



International Model Forest Network News

Connections

LANDSCAPES PARTNERSHIPS SUSTAINABILITY

2011 Issue 1

OUR VISION

To support, through Model Forests, management of the world's forest resources in a sustainable manner, reflecting environmental and socio-economic issues from the perspective of local needs and global concerns.

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INTRODUCTION

Two back-to-back events in Burgos, Spain from March 21-26 gave close to 400 participants from 62 countries an in-depth look at the issues and challenges of managing forest ecosystems and large landscapes around the world. *The International Symposium on Ecosystem and Landscape-level Approaches to Sustainability*—a conference of practitioners and experts in ecosystem-based management—was held March 21-23, and the triennial business meeting of the International Model Forest Network (IMFN)—*the 2011 IMFN Global Forum*—took place March 25-26. In between, a joint field trip to the Urbión Model Forest in Castile and Leon, Spain was attended by participants of both events. In this issue of *Connections* we present a summary and the key findings of the two events.

The International Symposium was an important event for the IMFN as it allowed Model Forest participants to get a closer look at international forestry and sustainable development policy considerations. As well, the event provided an opportunity for experts and policy-makers to comprehend the growth and reach of the Model Forest approach. According to the Executive Director of the IMFN Secretariat, Mr. Peter Besseau, “people working in Model Forests are doing exactly what the global policy-makers say needs to be done – turning policy into practice and demonstrating how this can be done.”

The 2011 IMFN Global Forum, which followed the Symposium, was a business meeting for the Model Forests that form the IMFN. Over 200 delegates from 32 countries gathered to network and share knowledge and to plan key thematic activities for the next three years. Mr. Besseau began by welcoming everyone to the “third Global Forum” while reminding attendees that one could say that this was the 5th such event as there had been meetings in Mexico in 1996 and in Halifax in 1999, in addition to the Global Forums in Costa Rica (2005) and in Canada (2008). Although international representatives participated in these earlier meetings, their numbers were limited. Since that time, the IMFN, to the credit of all its members, has become a truly worldwide initiative.

Both events generated discussion and inspired attendees to work hard to promote the ecosystem approach as critical in advancing the sustainability of our forests. It became apparent that key to this process will be development of links between ecosystem-based management approaches, and the organizations advancing them, to facilitate the sharing of information and experiences. To this end, the Symposium and Global Forum provided ample opportunity for participants from all corners of the world—from forest communities to the offices of international organizations and governments—to share ideas and exchange knowledge.



Section I:

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ECOSYSTEM AND LANDSCAPE-LEVEL APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABILITY

General Overview of Symposium

While the world's ecosystems are under strong and multiple pressures that threaten the critical life-sustaining values they represent, significant advances have also been made around the world that are positively impacting millions of hectares of forests and tens of millions of forest dependent people. *The International Symposium on Ecosystem and Landscape-level Approaches to Sustainability* brought together close to 400 experts and practitioners of ecosystem-based management from all over the world. The goals of the Symposium were:

- 1) To highlight the nature and magnitude of the significant body of work being delivered globally to advance understanding and application of ecosystem and landscape-level approaches to sustainable land use and management;
- 2) To create a forum to draw together representatives of the current capacity and experiences in landscape-level examples worldwide in order to better understand their value and prospects in term of potential impacts on policy, practice and decision-making from local to international levels;

- 3) To develop a strategic document of recommendations and suggestions on how to ensure that this body of evidence can be integrated into problem solving on sustainable use and management of landscapes and natural resources in the view of critical current and future challenges.

With a mix of keynote speakers, case study presenters, panels and small working group discussions, participants had an opportunity to learn about current approaches and engage in debate on the Symposium themes: ecosystem goods and services, inventory and monitoring, governance, and future directions.

The organizers of the Symposium were:

International Model Forest Network Secretariat • Natural Resources Canada • Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs, Spain • Regional Government of Castile and León, Spain.

Co-organizers included:

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) • Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) • International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) • Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity • International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



Summary of Key Findings and Future Directions

The two days of presentations, questions and discussion generated a number of conclusions. First, there was overwhelming agreement from participants that the ecosystem and landscape approach is essential in assessing the benefits of ecosystem goods and services and understanding key social, economic and ecological processes required for the achievement of sustainable natural resource management. Secondly, participants consistently highlighted the necessity to strengthen the link between science and policy while working towards engagement of multiple stakeholders and partners.

