




International Model Forest Network

Landscapes • Partnerships • Sustainability

Model Forest Development Guide

www.imfn.net



The Model Forest Development Toolkit is a collection of guides, frameworks and other documents that Model Forests can use during their development and operations to strengthen their organizational capacity and program delivery. The Toolkit is designed as a collection of modules or sections to allow for easy revision and quick reference. The following modules are currently available:

- Model Forest Development Guide
- Framework for Model Forest Strategic Plan Development
- Framework for Model Forest Annual Work Planning
- Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook for Model Forests
- Guide to Model Forest Governance
- Guidelines for Reporting

International Model Forest Network Secretariat
Natural Resources Canada–Canadian Forest Service

580 Booth Street
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1A 0E4
Tel: +1-613-947-7350 / +1-613-947-7358
Fax: +1-613-947-9020
Email: imfn@nrcan.gc.ca

© 2008

Model Forests may reproduce and distribute any or all parts of this guide for non-commercial purposes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-----------|
| PART 1. | ABOUT THIS GUIDE | 1 |
| PART 2. | MODEL FORESTS | 2 |
| 2.1 | What Is a Model Forest? | 2 |
| 2.2 | Model Forest Principles | 3 |
| 2.3 | What Can a Model Forest Achieve? | 11 |
| 2.4 | Establishing a Model Forest | 17 |
| PART 3. | INTERNATIONAL MODEL FOREST NETWORK | 22 |
| 3.1 | International Model Forest Network (IMFN) | 22 |
| 3.2 | IMFN Secretariat (IMFNS) | 24 |
| 3.3 | Joining the IMFN | 26 |
| APPENDIXES | | 28 |
| | Appendix I: Key Contacts | 28 |
| | Appendix II: Key Questions for Assessing Your Model Forest | 29 |
| LIST OF FIGURES | | |
| | Figure 1: Definition of a Model Forest | 2 |
| | Figure 2: Model Forest Principles | 4 |

The Model Forest Development Guide is part of a toolkit to help organizations and individuals seeking to develop a Model Forest and join the International Model Forest Network (IMFN). This guide introduces the principles that define a Model Forest, outlines the general process for establishing one and provides information on the IMFN and how to join it.

This guide is designed for:

- Stakeholder groups planning to develop a Model Forest
- New partners in existing Model Forests
- Anyone interested in the Model Forest concept and the principles and attributes of a Model Forest



Photo credit: Brian Bonnell, IMFN Secretariat. Location: Ulot Watershed Model Forest, Philippines

2.1 What Is a Model Forest?

The term “Model Forest” was first used in 1991 in connection with an innovative program of the Government of Canada. The program created broad-based voluntary partnerships within large forested landscapes that would translate sustainable forest management policies into practice. Each site was intended to be a model that others could learn from to advance their sustainability goals.

Therefore, a Model Forest is both a geographic area and a partnership-based approach to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources. As an approach, a Model Forest is as much about the people who sustain themselves from the forest, the effects they have on its resources and their human development as it is about trees and forest products.

More formally, a Model Forest can be defined as follows: a partnership-based process through which individuals and groups, representing a diversity of values, work together toward a common vision of sustainable development for a landscape in which forests are an important feature (see Figure 1).

A Model Forest is as much about the people who sustain themselves from the forest, the effects they have on its resources, and their human development as it is about trees and forest products.

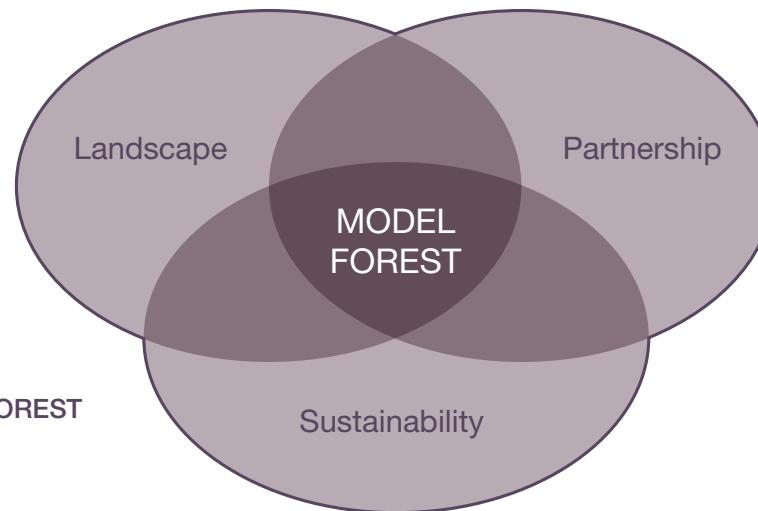


FIGURE 1: DEFINITION OF A MODEL FOREST

2.2 Model Forest Principles

No two Model Forests are identical. True, all share common principles, goals and objectives, but cultural, geographic, institutional, political and other circumstances make each Model Forest unique. The activities and approaches taken by Model Forests differ in light of this diversity. In some Model Forests, for example, biodiversity issues are paramount, while in others economic diversification is more prominent.

A Model Forest is a fully working landscape of forests, farms, protected areas, rivers and towns.

What is important is that each Model Forest constructs an approach that is relevant, inclusive, technically sound and achievable, and that reflects the Model Forest's own circumstances, laws and customs. Model Forests can do this by adhering to a set of six core principles:

