



IMFN Climate: **Scaling up Nature-Based Leadership Platforms for Climate Resilience, Restoring Degraded Forest Landscapes and Biodiversity**

Key Achievements – Year 1 January – March 2023



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

List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| ACOFOP | Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén / Association of Forest Communities of Petén |
| CATIE | Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza / Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center |
| CFS | Canadian Forest Service |
| COP | Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention |
| FLR | Forest Landscape Restoration |
| G7 | Group of Seven intergovernmental political & economic forum |
| IMFN | International Model Forest Network |
| IMFN Climate | Scaling up Nature-Based Leadership Platforms for Climate Resilience, Restoring Degraded Forest Landscapes and Biodiversity Program |
| NRCan | Natural Resources Canada |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| RBFM | Red Brasileña de Bosques Modelo / Brazilian Model Forest Network |
| RLABM | Red Latinoamericana de Bosques Modelo / Latin American Model Forest Network |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCBD | United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

IMFN Climate: Scaling-Up Nature-Based Leadership Platforms **Year 1 at a Glance: January – March 2023**

In the three months following the December funding announcement at COP15 of the *IMFN Climate* initiative (2022–2023), Can\$316,365 was invested in a project developed in Latin America by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), which is the host of the Latin American Model Forest Network (RLABM) in Costa Rica. This investment is part of the commitment of Can\$18.7 million for the next four years, with which the Government of Canada will support the expansion of nature-based leadership platforms for climate resilience, restoration of degraded forests and landscapes, ecological recovery, inclusive landscape governance and generation of the next forest leaders equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to face future challenges.

This initial investment allowed the first steps in the training of future leaders and agents of change, with the awarding of seven scholarships for the study of professional master's degrees for students from five Latin American countries, with research to be carried out in some of the territories of the Model Forests and on issues of landscape restoration, climate change and governance.

In addition, this included participatory and inclusive governance work, displayed through the consolidation of the Brazilian Model Forest Network in a meeting held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil as well as the preparation, development and coordination of the September 2023 RLABM board meeting in the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest in Guatemala.

IMFN Climate is part of the Government of Canada's commitment to act on climate change, its responsibility to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the landscape restoration initiatives of the Bonn Challenge, the 20x20 initiative, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and to support nature-based solutions in developing countries.

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1. Background & Project Orientation

1.1 Background

As Canada welcomed the world to the COP15 (Conference of the Parties) biodiversity conference in Montreal, on this past 12 December 2022, Canada announced an investment of Can\$18.7 million over 4 years in support of Scaling-up Nature-Based Leadership Platforms. Through the proven partnerships of the International Model Forest Network in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible countries, this investment will support efforts to scale up forest and landscape restoration, enable inclusive landscape governance and equip the next generation of forest leaders to address the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The investment represents an allocation of Canada's five-year \$5.3 billion climate finance commitment made in 2021 and toward Canada's commitment that 20 percent of these funds go toward nature-based climate solutions and projects that contribute biodiversity co-benefits.

This investment in the International Model Forest Network will not only help support developing countries in their transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient, nature-positive and inclusive sustainable development but also contribute in part to delivering on Canada's commitments under the Global Forest Finance Pledge and the Forests and Leaders' Partnership.

There is no solution to climate change and terrestrial biodiversity loss that does not involve healthy forest ecosystems. Forest ecosystems and how we sustainably manage forests are a key, nature-based solution to many issues, including climate mitigation, biodiversity loss and increased efforts in conservation.

The concerns that inspired the International Model Forest Network more than 30 years ago have become increasingly relevant today. Inclusive best practices and shared governance approaches to natural resource management are an important part of a collaborative, international effort to fight climate change and biodiversity and habitat loss. Through this investment, we are advancing our commitment to international climate finance, restoring important lands and forests and helping to support the next generation of forest leaders.