It was also clearly articulated that as a global community, the IMFN needs to better communicate its activities to policy makers and practitioners in a clear and coordinated manner to ensure a lasting impact. Throughout the event, initiatives such as Model Forests and biosphere reserves were highlighted as good examples of the type of approach required to promote and contribute to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes.

Finally, all the approaches to ecosystem and landscape-level management, and the organizations advancing them, need to be linked more effectively to facilitate the sharing of information and experiences which would lead to a greater overall impact.

Mr. Jim Ball, President, Commonwealth Forestry Association

Mr. Ball was asked to summarize and comment on the Symposium as the official reporter. Below are some highlights of his findings:

- 1) There is a need to maintain a diversity of ecosystems as a wise investment in providing forest goods and services as complex ecosystems are not only more adaptable to changes in climate but provide many more goods and services than simplified systems;
- 2) Climate change dominates all current forecasting and planning and overshadows international fora in discussions of finance and REDD+. The implementation of REDD+ faces both political challenges and technical constraints (especially in terms of monitoring and reporting and the valuation of goods and services). It is essential to first resolve technical issues in order to face the political challenges;
- 3) Good governance is a key issue;
- 4) Land tenure (private vs. public ownership) is an ongoing issue and urbanization of the world's population is another significant trend in the forestry sector. Two-thirds of the world's population is expected to live in cities by 2050 leading to the increasing importance of urban trees and forests.

Mr. Ball felt that the principles governing Model Forests represent important tools to sustainably manage the multiplicity of interests in large forest-based landscapes with two of those principles well emphasized at the Symposium:

- 1) the need for broadly defined research within a valid program, and
 - 2) the overriding importance of participatory approaches.
- Mr. Ball concluded by challenging the participants in two areas:

1. The need to improve the exchange of information and experience among IMFN members
2. The communication of results, not just within the forestry community but to the general public, the policy-makers and those who hold the purse strings



Reflections from International Organizations

Tim Christophersen, Program Officer for Forest Biodiversity, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Landscape-level planning is becoming increasingly important as pressures on our natural resources and biodiversity are mounting. The new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (CBD decision X/2) can only be implemented if land-use planning is further improved, and if relevant stakeholders have access to information and to decision-making processes. The ecosystem approach provides the blueprint for such comprehensive planning and ecosystem management, but we need more concrete experience and tools for its implementation. The International Symposium was very useful to present and discuss options for improving agriculture and forestry in a landscape perspective. The CBD Secretariat will bring the results of the Symposium to the attention of Parties to the CBD at the fifteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in Montreal, 7–11 November 2011.

Jim Carle, Leader, Forest Management Team, Forestry Department, FAO

The Burgos meeting provided an excellent forum for a diverse group of scientists, policy-makers, managers and academics from all regions of the world to share their knowledge and technology on ecosystem and landscape approaches in both formal and informal settings. This Symposium cemented the need to have cohesion between the fundamental pillars of monitoring, governance, management, science, capacity building and outreach. The Symposium was held in the beautiful culturally important setting in Burgos, with an educational and cultural field trip to the Urbión Model Forest. The warm hospitality made up for the brisk weather.

Theo Breedon, Manager, Program Development and Fundraising, CUSO-VSO

The Symposium and Global Forum provided an opportunity to observe the scope and breadth of activity surrounding the International Model Forest Network and the various agencies and organizations affiliated with this important body. CUSO-VSO has been involved with Model Forest activities over the last ten years through the support of volunteers, from both Canada and Southern partner countries, in areas ranging from strategic planning, eco-tourism, e-commerce and land use management. CUSO-VSO looks forward to discussing new and exciting ways to continue working with the IMFN, building on a decade's worth of experience.

