

International Model Forest Network Secretariat
Secrétariat du Réseau international de forêts modèles

Model Forest Development Guide



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The Challenge

The challenges facing natural resource managers today, and indeed all of society, are inherently complex as conflicting societal demands and values compete with one another against a backdrop of limited and dwindling resources.

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission Report clearly described the precarious and growing imbalance between the growth of humanity and the capacity of the Earth to sustain this growth. Six years later, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), world leaders set in motion a chain of policy-level events targeted at finding workable solutions to achieving sustainable development.

As a result, within the forestry sector itself, an array of processes began, with many countries subsequently demonstrating new and innovative approaches to forest management. Not surprisingly, several of these new approaches revealed parallel thinking on the nature of sustainability, and potential strategies for effective resource conservation. One initiative directly inspired by the challenges laid down during UNCED was the International Model Forest Network Program (IMFN), announced by Canada at the 1992 Rio Conference. Its origins were rooted in the Canadian Model Forest Network, itself created in 1991.

The IMFN represented a major commitment to build an international partnership of countries and institutional partners to work to translate the policy of sustainable forest management (SFM) into practice, at an operational level in ways that would benefit the people, communities and interests that depend upon forests and their many values.

The IMFN was built upon the firm belief that forests can be managed in a sustainable way to safeguard the economic, environmental, and social needs of current and future generations. It assumes that an inclusive partnership of all agencies, organizations, communities, and individuals who use the forest resource, each having their own specific understanding and appreciation of it, can together create the conditions that will lead to improved and sustainable utilization of all forest resources.

The IMFN was created to stimulate the field-level application of new concepts and ideas in sustainable forest management, and to create opportunities to share these experiences. The IMFN is supported by a Secretariat housed at

the Ottawa-based International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Since its 1995 launch, the IMFN Secretariat — together with partners and collaborators such as UNDP and FAO — has succeeded in building a global network of landscape-level, partnership-based model forests.

This global network is engaged in supporting and facilitating the development of locally relevant and workable approaches to SFM to benefit all stakeholders, from local communities to national policy makers.

Working to achieve sustainable forest management is a fundamentally optimistic endeavour. It assumes that there are solutions, and that they are accessible to society—if society chooses to seek them out. Experience to date, including the continued growth of the Network, supports this optimism.

To date, model forests have been established in:

Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, Myanmar, Philippines, Russia, Thailand and the United States.

Other countries pursuing the model forest concept include:

Brazil, Cuba, Cameroon, India, Panama, Peru, Sweden and Vietnam.

The IMFN Secretariat

The IMFN Secretariat is the executor of the IMFN program as defined by its Board of Directors, which is comprised of donor and regional model forest representatives. The role of the Secretariat is to strengthen and expand the Network and, at the site level, to support new and existing model forests (MFs) in the following areas:

- technical and logistical issues in establishing and operating Mfs
- networking between sites and regions, transfer of technology and know-how
- assistance in resource expansion
- advocacy and promotion
- communications
- targeted program support (as available)

- partnership development and capacity-building

The IMFN Secretariat provides assistance through regional and global network meetings, support for training and extension work, specialized workshops and the dissemination of information. While the IMFNS is not a grant-making institution, it does manage a small program fund earmarked for issues and areas of high priority.

While every model forest differs in its history of land use and the management concerns each faces, there is a range of common issues of special significance to the Secretariat, including: partnership and capacity-building; poverty alleviation and economic diversification; measuring and assessing progress toward SFM; development and demonstration of best forest management practices; monitoring and evaluation; governance; and conflict management.

Internationalizing the Network

The IMFNS is currently active in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Russia. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Network's first regional centre was launched in October 2002.

In the case of the Regional Model Forest Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (RMFC),



Craft and food market in the Linan Model Forest, China

the IMFNS supports regional model forest sites through the Centre based upon an agreed program of work. This program reflects priorities identified at the site level. In addition, the IMFNS and RMFC are represented on one another's boards of directors. Where there is no regional centre (as is the case in Africa and Asia), the

IMFNS supports site-level activities through nationally designated representatives or in conjunction with other institutional players who actively promote model forests, such as FAO in Asia.

What is a Model Forest?

A model forest is both a geographic area and a specific partnership-based approach to sustainable forest management. It is a large, working scale land-base in which forestry is one of the main values. At the heart of the model forest concept are people. Model forests, as a process, are as much about the people who sustain themselves from the forest, their impact on its resources, and their human development as they are about trees and forest products.