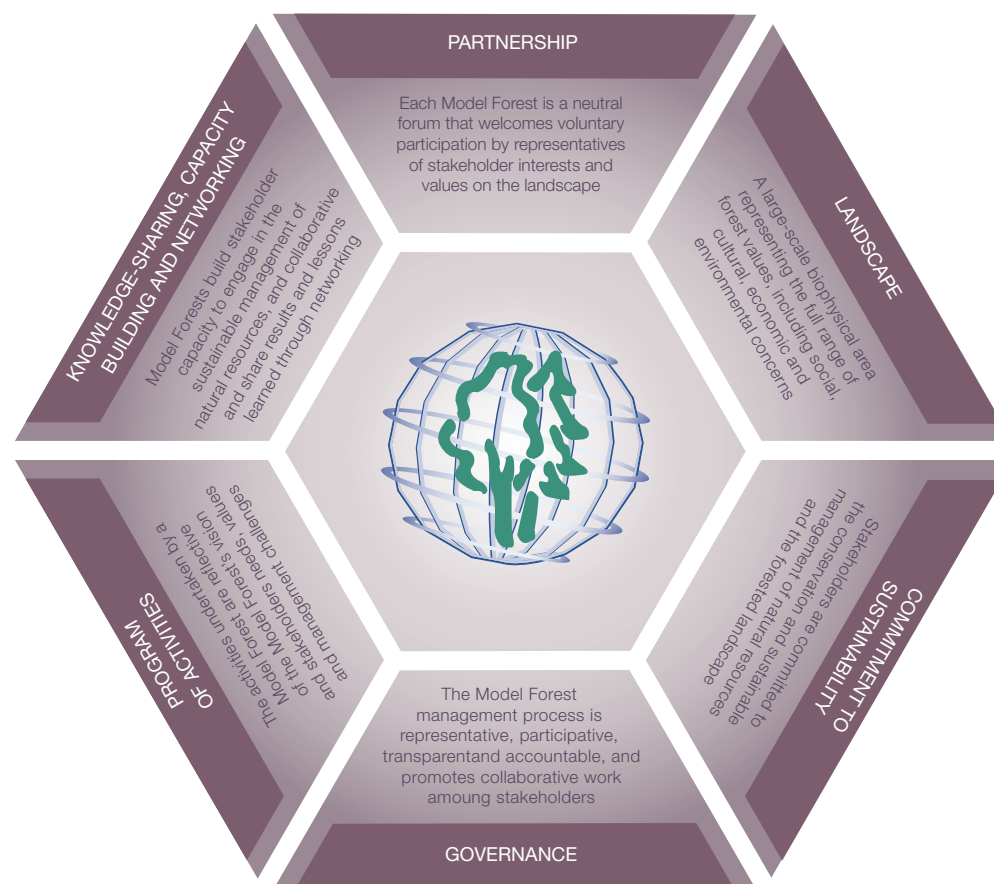
1. Landscape
2. Partnership
3. Commitment to sustainability
4. Governance
5. Program of activities
6. Knowledge sharing, capacity building and networking

These six principles and their associated attributes (see Figure 2 and Table 2) provide a baseline for establishing and maintaining a Model Forest. Once a Model Forest is set up, it can assess itself by comparing its structure and activities to these principles (see Appendix II for a list of assessment questions).

Regardless of the specific ecosystems or tenures involved, these principles have the following effects:

- Facilitate experiments in sustainable development
- Maintain broad program coherence
- Create a clear link between landscape-level applications and national and international policy issues
- Help each Model Forest maintain its conceptual focus and program integrity throughout its development
- Ensure that each Model Forest has the autonomy to design an initiative that reflects local priorities
- Create a foundation for networking at the local, national, regional and international levels

FIGURE 2: CORE MODEL FOREST PRINCIPLES



LANDSCAPE

A Model Forest is a large-scale geographic area, or landscape, that represents key natural resource values, including environmental, cultural, social and economic values. In terms of its boundaries, though a Model Forest can correspond to an existing administrative unit, it usually covers a range of administrative units. Some Model Forests are defined by an ecological boundary, such as a watershed.

A Model Forest must be large enough to represent the full range of landscape uses and values in the surrounding area. It must also be an appropriate size for its region or country. Most Model Forests cover less than 1 million hectares, with many ranging from 300,000 to 500,000 hectares. At 87,536 hectares, the Ulot Watershed Model Forest in the Philippines is one of the smallest. Others cover several million hectares each. Table 1 (below) provides examples of Model Forest sizes as well as land ownership, cover and use patterns.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED MODEL FORESTS

| MODEL FOREST Country | ARAUCARIAS DEL ALTO MALLECO Chile | FOOTHILLS Canada |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| JOINED IMFN | 2002 | 1993 |
| AREA | 400 000 ha | 2 756 692 ha |
| LAND OWNERSHIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and national reservation, 17.2% • Private lands (indigenous), 29.0% Provincial areas, 7.0% Private lands (non-indigenous), 46.8% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest management agreement, 36.0% • Provincial management units, 4.0% • National Park, 40.7% • Provincial protected areas, 19.3% |
| LAND COVER AND USE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural land, 6.6% • Grasslands and shrubs, 29.2% • Native forests, 48.5% • Plantations, 0.9% • Mixed forests, 0.1% • Wetlands, 0.7% • Areas devoid of vegetation, 4.9% • Snow and glaciers, 8.5% • Water bodies, 0.6% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpine Natural Sub-region, 25.1% • Subalpine Natural Sub-region, 36.9% • Montane Natural Sub-region, 4.8% • Upper Foothills Natural Sub-region, 21.7% • Lower Foothills Natural Sub-region, 11.5% |
| NO. OF STAKEHOLDERS | 22 stakeholder groups | |
| TYPES OF STAKEHOLDERS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National government • Communities & municipalities • Indigenous peoples • NGOs • Private sector (farming) • Private sector (forestry) • Conservationists • Religious groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National govt agencies • Provincial govt agencies • Private sector (forestry) • Private sector (mining/oil & gas) • Indigenous peoples • Municipalities & communities • NGOs • Academia/research institutions |
| GOVERNANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (25 persons) • Various committees/working groups • Dedicated staff • Financial administration through national foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (19 persons) • Various teams committees • Legally registered not-for-profit organization • Dedicated staff |
| BUDGET | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pesos 252,545,790 • USD 470,330 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAD 2,626,920 • USD 2,320,805 |
| WEB SITE | www.bosquemodelomalleco.cl | www.foothillsresearchinstitute.ca |

