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Initiative 20x20

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Report: International Forum "What Makes Landscape Restoration Possible? Policies, Inclusive Governance, Financing, and Innovation in Latin America"



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FLR hub
Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit
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Report: International Forum "What Makes Landscape Restoration Possible? Policies, Inclusive Governance, Financing, and Innovation in Latin America"

Compiled by: Digital World Perú and Natalia Ruiz-Guevara (WRI / RLABM)

1. General Information

Date and Venue	Friday, October 9, 2026. Venue: College of Engineers of Peru (CIP), Lima Departmental Council, San Isidro campus. Peru.
Organizers	Initiative 20x20(WRI) and the Latin American Model Forests Network (RLABM), with support from the CIP's Forest Engineering Chapter and WWF Peru.
Background	FLR Hub (Forest Landscape Restoration Implementation Hub) Project in Peru, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and led by IUCN, with support from WRI and WWF.
Objective	To inspire and mobilize collective action to accelerate the restoration of ecosystems and landscapes through dialogue, learning, and the exchange of experiences in public policy, inclusive governance, financing, knowledge management, and monitoring.
Participants	More than 80 representatives from public institutions, civil society, businesses, and academia involved in restoration in Peru, as well as representatives from Model Forests in 15 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. Executive Summary

The Forum brought together governments, civil society, academia, international cooperation agencies, and Model Forests from the region to address one question: What conditions enable restoration to move from commitment to scale? This question was addressed through discussions, keynote speeches, and audience interaction during a one-day event organized into four thematic blocks: Policy, Governance, Knowledge, and Financing, featuring presentations and contributions from more than 30 specialists from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain.

These are the main key messages that emerged from the event:

- **Commitments alone do not lead to restoration.** Latin America has ambition, but it often remains at the pilot stage. Scaling up means transforming systems—with aligned policies, incentives, capital, and capacities—rather than simply adding hectares or replicating projects.
- **Restoration is more than just planting trees.** It also involves protection—for example, against fires and pests—restoring ecosystem functions such as water regulation, and, above all, addressing the root causes of degradation.
- **Policy coherence is the prerequisite.** Global and national frameworks exist: the challenge is to ensure they work together in practice—across sectors and levels of government—and that they endure political cycles as a matter of state policy.
- **Governance is a process, not a project.** Long-standing territorial platforms such as Model Forests show that legitimate multi-stakeholder platforms and stable, minimum resources are needed, and that reliance on a single actor must be avoided.
- **Governance has real costs, and almost no one wants to pay** them**.** A landscape needs between $10,000 and $500,000 per year, depending on its size, to sustain its governance, and most operate on less than half that amount.
- **There is no shortage of money—there is** a need to **organize it.** We must move from scattered projects to territorial portfolios, with catalytic capital that reduces risk and attracts private investment, so that funding "arrives, is combined, and stays."

Funding and implementation:

Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit

IKI Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative

IUCN

WWF

World Resources Institute

- **Knowledge and culture drive action.** We must integrate Indigenous and local knowledge, foster a connection with nature from childhood onward, and provide women and young people with real opportunities to participate.
- **With the communities.** Not by or for the communities, but with them: that is the essence of all territorial action in the Model Forests, and restoration is a task that spans generations.

3. Schedule of the Event

3.1 Opening and Welcome

Diego Gómez (WRI Colombia) welcomed attendees to the Forum, presented the institutional context of the event, and explained its organization into four thematic blocks, as well as the process for audience participation through questions submitted via a QR code. Next, Boris Villa, president of the Forest Engineering Chapter of the Peruvian College of Engineers (CIP), emphasized that restoration is a multidisciplinary and long-term endeavor, whose sustainability depends on community ownership and its capacity to generate local income. He also referred to the forest fires caused by uncontrolled burning in Cusco, Ayacucho, and Apurímac, and offered the Chapter's forums and technical working groups to contribute to this agenda.

