

Model Forests Around the World: Thailand



Thailand: Ngao Model Forest
Joined in 2000, 175,159 hectares

The Ngao Model Forest in Lampang Province, Thailand is a multi-ethnic landscape that promotes forest conservation education and resource management through extensive collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders.

The Ngao Model Forest encompasses the entire Ngao district in Lampang Province, Thailand, covering 1,751 square kilometers. The Ngao Model Forest joined the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) in 2000 and since then, stakeholders—ranging from national and subnational government agencies, universities, NGOs, and the private sector—have been working to protect the forest's ecosystem.

The Model Forest has increased local awareness and participation in forest conservation activities, including using bamboo plantations to restore unsustainable land-use monocropping as well as forest fire protection initiatives. The Model Forest's management focuses on building linkages between landscape restoration and livelihood development to contribute to environmental and social benefits like climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

Key Facts

- The Ngao Model Forest houses a research center, utilised by Maejo University and Lampang Rajabhat University, which have conducted studies ranging from bio-circular economies and poverty alleviation by **promoting sustainable management and harvesting** of timber and non-timber forest products.
- The forest's sustainable management approach covering different types of forests (Protected Areas, National Forest Reserves, and Community Forests) **has preserved over 60% of forest cover across the landscape.**
- The Ngao Model Forest has **helped communities diversify their economies** by including businesses based on bamboo, medicinal plant cultivation, and edible insect farming.
- Under the Ngao Model Forest umbrella, **58 community forests have been established** to strengthen landscape-wide forest fire control.

Community-First Governance Model

There are over 58,000 people living in and around the Ngao Model Forest, including three ethnic groups (Mien, Karen, and Akha) across 10 sub-districts and 85 villages. The Ngao Forest Association, set up with the support of the Royal Forest Department, acts as a steward for the conservation of the Ngao Forest. The Association, managed by a voluntary committee and representatives from local communities, is focused on strengthening ties with locals to create an environment of trust and ensures a collaborative approach to forest management and decision-making.



Photos are sourced from the Ngao Model Forest, Thailand, with credits to the Ngao Model Forest Association.

Progress on the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals



The Model Forest specifically contributes to SDG 15: Life on Land.

The Ngao Model Forest promotes the sustainable use of the forest ecosystem and is working on halting and reversing land degradation across the landscape. The Ngao Model Forest is a part of the Regional Model Forest Network Asia, which leverages key partnerships with scientific institutions such as IUCN and the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) to promote SDG 15 via various conservation and sustainable development activities, particularly by promoting forest landscape restoration (FLR).

This is one example of how the Ngao Model Forest helps progress the SDGs.

Partners

This publication has been produced with financial support from the Government of Canada's Global Forest Leadership Program and through the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) Secretariat's IMFN Climate initiative which supports efforts to scale up forest and landscape restoration, enable inclusive landscape governance, and equip the next generation of forest leaders to address the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The **International Model Forest Network (IMFN)** is a voluntary global community of practice whose members and supporters work toward the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes and natural resources through the Model Forest approach.

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. By harnessing the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of some 16,000 experts, IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

RECOFTC is the current secretariat for the **Regional Model Forest Network-Asia (RMFN-Asia)**, which facilitates regional cooperation. RECOFTC is an international nonprofit organization operating in the Asia-Pacific region working towards a future where resilient communities with respected rights thrive in forest landscapes that they manage sustainably and equitably.



bit.ly/iucnimfn