| GASSINSKI Russia | DJA ET MPOMO Cameroon | ULOT WATERSHED Philippines |
|---|---|---|
| 1994 | 2005 | 2000 |
| 400 000 ha | 700 000 ha | 87 536 ha |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest of Federal Government, 56.0% • National Park, 44.0% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government owned forests, 75.0% • Community forests, 25.0% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private lands, 22.0% • Community Based Forest Management Agreements, 6.0% • Mineral Production Sharing Agreement, 8.0% • Natural Park, 64.0% |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural land, 0.1% • Grasslands and shrubs, 6.2% • Native forests, 6.1% • Plantations, 0.4% • Mixed forests, 64.7% • Wetlands, 22.5% • Areas devoid of vegetation, 0.01% • Water bodies, 2.0% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural lands, 10.0% • Forest management units, 40.0% • Community Forests, 15.0% • Protected areas, 23.0% • Mining, 10.0% • Municipal forests, 2.0% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bare/Crop/Grassland, 6.0% • Brushland/Coconuts, 48.0% • Built-up areas/Roads, 0.5% • Water Bodies, 1.0% • Fishpond, 0.4% • Forest/Mangroves, 44.0% • Swamp/Wetlands, 0.1% |
| 28 stakeholder groups | | 33 stakeholder groups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government • Indigenous peoples • Academia/research institutions • Private Sector (forestry) • NGOs • Schools • Conservationists • Consumer groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National government • Communities & municipalities • Indigenous peoples • NGOs • Private sector (mining) • Private sector (forestry) • Conservationists • Religious groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National govt agencies • Local government units • Communities • NGOs • People's Organizations • Cooperatives • Philippine Army • Academia |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Partners • Partners' meeting • Technical Council • Coordination group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Assembly (all actor-groups) • Board of Trustees (15 members) • Executive Board • Stakeholders Platforms (simple & complex) • Legally registered as an Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (15 persons) • Various committees/working groups • Legally registered as a Federation • Staffing provided by Government |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUB 1,815,493 • USD 67,380 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD 100,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Php 8,413,840 • USD 167,845 |
| www.gassi.khv.ru | | |

Sustainably managing a forested landscape means facing a range of issues, from local concerns to large-scale issues that cross several boundaries or jurisdictions. The traditional administrative boundaries used in managing natural resources are often ineffective in addressing these issues, especially the large-scale ones.

The Model Forest partnership is open, transparent and accountable

PARTNERSHIP

A Model Forest also has an open, transparent and dynamic partnership. People who are interested in their area's natural resources create a process for determining sustainability priorities and goals, then work together to achieve them.

Partnership is central to understanding the Model Forest concept. Durable and meaningful partnerships have a number of benefits. They make it easy to exchange information; they increase the skills and knowledge of those involved; and, through consensus, they enhance the group's decision-making capacity.

The partners or stakeholders in Model Forests are individuals, groups and institutions that are interested in, are affected by or can affect (positively or negatively) resource management decisions and programming priorities of the Model Forest. Participation is voluntary and does not affect land tenure or natural resource administration. While a Model Forest partnership typically does not exercise decision-making authority over the landscape, it does include those with legal tenure over the land.

Stakeholders join a Model Forest because they want to explore alternatives to existing natural resource management. Their participation signals a willingness to consider innovative approaches. The broad-based partnerships they create are powerful tools for translating the policies of sustainability into practice and vice versa.

A Model Forest partnership must include key land users and managers and other stakeholders in the geographic area. Here are some examples of stakeholders:

- Industry
- Community groups
- Indigenous peoples
- Government agencies
- Non-governmental organizations
- Academic and research institutions
- National parks
- Private landowners

In many Model Forests, the stakeholders who voluntarily work together to identify a common vision for their Model Forest and address issues of mutual interest are referred to as “partners.”

While a simple concept in theory, a Model Forest can prove complex in practice. Often Model Forests are formed to address conflicting interests over a particular land base or unsustainable land-use practice. The partnership may include stakeholders who do not typically work together or agree with one another. To usefully engage local participation and expertise, the partnership needs to recognize that its many points of view have common elements and have a place in the decision-making process.

Table 1 highlights the range of stakeholders involved in several Model Forests.

SUSTAINABILITY

A Model Forest partnership focuses on achieving sustainable development in tangible ways, which translate from the field to the policy level. Stakeholders continually develop, test and share innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainable development.

A Model Forest's objectives and work program reflect a vision of sustainability. The partnership applies and demonstrates natural resource management practices that are environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable.

The terms "sustainable forest management," "ecosystem management" and "sustainable management of forested landscapes" all refer to similar concepts. Each encompasses a broad range of social, economic and ecological values. A Model Forest can use the term or concept best suited to its area, national and local objectives, and stakeholder goals. Regardless of the term used, the principles of sustainability must remain embedded, and the term must be commonly understood and accepted by the stakeholders.

A Model Forest will have the support of the national, regional or local government with jurisdiction over the land. It will also have support from private landowners and other interested representatives from the community who are active in managing the forest and natural resources. Where appropriate, the Model Forest's activities should relate to a national or regional forest plan.

GOVERNANCE

A Model Forest is representative, participative, transparent and accountable, and it promotes collaboration among stakeholders. Its governance structure should encourage all stakeholders to participate equally and effectively in the following:

- Elaborating a vision for the Model Forest
- Discussing obstacles and opportunities for realizing that vision
- Developing a program of activities that support progress toward the shared vision

Because the Model Forest partnership does not have legal authority over the land base, tenure holders and governments play an active part in each of these stages. Their support is necessary for the partnership to establish a program of action.

Each Model Forest governs and administers itself, and its activities, according to the norms of its country and region. In Canada, for example, a Model Forest partnership generally constitutes itself as a legal, not-for-profit public association. Model Forests usually have four levels of governance. However, this organization, though typical, is only one of many options for structuring a partnership's activities.

- **Governing body**—Meets regularly, oversees staff, provides direction and authorization on strategic issues, approves budgets, makes decisions on its own or on recommendation from management. This group bears ultimate responsibility for the conduct and performance of the Model Forest.
- **Partnership or stakeholder committee**—A single group of representatives of all stakeholders, responsible for overseeing the program and ensuring implementation of annual plans. The committee elects a president or chair and a board of directors from among its members. In some Model Forests, the governing body and stakeholder committee are the same group.
- **Technical and advisory committees**—Provide expert input and guidance to the Model Forest group. The number, composition and activity level of technical committees vary according to need. Some may be project-specific and disband afterwards. Generally, there is at least one permanent technical committee that operates in an advisory capacity.
- **Staff**—Oversee project development and implementation. One staff member reports regularly to the governing body. Permanent staff usually include, at a minimum, a project manager, a communication or technical officer and an administrative support person. Staff numbers vary considerably depending on the Model Forest. Staff might be paid for or provided by the host government, partner organization or donor agency, or a combination of all three.