For her part, Alejandra Laina, director of the Initiative 20x20(WRI), emphasized the need to transform restoration commitments into large-scale actions through political decisions, institutional coordination, long-term financing, and governance that connects national priorities with local realities. In this regard, she called for moving from dialogue to agreements, linking national agendas with local experiences, and building partnerships for implementation. Subsequently, Edwin Chavarri, dean of the CIP's Lima Departmental Council, highlighted the cross-cutting nature of restoration—including its relationship to water resources and energy—and proposed incorporating the Forum's agreements into the Engineering Roadmap for Governance that the CIP is presenting to the government. He also announced the International Engineering Summit to be held in June 2027 and declared the meeting open.

Finally, Roger Villalobos, representative of the Latin American Model Forests Network (RLABM) and CATIE, highlighted the collaboration between both organizations as technical partners of the Initiative 20x20in the development of national plans, methodologies, policy accelerators, and monitoring tools. He emphasized the importance of promoting restoration based on solidarity, one that responds to the needs and aspirations of local communities, and noted that this is an intergenerational process whose benefits and responsibilities extend beyond the short term.



3.2 Keynote Address: What Makes It Possible to Restore a Landscape?

Alejandra Laina, director of the Initiative 20x20(WRI), delivered the opening address and shared the following points:

- **From ambition to scale.** There are three levels: isolated projects, territorial strategies, and systems with aligned policies, incentives, capital, and capacities. Restoration must integrate these levels and be a matter of national policy, not just a temporary government initiative.
- **A new economy of restoration.** Healthy landscapes sustain economies and well-being through three pillars: biodiversity, resilience, and livelihoods. The goal is to make restoration more attractive than degradation.
- **Enabling conditions.** None is sufficient on its own: policy and institutional frameworks, territorial governance, social and cultural ownership, technical capacity, economics and finance, and monitoring. On the policy front, he emphasized the need to translate national goals into local action, strengthen subnational governments, define responsibilities by level of government, and eliminate perverse incentives.
- **Civil society is the best ally, not an opponent.** It provides continuity, trust, and alignment between national policy and local realities. To fulfill this role, it needs flexible funding, meaningful participation, technical and administrative capacities, and high-quality information.
- **Funding.** Catalytic capital kickstarts processes and reduces risk; only then does investment capital follow. We must move from scattered projects to regional portfolios with shared indicators.
- **Model Forests as regional laboratories.** These regions serve to demonstrate, connect, learn, replicate, and influence policy and investment. The Initiative 20x20"is not a funder; it is an advocate for ensuring that these conditions are created."

Alejandra posed a question for the workshop and the next two years: *What conditions must we build together so that Model Forests can become platforms capable of scaling up restoration?*

3.3 Session 1 · Policy Coherence for Landscape Restoration: Bringing Together Sectors, Levels, Commitments, and Goals

Moderator and closing remarks: Natalia Ruiz Guevara (WRI) · **Keynote address:** Carolina Gallo Granizo (FAO) · **Panel:** Omar Carrión (SERFOR), Claudia Zuleta (MINAM), Dania Cruz (ICF, Honduras), Jessica Fernandes (Ekos Brasil, Mosaico Sertão Veredas), and Rocío Vásquez Jara (Landscape Alliance, formerly CIFOR-ICRAF)

Natalia Ruiz Guevara opened the session by emphasizing that policies provide a framework, legitimacy, and formality, and evolve over time. But for them to be effective, a published regulation is not enough: what matters is how they are implemented on the ground. That is why the key word for the session was coherence, which also takes into account the social and economic sectors.

Carolina Gallo Granizo (FAO) presented the global framework for ecosystem and landscape restoration, which brings together and articulates the three Rio Conventions and is institutionalized in the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (adopted in 2019) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. In addition, the United Nations General Assembly has just approved a decade on afforestation and reforestation. To implement this framework, the FAO offers several tools:

- FERM: the official reporting platform for Target 2 of the Global Framework, which reduces the reporting burden on countries.
- Ten principles of restoration.
- Standards with more than 300 recommended practices.
- A capacity-building action plan with eight initiatives, one of which is dedicated to policy coherence.

As a national example, she cited Brazil: its law on the protection of native vegetation was implemented through PLANAVEG, whose 2025–2028 phase expands the scope to include protected areas and indigenous and community territories.

> *"The goal must be for policies that coexist on paper… to work together in practice, not just in theory"* —Carolina Gallo Granizo

Panel. How are policies experienced in different contexts?