A model forest is also a voluntary partnership whose members fully represent the environmental, social and economic forces at play within the land-base. The partnership works to define a shared, locally relevant operational vision of SFM and then collaborates to achieve it in concrete terms for the benefit of all stakeholders. These partnerships operate on the bases of transparency and consensus.

While it typically does not exercise decision-making authority over the land-base, a model forest organization will include in its partnership those with legal tenure over the land. Their participation signals a willingness to consider new and innovative approaches to forest management. As a member of the IMFN, a model forest organization is committed to sharing its experiences and innovations with other model forests, as well as with others who can benefit from this expertise—locally, nationally and internationally.

The model forest concept, together with other SFM initiatives, regards knowledge and understanding as an evolving process.

The model forest process differs from other SFM initiatives in three distinct features:

1. All model forests share a core set of attributes and principles by which landscape-level experiments in SFM can be conducted—regardless of ecosystem type or system of tenure.
2. Its deliberate strategy of intra-site and inter-site demonstration and networking.

3. National policy-makers are seen as participants and beneficiaries of work undertaken at the local level. One of the main outcomes of a successful model forest project is feedback to the policy level so that improvements can be made for national benefit.

The assumptions underlying these features are that the shared attributes and principles will stimulate opportunities for networking, while a deliberate strategy of demonstration and networking will improve and accelerate implementation of specific advances in SFM among Network participants.

These features can be seen as representing a continuous loop (from the operational level to the policy level and back) describing a network oriented toward the exchange of information, with a prominent focus on field-level applications, and a clear link to national and international policy issues.

Core Model Forest Attributes

Creating and maintaining an effective partnership poses particular challenges. Among the partnership-building tools available to model forest partners is a set of commonly held model forest attributes on which a project can be structured.

Among the attributes that define the model forest concept, the following six are considered fundamental:

1. Partnership
2. Commitment to sustainable forest management
3. Scale (landscape or watershed-based)
4. Scope of activities (reflecting stakeholder needs and values)
5. A governance structure to address a broad range of values
6. Cooperation, sharing, and capacity-building

These attributes provide a baseline for establishing a model forest. They can assist each site to maintain its conceptual focus and program integrity throughout its development, while also ensuring that each site has the autonomy to design an initiative that is reflective

of local priorities.

No less important, the adoption of network-wide attributes creates the foundation upon which functional networking can take place from local to international levels.

IMFN Objectives:

- To foster international cooperation and exchange of ideas on the concept of and practical experience in sustainable forest management
- To facilitate international cooperation in field-level applications of sustainable forest management
- To use these concepts, experiences, and applications to support ongoing international discussions on the principles, criteria, and policies related to sustainable forest management

No two model forests are identical. While sharing attributes, goals, and objectives each model forest is unique by virtue of its distinct cultural, geographic, institutional, political, and other circumstances. As well, each model forest partnership will add its own individual cross-section of perspectives and experiences.

In light of the diversity of influences and circumstances from one region to another, it follows that the activities and approaches taken to meet the objectives of sustainable forest management will also differ. In some sites, for example, biodiversity issues will be paramount, while in others economic diversification, or forest research will feature more prominently.

1. Partnership

Understanding the importance of the model forest's partnership dynamic is central to understanding the model forest concept. But while seemingly a simple concept in theory, a model forest can prove complex in practice. In order to usefully engage local expertise, the partnership needs to recognize that its many, often conflicting, points of view are not

necessarily mutually exclusive. They are relevant and have a place in the decision-making process.

A model forest organization is governed by a partnership that identifies goals, sets priorities, and establishes policy guidelines for the overall program. The partnership must include key land users and other stakeholders represented in the geographic region. For example:

- ▶ industry
- ▶ community groups
- ▶ aboriginal peoples
- ▶ government agencies
- ▶ non-governmental environmental and forestry groups
- ▶ academic and educational institutions
- ▶ national parks
- ▶ private landowners

Example indicator: The majority of the resident population can access the model forest organization through a model forest partner who represents their principal activity or area of interest.

2. Commitment to sustainable forest management

In a model forest sound, socially acceptable, and economically viable forestry practices and techniques are applied and demonstrated. The overall objectives and work program are based on an ecosystem approach to forest management and reflect a vision of sustainability.

Example indicator: The partnership has an agreed upon strategy for determining progress toward sustainability and will develop and implement the strategy.

A model forest will have the support of the appropriate national, regional, and/or local government that has jurisdiction over the land, private landowners, and other interested community and private-sector representatives active in forest and natural resource management. Where appropriate, the model forest program should relate to an overall national or regional forest sector plan.