1.2 IMFN Climate Objectives

Through the proven partnerships of the IMFN, *IMFN Climate* will assist Model Forests in at least 10 Official Development Assistance (ODA)-eligible countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Over four years, from January 2023 through March 2026, the initiative aims to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration from forest/lands through:

- 1. Place-based investments in Nature-based Solutions through Forest and landscape restoration (FLR):** provide financing for rehabilitation and enhanced resilience actions on the ground in at least 10 countries with a focus on women, indigenous peoples and youth in implementing landscape restoration strategies that yield increased environmental, biodiversity and socio-economic benefits
- 2. Strengthened gender equity in sustainable forest and land management:** increasing the role of women in the planning and decision-making of developing landscape restoration strategies, landscape monitoring and land-use planning tools through leadership programming, alternative economic opportunities for local people, small grants programs and/or other sustainable, locally-driven and locally-relevant initiatives
- 3. Knowledge for development in forest and natural resource management education:** enhancing women's and community organizational capacity for sustainable management of local resources through the training of current and future overseas forestry professionals as well as the promotion of sustainable management and use of resources at the landscape level.

The initiative will also directly support multiple policy activities under the UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD and the associated UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030, the G7 2030 Nature Compact, and the United Nations Global Forest Goals. The initiative builds on Natural Resources Canada's successful delivery of *RESTAURacción: Wildfire Restoration in Latin America*.



Fazenda Santa Lucia demonstration farm in Serra do Brigadeiro Protected Area, in the Mata Atlântica Model Forest, Brazil © RLBM

1.3 IMFN Climate: Logic Model and Expected Outcomes



Figure 1: IMFN Climate Program Logic Model from overarching Monitoring and Evaluation indicators from Global Affairs Canada: Canada’s \$5.3 billion International Climate Finance Program Logic Model (IMFN Secretariat, 2023)

1.4 Links with CFS and IMFN Objectives

IMFN Climate addresses multiple Government of Canada international assistance, and multilateral priorities, particularly those relating to climate change and nature-based solutions, food security, growth that works for everyone, community and women's empowerment, and effective and inclusive governance. *IMFN Climate* applies the Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy to ensure the needs, interests and experiences of women, men and young people from the communities and organizations involved are an integral part of each step of the project.

IMFN Climate builds on and strengthens the IMFN, reinforcing Model Forests' comparative advantage as a convener of multi-stakeholder partnerships; their catalytic role in promoting long-term investments in sustainable land use; and building on a well-established platform that is strongly branded to Canada while reinforcing our environmental reputation as a forest leader. Building on the global recognition that Canada is a world leader in sustainable forest management, we remain committed, actively and concretely contributing to the implementation of nature-based climate solutions.

1.5 IMFN Climate: Fiscal Year 2022/23 Final Expenditures

| Model Forest | Country | Implementer | Amount financed (CAD) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Latin American Model Forest Network | Regional (Costa Rica) | Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación Y Enseñanza (CATIE) | 316,365 |