For more information on governance structures, see the Guide to Model Forest Governance.

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

A Model Forest's program of activities reflects the values, needs and management challenges at the community, regional and national level. It reflects the diverse values that stakeholders attribute to the landscape, while also addressing the needs of the community at large. In addition to traditional forest products, values may include food, medicine, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, soil conservation, recreation, aesthetics and conservation of biodiversity.

A Model Forest's program of activities:

- Increases knowledge
- Assesses impacts
- Develops and tests new approaches to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources

A Model Forest's activities and projects generally fall into a few program areas, including the following:

- Partnership development and maintenance (including conflict mitigation)
- Applied research
- Community sustainability and livelihood development
- Communications, public awareness and knowledge transfer
- Capacity building
- Networking
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Management and administration

These program areas are expanded on in Section 2.3 below.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

A Model Forest works on the principle that sharing knowledge creates a shared net benefit for participants. Networking, especially at the local level, strengthens the Model Forest partnership and makes it more effective in introducing positive landscape-level changes. Experience consistently demonstrates that when local expertise is pooled, the outputs exceed the accomplishments of individual stakeholders. This same principle applies to national and international networking.

Many Model Forests undertake activities that increase the capacity of local people—who often have no access to resource management and planning—to participate in the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources. For instance, Model Forests enable urban interests to be represented and to affect the processes supporting sustainable development. Model Forests often develop tools that allow communities to integrate social, environmental and economic factors into decision-making.

Locally, regionally, nationally and globally, Model Forests share experiences, successes and lessons learned on critical aspects of sustainable management.

2.3 What Can a Model Forest Achieve?

As mentioned in the previous section, Model Forest activities generally fall into a few program areas. The examples that follow are drawn from existing Model Forests. Please note that not all Model Forests undertake all of these activities, or even undertake activities in all of these program areas.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Developing and maintaining partnerships, either through expansion or institutional capacity building, is an important activity for Model Forests. At a minimum, regular meetings help strengthen a Model Forest partnership. However, it is also important to hold capacity-building workshops and training sessions, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with working in an open, consensus-based forum. Model Forest managers assume principal responsibility for liaison with, and maintenance of, the partnership.

A Model Forest partnership develops, applies, measures and monitors a package of projects that reflects its needs and expectations.

Because a Model Forest is a long-term initiative, it is important to maintain the interest and contribution of its stakeholders. This requires vision, patience and the constant and public advocacy of the Model Forest's supporters. Experience shows that three factors are critical to encourage and expand stakeholder interest and involvement:

- Networking between professionals and Model Forests
- Collaborative projects
- Involvement in the broader international dialogue on sustainable development policy

SCIENCE AND BEST PRACTICES

Model Forests generally place more emphasis on putting research results into practice (applied research) than on undertaking new research. In the Model Forest context, applied research includes identifying and applying criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Some Model Forests carry out data gathering, resource inventories and information management as well. Usually Model Forests are not directly involved in land or resource management, which is the responsibility of tenure holders and management agencies, but they can help stakeholders do the following:

- Address their management issues
- Develop tools to improve management and decision-making
- Test and demonstrate innovative practices

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

With few exceptions, Model Forest partnerships around the world place a high value on maximizing economic opportunities. However, they also recognize the need to balance economic activity with non-economic values.

Often economic activities diversify into areas that have not typically been pursued before:

- Improved stand management
- Local value-added wood processing
- Development of non-wood forest products
- Management of nut-producing zones
- Ecotourism
- Market analysis and development
- Micro-credit programs to support local entrepreneurial initiatives

Forest-dependent communities expect an economic benefit from their investment in sustainable management.

COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Model Forests are expected to make the public aware of their vision, goals, activities and impacts. Communications and public awareness activities can build the public's interest in becoming involved in sustainable development. In many instances greater public awareness, combined with other activities, is an important element in achieving an objective or impact. A key activity for a Model Forest, then, is to share its achievements with others, both inside and outside its boundaries.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Model Forests take on many activities to encourage local participation in sustainable management. These activities include internships, public participation processes and the development of tools that enable communities to integrate social, environmental and economic factors into decision-making.

In the past, Model Forests have offered training sessions on a range of subjects, including these:

- Conflict resolution
- Financial management
- Strategic planning
- Data management
- Effective communication
- Value-added processing for timber and non-timber products

NETWORKING

Every Model Forest benefits from sharing its experiences and learning from others who have developed local solutions to sustainability challenges. Often this sharing and learning are possible because of the links between Model Forests.

One way Model Forests can build links, as well as improve their performance, is to exchange information on events and developments involving sustainable development at all levels. Besides operating within the International Model Forest Network (IMFN), Model Forests also operate publicly and transparently within the broader community of resource management professionals.

Another way to build links is to participate in networking activities like these:

- Regional and IMFN-wide events on specific themes (e.g., biodiversity, geographic information systems, local-level indicators of sustainable forest management)
- Technology transfer initiatives
- Web-based data storage and exchange
- Case studies and experiences in economic diversification
- Sharing of developments in decision-support tools
- Technical and expert exchanges between Model Forests

The IMFN established its Networking Committee to identify networking activities and encourage information sharing between Model Forests. As well, the IMFN Global Forum brings together Model Forest representatives from across the IMFN every three years.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Effective planning involves making sure that the impacts a Model Forest expects actually take place on the ground. Impact monitoring and evaluation lets a Model Forest measure its progress, assess whether its activities are leading to the expected impacts and make any necessary adjustments. For further information, see the Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook for Model Forests.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

A Model Forest should have enough funds in its budget to support a staff that is the right size and skill level for the size and complexity of the Model Forest. While each Model Forest determines the roles of its local staff, the following are some typical duties:

- Organization of meetings (general and board)
- Ongoing liaison with stakeholders

- Project and contract management
- Staff recruitment and training
- Communication locally and within the IMFN
- Coordination of technical and other reports (their production and dissemination)
- Budget and financial management and control
- Strategic initiatives (e.g., establishing new partnerships, projects or funding arrangements)

The mix of activities that a Model Forest adopts, and the importance it assigns them, will reflect local priorities and needs, since the activities are based on the choices made by stakeholders. The Model Forest group should be careful that the program of work is not simply a collection of individual initiatives, but is instead an integrated, mutually reinforcing set of initiatives that will lead to better management and planning in the future.