Example indicator: Participation by communities, landowners, and managers in the partnership committee is reflected in the governance structure.

3. Scale

A model forest must be of a size that includes the full range of forest uses and values in the surrounding geographic region and be representative of a broad ecosystem.

Example indicator: The model forest area comprises a large complex ecosystem such as a watershed.

4. Scope of activities

Activities undertaken reflect the values and needs at the community, regional, and national levels. The activities support increasing the knowledge base, assessing impacts, and developing, testing, and otherwise supporting new approaches to SFM. In other words, the activities should reflect the diverse values of the forest's resources while also addressing the needs of the community at large. In addition to timber, some of those diverse values include food, potable water, shelter, local customs and spiritual beliefs, employment and recreation.

Example indicator: The majority of the forest values as defined in the National Forest Programme (or other similar documentation) are reflected in the model forest.

5. A governance structure to address a broad range of values

A model forest is managed in an integrated manner for all forest values identified as important by the partnership. The management process is both participatory and transparent. The governance structure reflects regional cultural, social, political, and economic realities. Additionally, the governance structure supports consensus-building amongst the partners.

Example indicator: A governance structure documented and approved by the partnership that demonstrates, in practice, ways that

encourage meaningful participation from the partnership. With respect to networking beyond the model forest site, as the IMFN has evolved it has become apparent that some types of expertise and activity are more readily 'networked' than others, largely for reasons such as ease of replication and cost-effectiveness. Among the most promising areas of networking are:

6. Cooperation, sharing, and capacity-building

A model forest partnership agrees to share its experiences and knowledge locally as well as throughout the IMFN. At the local, regional, national, and global levels, model forests share experiences, successes, and lessons learned on the critical aspects of sustainable forest management. Model forests also provide opportunities for urban interests to be represented and to impact the processes supporting sustainable forest management.

Example indicator: The commitment to sharing is shown through network activities, demonstration projects, linkages to other model forests, and participation in global processes such as the development and application of local level indicators of sustainable forest management.

Networking

Networking takes place at all levels starting with the local partnership and working through regional, national, and international levels.



Demonstration and discussion in the Chiloé Model Forest, Chile

Networking at the local level reinforces the model forest partnership and its effectiveness to introduce positive landscape-level changes. This same networking principle—of exchanging information to create a shared net benefit to participants—provides the *raison d'être* for national and international networks. Experience consistently demonstrates that when local expertise is pooled, outputs exceed individual partner accomplishments.

- ▶ partnership and capacity-building
- ▶ forest-based economic diversification
- ▶ measuring and assessing progress toward SFM
- ▶ adopting and using tools for SFM
- ▶ networking through special projects with highly focused regional or thematic features

In a model forest new ideas are tried—some successfully and some not—in order to push toward the goal of sustainability. It is acknowledged in the model forest process that no one country, agency, or individual has yet developed the knowledge necessary to achieve the goals set at UNCED. By working together, however, we can make progress more quickly.

How is a Model Forest Implemented?

Given the concept, philosophy, and attributes that make up a model forest, questions arise as to how model forests are created and how they operate. This section addresses these questions in three parts:

- ▶ Initial steps taken to create a model forest
- ▶ Options for organization, governance and management
- ▶ What does a model forest do?

It bears repeating that the following text provides a composite picture of what has worked so far. There is no standard template for creating or operating a model forest. The creativity of the local partnership, or specific regional, cultural, or other circumstances will all influence the form

and function of the model forest that is ultimately created.

1. The Initial Steps Taken to Create a Model Forest:

Becoming Familiar with the Concept

The first step toward establishing a model forest involves developing an understanding of the model forest concept. With systematic documentation of model forest experiences over the years, it is increasingly possible for candidate sites to familiarize themselves with the model forest concept and experience. Options include accessing the IMFNS website, and/or obtaining copies of IMFNS documents, including past proposals from established sites.

Familiarization with the concept is generally followed by an exploratory visit to operational model forests in other countries. Experience shows that these direct contacts between model forest practitioners and prospective candidates are highly effective. Site visits provide working examples of different approaches to model forest operations, from management to project delivery. In particular, such visits to sites and projects are highly productive and effective in making the concept tangible and demonstrating its benefits. Additionally, site visits can be valuable in revealing how partnerships function, and illuminate their decision-making processes, consensus-building strategies, and approach to conflict resolution.

