



Red Iberoamericana
de Bosques Modelo

RIABM

Ibero-American Model Forest Network

Model Forests: Areas for Sustainable Development

Model Forests seek participation and partnerships between organizations and institutions to move towards the sustainable development of a region and thus contribute to achieve global targets for reducing poverty, climate change, desertification and the millennium development goals. More than 31 million hectares in 15 countries in Latin America are part of the 29 Model Forests in this region.

The Ibero-American Model Forests constitute a mosaic of uses combining activities ranging from agriculture, livestock, forestry, tourism and conservation.

A Model Forest is an area where people organize and participate together to manage their forests and natural resources. The Model Forest is an area of sustainable human development, where the population residing in the area uses the goods and services provided by the forest or other forest ecosystems in a consensual manner.

The impact area of a Model Forest can include population centers, protected areas, agricultural and pastoral areas, natural forests and forest plantations, among others.

As expected, in the midst of diversity, the key to the success of a Model Forest is the way in which people work together on the conservation and sustainable management of their territory.

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Towards the Sustainable Development

Model Forests perform actions seeking sustainability, towards the achievement of sustainable human development. This involves conducting responsible agricultural and livestock activities including sustainable forest management practices, sustainable ecotourism and rural tourism, integrated watershed management, participatory management of protected areas, environmental education and all activities as defined by local actors as priorities in their territory. Most Ibero-American Model Forests direct their work towards:

- Conservation and sustainable forest management.
- Identification of opportunities and implementation of initiatives for economic diversification and the valuation of natural goods and services.
- Design and implementation of participatory governance structures.
- Capacity building through formal and informal education.
- Support for research regarding sustainable rural development.
- Resuscitation and valuing of ancestral knowledge and learning.

A Global Network

Model Forests are part of a global network called the International Model Forest Network, comprised of 60 sites on five continents. The most extensive regional network is the Ibero-American Network, made up of 15 countries and 29 Model Forests, whose landmasses total more than 30 million hectares.

Therefore, a Model Forest is a model of participatory environmental management, a catalyst for seeking opportunities to advance in the quest for sustainable human development in which local stakeholders define their priorities working in partnerships to shape their own future development.

Delivering on Diversity

Model Forests around the world are as unique and diverse as the countries and cultures to which they belong. Although each Model Forest should define their own programming priorities and structure of governance on a global scale, Model Forests are linked by a common philosophy. All Model Forests share six key principles that give coherence to the program and promote collaboration.

- Principle 1. Broad-based membership
- Principle 2. Landscape scale
- Principle 3. Commitment to sustainability
- Principle 4. Good governance
- Principle 5. Diversity of project activities
- Principle 6. Commitment to knowledge transfer, capacity building and networking

By creating a Model Forest, individuals and groups that make up the territory agree to collaborate to design and test ways of managing natural resources and forest landscapes, using locally acceptable approaches, and relevant national and global standards.

In Latin America, the smallest Model Forest is 14 hectares located in Puerto Rico, while the largest reaches 20 million hectares located in the Chiquitanía of Bolivia.

These are some of the 29 Model Forests that are part of the Ibero-American Model Forest Network (RIABM) whose territories are inhabited by over 8 million people.

Genesis of the Concept

The Model Forest concept was born in Canada in 1992 as a novel platform to encourage dialogue between various stakeholders in order to manage conflicts associated with forest management. That same year, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, the Prime Minister of Canada offered an international invitation for participation in the Model Forest Program. In 1994 the first Model Forest outside Canada (Mexico and Russia) was founded and a year later the Secretariat of the International Model Forest Network headquartered in Ottawa, Canada was established.

In 1998 South America's first Model Forests were established in Argentina and Chile.



Model Forests in Latin America at a Glance

Country	Model Forest	Year of Affiliation	Area (Hectares)	Population
Argentina	Formoseño	2000	800,000	27,400
	Futaleutu	1998	738,000	33,000
	Jujuy	2002	130,000	100,000
	Norte de Neuquen	2005	2,482,000	17,329
	San Pedro	2007	443,514	966,000
	Tucuman	2008	180,000	1,336,664
Bolivia	Chiquitano	2005	20,400,000	130,000
Brazil	Mata Atlantica	2004	2,250,320	68,208
	Pandeiros	2005	210,000	34,811
Chile	Araucarias del Alto Malleco	2002	391,400	10,237
	Chiloe	1996	300,000	33,000
	Panguipulli	2005	329,200	33,273
	Cachapoal	2008	105,000	53,386
Colombia	Risaralda	2008	360,000	883,673
Costa Rica	REventazón	2003	300,000	432,395
	Choroteaga	2011	512,510	156,326
Cuba	Sabanas de Mancaca	2008	171,700	81,620
Spain	Urbion	2006	120,000	81,620
Guatemala	Lachua	2008	53,523	18,277
	Los Altos	2008	50,000	252,620
Honduras	Atlantida	2006	440,000	315,041
	Yoro	2007	321,219	132,679
Dominican Republic	Sabana Yegua	2003	166,000	77,000
	Yeque del Norte	2007	83,000	908,250
	Colinas Bajas	2010	909,200	142,624
Paraguay	In Progress	2008	NA.	NA.
Peru	In Progress	2011	NA.	NA.
Puerto Rico	Tierras Adjuntas	2007	14,400	44,633
Total			32,260,986	6,286,882

The Ibero-American Model Forest Network (RIABM) links areas where initiatives for the proper management of forests and natural resources are conducted. RIABM is a voluntary partnership between Model Forests backed by government representatives from each member country, which is attached to the Secretariat of the International Model Forest Network (SIABM). The Network currently links 29 Model Forest territories, thanks to the commitment of 15 member countries.

Contact us

CATIE Main Building | Cartago, Turrialba 30501 Costa Rica, Central America

info@bosquesmodelo.net | (506) 2558-2318