Table 2 (below) shows some projects undertaken by Model Forests. For more information, see the Framework for Model Forest Strategic Planning and the Framework for Model Forest Annual Work Planning.



Photo credit: Atlántida Model Forest, Location: Atlántida Model Forest, Guatemala

TABLE 2: EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED MODEL FORESTS

| ARAUCARIAS DEL ALTO MALLECO Chile | FOOTHILLS Canada | GASSINSKI Russia |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of sustainable cattle proposal for small land owners • Coordinate leadership training program for local community • Carry out needs assessment of local community organizations in the region • Support community-driven projects through a small grants program • Create micro-credit programs that support local entrepreneurship • Carry out regional festivals which celebrate and increase awareness of local biodiversity • Piñon project (seed of the <i>Araucaria araucana</i>) • Increase strategic partnerships, resources and organizational capacity • Implementation of Global Environment Fund proposal. Focal area: soil degradation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish and watershed research • Foothills stream crossing program • Hardisty Creek restoration project • Natural disturbance program • Grizzly bear research program • Aboriginal involvement • Caribou Landscape Management Association • Foothills Growth and Yield Association • Adaptive forest management / history • Chisholm, Dogrib and Lost Creek post-fire research • Communications and extension • Geographic information systems • Local level indicators for sustainable forest management • Social sciences: economic and social values of the forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of informational and education campaigns and relations with communities • Monitoring of local level indicators in the Model Forest, including water quality, wildlife species and red-listed plants, changes in forest stock due to fires and harvesting, trends & dynamics in composition and standing wood volume, and social and economic factors • Introduction of sustainable forest management into practice, including analysis of obstacles and opportunities, development of a work plan for the Nanaski Experimental Forest Unit and forest users • Partnership maintenance • Communications and information exchange with the IMFN |

| DJA ET MPOMO Cameroon | ULOT WATERSHED Philippines |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with current partners and identify new ones in the development of Model Forests in Cameroon • Define and formalize relationships between the various proponents & supporters of the Model Forests • Facilitate strengthening of Model Forest governance, collaboration, procedures and standards • Build capacity in the Model Forests for strategic planning, negotiation and collaborative work including resource mobilization, project and proposal development and land-use management issues • Collaboratively develop and implement monitoring mechanisms to measure the performance of the Model Forest against its strategic & operational objectives, including the development of local level indicators of sustainability • Support the implementation of a local communications network <p>(note that these represent start-up activities in the development of two Model Forests in the country)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a watershed management plan for the Ulot River watershed • Ecotourism development in selected areas of the model forest • Skills training on coco coir and coco peat processing • Market analysis and development Strengthening of information and education campaign • Partnership development and maintenance • Training on financial management and resource mobilization • Training on project proposal preparation and negotiation skills |

2.4 Establishing a Model Forest

There is no standard template for developing a Model Forest. The creativity of your local partnership, as well as your regional, cultural and other circumstances, will all influence the form and function of the Model Forest you ultimately develop. The six steps above summarize the process Model Forests have generally used so far.

Establishing your Model Forest could take two years or more, although it usually takes much less time. Depending on how much technical support is available in your region, the roles and responsibilities involved in setting up the Model Forest will be shared between the IMFN Secretariat and your regional and/or national Model Forest network office.

Visits are a way of seeing how different Model Forests operate, from management to project delivery.

The process of becoming familiar with the concept is usually led by the group or individual that initiated your Model Forest and often includes visits to existing Model Forests. Experience shows that visits are highly effective. They enable you to see working examples of how different Model Forests operate, from management to project delivery. They make the concept of Model Forests tangible and demonstrate their benefits. Visits also reveal how partnerships work because they illuminate decision-making processes, consensus-building strategies and approaches to conflict resolution.

GENERAL PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING A MODEL FOREST

1. Become familiar with the approach
2. Select an area
3. Identify an initial stakeholder group
4. Hold workshops to discuss Model Forest development
5. Prepare a Model Forest strategic plan
6. Begin the program

1. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT

Since the inception of Model Forests, documentation of their experiences has increased and become more systematic. There are now many effective ways for you to become familiar with the Model Forest concept. These include communicating with the IMFN Secretariat, accessing regional network and Model Forest websites, and reviewing Model Forest documents, including from established Model Forests.

2. SELECT AN AREA

A Model Forest is a landscape that represents a range of values and issues in a geographic area. Besides forested areas, most Model Forests also encompass agricultural land, rivers and lakes, towns and sometimes cities, protected areas and other landscape features.

It is the stakeholder group that selects the boundaries of the Model Forest. Sometimes boundaries are chosen early, before the letter of intent is submitted to join the International Model Forest Network. Sometimes the selection comes later, because the stakeholder group has asked for advice in choosing an area.

You should define a rationale for why you have chosen a particular boundary. Doing so can help you identify the values and issues of the stakeholders involved.

3. IDENTIFY AN INITIAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Model Forest stakeholders are individuals, groups or institutions that are interested in, are affected by or can affect (positively or negatively) your Model Forest's decisions about resource management and programming priorities. Stakeholders need not reside within the physical boundaries of your Model Forest. In fact, many Model Forests involve organizations from outside, such as universities and research institutions. As well, although some stakeholders remain constant throughout the life of a Model Forest, others change over time as issues, programming and needs change.

In many Model Forests, the stakeholders who voluntarily work together to identify a common vision and address issues of mutual interest, and who are formally recognized in the Model Forest's governance structure, are referred to as "partners."

Your initial stakeholder group may be small, but it will likely grow over time. Model Forests tend to encourage new stakeholders to participate as gaps are identified in knowledge, issues or representation. Some organizations become interested in participating when they learn more about Model Forests and their activities.

4. HOLD WORKSHOPS TO DISCUSS MODEL FOREST DEVELOPMENT

Because your stakeholders will be diverse, it is strongly recommended that you conduct planning exercises in the form of workshops and meetings. Successful planning helps stakeholders reach consensus about the Model Forest's strategic directions, including its vision, objectives and expected impacts. It also helps them agree on the means to accomplish these goals—the implementation strategy.

In the long term, the Model Forest that involves stakeholders in developing, reviewing and renewing its strategic plans will come closest to achieving its strategic directions.