Proposal Preparation

Creating a model forest within the international network involves the guided preparation of a proposal. The proposal enables the partnership to focus its priorities, identify what it wants to do, and determine how it will operate. It typically details the composition of the partnership, describes the land-base in question, and documents the specific strategic and operational plans which will guide the model forest partnership. Past proposals have included the following:

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Project outline: project name, sponsors, partners and project summary

- ▶ Description of the proposed model forest territory: Includes significant documentation of resource characteristics, socio-economic data, significant cultural or historical information, and current forest resource management objectives
- ▶ Goals and tasks: strategic overview of goals
- ▶ Proposed administrative structure
- ▶ Short and long-term activities and expected results (e.g.. research, technology transfer, communications)
- ▶ Budget (planned expenditures and revenue sources)
- ▶ Appendices (maps, scientific, or survey information)

In most instances, development of the proposal would be led by those who participated in the familiarization mission, together with additional local expertise and partners. Technical assistance and advice can be made available by the IMFNS and other model forests throughout the proposal process.

Judging from previous experiences, a full proposal will generally take several of months to complete. Most of the costs associated with proposal development are local and need not be significant; however, it is often useful to engage a consultant or facilitator to assist the local partnership. At this stage a core partnership has been formed and additional partners are becoming active through consultation and information exchange.

The Model Forest Workshop

Once the draft proposal has been completed, the model forest proponents convene a workshop with the full partnership, facilitators, potential sponsors, and others to discuss the proposal. During the workshop the proposal is reviewed vigorously so as to arrive at a final understanding and consensus on what is being proposed, how plans will be implemented, and roles and responsibilities. Frequently, this workshop marks the first time that the entire model forest team gathers as a working partnership.

Workshop costs vary but generally include the participation of approximately 40

representatives, including those from a number of existing model forests. The workshop concludes with the endorsement of the proposal or with recommendations for additional editing, details, or focus. By the end of the workshop, the partnership has committed to a set of objectives and solutions to local forest management issues in the short-term and strategic plans for sustainable forest management in the long-term.

In most cases, once the partnership accepts the proposal, its next step would be to seek national level endorsement through the appropriate government department or ministry. This endorsement paves the way for model forest proponents to enter into a dialogue with the IMFNS, or through a regional centre or other representative as appropriate, on membership and participation in the Network.

2. Options for Organization, Governance and Management

Each model forest organization creates governance, technical, quality control, management, and other bodies according to standards and norms that apply in the model forest's country and/or region. In Canada, for example, a model forest partnership will generally constitute itself as a legal, not-for-profit public association. It will usually structure decision-making within itself through its partnership meetings, board of directors, technical bodies, and permanent staff with each assigned specific roles and functions.

In common with other types of organizations, one of the first tasks undertaken by the model forest entity is the setting of a number of clearly identifiable organizational objectives. For present purposes, the discussion will be limited to four objectives: structure, accountability, technical competence and effective self-governance.

Most of these organizational objectives are familiar to readers and ample illustrations are provided on the website; however a generic treatment is provided below for reference.

Structure

The Partnership Group

The model forest's full partnership group is usually understood to be the most senior decision-making body. Its decisions are typically made through an annual partnership forum or similar event, at which broad questions of strategy, program direction, and policy are addressed. The partnership generally elects a president or chair, and board of management (directors) from among its members, who are charged with ongoing program oversight and ensuring implementation of annual plans as endorsed by the group. This organizational sketch is typical of experience to date, but it is only one of many options available for structuring partnership activities.

During an annual partnership forum, the bodies that govern, manage, and deliver projects on behalf of the model forest partnership present reports on activities undertaken over the previous year and tender plans for the forthcoming year. The annual partnership forum allows all partners to raise, debate and discuss strategic and operational issues in the presence of the entire governing body.

While some partnerships will only meet formally once per year, or in extraordinary session, some model forests, for example Russia's Gassinski, have had as many as eight partnership meetings per year. Greater frequency of meetings can be advantageous, particularly during the initial start-up phase of a model forest when specific projects, research objectives, or other strategic issues are being elaborated, and as partners are forging a working relationship.

It bears mentioning that not all partners are active in the same measure or intensity. While all are equal, roles and responsibilities will vary in absolute terms as well as over time and activity. Some are passive partners, for example, who consider their membership to be an ongoing opportunity to publicly indicate their support for the concept and its local application. Others have niche interests and may limit their participation to annual or technical meetings. Still others will plunge into periods of intense involvement followed by lulls that reflect the year's management, planning and project delivery cycles. In each model forest there is also a core group of partners who are consistently engaged in management and activities: tenure holders (forest industries), government, environmental specialists, and academia are generally among this latter group.

