

International Model Forest Network Charter

This Charter sets out the way the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) conducts its business and what it means to be part of the Network. Through voluntary participation in the IMFN, members agree to uphold this Charter.

Article 1 – Name and Purpose

1.1 The Network will be known as the “International Model Forest Network” (hereinafter referred to as the “IMFN”).

French: Réseau international de Forêts Modèles (RIFM)

Spanish: Red Internacional de Bosques Modelo (RIBM)

1.2 The IMFN is a voluntary global community of practice whose members and supporters work toward the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources through the Model Forest approach.

1.3 The IMFN’s vision is to support, through Model Forests, the 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.

1.4 The primary goal of the IMFN is to establish a global network of Model Forests that represents the majority of the major forest ecosystems of the world. It also strives to ensure that all partners, regardless of political or economic status, can contribute to, and share in, the benefits of the Network as they work toward the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes.

The IMFN’s three key objectives are:

- a) To foster an international exchange of ideas, solutions and experiences relating to the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources;
- b) To support international cooperation in critical aspects of research and development that underlie new approaches to sustainable landscape and natural resource management;
- c) Use these concepts and applications to support ongoing international policy discussions on the criteria and principles of sustainable development.

Article 2 – Membership

2.1 The IMFN is comprised of all member Model Forests around the world that have been approved as either full members or candidate members through appropriate Network bodies and processes.

2.2 Membership in the IMFN is granted to those Model Forests that successfully meet and maintain the IMFN Principles and Attributes of Model Forests (see Annex A). Candidate status is granted when an applicant Model Forest has completed steps A and B of Article 2.3 below.

2.3 Application for membership must be submitted to the IMFN Secretariat (referred to in Article 6) and the Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable). A three-step process leading to membership includes the following¹:

- a) Submission of a Letter of Intent: A Letter of Intent to establish a Model Forest must be submitted to the IMFN Secretariat and Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable). The Letter should be submitted on behalf of Model Forest partners. The Letter of Intent must testify to the endorsement of an appropriate national or sub-national government agency, and, when possible, identify a dedicated focal point responsible for Model Forests within the national or sub-national government. The IMFN Secretariat and Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable) will confirm receipt of the Letter to the applicant and initiate discussion with the national or sub-national authority on subsequent steps and actions;
- b) The Model Forest proposal must describe, *inter alia*:
 - A profile of the proposed Model Forest area, including the physical, socio-economic and other unique features of the area;
 - A profile of the stakeholder groups involved;
 - The Model Forest's proposed organizational and governance structure;
 - The proposed vision, objectives and key program areas of the Model Forest, including what the proposed Model Forest can offer back to the Network in terms of expertise, research, programming, resources or other benefits;
 - Links to higher level policy priorities and objectives;
 - A financial plan including proposed sources of funding.

The proposal is to be submitted to the Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable) and the IMFN Secretariat. Following a successful review, the proposed Model Forest will be granted *Candidate Model Forest status* and will be invited to participate in IMFN activities;

- c) On-site Assessment: The last step of the application process is the official acceptance into the IMFN based upon a successful on-site assessment. The assessment will be performed by the IMFN Secretariat and Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable) after a reasonable period of time following the acceptance of the Model Forest's candidate status. If the assessment confirms the Model Forest's compliance with the IMFN Principles and Attributes Framework (Annex A), the Model Forest will receive *full membership status*.

2.4 Regional networks (where applicable) can determine subsequent steps required, if any, for full membership in compliance with their own policies and norms. In addition, Regions can further define benefits for full members vs. candidate sites.

2.5 Model Forests can lose membership status after prolonged periods of inactivity. The decision to delist a member lies with the IMFN Secretariat and Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable).

2.6 Membership in the IMFN (including applying theretofore) does not create any legally binding rights or obligations whatsoever.

Article 3 – Principles of Engagement

3.1 Member Model Forests (hereinafter referred to as "members") will share a common commitment to support, develop and operate their Model Forest consistent with the IMFN Principles and Attributes Framework (Annex 1).

¹ Guidance documents on these steps can be found at <<http://www.imfn.net>>

3.2 Members are expected to contribute to and participate in the life of the IMFN through their interaction in its governance bodies, committees, strategic initiatives and in other ways that advance the goals and objectives of the IMFN and those of its members.

3.3 Members are expected to undertake communications and knowledge exchange, capacity building, and, when necessary and appropriate, actively seek funding opportunities in support of those activities and of their local and regional programming in general.

3.4 Member Model Forests are the primary responsibility of the organizations that make up their respective partnerships, including national and/or sub-national authorities.

