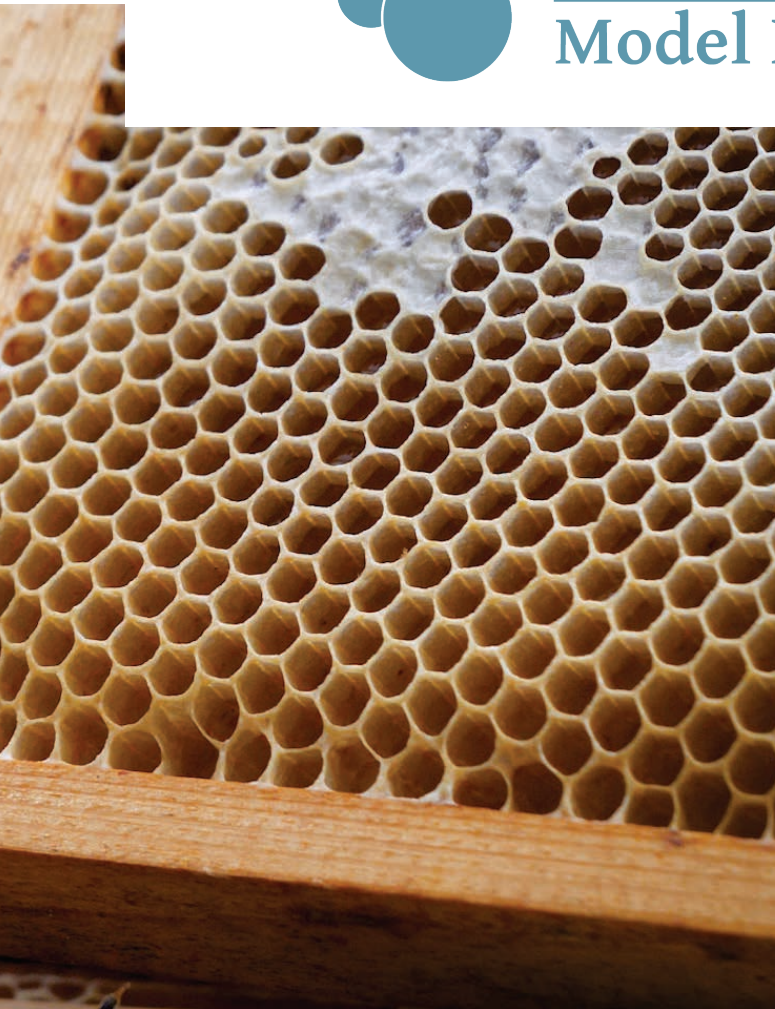


Mediterranean  
Model Forest Network



## What is a Model Forest?

A Model Forest is best understood as a process for bringing a diverse partnership of individuals and groups together to realize a common vision of sustainable development in a large landscape.

Three aspects central to a Model Forest are:

- **Landscape:** a large-scale biophysical area representing a broad range of forest values, including environmental, social, cultural and economic concerns
- **Partnership:** a neutral forum that welcomes voluntary participation of representatives of stakeholder's interests and values on the landscape
- **Sustainability:** stakeholders are committed to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and the forest-based landscape



## The Model Forest concept: transforming conflict into opportunity

**The Model Forest concept was first developed by the Government of Canada** in the early 1990s during a period of intense conflict between environmentalists, indigenous peoples, forest industry and government. It was a time when the civil society was demanding recognition of multiple forest values beyond timber alone and a greater voice in forest governance. In response, 10 experimental Model Forests were launched across the country to use science, innovation, and inclusive governance for sustainable forest management at a landscape scale.

The Model Forest idea was born to:

- **bring together all of the relevant stakeholders** in a given territory **to form a long-term collaborative partnership;**
- **serve as a neutral forum to encourage constructive discussion and inclusive participation** in the sustainable management of that territory;
- **develop, test and implement initiatives based on science, innovation and traditional knowledge** that were representative of the shared values and interests of the partnership group;
- **act as the middle ground between policy and practice:** national or international priorities could be piloted in the Model Forest before being scaled up, or innovative practices developed by a Model Forest could be shared for broad application;
- **change the way we think about, and act towards, our natural resources and each other.**

**Model Forests are intended to be a dynamic “model”** from which others can learn and, together, advance their own sustainability objectives.

Based on early success, **at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)** in Rio de Janeiro **the Government of Canada invited other countries to join in forming an International Model Forest Network** to share lessons learned and accelerate sustainability goals globally. What began with 10 sites in Canada has now spread to 35 countries with more than 60 MF in operation covering over 70 million hectares.