- **Omar Carrión (SERFOR, Peru).** Trial and error taught the country that "trees aren't the whole solution": a páramo is high-Andean grassland. From this insight emerged a national strategy that analyzes degradation by ecosystem type. 's current phase is a National Restoration Agenda, aimed at establishing it as a coherent state policy with consistency across policies, coordination on the ground, and funding tied to measurable results.
- **Claudia Zuleta (MINAM, Peru).** Initiatives are scattered, and each sector has its own priorities. CONADIB is promoting a technical restoration group, inspired by Brazil, to develop a national roadmap covering forests, terrestrial ecosystems, inland waters, and marine ecosystems. Without addressing the root causes of degradation, restoration will not be sustainable, and civil society and indigenous peoples must take ownership of the process.
- **Dania Cruz (ICF, Honduras).** The country aims to restore 1.3 million hectares by 2030. In many places, the focus is not on planting but on protection—against fires and pests such as the bark-stripping weevil. More than 900,000 hectares of forest are allocated under community forest management contracts, with value chains such as beekeeping. Land tenure remains the major challenge.
- **Jessica Fernandes (Ekos Brasil).** The Mosaico Sertao Veredas Peruacu territory faces a water crisis and the encroachment of agribusiness. The response has been to promote, through policy, an ecological corridor that coordinates local strategies and strengthens traditional, Quilombola, and Indigenous communities. In this way, restoration also becomes a source of income for young people.
- **Rocío Vásquez Jara (Landscape Alliance).** She proposed multidimensional assessments (ecological, social, and economic, with a gender perspective), aligned with the outcomes of Target 2: integrity, functions and services, connectivity, and biodiversity. It is not a matter of simply checking off a *checklist*, but rather of identifying synergies, leverage points, and trade-offs.

Closing Remarks. Natalia Ruiz Guevara summarized: "If we organize ourselves, we all win." Harmonized data and training are needed so that decision-makers and implementers speak the same language. We must also measure more than just hectares: we must assess how objectives are being met while taking into account those who depend on the forests.



3.4 Session 2 · Inclusive Multilevel Governance: Bringing Voices from Local Communities to the Global Stage

Moderator: Roger Villalobos (RLABM / CATIE) · **Keynote Address:** Fernando Carrera (RLABM) · **Panel:** Jaime Valenzuela (Ampay National Sanctuary, Apurímac), Teresita Chinchilla (ACOFOP, Guatemala), Steffany Bashi (Model Forests Youth Network), Jenny Flores (FCBC, Bolivia), and Mauro Condo (Regional Government of Madre de Dios) · **Closing Remarks:** Alejandra Laina (20x20 Initiative)

Funding and implementation:

Roger Villalobos opened the session with a warning: there is often a gulf between the policies formulated in capital cities and local realities. Governance must reach the local level in a way that makes sense to people and turn diversity into a functional value in decision-making.

Fernando Carrera (RLABM) explained what a Model Forest is: a voluntary governance forum for territorial management—"much more than just a forest; it's a territory." The idea originated in Canada in the late 1980s, and today there are more than 60 Model Forests worldwide; the RLABM brings together 32 territories across 15 countries. He shared the lessons learned over 20 years:

- A Model Forest is a process, not a project: "when the money runs out, the project is over."
- It requires a participatory plan, a geographic identity, leadership, and academic involvement.
- It requires minimal resources, such as a paid staff.
- It should not depend on a single level of government. Argentina lost three Model Forests when a national program ended, while in Panguipulli (Chile), the municipality pays the manager.
- Continuity in governance is made possible by local governments, private partnerships, and supporting local NGOs.
- The ideal financial structure is a trust fund. The FCBC's trust fund grew from 3–5 to more than 13 million dollars.