Article 4 – IMFN Members’ responsibilities and obligations

4.1 Members will aspire to uphold and promote the goals and the objectives of the IMFN.

4.2 Members will endeavour to actively participate in the activities and meetings of the IMFN and of their respective Regional Network (where applicable), resources permitting.

4.3 As part of their responsibility to act as advocates for members, International and Regional Secretariats depend on timely and relevant information. To that end, members will report on their activities to the IMFN Secretariat and their Regional Network Secretariats (where applicable) at least on an annual basis in a format and according to timelines agreed upon between the IMFN Secretariat and respective Regional Network Secretariats (where applicable).

4.4 Members will conduct the affairs of their Model Forest in a manner consistent with the IMFN Principles and Attributes Framework (Annex A) and will agree to periodic assessment against the Framework by the IMFN Secretariat and Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable).

4.5 Members will clearly identify themselves as belonging to the IMFN and their Regional and/or National Network (where applicable) in all public communications.

Article 5 - IMFN Assembly and the IMFN Global Forum

5.1 The IMFN Assembly is comprised of all member Model Forests.

5.2 Representatives of the IMFN Assembly, IMFN Secretariat, Regional Network secretariats, and IMFN Committees meet at the IMFN Global Forum (hereinafter referred to as “Global Forum”) every three (3) years, resources permitting. The Global Forum is open to observers, in consultation with the IMFN Secretariat.

5.3 The Global Forum is a business, technical, and networking meeting in which members share knowledge, review their accomplishments, address challenges, and agree on Network-wide and other strategic plans and initiatives for the three-year period following the Global Forum. Functions of the Global Forum are three-fold:

- a) For the IMFN Assembly to take decisions on specific matters;
- b) To strengthen collaboration and synergies among members;

- c) To strengthen collaboration and visibility for the IMFN among other relevant initiatives and programmes, including international forest policy priorities, in support of IMFN and member goals and objectives.

5.4 The Global Forum is convened and organized by the IMFN Secretariat in coordination with the appropriate Regional Network Secretariat (where applicable) and host Model Forest.

5.5 During the Global Forum, the IMFN Assembly will receive reports of the IMFN and Regional Network secretariats and standing committees, and take decisions if sought and deemed necessary by those secretariats and committees.

5.6 Policies and operational matters with regard to strategic directions of the IMFN will be decided by the IMFN Assembly.

5.7 Decisions reached by the IMFN Assembly will be based on consensus.

5.8 The quorum for the IMFN Assembly is set at 50% of all member Model Forests with representation of at least two Model Forests from each region.

Article 6 – IMFN Secretariat

6.1 The IMFN Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as the “IMFN Secretariat” or “Secretariat”) provides the central day-to-day coordination of support and development services to the IMFN, and develops and strengthens the IMFN and its profile internationally. It is responsible for, *inter alia*, the preparation, coordination and arrangement of the IMFN Global Forum and Committee meetings, and any other relevant IMFN-related meetings. Resources permitting, the Secretariat supports Regional Networks and member Model Forests in the following areas:

- a) International advocacy and representation;
- b) Resource mobilization;
- c) Technical and logistical issues in establishing and operating Model Forests;
- d) International communications, networking and knowledge management/sharing;
- e) International-level strategic initiatives;
- f) Targeted program support (as available);
- g) Partnership development and capacity-building;
- h) Impact monitoring and evaluation.

6.2 The Secretariat is the focal point for all official IMFN communications including the administration of a website. All official communications on behalf of the IMFN are the exclusive responsibility of the Secretariat.

6.3 The three working languages of the IMFN are English, French and Spanish.

6.4 One representative from the Secretariat will be invited to serve as a non-voting participant at meetings of the Regional Networks’ Boards or Steering Committees (see Article 8 below).

6.5. The Secretariat will publish an IMFN annual report on activities and other information it deems appropriate based principally upon documentation, including regional reports, submitted by regions, as well as additional documentation and information collected over the preceding reporting period.

6.6 The Government of Canada, through Natural Resources Canada—Canadian Forest Service, shall perform Secretariat duties until otherwise decided.

Article 7 – IMFN Committees

7.1 The Secretariat is supported by two standing committees: the International Advisory Council and the IMFN Networking Committee.

7.2 The International Advisory Council (hereinafter referred to as “IAC”) is comprised of experts on themes related to forest landscape management who agree to work in a voluntary capacity advising the IMFN Secretariat on high-level strategic matters concerning the IMFN’s development. The IAC meets at the discretion of the Chair.

- a) The IAC is chaired by the Head of the Canadian Forest Service or his/her designated alternate. The IMFN Secretariat serves as secretary for meetings of the IAC.
- b) The IMFN Secretariat will consult Regional Networks and INC members as part of the process for selecting IAC members .