**In 1995, the International Model Forest Network’s Secretariat (IMFN) was officially established in Ottawa** ([www.imfn.net](http://www.imfn.net)) where it continues to be hosted by the Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forest Service.

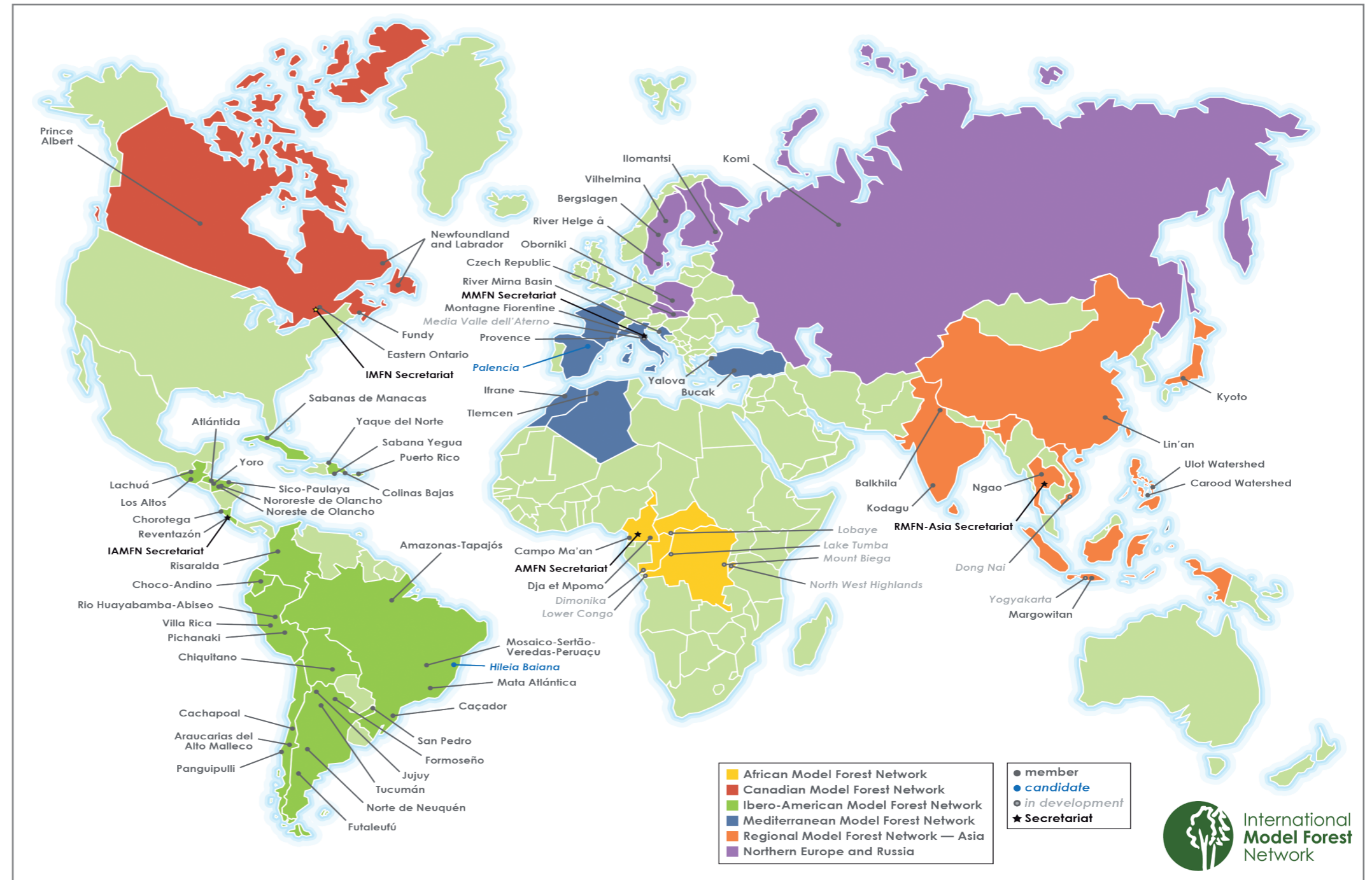
## Regional Model Forest Networks

Regional Model Forest Networks define, articulate and manage a regional program of work by those who know the area best. These regional programs may be formal or informal and reflect the priorities, strengths and opportunities that are unique to a particular region.

### Regional Network functions include:

- Networking between Model Forest sites within a region to help transfer technology and knowledge
- Assistance in regional resource expansion
- Regional communications and advocacy
- Regional program support
- Regional partnership and capacity of development
- Documentation, monitoring and evaluation
- Review and approval of new Model Forest proposals and membership in the Regional Network

There are currently six Regional Networks under the International Model Forest Network.

