

Connecting Model Forests

The Ibero-American Model Forest Network (RIABM) connects territories that foster the sustainable management and participative governance of forest-based landscapes through the Model Forest approach. The RIABM is a voluntary partnership among Model Forests that is endorsed by government entities in each member country.

It is the first voluntary regional organization to be created that brings together 15 countries and 29 Model Forests in Central America, South America, the Caribbean and Spain to share knowledge and exchange experiences.

Since the founding of the RIABM in 2002, it has evolved to become one of the largest and most dynamic regional networks within the International Model Forest Network (IMFN). The IMFN is a global community of practice that links over 60 Model Forests in 30 countries across five continents around the world.

The Way We Work

The RIABM has a Board of Directors comprised of representatives of its strategic partners, member countries and Model Forests. Operational management is handled by the Network's Management Team based at the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Costa Rica.

The Management Team offers technical assistance and development support to its members. It also provides Model Forests with the opportunity to participate in regional events and international forums that promote dialogue on advances and lessons learned in areas of common interest. These events serve to build ties across the region and beyond, and also encourage members to take a role in actively defining the future of the RIABM.

The Network's areas of work include:

- Promote regional and international cooperation as well as the exchange of ideas related to the sustainable management of forests and natural resources.
- Support fundamental and practical forest and social science research that underlies the search for new models of management of forests and large landscapes.
- Encourage international debate on the principles and criteria of sustainable development.
- Contribute to the proliferation and adaptation of innovative ideas that result from international discussions.

The vision of the RIABM is to be a reference point for broad-based social participation in the landscape-scale sustainable management of natural resources.

Creating Partnerships

Model Forests are socially-based processes where groups comprised of a diversity of stakeholders work together toward a common vision of the sustainable development of their landscape.

The building of partnerships is key to this process. For this reason, member countries and partners of the RIABM work together to strengthen existing Model Forests and to expand the regional network.

The Network offers support to its members and promotes knowledge sharing and technology transfer through horizontal collaboration initiatives, the dissemination of information on best practices and other related activities. The RIABM also contributes to multiple processes of public policy formulation, such as the implementation and evaluation of legislation related to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes.

The Network is a gateway through which Model Forests gain access to opportunities, such as the exchange of experiences to improve the use of natural resources, develop good governance practices, increase learning at the regional level, and improve the management of development initiatives. Furthermore, the Network maintains a link with Model Forest initiatives at a global level, connecting regions and enhancing access to international funds to provide continuity to the projects prioritized by each Model Forest.



Photo by: Hermes Justiniano.

The RIABM has trained and promoted exchanges among more than 1,000 Model Forest members in recent years, thus broadening knowledge to strengthen its Model Forest partners.

Our Strategic Partners

With the collaboration of internationally recognized organizations such as the CATIE, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Cuso International, the Network partners with countries that support the Model Forest approach for sustainable development.

Model Forests

Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Model Forests seek the sustainable development of a specific landscape or ecosystem. Projects that they undertake contribute to community sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and forest restoration, therefore working towards global forest policy objectives and the Millennium Development Goals. More than 31 million hectares in 15 Ibero-American countries form part of 29 Model Forests in this region.



Photo by: Marie Landry.



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Member of



Our partners



A Model Forest is a landscape of sustainable human development where people participate voluntarily in the organization and management of their forests and natural resources.

Model Forests seek to learn better ways for sustainably managing their landscapes or ecosystems in a collaborative and coordinated manner, often creating local leadership strategies to coordinate activities related to protected areas, biological corridors, forest management, sustainable agriculture, rural tourism, access to microcredit, organic farming, watershed management and forest certification, for example.

Integrating Diversity

The Model Forests around the world are as unique and diverse as the countries and cultures in which they are located. Although Model Forest participants define together their own priorities and governance structure, at a global scale they are connected by common attributes. Every Model Forest shares a core set of six principles that provide coherence to the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) and the basis for networking and knowledge sharing.

Principle 1.	Broad-based Partnership
Principle 2.	Large Landscape
Principle 3.	Commitment to Sustainability
Principle 4.	Participatory Governance
Principle 5.	A Broad Program of Activities
Principle 6.	Commitment to Knowledge sharing, Capacity Building and Networking

The first Model Forests were created in Canada in 1992. In Latin America, the Chiloé Model Forest was the first one founded in 1996 in southern Chile.

Participatory Governance

The strength of a Model Forest is its empowerment of all the stakeholders involved. Some Model Forests have woven a strong social fabric with few external resources, resulting in a stable and robust management of its activities.

Model Forest stakeholders include local and regional governments, civil society organizations, indigenous groups, NGOs, private enterprises and academic institutions, among others, that have an interest in the development of the landscape. These actors come together voluntarily in a neutral forum and take action based on a consensually agreed-upon strategic plan. In accordance with local customs, structures that facilitate processes and interaction are put in place. Without being a jurisdictional authority over the territory, therefore, the Model Forest helps set in motion consensual actions and facilitates their application.

One of the most innovative and, at the same time, least known models of governance is the Model Forest. In a Model Forest, the forest serves as the point of departure around which a group of individuals organize for the sustainable development of their forest-based landscape.

The Ibero-American Model Forests

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| Guatemala
1. Lachuá
2. Los Altos | Spain
15. Urbión |
| Honduras
3. Atlántida
4. Yoro
5. Sico-Paulaya
6. Noreste de Olancho | Cuba
16. Sabanas de Manacas |
| Costa Rica
7. Reventazón
8. Choroteiga | Puerto Rico
17. Tierras Adjuntas |
| Colombia
9. Risaralda | Dominican Republic
18. Sabana Yegua
19. Yaque del Norte
20. Colinas Bajas |
| Ecuador
Site in development | Brazil
21. Mosaico Sertão Veredas-Peruaçu
22. Mata Atlântica
23. Caçador |
| Peru
Site in development | Paraguay
Site in development |
| Bolivia
10. Chiquitano | Argentina
24. Jujuy
25. Formoseño
26. San Pedro
27. Tucumán
28. Norte de Neuquén
29. Futaleufú |
| Chile
11. Cachapoal
12. Alto Malleco
13. Panguipulli
14. Chiloé | |



Connecting the Ibero-American Model Forests

The Ibero-American Model Forest Network (RIABM) connects territories that promote the sustainable management of forests and natural resources. The RIABM is a voluntary partnership of Model Forests endorsed by government entities in each member country. Currently, the Network is comprised of 29 Model Forests in 15 member countries and is recognized as a regional network member of the IMFN (website: www.imfn.net).

Ibero-American Model Forest Network

Today, the Network has a presence in 15 countries in Ibero-America, connecting 29 Model Forests throughout the region. The Network is comprised of the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Paraguay, Peru and Spain.



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