Panel: Expressions of Governance in the Territories

- **Jaime Valenzuela (BM Abancay - Apurímac).** Water is the backbone of the territory. In the Mariño River micro-watershed, a public-private platform decides how to use funds from MERESE (the payment for ecosystem services mechanism) to conserve the headwaters. The challenges are to finalize land-use planning and ecological-economic zoning. In the main water recharge area, there are more than 30 mining applications; therefore, the Model Forest proposed declaring it an intangible area or creating a Regional Conservation Area.
- **Teresita Chinchilla (ACOFOP, Petén).** For the communities, the forest represents income, identity, culture, and heritage. Community concessions reinvest nearly 30% of their revenue in monitoring and surveillance. They are calling for legal, political, and economic support, as well as an ongoing relationship with each government—free from dependency—because "with a single unexpected law, we could also be wiped off the map."
- **Steffany Bashi (Model Forests Youth Network).** There is no single "youth"—there are many different youth groups. They are united by their connection to the land, but they also seek education, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities that the land does not always provide. They want genuine participation and intergenerational dialogue. Volunteering is a good start, but it is not enough without conditions that sustain it over time.
- **Jenny Flores (FCBC, Chiquitanía).** Water is the cornerstone of the strategy in a territory spanning 20 million hectares. Until recently, the "socio-economic function" required proof of one cow per hectare, which drove deforestation right up to the edges of water sources. With the new authorities in place, it is now possible to comply with land-use regulations and resume land-use planning.
- **Mauro Condo (GORE Madre de Dios).** Half of the region is a conservation zone and the other half is productive. Agroforestry has reduced deforestation caused by cattle ranching, but today the greatest threat is illegal mining. The region established a Technical Restoration Committee by ordinance and has pilot projects underway, although "we won't be able to do it alone either."

Closing Remarks. Alejandra Laina highlighted the panel's contributions as expressions of governance: water as a common good, the forest as culture and heritage, young people equipped with new tools, and the response to illegal mining.

> *"These expressions of governance serve to bridge the gaps we encounter in our territories"*—Alejandra Laina

3.5 Block 3 · Knowledge, Culture, Arts, and Communication to Mobilize Action

Moderator: Max Yamauchi (EcoAgriculture Partners) · **Keynote Address:** Saraí Gómez (IUCN South) · **Panel:** Boris Villa (CIP), Andre Nunes (World Bank Pantanal), Nina Duarte (World Bank Chocó Andino, Ecuador), and Héctor Alonso (World Bank Panguipulli, Chile) · **Closing Remarks:** Jhon Mario Rodríguez (Technological University of Pereira, Risaralda)

Funding and implementation:

Saraí Gómez (IUCN South) highlighted the importance of incorporating gender and intercultural perspectives into knowledge management for the restoration of forest landscapes. She emphasized that inclusive management is not merely about collecting information or consulting with communities, but about recognizing the legitimacy of different knowledge systems and ensuring that their bearers participate in decisions regarding their use, protection, and management. It was also noted that gender inequalities and power dynamics can limit the recognition of local knowledge—particularly that of women—making it essential to move toward knowledge governance mechanisms based on rights, reciprocity, and effective participation.

- **Moving from consultation to knowledge governance.** Inclusion requires that communities and their members participate from the very outset in the design of restoration initiatives. This implies recognizing that managing knowledge also means managing power relations.
- **Promote intercultural dialogue and the complementarity of knowledge systems.** Restoration must integrate scientific, Indigenous, and local knowledge without subordinating one to the other. The importance of building multi-evidence bases was emphasized, respecting the validation criteria of each knowledge system, as well as the CARE principles for the governance of Indigenous data: collective benefit, authority to control, accountability, and ethics.
- **Recognizing women's knowledge and removing barriers to their effective participation.** It was proposed to adapt participation and learning mechanisms to territorial, cultural, and care-related conditions, using accessible formats and ensuring that participation translates into real influence over decisions.
- **Strengthen exchange and learning through communities of practice.** The Community of Practice on Gender and Social Inclusion in Restoration was presented; it includes bimonthly virtual meetings, in-person exchanges planned for 2027 and 2028, and microgrants to systematize experiences starting in 2027. This space will help build capacity, share knowledge, and promote leadership and inclusive governance, with thematic priorities defined by its members and support from the Landscape Restoration platform