For example, the list of local partners involved with the Ulot Model Forest in the Philippines includes:

- ▶ Department of the Environment and Natural Resources
- ▶ CHC Forest Planters' Association
- ▶ San Rafael, Taft Integrated Farmers Cooperative
- ▶ Department of Agrarian Reforms
- ▶ Department of Trade and Industry
- ▶ Department of Education, Culture and Sports
- ▶ Department of Agriculture
- ▶ Philippine army
- ▶ Foundation for Philippine Environment
- ▶ Guinabuangan Multipurpose Cooperative
- ▶ KAPPAS Youth Federation
- ▶ Mabuhay Multipurpose Cooperative
- ▶ municipal/local government units
- ▶ Paglaum han Brgy. San Rafael, Inc.
- ▶ Parent-Teachers' Association
- ▶ Samar Island Biodiversity Project

While partners in the Prince Albert Model Forest of Canada include:

- ▶ Canadian Forest Service
- ▶ Canadian Institute of Forestry, Saskatchewan Section
- ▶ Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
- ▶ Lac-La-Ronge Indian Band
- ▶ Montreal Lake Cree Nation
- ▶ Prince Albert Grand Council
- ▶ Prince Albert National Park
- ▶ Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management
- ▶ the Resort Village of Candle Lake
- ▶ Weyerhaeuser Canada Limited

The Board of Directors

Whether it is known as a Management Committee, an Executive Steering Committee, or a Board of Directors, the model forest entity requires a body that meets regularly and which oversees model forest staff, providing direction and authorization on issues of substance. The size of the body varies from as few as three members to nine or more.

Boards of directors are typically elected during the annual partners meeting, or other agreed upon process, and usually serve two-year, staggered terms of office. The composition of the board tends to reflect the broad diversity of the partnership base. It meets regularly to review with model forest managers activities, project developments, new proposals, problems, and financial reports. The board approves budgets and makes decisions of its own accord or on recommendation from management. As the chief body of governance, the board of directors bears ultimate responsibility for the conduct and performance of the model forest entity.

Accountability

A model forest organization acts on behalf of its partnership in areas such as project development and implementation. Among other things, the organization also has a public profile and seeks to make input into public discussions on resource issues. In order for the model forest organization to represent and accurately reflect its membership in these and other areas it must be structured so as to be accountable to the partnership for its decisions and actions. In most – but not all – cases this accountability has been secured by establishing the model forest as a legal entity within appropriate national or sub-national jurisdictions regarding public organizations or associations.

Whatever its eventual design, the purpose is to create a procedural milieu in which partners interact, and by which decisions are made. It is also on this basis that the model forest organization becomes publicly active as a legitimate and credible entity. Its cohesion as an organization is established through a combination of clearly stated and documented goals and objectives, governance structures, decision-making processes, membership criteria, and so forth.

It is important to note here as well that the jurisdiction of a model forest organization rarely includes decision-making authority over the land-base. Its rights and responsibilities tend to be limited to the governance, management, and financial aspects of its internal management activities, as well as extending to contract oversight for its project activities.

Technical Competence

The model forest organization has a wealth of professional expertise at its disposal and benefits greatly from the input and guidance of its specialists. Expert input is often structured around formal or informal technical or advisory committees. The number, composition, and level of activity of model forest technical committees varies according to need: in some cases, a technical committee will be project-specific with the committee disbanding following project completion. Generally, however, there is at least one permanent technical committee that operates in an advisory capacity to both the board and management. This type of committee is frequently composed of the leaders of the various model forest programs or core projects (i.e., forest research, economic development, Geographic Information System (GIS), communications). It can be instrumental in assisting the model forest create and maintain an integrated and focused package of programs and projects. Additionally, committee members can often access additional expertise and resources from within their home organizations. Technical committees will meet regularly and occasionally very frequently, as is the case when programs are being designed, or when outputs and progress are assessed or analyzed.

Among the range of technical committees that might be formed on an occasional basis is a committee for internal management reviews and technical audits. It is beneficial for the organization to undertake routine quality control exercises to ensure that proposed courses of action will generate the anticipated outputs. Unlike technical audits, financial audits should be done annually and should be undertaken by independent auditors.

*Note: The requirements for **external** technical and financial reviews and audits will vary from one model forest to the next depending upon the requirements of sponsoring agencies and the*

statutes or adopted procedures of the model forest in question.