Dr. Hosny Al-Lakany, IMFN International Advisory Council

From the perspective of a member of the IMFN International Advisory Council, the fact that the 2011 Global Forum was combined with the International Symposium on Ecosystem and Landscape-level Approaches to Sustainability was very beneficial for the participants and cost-effective for the Network. It was particularly rewarding to give participants from developing and developed countries a chance to meet and interact with some eminent leaders in international forestry and related fields in an informal setting. The diversity of participants at the two events encouraged meaningful discussions and facilitated new partnerships. Many participants believe, however, that the highlight of the week was the introduction of and debate around the draft IMFN Charter. Given the current size of the IMFN and the expected growth, the IMFN Charter will be a key element in assuring a healthy and consolidated Network in the future.





Section II:

THE IMFN GLOBAL FORUM

Overview of the 2011 Global Forum

The triennial meeting of the IMFN was held in Burgos, Spain immediately following the *International Symposium on Ecosystem and Landscape-level Approaches to Sustainability*. The event gathered 225 participants from 32 countries, including Canada, Africa, Europe and Russia, Asia and the Americas. Long-standing members of the Network agree that the 2011 Global Forum was the most successful IMFN event to date in terms of attendance, profile and accomplishments. Three key objectives were identified:

- 1) To provide IMFN members with networking and knowledge sharing opportunities
- 2) To discuss the proposed IMFN Charter
- 3) To discuss specific IMFN Strategic Initiatives in order to plan Network activities for the next three years that will respond to local partnership needs and global forest policy priorities

The 2011 Global Forum was organized into two main sections. The first was dedicated to reports from the regional networks and IMFN committees. The second part of the meeting focused on development of the Strategic Initiatives, or key themes, being undertaken by the IMFN: climate change, ecological goods and services, community sustainability and knowledge sharing.

A field trip to Urbión Model Forest took place the day before the Global Forum was officially opened. Participants also celebrated the Spanish National Tree Day during the field visit where they observed sustainable forest harvesting and demonstrations of sustainable forest management practices. Participants also visited a number of companies and sites which provided an opportunity to see how economic, social and cultural interests are being considered in the context of conserving local natural resources.



IMFN Charter

The concept for a Charter was raised by the IMFN International Advisory Council in 2009, who recommended that the Network establish a structural framework for moving forward. The Charter is designed to build a strong and healthy foundation for the ongoing institutional development of the IMFN. The document is formulated to highlight the IMFN's key objectives, define roles and responsibilities of membership, formalize general IMFN procedures, and reinforce the existing Framework of Model Forest Principles and Attributes. The draft was presented at the Global Forum and initial comments were received from the various IMFN regions. Discussion on the draft Charter will continue in the coming months with the goal of finalizing the document by the end of the year.

Summary of Strategic Initiative Planning Sessions

The Strategic Initiative planning sessions provided IMFN members with an opportunity to discuss and collaborate on key themes relevant to the local activities of their Model Forests. Representatives from all IMFN regions participated in each session facilitating networking and an exchange of knowledge and ideas related to the themes. A key objective of the discussions was to identify priorities for the IMFN for the next three years.

A key conclusion was the reaffirmation of the IMFN Strategic Initiatives identified at the 2008 IMFN Global Forum: climate change, ecological goods and services and community sustainability. It was also recommended that knowledge sharing, as a guiding principle of the IMFN, be incorporated into all activities rather than remain as a "stand-alone" Strategic Initiative. Within the Strategic Initiatives, participants identified key priorities to guide activities over the next three years:

- **Climate Change:** 1) adaptation to climate change, and 2) mitigation, monitoring and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)
- **Ecosystem Goods and Services:** 1) methodologies for measurement, valuation and payment for ecological services, 2) capacity building, knowledge sharing and integration of policy and practice, and 3) landscape and watershed management
- **Community Sustainability:** 1) commercialization of local products and services, and 2) investment and capacity building of local human resources and leadership

Working Groups will be formed for each Strategic Initiative with representation from across the IMFN. The groups will be responsible for developing strategies and identifying opportunities for Model Forest and IMFN involvement in activities related to each theme. A Communications and Knowledge Sharing Community of Practice is also being formed which will provide a forum for IMFN members interested exchanging ideas and practices on communications and knowledge sharing.