1.6 IMFN Climate Fiscal Year 2022/23 in Numbers



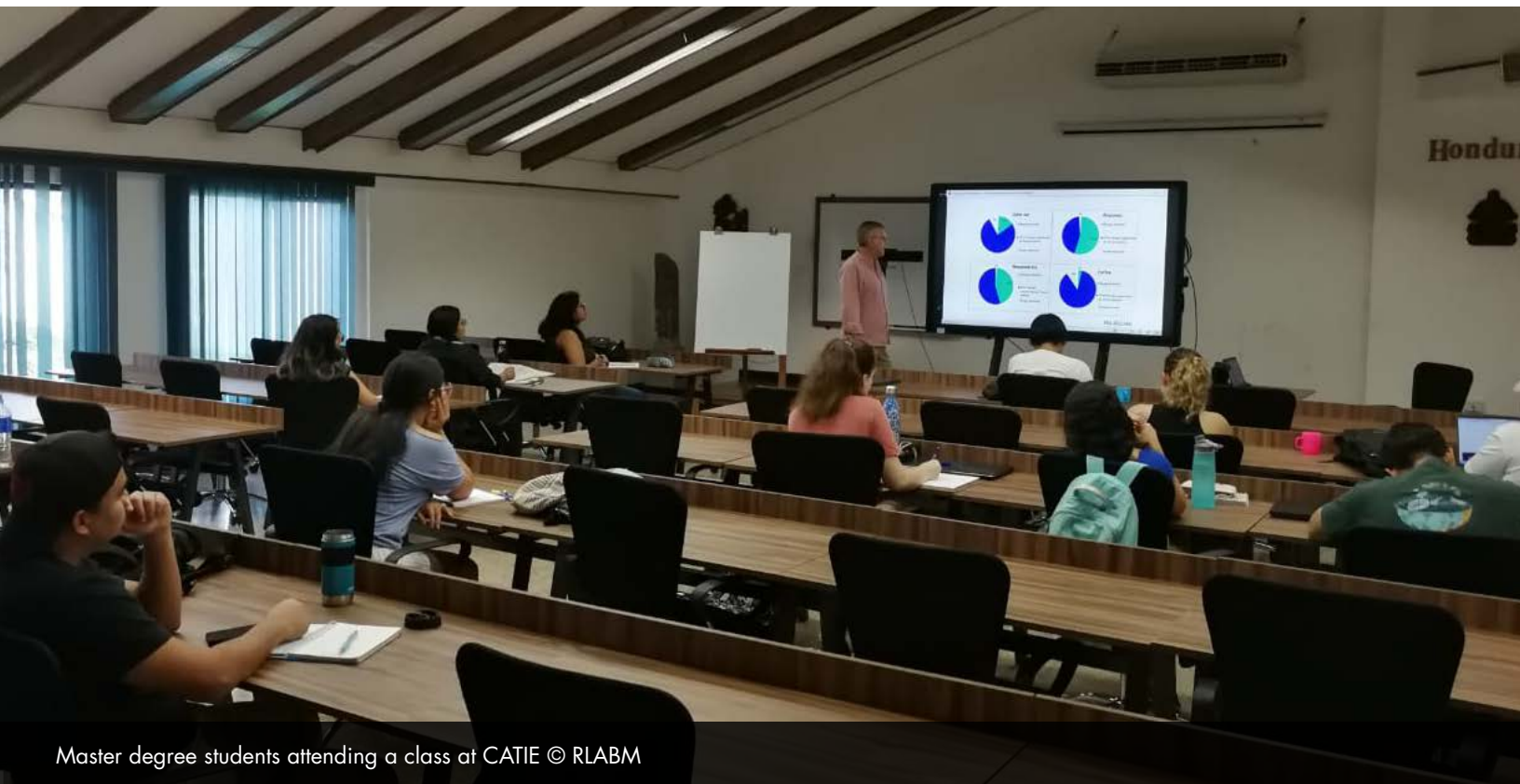
2. Achievement of Objectives

Facing an implementing calendar of only three months, project partners achieved a lot during the Year 1 project timeframe with a focus on knowledge for development: capacity building in scientific and technical research in landscape restoration and the improvement of technical capacities in governance and landscape restoration, with a cross-cutting axis of gender equity focused on increasing the role of women in planning and decision-making in the development of landscape restoration strategies.

2.1 Knowledge for development

Regarding the development of scientific research capabilities: financial support was provided for the awarding of seven scholarships for master's degree studies at CATIE's Graduate School, ensuring five full scholarships and two partial scholarships, 57% of which are women from Brazil (two), Peru (one) and Honduras (one) and 43% are men from Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru. Scholarship recipients were selected after a rigorous selection process.

The research projects, such as wildfire impacts on biodiversity, to biomass and carbon estimates in mangroves, and success factors of community forestry can have different direct and indirect impacts on the local level, as they seek to analyze problems or search for innovative solutions. In addition, each of the students, once trained, will return to their countries and localities of origin to develop their professional careers where they will continue to generate valuable knowledge and the application and design of solutions based on nature, for the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in their region, as well as for the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. All this with a focus on gender equity, where they are also expected to integrate the different strategies of the gender approach in their activities.