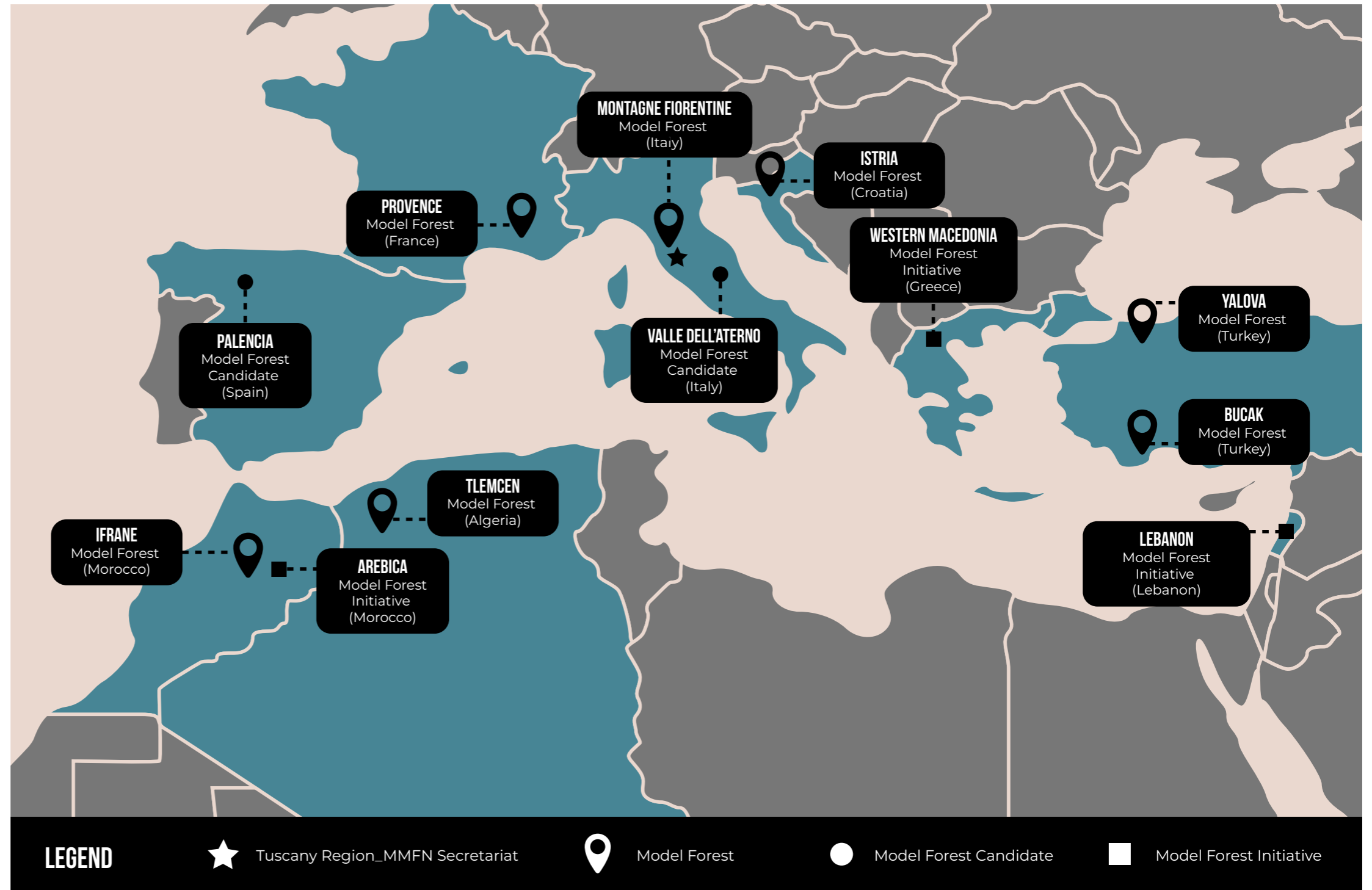


## A network of Model Forests in the Mediterranean

In 2007 Spain led to the creation of the **Mediterranean Model Forest Network (MMFN)**. Since then, the secretariat to the MMFN was hosted by the CESEFOR Foundation on behalf of the Castilla y Leon Region. In 2019, the Tuscany Region of Italy took over as host to the secretariat with the support of the Union of Municipalities Valdarno and Valdisieve and the Montagne Fiorentine Model Forest Association.

