image was required to resample the original CHRIS/PROBA bands to the *Sentinel-2*'s SR. The *Sentinel-2* sensor will acquire its images in three SR modes, i.e. 10 m, 20 m, and 60 m (Fletcher, 2012). For this purpose two Landsat 7 ETM+ images, acquired on closer dates to CHRIS/PROBA acquisitions – i.e. before and after the wildfire, were selected from USGS LP DAAC online archive, (Table 1). The dates were selected to be as close as possible due to seasonal changes which effects on vegetation in the high-mountainous area. The image values of panchromatic band № 8 (15 m SR) of Landsat 7 ETM+, were converted from digital numbers (DN) to reflectance using the build in correction parameters in the metadata files (.MTL). Atmospheric correction was applied using the QUick Atmospheric Correction (QUAC) algorithm in ENVI (ENVI Atmospheric Correction Module, 2009).

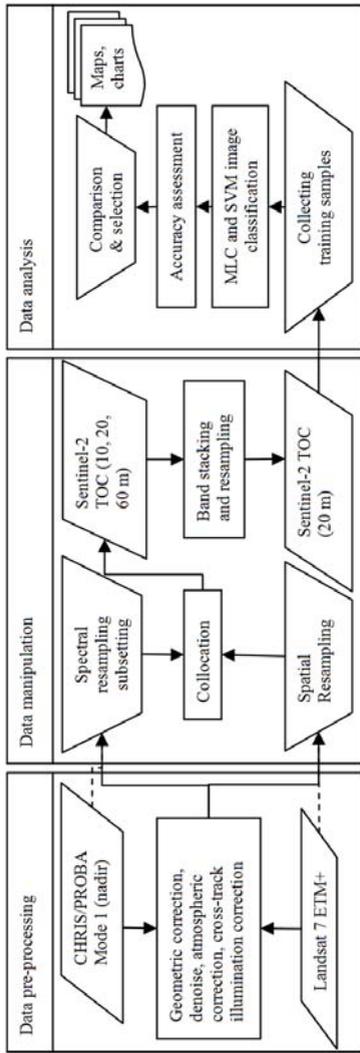


Fig. 1. Workflow of the study

Table 1. Dates of acquisition and ID of the Landsat 7 ETM+ and CHRIS/PROBA images used for simulation of the Sentinel-2 images

Landsat 7 ETM+ Image ID(date) LE71840302012181ASN00 (29 June 2012) (PAN)	CHRIS/PROBA Mode 1 Image ID(date) CHRIS_HQ_120622_E48E_41 (22 June 2012)
LE71840302012245ASN00 (1 September 2012) (PAN)	CHRIS_HQ_120928_EA88_41 (28 September 2012)

The first CHRIS/PROBA Mode 1 (CHRIS_HQ_120622_E48E_41_c) image used for *Sentinel-2* simulation was acquired on 22 June 2012, i.e. before the wildfire in the reserve. In present study it is used only the nadir image from the five image stack. The second post-fire CHRIS/PROBA Mode 1 image used in the analysis (CHRIS_HQ_120928_EA88_41) was acquired in nadir on 28 September 2012. Both images were spectrally resampled in ENVI 4.7 (Academic license) using the following band information, Table 2 (Law and Nichol, 2004; Drusch *et al.* 2012). The CHRIS/PROBA spectral coverage is not as wide as the one of *Sentinel-2*. Thus, only those *Sentinel-2* bands which correspond to the CHRIS/PROBA's bands in Mode 1 were simulated.

Table 2. Spectral characteristics of Sentinel-2 simulated bands. After Law and Nichol, (2004) and Drusch et al. (2012) with modifications

Sentinel-2' bands	Central wavelength λ (nm)	FWHM* (nm)
1	443	20
2	490	65
3	560	35
4	665	30
5	705	15
6	740	15
7	783	20
8	842	115
8b	865	20
9	945	20

*Full width at half maximum (FWHM)

