



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
FOR THE CREATION OF A MEDITERRANEAN MODEL FOREST NETWORK**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made by and between the following institutions:

- 1. Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Medio Ambiente, having its administrative offices at CL Rigoberto Cortejoso 14, 47014 Valladolid (Spain),**
- 2. The Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources, Canada, acting through the International Model Forest Network Secretariat (IMFN Secretariat)**
- 3. Region of Tuscany, having its administrative offices at Via di Novoli 26, 50127 Firenze (Italy)**

They may be referred to herein as a “Party” or collectively as the “Parties”.

WHEREAS the model forest (MF) concept is based on an innovative approach that combines the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability of forest landscapes; and

WHEREAS the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) is a voluntary association of participants (public forest services, civil society organizations and others) from around the world working toward a common goal, which is the sustainable management and use of forests and forested landscapes;

ACKNOWLEDGING that this initiative has developed in consultation with and has received technical support from the IMFN Secretariat which views this as an important and welcome development in the context of the International Model Forest Network;

NOTING that the model forest concept falls well within the working programme of the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which continues to support member countries in the identification of potential future model and demonstration forests and in further developing the concept including the establishment of regional model forest networks;

TAKING into consideration the objectives of the “Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests” issued by the United Nations Forum on Forests and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 22 October 2007;

RECOGNIZING that the Regional Government of Castilla y León in Spain has been working for years towards sustainable forest management (SFM), through the development of different initiatives such as certification, sustainable entrepreneurship support, research funding and others, and that the Castilla y

León 2002–2027 Regional Forest Plan includes a participation in the IMFN as a means to improve the quality of its forest management standards;

TAKING into consideration that on 20 March, 11–13 July, 19–20 December 2007 and 12–13 March 2008, preparatory workshops were held in the Urbión Model Forest (Castilla y León, Spain), FAO headquarters in Rome (Italy) and Provence–Alps–Côte d’Azur (PACA) headquarters in Marseille (France) with the participation of a group of regional governments, forest owners associations and others, with the aim of (i) presenting the model forest concept and characteristics of the IMFN to a noteworthy group of active national/regional/local forest services within the Mediterranean area, (ii) receiving their feedback and strategic orientation concerning the feasibility of Mediterranean Model Forests and a Mediterranean Model Forest Network (MMFN) and to define its functionality, and (iii) discussing the development of a proposal to identify funds and ways of cooperation, mainly through site-based and inter-regional cooperation in a European Union context, in support of networking for SFM in the Mediterranean; and

UNDERLINING the success of these efforts in demonstrating common grounds for the development of a Mediterranean Model Forest Network between a significant number of participants in the abovementioned workshops;

AND WHEREAS it is also necessary, and parties have expressed their will to do so, to take into account the different integration and cooperation initiatives that crisscross the Mediterranean region, i.e. (i) the political, mainstream processes conducted by FAO: COFO and Silva Mediterranea, (ii) other processes such as the Barcelona Process or the Mediterranean Union, and (iii) other networks and networking activities, mainly the existing sites in the Mediterranean area covered by the World Heritage Centre;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties have reached the following understanding:

- 1.– Purposes of this MoU
- 2.– Nature of collaboration activities of the Parties
- 3.– Parties to this MoU
- 4.– Members of the MMFN
- 5.– Commitments of members
- 6.– Governing structure
- 7.– Entry into Force
- 8.– Evaluation and Continuation
- 9.– Additional Co-operation
- 10.– Termination of Agreement
- 11.– Language
- 12.– Representations and warranties
- 13.– Legal obligations

1.– Purposes of this MoU

Forest areas and landscapes in the Mediterranean environment face significant challenges such as climate change, increasing fire hazards, erosion, land abandonment and degradation, and loss of biodiversity. Coming from Canada and internationalised at the “Rio Summit” (UNCED 1992), the model forest concept, based on the ideas of broad-base **partnerships** within complex **landscapes** working toward **sustainability** is of high relevance to help solve these and other problems, common to the

whole Mediterranean area, through innovation and participatory governance. Parties to this MoU share a will to enhance the quality of life in rural areas on both the Southern, Northern and Eastern rims of the Mediterranean Sea.

The signatory Parties to this MoU are in accordance with a common understanding of strategic problems and a shared vision of future, as stated in the attached concept paper.

The Parties hereby convene to collaborate with the objective of establishing a network of territories that share as a common aim to develop the Model Forest concept in the Mediterranean environment, under the name of Mediterranean Model Forest Network and as part of the International Model Forest Network.

The objective of the Network is to create and develop model forests in the Mediterranean.

At the highest operational level the Mediterranean network has two functions: at site level to promote locally-based forest landscape governance through the creation of model forests; and regionally to develop and support networking opportunities among model forests across the Mediterranean in order to accelerate learning and innovation in support of the goals agreed upon in this MoU.