Capacity for Effective Self-Governance

The model forest partnership identifies strategic goals and objectives on an annual and long-term basis and authorizes yearly and longer-term operational plans. It engages a small, permanent staff to oversee project development and execution, with the staff manager reporting on a regular basis to the board of directors or comparable body. Annual operational plans are generally coordinated by model forest staff with principal input from project executors and technical committees and on occasion from the board. Most model forest projects are implemented by the partner organizations under contract with the model forest entity. As such, the model forest management team is responsible for project oversight and contract fulfillment.

The minimum permanent staffing levels usually include a project manager, a communication or technical officer, and an administrative support position. The actual number of staff in a model forest organization varies considerably, and is determined by available resources, the scope of the annual work plan, and in some cases by the reporting and tracking requirements of sponsoring agencies. In the case of developing countries, staff costs might be paid by the host government, partners' organizations, international donors, or a combination of all three. It is critical that the model forest staff be provided with training and upgrading that allow them to perform their duties with skill and confidence.

3. What does a Model Forest do?

The model forest process provides a unique approach to develop, measure, and monitor strategies for SFM. A model forest organization designs, develops, and delivers an integrated package of projects that reflect the needs and expectations of locally based multi-stakeholder partnerships within the context of sustainable resource use.

Communications is central to the model forest process and outreach, both locally and within the greater model forest community. In cases where there have been inadequate local forums for

stakeholders to air views on resource management, the model forest has become a tool to exchange information and manage conflict. The text below describes the general framework of activities that occupy a model forest organization and are suggestive of the range of activities a model forest can undertake at local and higher levels within the SFM debate.



Eucalyptus plantation in Tabasco, Mexico

Program selection

Model forest annual and longer-range work plans will typically be comprised of a number of broad program areas that reflect the priorities identified by the full partnership group. These selections are usually made following a series of meetings, consultations, retreats and/or workshops.

Groups of technical experts work with the partnership to identify priorities, how they can best be addressed, the level of effort required, and expected outcomes. To date, programs have fallen into a relatively small number of areas, each including specific operational activities or projects (Project Management and Administration is assumed inherent in each program):

- ▶ data acquisition/resource inventory
- ▶ forest science/research
- ▶ maintaining biodiversity
- ▶ communication
- ▶ technology transfer

- ▶ economic development and diversification
- ▶ capacity-building (management and staff training, and others)
- ▶ networking
- ▶ measuring sustainability / local level indicators

The eventual mix of program components and their assigned importance in the overall model forest program will depend on the choices made by the partnership, and are themselves a reflection of local priorities and needs. At the same time, caution should be exercised by the group so that the program of work is not simply a collection of individual initiatives, but instead an integrated and mutually reinforcing set of initiatives that will facilitate better management and/or planning in the future.

Project selection

Within each program area individual projects are identified for development and delivery. It is at this point that specific resources (money plus in-kind contributions) are assigned to projects. These are the most variable of all costs. The model forest organization will seek to secure direct financial contributions (grants, donations, contracts etc.) from sponsors or donors.

Parallel to securing direct financing, the partnership should work to secure matching or greater funds through internal resources in the form of actual funds, professional services, facilities, or other contributions that would offset direct costs. Costs are generally higher during the first or second years of operation, during which the majority of capital acquisitions and training costs might occur.

Based upon the above list of possible program areas, a short list of projects is given below to illustrate the broad range of options open to a partnership. Examples are drawn from the work plans of existing model forests:

Data acquisition/resource inventory: Inventory of resources with a current market demand; socio-economic profile of the model forest territory; detailed forest species inventories; archival research on forest history and dynamics; soil and hydrology mapping and classification.

Monitoring and evaluation: Development and application of tools for measuring sustainability (i.e., local level indicators of sustainability); measuring sustainable harvest/use levels of forest resources.

Forest science/research: Geographic Information System (GIS) development and applications; forest pathology research; riparian zone management; modelling forest dynamics; scenario planning; forest succession dynamics; value-added wood processing through local enterprises, other non-wood forest products.

Biodiversity: Documentation of rare and endangered species of flora and fauna; habitat research and/or restoration; measures for conservation and protection; monitoring population growth and patterns of migration with respect to forest harvesting operations;

Communication: Partnership retreats; quarterly newsletters, web-site development; data acquisition and dissemination; organization of workshops and symposia; participation in events; liaison with sponsors, NGOs, government, and others.

Technology transfer: Technology research for local applications; modification of forestry equipment to local conditions; GIS training; data and information management training; case studies in local economic diversification; inter-disciplinary partnership to exchange expertise.

