



**International  
Model Forest  
Network**



# IMFN Global Forum: Networks and Networking

## Summary

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**Landscapes – Partnerships – Sustainability**



# Networking as a Core Principle

- 🌱 An inclusive and dynamic **partnership** in which those with an interest in their area's natural resources agree on a process for defining sustainable forest management in locally relevant terms, prioritize goals, and then work collaboratively to achieve them;
- 🌱 A commitment to **sustainable forest management** and to taking collaborative action to support it;
- 🌱 A **landscape** large enough in size to represent an area's diverse forest uses and values;
- 🌱 A **governance structure** that is representative, participative, transparent and accountable;
- 🌱 A **program of activities** reflective of partner needs and values; and
- 🌱 A commitment to **knowledge-sharing and networking**, from local to international levels



# IMFN Global Forum

- 🌳 Brought together over 100 participants representing more than 35 model forests from 17 countries
- 🌳 Provided an opportunity for members to strengthen the IMFN and its networking by:
  - ▶▶ Bringing together site, country, regional and international partners to review, assess and discuss issues related to networking at all levels;
  - ▶▶ Considering future directions and opportunities for networking at all levels, including strategic and niche opportunities within and among model forests, regions and globally; and
  - ▶▶ Identifying the specific roles, advantages, limits, mechanisms and opportunities for effective networking at all levels



# Basic Premise / Questions



Three questions were highlighted by PB

- » Why are we a network?
- » How are we a network?
- » What is its potential?





# What motivates us?

- 🌱 We are all facing challenges related to the sustainable management of our local areas. The network:
  - » Offers an opportunity to learn from others and gain access to information and tools
  - » Enhances our credibility and visibility
  - » Increases international support for local issues
  - » Improves access to additional sources of funding
  - » Provides a chance to share our experiences and help others address their issues
- 🌱 Networking is an “incremental” activity – creating more experiences, generating greater attention, attracting more people which increases ability to network further



# The Model Forest Niche

- 🌳 Model forests are not a traditional network – they look at long-term relationship building rather than one issue only
- 🌳 Size of landscape, diversity of interests involved, inter-linked global network creates a platform can be used to
  - ▶▶ address future challenges
  - ▶▶ testing best practices in sustainable resource management
  - ▶▶ bridge the gap between forest science and practice (or policy and practice)
- 🌳 Bring together various perspectives, skills and resources (knowledge, human, technical, financial) required to address increasingly complex sustainability questions and issues



# General



Discussed networking at three levels

- » Local / national
- » Regional
- » International



Lot of overlap between them and the issues highlighted



# International-level Discussion

- ✿ What form does networking take at an international level (expectations and reality)? What can be done at this level more effectively than at other (regional, national, local) levels?
- ✿ What niche do (or can) model forests and the IMFN occupy in the context of SFM? What strategic partnering or thematic activities should we be pursuing as a network or otherwise?
- ✿ Governance: what are, or should be, the inter-relationships within the Network from site to Secretariat levels? How can we organize ourselves to be pro-active and strategic on key niche and other opportunities?





# What needs to be done at the international level

- 🌳 Create a channel of communication to enhance sharing of experiences
- 🌳 Greater promotion and marketing of what has been built including knowledge, experiences and lessons learned
  - ▶▶ Participation in other international fora (not just our own meetings)
- 🌳 Enhancing policy links including a demonstration of those links
  - ▶▶ Take a broad view of policy – international to organizational
- 🌳 Use model forests as a platform for international research on forest and landscape management, common / thematic issues, policy implementation
- 🌳 Establish a fund for new model forest establishment – to be repaid once established



# Governance

- 🌳 Need a strong secretariat – need an effective core central agency
- 🌳 Role at international level
  - ▶▶ Support model forests with networking functionality and tools
  - ▶▶ Put model forest program in context of other international networks and initiatives
  - ▶▶ Serve as a coordinating body for regional networks
- 🌳 Establish working / discussion groups on various themes
- 🌳 Progressively enlarge the group of strategic international stakeholders active (and influential) in the governance of the IMFN in order to enlarge/diversify sources of funding and support
- 🌳 Model forest representation, rotating “presidencies”
- 🌳 Governance should be based on equal rights and responsibilities
- 🌳 Secretariat does not need to be based in Canada but do not see an immediate need to move



# Regional-level Discussion

- What regional activities has your model forest been involved in? What impact did these activities have (or are they expected to have)? Are there regional networking activities that you would like to see that have not yet been developed?
- Generally speaking, but also specifically within your region, what are the advantages of regional networking? What comparative advantages are there at this level?
- What is, or should be, the relationship between model forests, national MF programs and the regional network?
- How can regional networks and regional networking be strengthened? What are our various roles in it?