An initial workshop is an ideal time to develop a common understanding of the Model Forest concept, to get commitment to proceed with development and to identify a process for moving forward. Additional workshops can focus on preparing the strategic plan (see step 5 below). During these workshops, you can closely review boundaries, key issues and challenges, ideas for a vision and objectives, and proposed program areas. This way the partnership can arrive at a final understanding and consensus on what is being proposed, how plans will be implemented, and how roles and responsibilities will be divided.

The number of workshops and meetings you will need for development depends on various factors:

- Number of needs, issues and challenges to be addressed
- Amount of time available for the process
- How committed stakeholders are to the Model Forest development
- How well stakeholders understand the Model Forest concept and the importance of planning
- Level of awareness of the needs and issues of each stakeholder
- Level of understanding of national priorities and international conventions
- Level of agreement on the Model Forest priorities
- Level of trust among stakeholders

Generally, the more stakeholders involved, the longer the process takes. However, it is important to involve all stakeholders in development to get their input and support for decisions. You may need different approaches for different stakeholders to ensure their full participation.

The strategic plan focuses the stakeholders' priorities and determines how the group will operate.

5. PREPARE A MODEL FOREST STRATEGIC PLAN

Preparing a strategic plan is a key step in establishing your Model Forest. Stakeholders must meet, understand each other and seek consensus on the broad vision for the landscape, the mutual values they hold and the actions required to sustain those values. You can use this process as an important partnership-building exercise.

The strategic plan typically details the composition of your partnership, describes your land base and documents the objectives that will guide your partnership. In the initial stages, the strategic plan may in fact be a

“Model Forest development plan”—a document that outlines how you intend to move forward with your development in terms of addressing the six Model Forest principles and preparing a multi-year strategic plan.

The strategic plan helps your Model Forest in the following ways:

- Defines the purpose of your Model Forest and builds consensus on a common vision for sustainably managing the landscape
- Develops objectives that are consistent with your vision and mission and that are within your capacity to implement
- Communicates those objectives to all stakeholders and other interested organizations
- Develops a sense of shared ownership among stakeholders and an increased level of commitment to the Model Forest
- Ensures that your resources are used effectively by identifying areas where they are most needed
- Provides a clearer focus to stakeholders
- Provides a base from which you can measure progress

It is important to set aside ample time for the strategic planning process. Usually the process is led by those who took part in the familiarization process described above, together with other local experts and stakeholders. A workshop or series of workshops and meetings typically facilitates the planning. Throughout, you can get technical assistance and advice from the IMFN Secretariat, the regional office and other Model Forests.

You are also encouraged to seek national endorsement of your Model Forest through the appropriate government department or ministry. You can pursue this at various stages in the process, but it is best to involve national-level departments or ministries early on. In fact, these bodies are usually key stakeholders in your Model Forest.

For more detail on preparing the strategic plan, see the *Framework for Model Forest Strategic Planning*.



Photo credit: Patrick Nyemeck Brown, AMFI Secretariat, Location: Dja et Mpomo Model Forest, Cameroon

6. BEGIN THE PROGRAM

Once your strategic plan has been finalized and endorsed by stakeholders, you can begin your Model Forest program. Here are some other plans and strategies to consider at this stage:

- **Annual Work Plan**—Outlines the activities you will undertake in a given year to achieve your Model Forest's strategic directions. This is a detailed planning document with specific budgets for each activity. For more information, see the Framework for Model Forest Annual Work Planning.
- **Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**—Helps you measure and report on the outcomes and impacts of your activities compared to the strategic plan. For more information, see the Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook for Model Forests.
- **Communications Strategy**—Clarifies your key messages and target audiences, and identifies the best ways to deliver the messages to the audiences. The strategy identifies who will take the lead on communications activities, lays out a time frame for delivery, and outlines the advantages and challenges involved in meeting your communications objectives. A communications strategy integrates your outreach and public awareness activities for greater impact and better use of resources. Some communications information is available on the IMFN website (www.imfn.net).
- **Resource Mobilization Strategy**—Outlines the available and required resources for your programs, the gaps between them, potential sources for the funding you require and plans for engaging potential donors. This strategy ensures that all stakeholders understand their role in securing the financial, human and technical resources needed to implement the strategic plan and achieve the expected impacts.



Photo credit: Vilhelmina Model Forest, Location: Vilhelmina Model Forest, Sweden

3.1 International Model Forest Network (IMFN)

The International Model Forest Network is a voluntary association of partners around the world that works toward the common goal of sustainable management of natural resources and forest-based landscapes and natural resources through Model Forests.

The IMFN is based on an innovative approach that combines the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability of forest-based landscapes and natural resources. The approach assumes that a dynamic, inclusive partnership of all the agencies, organizations, institutions, communities and individuals that use the forest—each with its own understanding and appreciation of it—can together create the conditions for the improved and sustainable use of all natural resources.

The IMFN is built on the firm belief that forested landscapes can be managed to safeguard the economic, environmental and social needs of current and future generations.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

The IMFN stimulates the field-level application of new concepts and ideas for the sustainable development of forest-based landscapes and natural resources. It also creates opportunities to share these experiences. As an IMFN member, a Model Forest shares its experiences and innovations with others who can benefit—locally, nationally and internationally. This includes national policy-makers, who are seen as participants and beneficiaries of work done at the local level. In fact, one main outcome of a successful Model Forest is feedback to the policy level so that improvements in natural resource management can benefit those beyond the Model Forest's boundaries.

Much of the IMFN's networking activity is made possible through the IMFN Secretariat or through regional initiatives. Network collaboration enables Model Forests to access and apply more resources to an issue than they could individually. This increases the likelihood that their project will succeed and can reduce the time it takes to develop an effective solution to a particular challenge.

A Model Forest may work through the IMFN's Networking Committee or establish links with other Model Forests on its own. Either way, it is important that the rich body of knowledge in the IMFN be shared, explored and applied to improve resource management.

Although individual Model Forests work toward a vision of sustainability for their area and set their own priorities, there are themes of common interest across the IMFN:

The IMFN is an efficient mechanism for sharing knowledge and experiences peer to peer and site to site, so that the lessons learned in one Model Forest are available to others.