Master degree students attending a class at CATIE © RLBM

Table 1. Masters Degree Research profiles financed by *IMFN Climate* during Fiscal Year 2022–23

| Research Topic | Country | Model Forest |
|--|----------------|---------------------------|
| Networks of knowledge facilitators, decision-makers and information flows that include scientific evidence on the impact of fire on the biodiversity of the Pantanal | Brazil | Pantanal Model Forest |
| Ecological succession in mangrove rehabilitation sites | Costa Rica | Chorotega Model Forest |
| Estimation of biomass and carbon content in mangroves of the Gulf of Nicoya from drone imagery | Costa Rica | Chorotega Model Forest |
| Ecosystem resource monitoring system and creation of management tools in the Gulf of Nicoya, Costa Rica | Costa Rica | Chorotega Model Forest |
| Governance, restoration and protection against forest fires in the Model Forest of the Andean Chocó Bio-Region of Pichincha, Ecuador | Ecuador | Chocó Andino Model Forest |
| Impacts of coffee processing on water resources and the capacity of the local and community institutions to manage the environmental regulation and surveillance in the Trifinio municipalities of Guatemala | Guatemala | N/A |
| Success factors of community forestry in three sites in Mexico | Mexico | N/A |

2.2 Nature-based solutions and investments

Under the activities to improve the technical capacity of landscape restoration governance, technical assistance was provided to consolidate the Brazilian Model Forest Network (RBFM), and to the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest in Guatemala to plan the XXXII RLAMM annual board meeting¹.

In Belo Horizonte (Brazil) from March 27–29, 2023, the president, the manager and a close collaborator of the RLAMM Secretariat participated in the first meeting of the Brazilian Model Forest Network. Based on experience of other Model Forests in the region, technical assistance was provided to strengthen partnerships and formalize the RBFM governance.

The meeting of the RBFM represented an opportunity to articulate challenges, stakeholders and potential partnerships throughout Brazil's landscapes and promote better governance for sustainable management of natural resources and improve livelihoods in each territory. RBFM seeks to consolidate these participatory governance processes in Brazil for the construction of synergies around sustainability, in ecosystems as varied as Amazon, Pantanal, Atlantic Forest, Cerrado, Caatinga and Araucaria forests, and in regions as widely distributed as Pará, Bahia, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais and Paraná.

“This consolidation currently makes up the largest national network in the world, with about 13 million hectares and approximately 3.5 million inhabitants”

— Kolbe Soares, WWF researcher, president of the RBFM

During this meeting, the participants analyzed the challenges of participatory governance for sustainable development in Brazilian forest landscapes, shared experiences and lessons learned from the various processes of research and promotion of human development, from areas such as sustainable production of timber and non-timber forest products, the construction of social agreements involving various cultural approaches and public and private interests, land management and a wide range of approaches to the restoration of specific landscapes and ecosystems. Forest landscape conservation and restoration efforts in the Mata Atlântica region were also presented in the field.

The participation of RLAMM representatives contributed to clarify different aspects of the Model Forest concept, supporting discussions on the constraints, opportunities and actions that each landscape is undertaking, advising on paths and steps for the consolidation of the national network. Although this advice and meeting may have differing levels of impacts on the area of each Model Forest, the conversations and presentations with people from the Brazilian Model Forests certainly have an impact in themselves as representatives of each locality.

¹ The XXXII RLAMM board meeting took place in the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest, in Guatemala, in September 2023. This project supported virtual coordination meetings between the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest and the RLAMM Secretariat, and the creation of the schedule for the event.

In addition, technical assistance was provided to the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest in Guatemala for the organization of the XXXII RLABM Annual Board Meeting. Through virtual coordination meetings, the RLABM Secretariat and the Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén (Association of Forestry Communities of the Petén – ACOFOP), the lead organization in Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest for the organization of this event, planned the 5-day meeting. Along with the board of directors meeting and field visits to Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest partners, a 2-day sessional workshop on "Models of tenure rights of forests and landscapes in Latin America" was organized. These topics have great impact and relevance at local level for the different Model Forests and are very important to promote gender equity and landscape restoration in the region.

It should be noted that the Manejo Forestal Biosfera Maya Model Forest is one of the most recent Model Forests to be established and accepted as a member of the IMFN (officially joining in 2022). This initiative is also recognized in the region as an example of participatory governance and excellent sustainable landscape management of more than half a million hectares of subtropical forests, with more than 25 years of experience with community forestry.