In the Mediterranean Model Forest Network we **define common objectives and promote collaboration** between areas that have similar ecological, economic, social and cultural characteristics while enhancing individual specificities.

**We cooperate on the development of common priorities, in conflict resolution, and the promotion of cooperation and collaboration on sustainable development in the Mediterranean and beyond.**



We are many... we want to become more!



7

Mediterranean countries where Model Forests are present



9

Model Forest of Mediterranean Network



437+

Thousand hectares

## Networking makes us stronger

**Working “in the network” means working connected**, enriching partners with specific skills, sharing experiences and know-how. Through networking and sharing lessons learned we save time by avoiding mistakes already made and accelerate opportunities for success. Networking gives us flexibility and allows the participation of the most competent, suitable and interested subjects in achieving a certain result. The Mediterranean Network of Model Forests is inspired by this system and also seeks **to contribute to global environmental sustainability objectives**.



## Why a Mediterranean Network?

- To promote the Model Forest approach to **shared land management**;
- To **support the development of new Model Forests** in the Mediterranean area;
- To **seize and enhance the opportunities offered by the Network to share knowledge**, promote innovation and join forces, for the long-term sustainability of the planet.





## Membership in the Network offers many possible benefits...

- **Accessing and belonging to a global network** with many examples from which to draw inspiration;
- **Participating in projects on a European and International scale;**
- **Participating in broad National and International dialogues** on sustainable development policy and practices;
- **Promoting rural areas and communities** as essential to the social and economic well-being of the Mediterranean area and beyond;
- **Accessing case studies, lessons learned, challenges, the exchange of experiences and good practices** with respect to economic diversification, social support, conflict resolution, good governance, sustainable forest management, and environmental protection;
- **Contributing to public participation processes involving multiple stakeholders with varying needs and values;**
- **Developing and sharing of tools and techniques** that allow local communities to integrate social, environmental and economic factors into decision making for long-term sustainability at a landscape scale;
- **Undertaking cultural exchanges between different areas of the Mediterranean and with Model Forests around the world;**
- **Developing synergies and partnerships with the other international networks** concerned with forests and the environment.

## Sustainable development and environmental policies? They concern us all!

Establishing a Model Forest and becoming part of the Network means a commitment to follow **six broad principles that combine the social, environmental and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability** of large forest-based landscapes. As members of a Regional and International Network, Model Forests **bring joint solutions and innovative strategies to shared challenges** such as climate change, wildfires and pests, market access and livelihoods, health and well-being, and land-use conflicts. In other words, being a Model Forest means implementing forest management-based priorities, policies and agreed actions aimed at finding a balance between combating climate and environmental challenges as well as social and economic issues. Model Forests are designed to occupy the middle ground between policy and practice. They are living laboratories where governments and decision makers can test new policies or programs before scaling up to other areas, or where **innovative practices developed within the partnership can be shared with decision makers for implementation** beyond the Model Forest boundary. They are not a project, but a process who in turn also help countries to contribute their national and international commitments such as the UNFCCC and Sustainable Development Goals.







## Building a Model Forest is not children's game

Establishing a Model Forest is not simply a bureaucratic or administrative step. **The creation of a Model Forest requires time, dedication, active and sustained involvement, a willingness to listen, mediation and flexibility.** A Model Forest must have a broad representation of all stakeholders in the area - even those who are in conflicting positions - and membership may change over time. In fact, only by including a broad stakeholder base will the strategic plan and resulting initiatives result in long-term buy-in and positive change reflecting differing views and priorities.

*“ A Model Forest takes on projects, but  
is not a project itself.  
It is a long-term process ”*

## 4 ways to support the Model Forests

- **Disseminate and promote** the Model Forest idea and its values
- **Become a member** of an existing Model Forest in your country
- If you are interested in participating in the activities of a Model Forest, **become a volunteer or seek internship opportunities** in a Model Forest
- **Make a donation** on [www.medmodelforest.net](http://www.medmodelforest.net) in support of existing projects or provide the opportunity to create new programming.



## Do you want to build one Model Forest? Get in touch

To establish a Model Forest and become part of the Mediterranean and International Network, you can contact us and consult the “Model Forest Toolkit”.

Contact us at [info@medmodelfores.net](mailto:info@medmodelfores.net)

Toolkit: <https://imfn.net/model-forest/model-forest-toolkit/>

## International Model Forest Network



## Mediterranean Model Forest Network Secretariat



REGIONE  
TOSCANA



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## Model Forest of Mediterranean area



Associazione  
FORESTA MODELLO  
delle MONTAGNE  
FIORENTINE



## Candidate Model Forest



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