- **Good governance**—Development of structures that are inclusive, participatory, transparent and accountable to stakeholders.
- **Sustainable economic and community development**—Creation of sustainable economic development opportunities for local communities, and better distribution of benefits derived from sustainably managed natural resources.
- **Conservation and stewardship**—Support for collaboration between protected areas, industry, agriculture and communities, and the creation of balance between the social and ecological values necessary to achieve sustainability.
- **Science and best practices**—Advancement of sustainability on the landscape, and the provision of knowledge for informed decision-making.
- **Knowledge sharing, capacity building and networking**—Support for local, regional and international exchanges that accelerate progress toward the sustainable management of forested landscapes.

The access to talent and knowledge that the IMFN offers can help managers formulate and test policy. The reality is that many resource managers are already involved in the core elements of the Model Forest concept—for example, participatory forestry, ecosystem-based management and collaborative networks. In many countries, new knowledge is being developed through experiences that could and should be shared. Indeed, relevant knowledge is no longer the exclusive domain of “experts” but includes those whose knowledge comes from a history of connection with the place. An open, honest exchange of knowledge in all forms, and an examination of that knowledge by all stakeholders, creates the best potential for learning from one another.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING

In joining the IMFN, countries, agencies and individual stakeholders do the following:

- Foster collaborative stewardship among countries so that science and technology are made available and ideas and experiences are shared
- Provide leadership in promoting sustainable forest values
- Take part in a transparent process that allows others to freely obtain real-world experience from their Model Forest initiatives
- Test national forest program strategies and other innovative approaches to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources, which can then be applied outside Model Forest boundaries

- Challenge existing approaches and change existing institutions, policies and legislation
- Promote and strengthen community capacity building and consensus building

Bilateral and multilateral donor agencies can also benefit from the IMFN through a number of key elements of Model Forests:

- Alternative economic and community development
- Increased participation of women and indigenous people
- Food security and energy availability
- Healthy ecosystems, healthy communities
- Institution and capacity building, education, training
- Technology assistance and exchanges

3.2 IMFN Secretariat (IMFNS)

The IMFN is governed by a small Secretariat headquartered in Ottawa, Canada.

The IMFNS strives to ensure that all participants, regardless of their political or economic status, can contribute to and share in the benefits of the IMFN as they pursue the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources. The IMFNS works toward three key objectives through Model Forests:

- Foster international cooperation and exchange of ideas related to the working concept of sustainable development
- Support international cooperation in critical aspects of forest science and social science that underlie the search for new models for sustainably managing forest-based landscapes and natural resources
- Support ongoing international discussions on the criteria and principles of sustainable development

The overall role of the Secretariat, in collaboration with regional networks, is to strengthen and expand the IMFN and to provide technical support to new and existing Model Forests in areas such as these:

A primary goal of the IMFN Secretariat is to establish a global network of Model Forests that represent most of the world's major forest ecosystems.

- Technical and logistical issues related to establishing and operating Model Forests
- Networking between Model Forests and regions
- Resource expansion
- Advocacy, promotion and communications
- Limited and targeted program support
- Partnership development and capacity building

The IMFNS is not a grant-making institution and does not typically provide direct financial support to Model Forests. If asked, the Secretariat will work with Model Forests to mobilize resources. However, it does so in a supportive rather than a lead role.

The IMFN Networking Committee, created at the Secretariat's request and made up of representatives from each region, meets biannually to advance IMFN-wide priorities. These priorities include the IMFN's strategic directions, the efficient management and use of knowledge and information, resource mobilization, and accelerated innovation in the sustainable development of forest-based landscapes and natural resources.

REGIONAL NETWORKS

As the IMFN has expanded and new sites have emerged around the world, most Model Forests have become aligned through formal or informal regional networks. Through these networks, they pursue joint projects and training, identify collaborative projects and secure political support in order to create more opportunities for effective site-level activity.

The Ibero-American Model Forest Network, launched in 2002, and the Canadian Model Forest Network, launched in 1992, are two formally structured networks within the IMFN. Each has an established board of directors that meets regularly. Other regional developments include the following:

- Russia's five Model Forests have joined together in an informal network
- The Asian Model Forests have been collaborating for several years
- The Mediterranean Model Forest Network is under development and includes countries in southern and eastern Europe, the Middle East and north Africa
- The IMFN Secretariat supports the development of two sites in Cameroon, the beginning of a Congo Basin-wide regional Model Forest network, Africa's first

These regional networks are an important way for Model Forests with similar forest types, languages or patterns of resource use to define regional programs specific to their needs and experiences, while continuing to be fully engaged in the IMFN.

3.3 Joining the IMFN

To join the International Model Forest Network, your Model Forest must be endorsed by the IMFN Secretariat and/or board of directors. The process is relatively simple, and technical support is available through the IMFN Secretariat and its regional and national members. Be sure to check whether your country must officially join a regional network or whether your group can initiate the process directly.

You are encouraged to contact the IMFN Secretariat and regional network early in the process, even before submitting your letter of intent, for documentation that will help with the familiarization process outlined in Section 2.4 of this guide.

GENERAL PROCESS FOR JOINING THE INTERNATIONAL MODEL FOREST NETWORK

1. Submit a letter of intent
2. Submit a concept note
3. Undergo review by the IMFN Secretariat and regional network
4. Get accepted to the IMFN

1. SUBMIT A LETTER OF INTENT

Once you decide to proceed with developing a Model Forest, you must send a letter stating your group's intentions to the IMFNS or, where there is a formal regional network, via the regional Model Forest office (see Appendix I for contact information). The letter should include the following:

- Description of the stakeholders involved and their commitment to the process
- Statement of your intention to develop a Model Forest
- List of your activities to date in developing the Model Forest
- Brief outline of your future plans for development
- Questions or issues you need guidance on
- Name and details of a key contact person

The letter of intent is the basis on which the IMFN Secretariat and regional network will work with you to develop your Model Forest. You can get help with defining a Model Forest development process that is relevant to your country and local context. You can also get technical advice and other assistance as you move forward in the development process.