The image was subsequently corrected for topography using Minnaert topography correction algorithm implemented in SAGA GIS (Verrelst *et al.* 2010). The so-formed bands were spectrally subset from the *Sentinel-2* simulated image (inheriting from CHRIS/PROBA the 30 m SR) in order to provide an input for simulation of 10, 20, and 60 m SR *Sentinel-2* bands. The spectral subsets are: 1) 2, 3, 4, and 8 bands (10 m SR); 2) 5, 6, 7, and 9 (natively the 8b *Sentinel-2* band) band (20 m SR); 3) 1 and 10 band (60 m SR) (Law and Nichol, 2004). Then the high resolution (15 m SR) panchromatic Landsat 7 ETM+ bands were degraded to 20 m SR. The next step in the simulation approach was collocating the Landsat 7 ETM+ spatially degraded panchromatic band to 20 m SR with the spectral subsets from *Sentinel-2* simulated images before and after the wildfire, using BEAM-VISAT ‘Collocate’ procedure. Three Top Of Canopy (TOC) (atmospherically corrected) *Sentinel-2* simulated images at three different SR (10 m, 20 m, and 60 m) were simulated for both dates. Finally, before image classification the simulated *Sentinel-2* bands were all stacked and spatially resampled to 20 m SR using Cubic Convolution (CC) algorithm.

2.3. Image classifications

On the stacked high-resolution (20 m SR) *Sentinel-2* TOC simulated image a supervised Maximum Likelihood Classification (MLC) and Support Vector Machines (SVM) image classifications were performed. The accuracy of the classification outputs were assessed after using a stratified random sampling (seed proportionally – 10 % to the class weigh). Finally, the areas estimated after the best performing classification algorithm were compared to each other.

3. Results and Discussions

The false colour composites of *Sentinel-2* TOC simulated images (20 m SR) from both dates are presented on (Fig. 2).

The major challenge in performing an image classification on the *Sentinel-2* simulated images was the difference in illumination conditions of two CHRIS/PROBA scenes due to the seasonal changes (Fig. 2). Those difference were persistent even after performing a topographic correction on the images which later on imposed on adding to the LU/LC classification scheme an additional LU/LC class 'Shadows'. The quality of the second image was additionally deteriorated due to an airplane trail, which crossed just above the burnt area. The classification scheme for LU/LC classification is based on expert knowledge for the distinctive LU/LC classes on both images. The spectrally discriminated classes in present study are: 1) for first-date *Sentinel-2* simulated image: 'Urban area', 'Rock screes', 'Grassland', 'Bushes', 'Broadleaf forest', 'Coniferous forest', and 'Unclassified'. The latter LU/LC class is practically void because no probability threshold was applied to either MLC or SVM and images were completely classified. This was done intentionally in order to assess whether the *Sentinel-2* spectral bands are providing enough information to discriminate between those classes; 2) for the second-date *Sentinel-2* simulated image some additional classes were introduced due to different image spatial coverage and the wildfire occurred in the nature reserve: 'Water bodies', 'Fire scar', and 'Shadows'. The results from the LU/LC classifications differed significantly in their accuracies and barely reached 80 % accuracy. The worst performing LU/LC classification outputs were discarded in the subsequent analysis. On (Fig. 3) are presented the most accurate results for *Sentinel-2* image classification. The visual comparison, between 22 June 2012 and 28 September 2012 image classification results, bring some interesting insights to the seasonal changes and the changes in LU/LC caused by the wildfire in July 2012. Firstly, the 'Shadows' class is introduced in the LU/LC classification due to the high extent of shadows casted on the slopes of Bistrica river valley. The presence of this class is explained with the changed solar zenith angle due to the autumn season. The applied atmospheric and topographic corrections gave little visible effect which also reflected the introduction of the new 'Shadows' class. The thematic accuracy of classification of the 'Fire scar' class was also lessened due to the fact that the fire scar falls almost completely in the 'Shadow' class, see Fig. 2d and Fig. 3, image 2. Another complication was the presence of an airplane trail, which trespasses exactly over the burned up area as well as the atmospheric haze which was abnormal for this day, Fig. 2c. Furthermore, the extension of the 'Rock screes' class in expense of 'Bushes' and 'Grassland' classes are due to the seasonal changes of insulation and the drying out grass from mountain meadows which either uncover the rock screes in some places or become spectrally similar with the rocks.

Colour Composites of Sentinel-2 Simulated Images



Image 1: Sentinel-2 simulated image from PROBA/CHRIS Mode 1 image acquired in nadir (CHRIS_HQ_120622_E48E_41_C)
 A) false colour composite;
 B) Colour InfraRed (CIR) composite