Reflections from Regional Networks

Johann Svensson *Sweden*

The 2011 IMFN Global Forum made a strong impression on the participants from Sweden and strengthened global recognition of the IMFN. The Global Forum highlighted strong development in the Mediterranean Region and in Africa in particular, which emphasizes the capacity within the Model Forest concept to be applicable in many different circumstances and types of landscapes. As well, the IMFN Strategic Initiatives that are shared among Model Forests within and across the regional networks now have become fully recognized as fundamental strategies for advancing further sustainability and multi-purpose land management and uses.

Ronnie de Camino

Ibero-American Model Forest Network

The growth of the IMFN gives one a sense of optimism with a dash of precaution. Key in the process of IMFN expansion will be the role of the regional networks which need to take on more responsibilities, particularly in the long-term. Regional networks can play a greater role in promoting sustainable rural development and in achieving the objectives of international initiatives. The IMFN Charter discussion was a historic event and reiterates the important global presence of the IMFN and the good spirit of participation defining its operating collective procedures. As well, the Strategic Initiatives are an important international manifestation of the way Model Forests work together to develop strategies for the future of the Model Forests. This will create more visibility for the Network and help it to be taken seriously as a global initiative.

Przemyslaw Majewski

Russia

The growth of the regional networks of the IMFN represents a decentralization that is very positive and substantial. Given this decentralization, the IMFN Strategic Initiatives have become an important way for Model Forests across regions to work together to help maintain the cohesiveness of the IMFN. The Strategic Initiative break-out groups were a very efficient way to contribute to the discussions. Overall, the IMFN has developed a comfort level as a large global group that helps members to address important issues.

Leanne Elliot

Canadian Model Forest Network

The organizing committee and hosts should be commended for all their hard work that contributed to making the event a great success. Everyone who participated was open to new ideas and developing partnerships which further enforced the purpose of the Network. This helped to identify common issues across regions and build links that would have been challenging otherwise. The CMFN made a strong region-to-region connection to the African Model Forest Network; these groups are now looking at how they can work together for mutual benefit and learning. As a result of the meeting, the CMFN better understands how its activities fit into the global framework, giving it more focus for participating in the future of the network.



Angeline Ndo

African Model Forest Network

The members of the African Model Forest Network greatly appreciated the atmosphere at the Global Forum. The collegial ambiance where ideas were openly accepted and discussed was refreshing. The African Model Forest Network believes strongly in the Model Forest approach as a method for finding solutions for African communities as they strive for sustainability. The African delegation is counting on the IMFN to put in place all the suggestions of the Global Forum participants so that the IMFN can grow and improve as a global network.

Miguel Segur

Mediterranean Model Forest Network

The Global Forum provided a venue for networking that has contributed to reinforcing interregional cooperation. A great deal of networking happened throughout the week between Model Forests from around the world and between members of regional networks. The Strategic Initiatives provide the IMFN with a focus and a great deal of hope. The Mediterranean Model Forest Network would like to see the Strategic Initiatives developed with a strong vision and goals that are clear and ambitious while taking care that the final configuration is not constrained by conceptual limits between working groups (i.e., we can find interesting ideas that cross the borders between the groups, tackling more than one subject in each Strategic Initiative).

Isabelo Montejo

Regional Model Forest Network – Asia

The Asia Regional Network greatly appreciated all the work that went into producing the Symposium and the Global Forum in Burgos, Spain, from which they derived many new ideas. The IMFN Strategic Initiatives are a very important part of the plan to strengthen the Regional Model Forest Network – Asia and the IMFN in general. The regional network was also happy to contribute as a team to the IMFN draft Charter. Recognizing the need to strengthen communications with other IMFN regional networks to benefit from their experience, some priorities for the Asian Network in the coming years will be to strengthen operations, prioritize activities and secure funding.

REGIONAL NETWORKS

Canadian Model Forest Network



Mediterranean Model Forest Network



Russia and Northern Europe



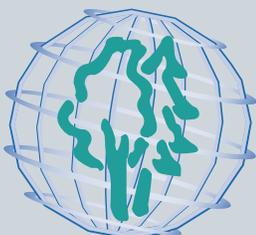
Ibero-American Model Forest Network



African Model Forest Network

Regional Model Forest Network – Asia

- member
- candidate
- ★ Regional Model Forest Secretariat
- ★ IMFN Secretariat



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