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GLOBAL FORUM SIDE EVENTS

10th EDITION | THE MMEN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BOOSTING THE GLOCAL APPROACH OF MODEL FORESTS TO TACKLE GLOCAL CHALLENGES

Working Group Notes & Insights

26 May 2025 - OTTAWA, CANADA

Kemptville Campus Education and Community Center Parish Hall - 112











- WG1: WILDFIRES | The Model Forest approach to prevention: between silviculture and firewise communities (coord Dimitris rap.Riccardo)
 - I. Are you aware of any successful examples or approaches of communicating fire risk to increase community awareness?
 - 1. Firewise Communities (USA)
 - 2. Visual Tools and Technology
 - 3. Targeted Messaging for Vulnerable Groups
 - 4. Storytelling and Media Campaigns
 - 5. Education
 - II. What factors can be taken into account to reduce the risk of forest fires?

Fuel Reduction Thinning Removing Dead Wood Creating cleared areas or firebreaks—zones without combustible vegetation

Forest Composition and Species Management Species Selection

Improving Firefighting Infrastructure: Access Roads and Firebreaks Firefighting Equipment Firefighting Training

WG2: STRONG ECOSYSTEMS, STRONG TERRITORIES | Biodiversity and resilience in territorial development (coord. Marcello, rap. Lazhari)

• Why Are Biodiversity and Resilience Central to the Development of Mediterranean Forest Areas?

Mediterranean forests are biodiversity hotspots and provide essential services to human well-being and the vitality of rural areas. Integrating biodiversity into development processes means strengthening territories' ability to cope with environmental, economic, and social crises.

On Biodiversity:

- The Mediterranean Basin is one of 35 global biodiversity hotspots recognized by Conservation International.
- It hosts more than 25,000 plant species, about 50% of which are endemic (unique to the region).
- Around 400 tree species originate from the Mediterranean Basin (Source: FAO, *State of Mediterranean Forests*).

On Ecosystem Services:

- Mediterranean forests protect soils, regulate water resources, store carbon, and mitigate climate change.
- They provide direct goods: timber, cork, resin, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and grazing areas.
- They are closely tied to culture, identity, and rural tourism.









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Reference to the Climate Crisis, Human Pressure, and the Need for Integrated Approaches

Mediterranean territories face increasing risks: fires, droughts, extreme events, and habitat fragmentation. Rising human pressure and the abandonment of traditional practices make it urgent to adopt integrated approaches linking forest management, local development, and conservation.

On Climate Change:

- According to the MedECC report (2020), the Mediterranean is warming about 20% faster than the global average.
- A 30–50% increase in high fire-risk days is expected by 2100 (Source: IPCC, MedECC).
- Droughts are more frequent and intense; in the last 50 years, extreme events have doubled in the region (Source: FAO, 2018).

On Wildfires:

- The Mediterranean accounts for about 85% of the burned area annually in Europe (Source: EFFIS European Forest Fire Information System).
- The fire season is getting longer and affecting new areas, including higher altitudes.

The Role of Model Forests

Model Forests provide a practical space to experiment with, adapt, and share sustainable and participatory solutions.

They serve as laboratories for best practices, innovation, and shared governance.

They have strategic value for promoting sustainability, biodiversity, and community well-being.

Roundtable Questions

Question 1: Share experiences, discuss tools and priorities to make Mediterranean forests more resilient and better integrated into territorial development.

Algeria – Tlemcen Model Forest

- Promoting biodiversity resilience:
 - o Irregular silvicultural practices to enhance diversity.
 - o Grazing used as a sustainable forest management tool.
- Examples of Good Practices:
 - o Integration of economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation.
 - o Actions to halt ecosystem degradation.
 - o Installing wildlife watering points.
 - Protecting the Egyptian vulture by setting up feeding zones.
 - o Creating two nurseries for producing aromatic and medicinal plants (AMPs).
 - Forest restoration by filling in gaps.
 - o Essential oil distillation and promoting non-timber forest products (NTFPs).
 - o Training facilitators in biodiversity conservation.
 - Field training for local stakeholders.

France – Provence Model Forest

- Protection of four forest massifs.
- Diversification and ecosystem integration in territorial management.









- Research on invasive species, particularly mimosa:
 - o Ecological impact studies.
 - o Development of reduction and control methods.