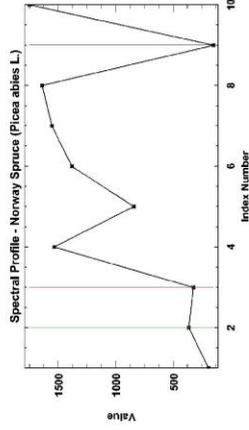
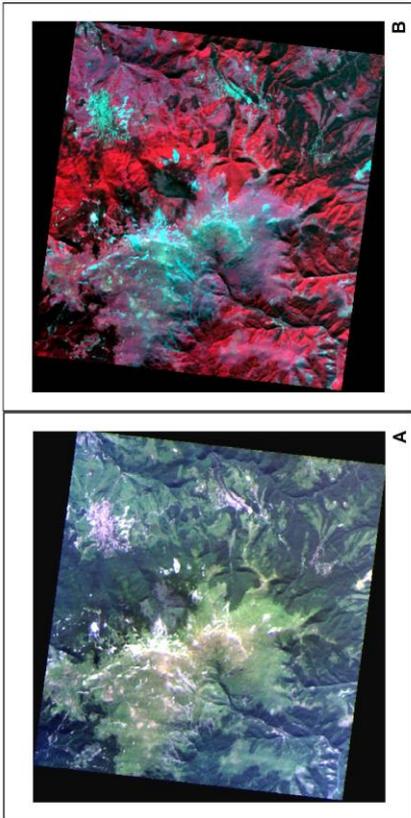


Image 2: Sentinel-2 simulated image from PROBA/CHRIS Mode 1 image acquired in nadir (CHRIS_HQ_120928_EA88_41)
 C) false colour composite;
 D) Colour InfraRed (CIR) composite

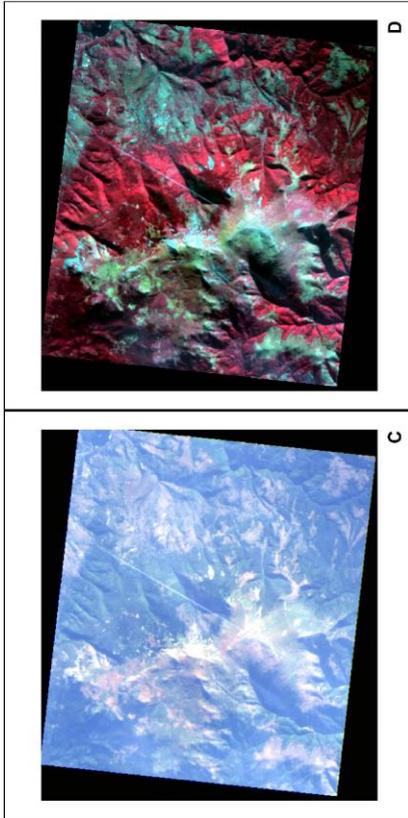


Fig. 2. Colour composites of Sentinel-2 TOC simulated images (20 m SR). A) and B) false-colour composites of Sentinel-2 TOC (22 June 2012); C) and D) false-colour composites of Sentinel-2 TOC (28 September 2012)

