

Title: Aerial photo of Fenglingdu Power Plant

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Can machine learning map PV power plants across China?

This study developed a workflow, combining machine learning and visual interpretation methods with big satellite data, to map PV power plants across China. We applied a pixel-based random forest (RF) model to classify the PV power plants from composite images in 2020 with a 30 m spatial resolution on the Google Earth Engine (GEE).

Where are PV power plants located in China?

Eventually, we established a map of PV power plants in China by 2020, covering a total area of 2917 km². We found that most PV power plants were situated on cropland, followed by barren land and grassland, based on the derived national PV map. In addition, the installation of PV power plants has generally decreased the vegetation cover.

How big are PV power plants in China?

The total area of the PV power plants in China is about 897 km², based on Dunnett's dataset. We manually modified this dataset with Google Earth's background to ensure that the PV samples are located inside the PV power plants.

Can PV power plants be identified in China?

The model trained by large and scattered training samples ensures that most PV power plants are successfully identified in China under various conditions. Nevertheless, there are still some omission errors in the RF classification result.

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