**Unshaping model forests in the Global Souths: connecting international sustainability strategies with community-based territorial alternatives**

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**Abstract**

In recent years, exchanges between forest communities around the world have increased to defend territorial and community rights over lands and forests. This is how the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) was created in 1995 by the Government of Canada within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. According to IMFN, a Model Forest is a process of bringing together a diverse association of individuals and groups towards a common vision of sustainable development across extensive landscapes. In 2002, the Ibero-American Model Forest Network (RIABM) was created in Costa Rica, and in 2009 the African Model Forest Network (AMFN) emerged in Cameroon. How do local communities build shared knowledge on community-based forest management through trans-local dynamics? This research aims to (i) identify who are the key actors involved in knowledge co-production and dissemination of Model forests principles and related practices; (ii) understand the construction of trans-local processes and (inter) dependency between key actors governing Model Forests networks in the Global Souths. This study draws on a comparative analysis of the Choco Andino Model Forest in Ecuador and the Campo Ma’an Model Forest in Cameroon. As a main result, this research shows the financial and project-based opportunities of being part of a Model Forest network, but also the challenges in terms of local appropriation and visibility, political continuity, leadership and tensions with extractive activities.

**Key-words:** Model forests; Community forestry; International cooperation; Translocal politics; Ecuador; Cameroon