Map of Bistrishko Branishte UNESCO MAB Reserve Land-Use/Land-Cover

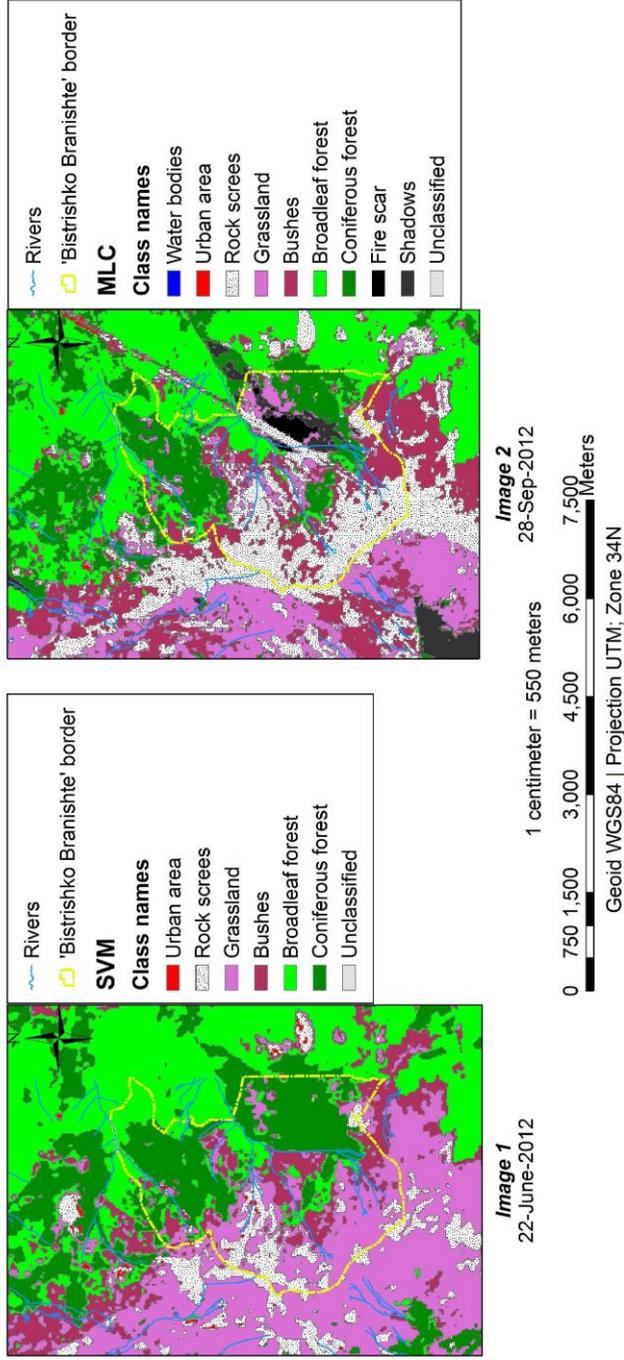


Fig. 3. LU/LC maps of Bistrishko Branishte UNESCO MAB reserve, prepared from the Sentinel-2 TOC simulated images

Table 3. Accuracy assessment of SVM LU/LC classification performed on Sentinel-2 TOC simulated image (22 June 2012) (in percentage)

LU/LC Class	Rock screens	Broadleaf forest	Grassland	Coniferous forest	Urban area	Bushes	Total
Rock screens	45.61	0	1.91	0	36.11	0	8.08
Broadleaf	0	98.31	1.27	22.22	0	5.88	28.65
Grassland	10.53	0	79.62	0	0	23.53	25.96
Coniferous	5.26	0	0	77.78	0	0	20.77
Urban area	38.6	1.69	0.64	0	63.89	0	9.23
Bushes	0	0	16.56	0	0	70.59	7.31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4. Accuracy assessment (omission and commission) of SVM LU/LC classification performed on Sentinel-2 TOC simulated image (22 June 2012) (cont.)

LU/LC class	Commission (Percent)	Omission (Percent)	Commission (Pixels)	Omission (Pixels)	Prod. Acc. (Percent)	User Acc. (Percent)	Prod. Acc. (Pixels)
Rock screens	38.1	54.39	16/42	31/57	45.61	61.9	26/57
Broadleaf forest	22.15	1.69	33/149	2/118	98.31	77.85	116/118
Grassland	7.41	20.38	10/135	32/157	79.62	92.59	125/157
Coniferous forest	2.78	22.22	3/108	30/135	77.78	97.22	105/135
Urban area	52.08	36.11	25/48	13/36	63.89	47.92	23/36
Bushes	68.42	29.41	26/38	5/17	70.59	31.58	12/17

The highest producer's accuracy features the 'Broadleaf forest' class, while the highest user's accuracy has 'Coniferous forest' and 'Grassland' classes. The 'Urban areas' class is largely misclassified with 'Rock screens' due to the spectral similarity of the materials used in urbanized areas with rocks. The results from for MLC LU/LC classification (after wildfire) are presented on Table 5 and Table 6. The overall accuracy of MLC is 76.98 %, which is well below for routine LU/LC mapping purposes (Kappa 0.7293). It could be inferred, that the highest user's accuracy has the 'Urban areas' class followed by 'Broadleaf forest', and 'Coniferous forest' class. Conversely, the highest producer's accuracy have in descending order 'Broadleaf forest', 'Bushes', 'Coniferous forest', and 'Urban areas' classes. This discrepancy is explained with the differences between ground-truth data and the classification output. Finally, the classification outputs were updated using on-screen digitizing to avoid the airplane trail. The mapped area is found to be close to formerly published estimates of the burnt area (Filchev, 2012; Filchev *et al.* 2013, Filchev and Dimitrov, 2013; Gikov and Dimitrov, 2013; Panayotov and Georgiev, 2012; EUFODOS Newsletter, 2013).