2. SUBMIT A CONCEPT NOTE

The next step is to prepare a concept note on the proposed Model Forest. You should submit the concept note to the IMFN Secretariat, or your regional network, within a reasonable amount of time after the letter of intent. The concept note should outline the following:

- Contact: a main contact or lead person
- Proposed Model Forest area: a profile of the proposed Model Forest, including the socio-economic, cultural and ecological context of the area, key issues and stakeholders
- Model Forest principles and attributes: an outline of how your proposed Model Forest meets, or is planning to meet, the principles and attributes that define a Model Forest
- Finances: how you plan to finance the Model Forest activities

3. UNDERGO REVIEW BY THE IMFN SECRETARIAT AND REGIONAL NETWORK

The IMFN Secretariat and/or your regional network will jointly review your concept note. In the case of the Canadian or Ibero-American Model Forest Networks, the regional board of directors, in collaboration with the IMFN Secretariat, will review the concept note, then either approve the application or request additional information. Representatives of the IMFN Secretariat and/or regional network will also visit your site at an agreed-upon time during the review.

At the review stage, regular communication between you and the IMFN Secretariat (or your regional network) is important so that your application proceeds smoothly, without any unforeseen difficulties. At this stage you will receive timely feedback, as well as guidance and advice on any issues identified during the review. Likewise, you should submit your own questions or documents quickly. Regular, timely feedback ensures that you benefit fully from the knowledge and experience of the IMFN Secretariat, regional network and other Model Forests. It also ensures that new sites are consistent with the global principles and attributes of Model Forests.

4. GET ACCEPTED TO THE IMFN

Once all technical and substantive issues have been addressed, your Model Forest will be officially accepted as part of the International Model Forest Network.

The partnership is expected to develop a strategic plan following the Model Forest's acceptance to the IMFN.

Following acceptance, your group will be expected to develop a strategic plan for your Model Forest. For more information, see Section 2.4 of this guide and the Framework for Model Forest Strategic Planning. Your Model Forest will also benefit from information in the other documents that make up the Model Forest Development Toolkit:

- *Framework for Model Forest Annual Work Planning*
- *Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook for Model Forests*
- *Guide to Model Forest Governance*

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I. Key Contacts

International Model Forest Network Secretariat
Natural Resources Canada–Canadian
Forest Service
580 Booth Street
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1A 0E4

Tel: +1-613-947-7358
+1-613-947-7375
+1-613-947-7350
Fax: +1-613-947-7397
Email: imfn@nrcan.gc.ca
Web: www.imfn.net

Ibero-American Model Forest Network
Centro Agronómico Tropical
de Investigación y Enseñanza
CATIE 7170
Turrialba, COSTA RICA

Tel: +506-556-0401
Fax: +506-558-2057
Email: fcarrera@catie.ac.cr
Web: www.bosquesmodelo.net

Canadian Model Forest Network
c/o P.O. Box 2111
Kemptville, Ontario
CANADA K0G 1J0

Tel: +613-258-8241
Fax: +613-258-8363
Email: dwinston@cmfn-rcfm.ca
Web: www.modelforest.net

African Model Forest Network
~~Dr. Mariteuw~~ Yaounde Cameroon
Email: c.diaw@africanmodelforests.org

Russian Model Forest Network
Komi Model Forest
P.O. Box 810
Syktyvkar, Komi, Russia 167000
Email: PMajewski@komimodelforest.ru

Mediterranean Model Forest Network
CMA B Junta de Castilla y Leon
CL Rigoberto Cortejoso 1447014 Valladolid Spain
Email: picnieal@jcyl.es



APPENDIX II. Key Questions for Assessing Your Model Forest

ASSESSING YOUR LANDSCAPE

- Does your landscape area contain significant forest and other natural resources, including unique environmental features?
- Is your area reflective of social, cultural and other community considerations?
- Are a range of issues and values represented on the landscape?
- Is there a diversity of landscape types (ecosystems, land uses, etc.) within your area?
- Is your area reflective of your broader geographic region?
- Is there a clearly articulated rationale for the area selected?

ASSESSING YOUR PARTNERSHIP

- Can most of the population access the Model Forest through a stakeholder who represents their principal activity, value or area of interest?
- Does your Model Forest have a diverse partnership of stakeholders who identify goals, set priorities and development targets, and establish policy guidelines for the overall program?
- Are any values or resource uses under-represented or not represented in your partnership?
- Are there stakeholders or other groups not currently involved that could help achieve your goals?

ASSESSING YOUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

- Does your partnership have an agreed-upon strategy for determining progress toward sustainability? Is there a commitment to developing and implementing this strategy?
- Does your partnership have a long-term commitment to the concept of sustainable development? Will it support research and technology transfer on the subject?
- Does your Model Forest have the support of national, regional and local authorities (public or private) with jurisdiction over the land and resources?
- Does your Model Forest's program relate to an overall national or regional forest plan?

ASSESSING YOUR GOVERNANCE

- Does your governance structure encourage, in practice, meaningful participation by the stakeholders?
- Is your Model Forest managed by a partnership of stakeholders representing a diversity of interests (e.g., industry, community groups, government agencies, non-governmental environmental and forestry groups, academic and educational institutions, national parks, Aboriginal groups, private landowners)?

- Is your Model Forest managed by consensus and is the decision-making structure transparent?
- Has your Model Forest established technical or advisory committees to develop your program and report to the stakeholder committee?
- Does your governance structure exclude or inhibit involvement by any groups?

ASSESSING YOUR PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

- Does your Model Forest reflect the majority of local and national forest values as defined in a national forest program or similar documentation?
- Is your Model Forest concerned about the needs of local and indigenous people, as well as about the conservation and wise use of the forests and natural resources?
- In its programming, does your Model Forest consider the range of forest values identified as being important? Does it consider social, economic, ecological and historical dimensions of sustainable management of the forest-based landscape and natural resources?
- Does your Model Forest demonstrate the most environmentally appropriate management practices and techniques, and does it support, to the degree possible, scientific research and the application of new technologies?
- Does your Model Forest carry out education and training within the area to make local communities more aware of the program?

ASSESSING YOUR KNOWLEDGE SHARING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

- Do you make your commitment to knowledge sharing known through network activities, demonstration projects, linkages to other Model Forests and participation in global processes (e.g., the development and application of local-level indicators of sustainable forest management)?
- Will your Model Forest be an active partner in the IMFN and share experiences, successes and failures with other Model Forests?



International Model Forest Network

Landscapes • Partnerships • Sustainability

www.imfn.net

Canada