Economic development and diversification: local value-added wood processing; development of non-wood forest products; management of nut producing zones; tourism and eco-tourism; technical and expert exchanges between model forests.

Capacity-building: Training in conflict resolution, financial management; strategic planning, data management, effective communication; internal technical and financial reviews.

Networking: Attending regional and IMFN-wide events for thematic networking (biodiversity, GIS, or local area indicators, for example), bilateral technology transfer initiatives; web-based data storage and exchange; case studies and experiences in economic

diversification; sharing developments in the field of decision-support tools for SFM.

For example, program and project activities from the Chiloé Model Forest in Chile include:

- ▶ the creation of forest trails
- ▶ biodiversity conservation and native germoplasm
- ▶ rescue of traditional basket-weaving techniques
- ▶ training in production and marketing of arts and crafts
- ▶ traditional forest-based medicinal plants
- ▶ development of sustainable forestry activities, Province of Chiloé
- ▶ development and production of gevuina avellana (hazelnuts)
- ▶ environmental education for rural broadcasters
- ▶ Bosqueduca: development of an educational base for Chiloé Model Forest
- ▶ evaluating European ulex techniques in ensilage and compost
- ▶ development of education material on Native potatoes
- ▶ workshops on carpentry and reforestation of Native species
- ▶ production and commercialization of vegetal coal

Administration/management

An administrative budget should include adequate funds to support a staff whose size and skill levels reflect the size and complexity of the model forest initiative. Activities include but are not limited to management and monitoring of projects, and communication. Each model forest group will determine the role(s) of its locally engaged staff, however, among a typical list of staff duties are:

- ▶ organization of general meetings
- ▶ organization of board meetings
- ▶ on-going liaison with partners
- ▶ contract management
- ▶ staff recruitment and training

- ▶ communication locally and within the network
- ▶ coordination of production and dissemination of technical and other reports
- ▶ budget and financial management and control
- ▶ strategic initiatives (such as establishing new partnerships, projects, or funding arrangements)

As funds for model forests are limited, it is incumbent upon model forest managers to be highly efficient and innovative in ensuring the most effective use of funds.

Internal Appraisal, Analysis and Dialogue

The work of a model forest generates a large volume of data, maps technical reports, and other resources and so the organization must take steps to ensure its information and experiences are shared – and where appropriate – applied. Despite the best of intentions, the gap between the work of resource professionals and field-level applications is often the weak link in model forest operations. Responsibility for managing information and transferring it to potential users can reside with any or each of the main model forest bodies (management, board, or technical committees).

Engagement with SFM Developments Globally

Each model forest organization is interested in sharing its experiences and learning from others who are also developing local solutions to the sustainability challenge. In many instances this will mean building links with other model forests. There are a number of opportunities to do this:

Model Forest Workshops and Forums: Throughout the year individual model forests, international organizations, and national agencies organize events around thematic issues of interest to most model forest sites.

Web-based information sharing and collaboration: Most model forests currently have well-established

electronic databases that are accessible from the internet.

Secretariat facilitation of exchanges and networking: Following a series of detailed regional consultations on model forests, conclusions pointed to a number of areas where model forests saw networking as being achievable and of value to members. The IMFN Secretariat encourages and facilitates networking (information sharing, collaboration, exchanges, etc.) between sites in five areas: partnership and capacity-building; economic diversification; measuring and assessing progress toward SFM; adopting and using tools for SFM; and, networking through special projects with focussed, regional or thematic features.

Autonomous networking between model forests: Each site is encouraged to develop autonomous links with other sites, in addition to the networking currently facilitated by the IMFN Secretariat.

Broader engagement with SFM initiatives and developments: A model forest project operates within the international network but also publicly and transparently within the broader community of resource management professionals. As such, and in order to improve its own performance, each model forest is encouraged to inform and be informed about events, developments, and activities involving SFM at all levels, particularly vis-a-vis National Forest Programmes and international SFM-related initiatives, such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

Partnership development and maintenance

On an on-going basis, model forest managers assume principal responsibility for liaison with and maintenance of the partnership. Advances in sustainable management rarely make headlines. They are incremental and hard won. Maintaining the interest and contribution of the partnership involves from the outset an understanding that this initiative is long-term. It requires vision, patience, and the constant and public advocacy of its supporters. Experience shows that networking between professionals

and sites, collaborative projects, and engage with the broader international SFM policy dialogue are important factors in encouraging and expanding partner interest and involvement.