Table 5. Accuracy assessment of MLC LU/LC classification performed on Sentinel-2 TOC simulated image (28 September 2012) (in percentage)

LU/LC Class	Unclassified	Grasslands	Rock screes	Urban areas	Fire scar	Water bodies	Shadows	Bushes	Broadleaf forest	Coniferous forest	Total
Unclassified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grasslands	0	83.51	38.16	11.86	7.69	0	4.08	10.91	0	0	20.42
Rock screes	62.5	1.03	56.58	8.47	0	18.18	0	0	0.86	0.75	9.4
Urban areas	0	4.12	0	74.58	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.78
Fire scar	0	0	0	0	23.08	0	0	0	0	0	0.49
Water bodies	0	0	0	0	0	54.55	0	0	0	0	0.97
Shadows	25	2.06	0	1.69	69.23	18.18	69.39	0	0	9.02	10.05
Bushes	12.5	7.22	3.95	1.69	0	9.09	0	89.09	4.31	0.75	11.02
Broadleaf forest	0	0	1.32	1.69	0	0	0	0	92.24	8.27	19.45
Coniferous forest	0	2.06	0	0	0	0	26.53	0	2.59	81.2	20.42
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6. Accuracy assessment of MLC LU/LC classification performed on Sentinel-2 TOC simulated image (28 September 2012) (cont.)

Class	Commission (Percent)	Omission (Percent)	Commission (Pixels)	Omission (Pixels)	Prod. Acc. (Percent)	User Acc. (Percent)	Prod. Acc. (Pixels)	User Acc. (Pixels)
Unclassified	0	100	0/0	8/8	0	0	0/8	0/0
Grasslands	35.71	16.49	45/126	16/97	83.51	64.29	81/97	81/126
Rock screes	25.86	43.42	15/58	33/76	56.58	74.14	43/76	43/58
Urban areas	8.33	25.42	4/48	15/59	74.58	91.67	44/59	44/48
Fire scar	0	76.92	0/3	10/13	23.08	100	3/13	3/3
Water bodies	0	45.45	0/6	5/11	54.55	100	6/11	6/6
Shadows	45.16	30.61	28/62	15/49	69.39	54.84	34/49	34/62
Bushes	27.94	10.91	19/68	6/55	89.09	72.06	49/55	49/68
Broadleaf forest	10.83	7.76	13/120	9/116	92.24	89.17	107/116	107/120
Coniferous forest	14.29	18.8	18/126	25/133	81.2	85.71	108/133	108/126

Conclusions

In conclusion of present study, the following have been found:

The simulated *Sentinel-2* TOC data can serve for mapping and monitoring of coniferous, deciduous forests, and grasslands due to the achieved high-level of producer's and user's thematic accuracies, i.e. between 78 % and 98 %.

Depending on the illumination conditions, throughout the seasons, the accuracy of specific LU/LC classes such as 'Bushes', 'Rock screes', and 'Urban area' vary significantly, due to the spectral similarity.

The 'fire scar', area estimate by the second *Sentinel-2* TOC simulated image, was not found reliable enough due to the airplane trail which passed through the burnt area.

In summary, in future more studies on *Sentinel-2* capabilities of detection and mapping of forest-fire area estimation are needed.

4. Acknowledgements

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ОЦЕНКА НА ПРОМЕНИТЕ В ЗЕМНОТО ПОКРИТИЕ НА БИОСФЕРЕН РЕЗЕРВАТ „БИСТРИШКО БРАНИЩЕ“ С ИЗПОЛЗВАНЕ НА СИМУЛИРАНИ SENTINEL-2 ДАННИ

Л. Филчев

Резюме

Целта на настоящото изследване е оценяването на промените в земеползването/земното покритие на територията на биосферен резерват „Бистришко бранище“ (ЮНЕСКО, МАВ) в ПП „Витоша“, с използването на спътникови данни от CHRIS/PROBA и симулирани данни от *Sentinel-2*. Заснетите на 22 юни 2012 г. и на 28 септември 2012 г. CHRIS/PROBA изображения, са геометрично и атмосферно коригирани и ко-регистрирани. Топографската нормализация е приложена на второто изображение поради хвърлената сянка върху склоновете на долината на река Бистрица. С цел симулиране на *Sentinel-2* данни спектралните канали на CHRIS/PROBA са спектрално ресамплирани по ширината на спектралните канали на *Sentinel-2*. Пространственото ресамплиране на съответните канали на *Sentinel-2* е направено с помощта на панхроматичен канал (15 m) от Landsat 7 ETM+. На направената класификация на земеползването/земното покритие е извършена оценка на точността и крос-валидация с помощта на наземни данни. Резултатите показват, че между 60 ha и 72 ha от иглолистна растителност са опустошени от горския пожар през 2012 г. Получените резултати доказват и потвърждават способността на *Sentinel-2* мисията за откриване на промени в земеползването/земното покритие.