7.3 The IMFN Networking Committee (hereinafter referred to as “INC”) acts as a strategic group for the IMFN and the Secretariat as a body that identifies trends, issues, and opportunities of global or regional importance in support of inter-regional networking. The INC acts as the central facilitator for information, expertise and experience flow between regions of the IMFN (see Article 8). The INC meets once per year face-to-face, resources permitting, and holds online meetings on an as-needed basis.

- a) The INC provides a critical two-way link between the Secretariat and the IMFN members, aiming to ensure that members have an effective voice in the evolution of the IMFN and for new ideas to be brought forward and realized.
- b) The INC is composed of one elected representative from each region of the IMFN. The INC may draw upon additional experts as needed and at its discretion.
- c) INC representatives are expected to bring their region’s perspectives to meetings, after consultation with their members, and to share back relevant information to their respective regional members.
- d) The IMFN Secretariat convenes and co-chairs meetings of the INC in consultation with regional committee members.

Article 8 – Regional Networks

8.1 The IMFN includes Regional Networks whose goals are to more effectively define, articulate and facilitate programs of work that are more reflective of and tailored to the unique features and opportunities in each region.

8.2 Regional Networks will clearly identify themselves as belonging to the IMFN in all public communications. Regional Networks are expected to use the term “Model Forest” in their name for the purposes of the IMFN.

8.3 The IMFN Regional Networks are:

- a) African Model Forest Network
- b) Canadian Model Forest Network

- c) Ibero-American Model Forest Network
- d) Mediterranean Model Forest Network
- e) Regional Model Forest Network – Asia

8.4 Regional Network Secretariat functions include:

- a) Regional advocacy and representation;
- b) Networking between members within a region (transfer of technology and expertise);
- c) Assistance in regional resource expansion;
- d) Regional communications and knowledge management/sharing;
- e) Regional program support;
- f) Regional partnership development and capacity-building;
- g) Documentation, monitoring and evaluation;
- h) Representing their members' interests to the IMFN, the IMFN Secretariat, and IMFN Committees and Strategic Initiatives.

8.5 Members will establish their Regional Networks' operating rules including that of their Regional Secretariat at their discretion and in their interest so long as they are not in conflict with this Charter.

8.6 Regional Network Secretariats review and approve proposals for new Model Forests arising from their respective regions, in conjunction with the IMFN Secretariat as described in Article 2.

8.7 Where Regional Networks exist, members must belong to both their Regional Network and the IMFN.

8.8 Model Forests may work towards establishing a Regional Network in any such region that is not already comprised in Article 8.3. The creation of new Regional Networks will be confirmed by the IMFN Assembly upon recommendation by the IMFN Secretariat.

8.9 A Model Forest may be a member in more than one Regional Network.

8.10 Model Forests that are not associated with formal Regional Networks will associate themselves with the IMFN Secretariat in terms of operating procedures and liaison with the IMFN.

8.11 Members are welcome to create and maintain sub-regional, national or sub-national Model Forest networks and/or programs in forms and function according to national circumstances while remaining consistent with the terms of this Charter.

8.12 Each regional network will periodically undertake a review and report on problems or issues inherent in the application or maintenance of the Model Forest Principles in their respective regions.

8.13. Each regional network will produce annual or periodic reports which shall be shared with the IMFN Secretariat for citation in its global publications and reports.

Article 9 – Strategic Initiatives

9.1 The IMFN, through its regional and international structures, provides a mechanism for efficient collaboration and information sharing amongst researchers, practitioners and policy makers. At the Global Forum, the IMFN Assembly will discuss, review, consider and adopt programming priorities that are relevant to all members, regardless of forest region or country. These are referred to as Strategic Initiatives.

9.2 Putting knowledge into practice, and a link to national and/or international policy objectives, is an underlying goal of each Strategic Initiative.

9.3 Participants in Strategic Initiatives will endeavour to conduct research, develop educational material and tools, and disseminate information. Efforts will be made to ensure that the knowledge and tools developed under each Strategic Initiative be made available to IMFN members and partner organizations.

9.4 The IMFN Secretariat will monitor and, when appropriate, facilitate the development of Strategic Initiatives once they are adopted by the IMFN Assembly at the Global Forum. The IMFN Secretariat will report on the progress of Strategic Initiatives at the following Global Forum.

9.5 Funding of Strategic Initiatives may be provided by the participants themselves or, partially or fully, through external sources.

Article 10 – Validity, Amendment and Interpretation

10.1 The IMFN Charter is effective as of June 1, 2012.

10.2 Amendments to the Charter may be made by the IMFN Secretariat following consultation with IMFN Regional Networks and members not affiliated to a Regional Network.