Italy – Valle Aterno Model Forest

- Research on ecosystems and truffles:
 - o Studies on the relationship between truffles and local biodiversity.
 - o Using truffle knowledge to improve soil and forest management.

Question 2: How do economic activities align with ecosystem conservation?

Albania – Voskopoja Model Forest

- Implementation of integrated resource management:
 - o Integration of forests, water, and pastures in territorial projects (e.g., watershed projects).

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• Management of public forests with local participation.

Italy – Valle Aterno Model Forest

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- Development of forest management plans (Integrated Planning Processes IPP):
 - Tools to preserve biodiversity, especially:
 - Protection of micro-habitats.
 - Ecosystem-based planning approaches.

Tunisia – Kroumirie Mogods Model Forest

- Sustainable rangeland management:
 - o Use of livestock (sheep, goats) to maintain landscapes and conserve ecosystems.
- Diversification of ecosystem types.
- Climate change adaptation studies and mitigation strategies.
- Promotion of mixed forests.
- Implementation of national conservation and resilience programs.











WG3: LEARNING FROM (AND IN) THE FOREST | Environmental education, art, and forest pedagogy to connect people - and territories. (coord. Ana rap. Silvia)

Most of the MF of the Network already implement forest pedagogy activities on their territories through workshops and lectures with children while implementing various didactic tools.

In MF Provance they claim it is important to go out in the forest, and to have forest education outside, to bread and get connected with nature on a dipper level.

Zohra Bouziane from Model Forest in Morocco said they share the thought that the most efficient way of forest education is true senses and the activities that integrate creativity and physical activity.

In the Model Forest of Western Macedonia, they carry out various activities in forest pedagogy as part of the Forestival event, which brings together many people from their area. The emphasis is on creative activities.

One of the participants said that children can be attracted to the forest through digital games and interactive tools they would use by smartphones. The discussion has developed in the direction of whether we should use digital devices in forest pedagogy or is it better to remove children from it and return them to nature through direct experience.

Conclusion of the session was that a forest pedagogy and creative activities are essential for the health of the communities and should present an important part of the MF program of activities.

Bringing people and children back to nature, to feel the forest and deepen their experience of natural environment that surrounds us is the main point for connecting people and territories.

WG4: COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES | The Model Forest approach to Forest and Landscape Restoration (coord Andrea rap. Kamal)

Communities and landscapes: the Model Forest approach to restoration

The working group explored how the Model Forest (MF) approach can strengthen Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) initiatives by aligning ecological objectives with community-led development. Participants emphasized the value of inclusive governance, local knowledge, and strong partnerships in creating lasting restoration impacts.

Key Messages and Insights

A Bridge Between Donors and Communities

- Model Forests provide a neutral and trusted platform that facilitates dialogue and cooperation between donors and local communities.
- Their solid institutional structure reassures investors and enhances the credibility of restoration efforts.

Enhancing Community Engagement

- Through their participatory model, MFs help communities understand the logic and strategy behind FLR projects, fostering more meaningful involvement.
- Community engagement through the MF approach increases long-term impacts by ensuring that initiatives are locally relevant and supported.









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Bottom-Up Innovation

- MFs employ a bottom-up philosophy, starting with community assets and needs to co-develop solutions.
- This inclusive process results in shared, context-specific restoration strategies that accommodate a wide array of stakeholder perspectives.

Tradition Meets Innovation

- Model Forests act as hubs for knowledge exchange, combining traditional knowledge with innovative practices.
- They serve as pilot sites for FLR, testing good practices in real landscapes before broader implementation.

Academic and Scientific Integration

- By engaging large partnerships, MFs create opportunities for academic research and field application.
- This strengthens evidence-based approaches and encourages cross-sector collaboration.

Advocacy and Awareness

- MFs can act as advocates for making FLR more accessible, reframing projects as opportunities to reconnect people with their territories.
- Their inclusive partnership model fosters greater social acceptance of restoration efforts.

Ecosystem and Social Resilience

• Recognizing that strong communities build strong ecosystems, MFs support restoration by integrating social complexity and avoiding polarization in discussions and decision-making.

Alternative Financing: PES Schemes

• With their deep understanding of landscapes and community dynamics, MFs are well-positioned to design Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes as a financing mechanism for FLR.