Panel: Knowledge from the Regions

- **Boris Villa (CIP Lima)** highlighted the role of professionals, professional associations, and universities in enriching the knowledge base through experience and professional practice.
- **Héctor Alonso (Panguipulli Model Forest).** He spoke from his Mapuche experience and that of the Model Forest. In a century, southern Chile has gone from being a rainforest to facing a year-round water shortage. Indigenous proposals are relegated "to a second or third level," and no university degree program in Chile incorporates the knowledge of Indigenous peoples. He proposed mainstreaming this knowledge into professional training.
- **Nina Duarte (Chocó Andino Model Forest).** If children do not value their forests, they will not drive restoration efforts as adults: it is necessary to foster a connection to nature from childhood. In the Andean Chocó, six local governments have joined together in a consortium to conserve at the landscape scale, and the School Forests

Network is celebrating its tenth anniversary. She noted that governments change every four years and that rural women remain excluded from decision-making. "It's not a project—it's about generations."

- **Max Yamauchi (Ecoagriculture Partners).** The foundation of enabling conditions lies in education, culture, and a love of nature. Without that, no public policy or amount of money will be enough.

Closing Remarks. For Jhon Mario Rodríguez, the word that sums up the session is "change." Each presentation added a new dimension:

- Saraí Gómez: a "shift in mindset" and co-creation.
- Boris Villa: a new professional profile for the region, in universities that change very slowly.
- Andre Nunes: a co-created science, serving as an intermediary among stakeholders, that goes beyond articles and patents.
- Héctor Alonso: the "ancestral nature of the curriculum."
- Nina Duarte: what is transformed from within.

> *"We have to listen differently, try new things, and take risks"*—Jhon Mario Rodríguez

3.6 Block 4 · Public and Private Financing: The Necessary Combination for Restoration

Moderator: Walter Aguirre (WWF Peru) · **Keynote Speakers:** Gustavo Rojas and Max Yamauchi (EcoAgriculture Partners) · **Panel:** Tatiana Valverde (WRI consultant), Alex Reátegui (CIMA Cordillera Azul and CAR San Martín), Graciela Salazar (World Bank Tucumán, Argentina), and Carmen Rivera (World Bank Puerto Rico) · **Closing Remarks:** Cynthia Gómez (WWF Peru)

Walter Aguirre put forward a premise: we cannot rely solely on the government or on aid, but rather on a combination of sources. Restoration must be viewed as a process, and its key elements are planning and governance.

Gustavo Rojas proposed that funding "arrive, be combined, and stay." Between the landscape—where value and risk are collective and long-term—and the market—which seeks quick returns—the bridge is integrated landscape financing:

- **The framework.** Funding sources flow into a multi-stakeholder landscape partnership and pass through a channeling mechanism—such as a trust—to reach investments.
- **Enabling investments first.** Investments in governance, planning, and monitoring are typically funded by the public sector, international cooperation, or philanthropy. These investments pave the way for banks and the private sector to invest in assets.
- **What companies need to stay.** Certainty, with stable policies and shared risks, and a landscape partner with a prioritized portfolio. They act based on opportunities and risks, not out of obligation.
- **A case study.** In Sierra Volcánica (southern Jalisco, Mexico), a 190,000-hectare landscape, investment from other actors arrived between the fifth and sixth years.

Max Yamauchi placed governance at the center of financing: without it, funds arrive in a disorganized manner or are duplicated, and yet "no one wants to pay for governance." Facilitation, coordination, basic infrastructure, communication, and data are real costs. A study by EcoAgriculture Partners across more than 30 landscapes estimates the annual minimum for viable governance: $10,000 to $50,000 in small landscapes, $50,000 to $130,000 in medium-sized ones, and up to $500,000 in large ones. Most operate with a deficit exceeding 50%.

> *"Land governance isn't overhead; it isn't an administrative cost… it's actual implementation"*—Max Yamauchi

Panel: Funding Strategies for Restoration in Territories

- **Tatiana Valverde (WRI consultant).** Peru's public investment system already recognizes the gap in degraded areas, and there are nearly 600 projects related to restoration across the three levels of government. However, the portfolio is fragmented, and not all projects are of high quality. She highlighted three challenges: the capacity to execute projects; determining who will maintain and monitor them once the project is completed; and setting territorial priorities with shared outcomes.
- **Alex Reátegui (San Martín Regional Environmental Commission).** "The government does have a budget; what's missing is organizing the investment." Over the past 20 years, there have been more than 150 environmental

projects in the region without visible results, and today efforts are duplicated. She called for including civil society in governance and understanding restoration as a social construct. For producers, she proposed incentives related to legal certainty, economic and financial support, production and market access, and social benefits.