Visit to the Mata Atlântica Model Forest in Brazil © RLABM



Marcelo Araki
Analista IEF | Coordenador Estadual
do Projeto Conexão Mata Atlântica



First Meeting of the Brazilian Network of Model Forests (RBFM) (available in Portuguese only)



CATIE leads training process for leaders in forest and forest landscape restoration in Latin America in the face of Climate Change



CATIE supports participatory governance of forest landscapes in Brazil



Ambassador to Costa Rica visits CATIE to strengthen cooperation projects

3. Reflections on Lessons Learned

Despite the short implementation period, the Model Forest concept promoted by RLABM representatives is intrinsically linked to better management of nature, forests and landscapes. Thus, the adoption of nature-based solutions, such as sustainable forest management, agroforestry, various restoration models among others, are central to discussions on opportunities in landscape management.

a. Next generation of forest leaders – Action

beyond Words: There are lasting contributions for the next generation of forest leaders by making restoration and nature-based solutions a high priority for CATIE's Master's degree program. This is the beginning of the preparation of young professionals who will have the knowledge and skills to develop new strategies for mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change in natural resources, the impact of which will be reflected in the medium and long-term implementation and delivery on global, regional, national and local forest goals/commitments.

b. The road towards UNFCCC COP30 (Brazil):

These first-year investments contributed significantly to the establishment, consolidation and action planning of the national-level Brazilian Model Forest Network, as well as towards the planning of the board of directors of the Latin American Model Forest Network being held between September 3 and 8, 2023.

“Participatory cross-sectoral governance processes are an opportunity to promote new approaches to territorial management that give local inhabitants the opportunity to build their resilience and improve their capacity to adapt to climate change in Brazil”

— Róger Villalobos, CATIE researcher,
president of RLABM

The Model Forest concept and its six (6) principles and attributes encompass the promotion of participatory decision-making processes with an inclusive approach, seeking the empowerment of women and youth in the territories. In this context, as part of the technical assistance provided to the Model Forests, there is ongoing advice to create and strengthen inclusive spaces for dialogue and efforts to bridge gender and generational gaps.

4. Future Perspectives & Conclusions

Following the announcement of this Can\$18.7M at CBD COP15 in Montreal on December 12, 2022, in a very short execution period from January to March 2023, *IMFN Climate's* implementing partner in FY2022/23 promoted the adoption of nature-based solutions through capacity building in scientific research and landscape restoration techniques. Through the investment during this first fiscal year, seven young leaders and change agents, mainly women, are beginning to flourish in RLABM member countries and governance is being strengthened by supporting the consolidation of the Brazilian Model Forest Network and guiding preparations for the exchange of experiences at RLABM board meetings.

Both actions focus on protecting, restoring and sustainably managing Model Forests in ways that increase their resilience and capacity to address environmental and social challenges while safeguarding biodiversity and enhancing human well-being.

Part of this success is due to the established governance platforms — the Model Forests — fostering close cooperation with local stakeholders, eager to contribute to the sustainable management, governance and restoration of their landscapes. Through a commitment to knowledge sharing and networking, *IMFN Climate's* Year 1 results are scalable to all Model Forests in ODA eligible countries, and more broadly throughout the 60+ Model Forests in 30+ countries of the International Model Forest Network.

This is the beginning of four years of implementation for the *IMFN Climate* initiative, which with the help of the multiple partners of the International Model Forest Network will fund a further Can\$18.4 million over the next three years in developing countries to foster the implementation of Nature-based Solutions through FLR alongside investments in human capacity for sustainable management of forests and natural resources with a gender equity approach.

This continued financial support from the Government of Canada's \$5.3 Billion International Climate Finance Program will enable the *IMFN* Secretariat team and Model Forest partners to further pursue *IMFN Climate's* aims to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration from forest/lands through: i) place-based investments in Nature-based Solutions through Forest and landscape restoration (FLR); ii) Strengthened gender equity in sustainable forest and land management; and iii) Knowledge for development in forest and natural resource management education.