10.3 Interpretation of the provisions of the IMFN Charter is the responsibility of the IMFN Secretariat.

10.4 This IMFN Charter does not create any legal binding rights or obligations whatsoever.

**International Model Forest Network
Principles and Attributes of Model Forests**

*draft
24.01.2008*

<p align="center">1 Partnership</p>	<p align="center">2 Landscape</p>	<p align="center">3 Commitment to Sustainability</p>	<p align="center">4 Governance</p>	<p align="center">5 Program of Activities</p>	<p align="center">6 Knowledge-sharing, Capacity Building and Networking</p>
<p><i>Each model forest is a neutral forum that welcomes voluntary participation of representatives of stakeholder interests and values on the landscape</i></p>	<p><i>A large-scale biophysical area representing a broad range of forest values, including social, cultural, economic and environmental concerns</i></p>	<p><i>Stakeholders are committed to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and the forested landscape</i></p>	<p><i>The model forest management process is representative, participative, transparent and accountable, and promotes collaborative work among stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>The activities undertaken by a model forest are reflective of the model forest's vision and stakeholder needs, values and management challenges</i></p>	<p><i>Model forests build stakeholder capacity to engage in the sustainable management of natural resources, and collaborate and share results and lessons learned through networking</i></p>
<p>Model forest stakeholders represent diverse values and interests from various sectors of society who work towards a common vision for the sustainable management of the area</p>	<p>The natural resources in the model forest are recognized by the stakeholders in social, cultural, economic and ecological terms</p>	<p>Sustainable management practices promote the generation and equitable distribution of economic and social benefits derived from natural resources</p>	<p>Stakeholders work together using consensus-based processes to attain the model forest's vision and objectives</p>	<p>Model forest management processes include effective planning and monitoring systems</p>	<p>Model forests contribute to local and national capacity building in the sustainable management of natural resources</p>
<p>The model forest aims at having representatives from the public, private and volunteer sectors, community organizations, academia and research institutions involved in its activities</p> <p>Involvement in all aspects of governance in the model forest is voluntary and inclusive</p> <p>No discrimination against groups or individuals exists within the model forest partnership</p>	<p>The model forest has a geographically defined area encompassing diverse ecosystems, resource management administrations and tenure arrangements</p> <p>Forest and other natural resources provide communities with a range of goods, services and values</p> <p>The model forest is a working landscape reflective of the diverse interests and values of the stakeholders and the uses of the area's natural resources</p>	<p>Model forests foster economic growth and diversification aimed at sustainable community development</p> <p>Model forests promote innovative mechanisms for pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources within a framework of just and equitable distribution of costs and benefits</p>	<p>A vision for the sustainable management of the landscape and its natural resources is developed jointly by the stakeholders</p> <p>The model forest is a forum for exploring options to effectively address natural resource management conflicts</p>	<p>A strategic plan, with a program of activities reflective of stakeholder needs, values and issues, considers national forest programme objectives and other plans developed by broader jurisdictions</p> <p>Practical mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the strategic plan are in place</p>	<p>Model forests undertake and promote training and mentorship activities</p> <p>Model forest communication and outreach activities have demonstrable influence on stakeholders and the general public</p>
		<p>Model forests support actions for maintaining ecological integrity on a landscape</p>	<p>The actions of the model forest are governed by principles of trust, transparency and collaborative decision-making, while respecting various interests and values</p>	<p>Model forests facilitate innovation in the sustainable management of natural resources</p>	<p>Model forests exchange experiences and lessons learned with other model forests and organizations</p>
		<p>Model forests explore and promote practices that contribute to maintaining and/or restoring the ecological integrity of the landscape</p>	<p>Clear policies, procedures and practices are in place for stakeholders to express their views and influence decision-making</p> <p>The model forest has a structure that is transparent and accountable, sets priorities and manages activities effectively</p> <p>Committees, staffing or other executive mechanisms for developing and implementing activities are in place</p>	<p>Model forests facilitate and promote research and the implementation of new and innovative ideas, processes, approaches and techniques in the sustainable management of natural resources</p> <p>Model forest planning processes make use of the best available traditional and scientific knowledge</p> <p>The model forest process generates information and synthesizes knowledge that informs local and national policy-making and global sustainability initiatives</p>	<p>Model forests share their achievements and lessons learned nationally, regionally and internationally using various activities and approaches</p> <p>Model forests develop and participate in networking activities</p> <p>Model forests engage in collaborative activities with other model forests</p> <p>Model forests participate in activities and governance structures aimed at strengthening national, regional and international model forest networks</p>