- **Graciela Salazar (Tucumán Model Forest).** After 16 to 18 years of experience, her lesson is that the key to governance is not funding, but the habit of dialogue. This involves compromise, earning the "return on trust" through transparent and auditable processes, and speaking the language of the private sector with evidence. First come the stakeholders and planning; then come the projects with measurable indicators.
- **Carmen Rivera (World Bank Puerto Rico).** A trust established by law made it possible to channel funds transparently to the Model Forest Multisectoral Committee. However, its dependence on the government weakened it, so today the Committee also receives funds directly. She recommended anticipating political fluctuations and ensuring that governance rests with the residents of the Model Forest.

Closing Remarks. Cynthia Gómez concluded that the scale is no longer measured in tens of thousands, but in millions over the long term. This requires a multi-stakeholder partnership, aligned catalytic capital from the government and cooperation, and risk management. The government must lead the agenda (zoning and areas to be restored), but not alone: a mechanism that depends on a single actor is vulnerable. Contracts, transparent agreements, and ongoing communication reduce that risk. She mentioned the sustainability financing model implemented by SERNANP.

> *"Without institutional frameworks, no project, initiative, or partnership can survive"*—Cynthia Gómez



3.7 Questions from the Audience and Word Cloud

- **How can agreements be reached with private interests, such as monoculture plantations or mining?** These are reconciled through agreements and incentives for those occupying designated areas, as well as certification of plantations and silvopastoral and agroforestry systems (Dania Cruz).
- **What is the role of regional and municipal governments?** In San Martín, the Regional Environmental Commission brings together all sectors, and local governments develop projects based on pilot initiatives (San Martín Regional Government).
- **How can we ensure that communities take the lead rather than merely being beneficiaries?** They need forums where they have a voice and a vote. But such forums are multiplying and always bring together the same actors, who aren't paid to attend and end up losing interest (Jaime Valenzuela).
- **How can we prioritize restoration when local governments prioritize health or education?** Participants proposed several approaches: incorporating it into coordinated development plans, committing to productive restoration, "politicizing the technical and technifying the political," having projects ready before funding is secured, and ensuring that public policy originates from the communities.

- **How to turn ancestral knowledge into public policy.** Héctor Alonso cited the experiences of intercultural health in Chile—including Mapuche medicine in primary care—and intercultural education. These did not emerge because policymakers decided to create them, but rather due to persistent advocacy.
- **Who funds restoration and what do they require?** Gustavo Rojas recommended choosing funding sources based on the landscape's stage of development: In the early years, development banks and philanthropic organizations; in mature landscapes, secondary-tier banks and bonds; at any stage, strengthen producers and cooperatives—for example, regarding land tenure—so they can submit projects.

In addition to the interaction through questions and answers, the audience collectively created a word cloud that answered the session's main question*: What makes it possible to restore a landscape?*



3.8 Closing and Cultural Film Afternoon

Natalia Ruiz Guevara (WRI) closed the Forum by highlighting what resonated most from the day's discussions:

- Old words with new life: forestry vocation, livelihoods, ecosystem services, and water management.
- Model Forests as a "grounding force" between global dialogue and local territories, and as laboratories.
- Realism when applying for funding: neither all that wonderful nor all that tragic.
- The idea repeated throughout the day: to work "neither for the communities nor on behalf of the communities, but with the communities."

As challenges, she pointed out that the government must shift from a sectoral approach to landscape-level coordination—a process that will take decades—along with education starting in childhood and persistence.

> *"Restoration involves not only recovering what was damaged, but also continuing to fight to stop what damaged it in the first place"*—Natalia Ruiz Guevara

The day concluded with an **afternoon of international cultural cinema**: three short films exploring the relationship between landscapes, communities, and cultures, featuring filmmakers from communities in Peru, Morocco, and Thailand:

- No Water, No Life (Chirapaq, Peru)
- Restoration in Model Forests – Morocco Episode (Mediterranean Network of Model Forests)
- Community-Based Fire Management in Nan Province (RECOFTC)