Annex A: Performance Indicators – *IMFN Climate* (Year 1)












The list below compiles the various results as self-reported by *IMFN Climate*'s implementing partners.

| # | Performance indicator(s) – <i>IMFN Climate</i> (Year 1) | Results as of March 2023 |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Number of current and future women forestry leaders receiving scholarships, grants or awards | 4 |
| 2 | Number of current and future male forestry leaders receiving scholarships, grants or awards | 3 |
| 3 | Number of academic and/or professional technical training courses offered (e-learning or face-to-face) | 0 |
| 4 | Percentage/total number of trained individuals (male/female) with improved knowledge and skills to develop and implement nature-based climate solutions that also benefit biodiversity (disaggregated by indigenous people; youth; community members; government officials; civil society members; private sector members) | 0 |
| 5 | Number of technical reports, guidelines and/or protocols established (with a list of individual titles, copies and/or links) | 2 |
| 6 | Number of face-to-face exchanges, workshops and/or knowledge sessions (include a total count of participants, disaggregated by gender) | 1 |
| 7 | Number of virtual exchanges, virtual workshops and/or virtual knowledge sessions, including webinars (include a total count of participants, disaggregated by gender) | 0 |
| 8 | Number of written testimonials, audiovisuals, podcasts or recorded multimedia interviews (with a list of titles, copies or links) | 5 |
| 9 | Number of stories or testimonies of change in attitudes, behaviors and practices that promote gender equality and inclusion in relation to climate change | 0 |

* Note: these are self-reported by Implementing Partners through their final technical reporting templates under their contribution agreements. Some deviation may occur between these figures and those summarized in the body of this Achievements Report, which is authored by the *IMFN* Secretariat and its staff based on interpretations and context. For evaluative purposes, not all figures are mutually exclusive between indicators.

Annex B: Compilation of Knowledge Products (Year 1)

The list below compiles the various reports, products and media developed by *IMFN Climate's* implementing partners.

| Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) | |
|---|--|
|  <p>Investigation profile: International scientific master's degree in management and conservation of tropical forests and biodiversity</p> <p>Sucesión ecológica en sitios de rehabilitación de manglares</p> |  <p>Informe de Viaje Minas Gerais, Brasil</p> |
|  <p>Investigation profile: International scientific master's degree in management and conservation of tropical forests and biodiversity</p> <p>Estimación de biomasa y contenido de carbono en manglares del Golfo de Nicoya a partir de imágenes de drones</p> |  <p>Informe para la coordinación de la XXXII Reunión del Directorio de la RLABM Petén, Guatemala</p> |
|  <p>Investigation profile: International scientific master's degree in management and conservation of tropical forests and biodiversity</p> <p>Factores de éxito de la forestería comunitaria en tres sitios en México</p> |  <p>News: CATIE apoya la gobernanza participativa de paisajes forestales en Brasil</p> |
|  <p>Investigation profile: International scientific master's degree in management and conservation of tropical forests and biodiversity</p> <p>Impactos del procesamiento del café en la etapa del beneficio en el recurso hídrico superficial y la capacidad de la institucionalidad local y comunitaria para la regulación y vigilancia ambiental en los Municipios de Guatemala del Trifinio</p> |  <p>News: Successful CATIE project with support from the Canadian government concludes</p> |
|  <p>Investigation profile: International Scientific master's degree in management And Conservation of Tropical Forests and Biodiversity</p> <p>Redes de facilitadores del conocimiento, responsables de la toma de decisiones y flujos de información que incluyan pruebas científicas sobre el impacto del fuego en la biodiversidad del Pantanal</p> |  <p>Investigation profile: International Scientific master's degree in management and Conservation of Tropical Forests and Biodiversity</p> <p>Sistema de monitoreo de los recursos ecosistémicos y creación de instrumentos de gestión en Golfo de Nicoya, Costa</p> |
|  <p>Investigation profile: International Scientific master's degree in management And Conservation of Tropical Forests and Biodiversity</p> <p>Gobernanza, restauración y protección ante los fuegos forestales en el Bosque Modelo de la Bio Región del Chocó Andino de Pichincha, Ecuador</p> | |

This publication has been produced with financial support from the Government of Canada's Global Forest Leadership Program and through the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) Secretariat's IMFN Climate initiative which supports efforts to scale up forest and landscape restoration, enable inclusive landscape governance, and equip the next generation of forest leaders to address the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.