2.- Nature of collaboration activities of the Parties

The Parties will undertake common activities for the attainment of the above-mentioned objective, which can include but are not limited to:

- providing training, advice and any other requested assistance to candidate Model Forests in the Mediterranean, in collaboration with local agents interested in the establishment of MF processes
- disseminating information (website, newsletter, etc.) about the MFs and the IMFN in general inside the network, and communicating about MMFN progress to the broader Mediterranean audience;
- organizing regular opportunities (seminars, field visits) for the network's members to exchange information, experience and know-how on key-issues for the regions involved and existing or future MFs in the Mediterranean;
- providing continuing support in respect of the preparation, implementation, dissemination and consolidation of co-operation projects involving members of the network on key-issues for SFM in the Mediterranean, including maintenance of ongoing links among projects via the network's activities;
- reporting ongoing model forest progress in the Mediterranean, so as to fully capitalise on member's experiences for the benefit of every member, the whole network and the Mediterranean forest-based sector;
- supporting innovation and experimentation in order to find solutions adapted to the specified contexts found in the Mediterranean Basin.

3.- Parties to this MoU

Parties to this MoU are regions in the European Union and candidate countries and, in other countries, national government bodies having competencies over forest-based development. They share the natural environment and cultural background of the Mediterranean.



With the aim of fully establishing the linkage between the MMFN and the IMFN, the IMFN Secretariat is Party of the MoU.

4.- Members of the MMFN

Members of the Mediterranean Model Forest Network are:

- The regions in the European Union and candidate countries and, in other countries, national government bodies having competencies over forest-based development, who are parties to this MoU,
- Model forests in the Mediterranean region.

In addition, the activities of the network can benefit from the support and participation of external expert bodies (multilateral agencies, national competent bodies and other organizations), acting as supporting participants, with a voice, but no vote, in the Network. This other entities can become supporting members of the initiative by signing a supporting act attached to this MoU.

Founding members are the members of the Network who sign this document before the 16th of June 2008, date of the IMFN Global Forum of IMFN in Canada.

Regions or national entities interested in joining the network can be invited as observers until they become full members upon becoming signatory and party to the MoU.

5.- Commitments of members

Each member of this MoU will commit its active participation in the activities, as well as its active exploration of the concept in its competence area, including the willingness to support the establishment of at least one Model Forest in its competence area.

The IMFN Secretariat will provide technical advice to members as requested.

6.- Governing structure

The main governing body of the Mediterranean Model Forest Network is the Assembly, comprising all Members. Members nominate their representatives to take part in the Assembly, who are duly authorized to take decisions.

A Coordination Committee is established by the Assembly, as the main executive body between Assembly meetings, to manage the first steps in the development of the MMFN.

The MMFN Secretariat, initially supported by the Junta de Castilla y León and rotating on a voluntary basis, provides support to common activities under the guidance of the Coordination Committee. The Assembly will develop and adopt rules and operating procedures for the MMFN Secretariat.

The MMFN Secretariat, until otherwise agreed upon by the Assembly, shall be headquartered at CESEFOR, Polígono Industrial Las Casas, CL C, P. 4, 42005 Soria (Spain).

The IMFN Secretariat will participate in the governing structure of the MMFN as an observer providing technical advice as requested.

7.- Entry into effect

This Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into effect on June 16th 2008, and remain in effect until December 31st 2013. After that date, the MoU will be considered to remain in effect for annual periods unless otherwise explicitly decided by the Assembly.

8.- Evaluation and Continuation

Members commit themselves to participate in interim and final evaluations, and decide for continuation of the MMFN initiative accordingly.

9.- Additional Co-operation

The parties will seek ways and means to strengthen co-operation between them with regard to exchange of experience, with a view to implement further activities for the purposes of this MoU.

10.- Termination of Agreement

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, any Party may terminate its participation under this MoU by giving notice in writing to the Coordination Committee of its decision to leave. Such termination will be effective once the Committee has received such notice.

11.- Language

English is the one official version of this Memorandum.

12.- Representations and warranties

Each Party hereby represents and warrants to the other Parties that: (i) it has the corporate power to enter into this MoU; (ii) it is not a Party to any agreement or understanding and knows no law or regulation that would prohibit it from entering into and performing its obligations under this MoU or that would conflict with this MoU; and (iii) it shall perform its obligations under this MoU in compliance with all applicable laws in its country or region.

13.- Legal obligations

This MoU does not create any legally binding obligations among the Parties and is not binding under international law.

In witness thereof, the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Memorandum of Understanding in four copies in English.

Given in Valladolid (Spain), the 13th day of March of 2009.

María Jesús Ruiz Ruiz
Consejera de Medio Ambiente de la
Junta de Castilla y León (Spain)

Claudio Martini
President of the Region of Tuscany (Italy)

Peter Besseau
International Model Forest Network
Secretariat (UMFN Secretariat)