# The Regional Advantage

- 🌱 Regional networks seen as vital to the health of the overall network
  - » Can secure in securing regional resources
  - » Identify and facilitate development of new sites
  - » Assist in program delivery reducing burden on an international secretariat
  - » Promote outreach on sub-global issues
- 🌱 There are many regional similarities which allow for identification of model forests with common issues providing basis for collaboration and information exchanges





# Regional Activities and Impacts

- 🌱 A key regional activity has been capacity building through regional workshops
  - ▶▶ Participants learn together and share their experiences
  - ▶▶ Can exchange lessons learned later on when they apply their new knowledge within their respective model forests
- 🌱 Help model forests facilitate national linkages
- 🌱 Facilitate exchange of information
  - Enhance political, institutional and financial support to and for model forests
- 🌱 Assisting new model forests in start-up by providing technical advice, visits and mentoring
- 🌱 Undertake range of regional based initiatives on topics of regional significance (facilitate using model forests as platforms regionally)



# Governance – how to strengthen

- 🌱 Role at regional level could be defined as providing political, institutional and financial support to model forests
- 🌱 Requires coordinating mechanisms, good communication methods
- 🌱 Create structures to facilitate information exchanges and discussions on topics of interest across region
- 🌱 While it is important to have national-level representation (helps secure national support for local model forests), also need model forest input / representation into regional discussions and governance



# Local-level networking

- 🌱 Clearly the area we have the most experience
- 🌱 A strong time factor involved in networking – results of networking generally not seen in the short term
- 🌱 People stay because they see the long-term potential of model forests (must ensure this potential is realized)
- 🌱 Local-level networking has enhanced confidence of local stakeholders through feeling of belonging
- 🌱 Communications seen as a key factor in enhancing local-level networking
  - Results, impacts, success, lessons learned need to be communications
  - Need a good M&E system that is consistent across network
- 🌱 Good management teams within a model forest (effective local leadership to facilitate dialogue); includes securing support of organizations but just individuals





# Networking...Necessary or nice to have?

- 🌱 Clear that you feel that networking (at all levels) is essential for a model forest to be successful
- 🌱 Networking ...
  - ... generates empowerment and commitment
  - ... is a way for participants to support each other
  - ... provides a long-term platform which can be used to address future challenges
  - ... increases efficiencies and reduces duplication of efforts
  - ... requires, and helps create, a participatory governance structure





# A Few VERY General Comments!

- 🌳 Communications is seen as a key to effective networking
  - ▶▶ Promotion of results and impacts to others
  - ▶▶ Talking with each other
- 🌳 The three C's to networking
  - ▶▶ Cooperation
  - ▶▶ Collaboration
  - ▶▶ Coordination
- 🌳 Can add a fourth "C" – Communication
- 🌳 Strategic plans for model forest networking at regional and international levels
- 🌳 Need flexibility in approach to allow for easy transitions between various levels



# Back to the Opening Session

- 🌱 Galloway and Hartshorn provided some advice on networks and networking:
  - » Limit dependency on projects; diversity support base
  - » Ensure members have authority to act on behalf of their organization – make decisions and commitments
  - » Need parity and equality among members
  - » Have a participatory governance structure
  - » Conduct periodic introspectives / reviews
  - » Leadership is key but need the right leadership



# Beacons of Sustainability

- 🌱 Duinker described model forests as “Beacons of Sustainability”
  - ▶ Are inventive and innovative, focusing on new ideas to foster sustainability;
  - ▶ Help maintain a strong balance of head (knowledge), heart (compassion about issues and values) and gut (instinct) in promoting sustainability;
  - ▶ Engage a wide range of partners in a strategic way; and
  - ▶ Promote risk-taking in experiments, and foster and support local leadership, but also provide safety nets for the risk-takers
- 🌱 Networking is personal but there is both a
  - ▶ **Right** to benefit from networking, and a
  - ▶ **Responsibility** to contribute
- 🌱 Members must take an active role in networking and in defining the network



# Questions to ponder

- 🌱 What specific issues should we examine as a network of model forests (platforms)?
- 🌱 What can we do which no one else is doing?
- 🌱 How must we organize ourselves (regionally and internationally) to be able to effectively capitalize on our strengths as model forests?
- 🌱 The importance of policy links was raised on many occasions. How can we enhance this component within model forests?
- 🌱 What will you do when you return to your model forest?
- 🌱 How can we continue the dialogue on what we have started here this week?
- 🌱 What can each of us do, what is our individual responsibility?