Guiding Principles

Finally, it was noted earlier that the model forest concept is optimistic. It is also ambitious. Relying as it does on the time, expertise and dedication of many volunteers (aside from staff and contractors, of course), the model forest initiative must demonstrate its potential and capability to create a forum for improved local-level decision-making in resource management.

To help maintain its focus and credibility, the model forest concept is guided in its programs, projects and activities by a number of shared guiding principles. As with the model forest attributes, these principles are designed to provide context and focus for the partnership's path to success. They stress sound management, continuous learning, clear focus, creativity and innovation. Among the most often cited are the following:



Linan City, China

Relevance to stakeholders

SFM must provide tangible, measurable dividends to the local stakeholders and communities who invest their time and energy in a model forest.

A high level of managerial efficiency and financial integrity

A model forest is financially supported through a combination of government (taxpayer) funds, direct and in-kind contributions from partner organizations, and by donors. While the range

and depth of projects that a model forest could undertake is virtually limitless, the amount of funds available is not. To maintain the support of the partnership and to continue to instill confidence in financial and other supporters, a model forest organization must manage its affairs efficiently and demonstrate clear financial accountability at all times.

An appreciation for the value of partnership in all its facets.

In line with the saying, "*the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*", it is understood that, within a model forest partnership, diverse perspectives on the forest are held by different groups and individuals. Each of these views adds to the composite understanding of the web of values and inter-relationships that form an ecosystem. As good as this composite view may be, it is unlikely ever to be complete. But by building such a partnership, we can aspire to some of the best approximations yet of how to understand and manage complex ecosystems.

Perhaps equally significant, the development of working relationships and linkages within a partnership is in itself a ground-breaking exercise. These links can play critical roles in developing improved long-term management strategies.

Respect for the independence of participating model forests and for the sovereignty of participating countries.

A vigorous partnership requires sound information, effective information flows, and open forums for discussion. A model forest organization is more capable of managing these needs if it is recognized as performing this role at all levels – local, regional and national. As all model forests operate within the strictures of their own countries, it is up to each sponsoring country to support and encourage conditions under which a partnership can fulfill its mandate.

The provision of an open forum for debate and decision on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

As noted above, the model forest should be structured to maximize information flows and knowledge transfers. Effective management of issues, debates, and conflicts will facilitate this goal. This is particularly vital so that model forest partnerships attract and include those who exercise considerable authority within the

resource sector and those who exercise little or none.

Growing pains are expected during the initial stages of a new model forest partnership: debates are frequently heated, and views often one-sided. Decision-making processes will be untested, and a lack of familiarity in working with one another will test the resolve of the partnership to stay the course. However, assuming that partners have made a commitment to the model forest concept and that each partner comes to the discussion table prepared to treat others with respect and consideration, debate can be constructive, and decisions can be well-considered and reflective of partner input.

Respect for the value of the knowledge of local communities, women and indigenous peoples.

Often the net benefit of forest use accrues to urban or distant users, while local communities contend with a depleted resource, degraded landscapes, or an unsustainable economy. These impacts impoverish communities in many ways other than economic, for example, by substituting outside values for existing indigenous values, or by marginalizing and diminishing the value of local knowledge about the forest, its uses, and cycles.

The model forest partnership and its programs respect the knowledge held by local communities, including that of women and aboriginal peoples, as fully legitimate and playing a vital role in contributing toward sustainability and achieving community well-being.

Attention to the quality of research results shared with members and partners of the Network.

The transfer of knowledge and technology within and amongst model forests is central to the idea of networking. The communication of experiences and advances toward improved forest management can accelerate similar developments in other sites and confirm for others the validity of their own conclusions. As much as managerial efficiency and financial integrity, the quality of work produced by a model forest is vital for effective local decision-making and for the credibility of the model forest partnership as a whole. A sound research program, accessible data, and quality technical reports are all part of this equation.

A recognition of the importance of information, communications, and global awareness with respect to sustainable forest management.

Sustainable forest management is much more than a technical or managerial challenge. It is also a significant communication issue. A crucial element of the SFM dialogue is the effective transfer of knowledge from the model forest to a wider audience so that the initiative is understood and supported on a broader level. The creation of information for this wider audience, its dissemination, and communication – from school children to adults, from local to national levels – is a necessary component in any model forest long-term strategy.

Ultimately, the fundamental reason for the Network's existence is its potential contribution to the management of the forest in ways that fulfil the needs of the present inhabitants of the planet while respecting and safeguarding the rights of future generations.

*This paper is available on the IMFN website at www.imfn.net.