Fibria
The Sustainable Forest Mosaics Initiative

Overview
Forestry industry representatives and environmental organizations in Brazil's Atlantic rainforest are promoting a new model of rural production and conservation on a landscape scale. The sustainable forest mosaics concept is a response to the complex challenge of producing much-needed wood fibre while protecting ecosystems, natural resources and community livelihoods.

Background
Throughout the world, an area of tropical rainforest equal to half the size of Florida is being lost each year. As many as 13 million hectares of forest lands, including 6 million hectares of primary forest, were lost each year between 2000 and 2005, with South America suffering the worst losses. Although there are many legal reserves and protected areas within forests, many lack adequate protection and are affected by hunting, wood extraction and grazing.

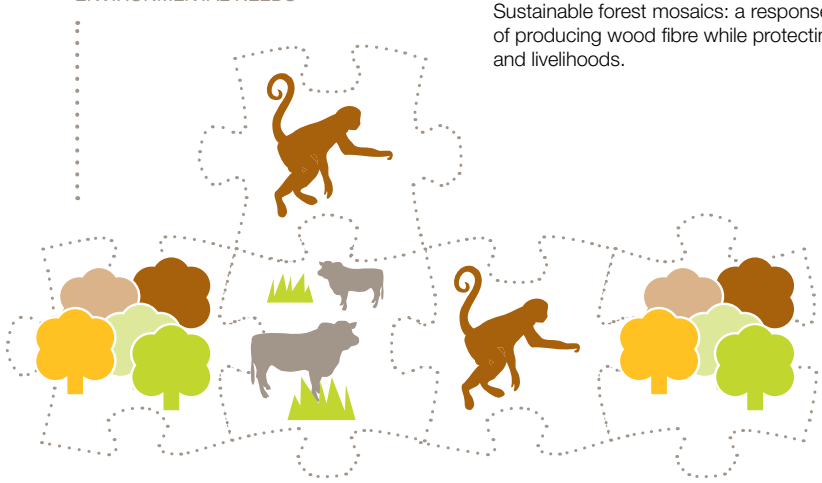
The clearance and unsustainable use of forests threatens the economic and social benefits and environmental services that healthy forests provide.

Tropical forest areas are also home to substantial forest plantations, which supply an ever-growing portion of the world's demand for paper, personal goods and inexpensive wood products. Along with partners in the pulp and paper industry, Fibria launched an initiative to promote an industry-wide movement towards practices that are both environmentally beneficial and economically sound.

The project
The Sustainable Forest Mosaics Initiative was set up in 2007 in the Atlantic rainforest of Brazil. It brings together global and national companies, non-profit organizations and local institutions to establish an innovative and collaborative model of production, conservation and livelihood generation. The founding partners were Brazilian pulp and paper companies Fibria, Veracel and Suzano, paper-based consumer products giant Kimberly-Clark, and NGOs Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and Instituto BioAtlântica.

The mosaic concept aims to fit together different land uses – such as plantations, agriculture and nature reserves – in a way that meets economic and social needs while maintaining ecosystem services and biodiversity. The initiative takes a science-based landscape approach, seeking to guarantee results in an area large enough to benefit a range of species and ecosystems.

MOSIACS FIT TOGETHER DIFFERENT LAND USES TO MEET ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS



Sustainable forest mosaics: a response to the challenge of producing wood fibre while protecting ecosystems and livelihoods.

The concept recognizes the multiple roles tropical forests serve – such as absorbing and storing CO_2 while generating oxygen, protecting watersheds, preventing erosion and soil degradation, cycling water and nutrients, supplying non-timber forest products, and serving as habitat for most of the world's known species. Plantations can help to fulfil these roles as part of a landscape mosaic.

The project began in a large area of the Atlantic rainforest, from southern Bahia to the north of Espírito Santo. While work is still ongoing in this region, the idea is to expand the model to cover the rest of the Atlantic rainforest and apply it to other regions of the world where plantation forests can bring significant benefits within the landscape. A forum – the Forest Dialogue for the Atlantic Forest and the Pampa – was created to bring stakeholders together. This was subsequently transformed into one national forum and seven regional ones. Other players, such as manufacturers, retailers and even consumers, have been invited to participate. This has helped to disseminate the concept.

As a result of the initiative, a group has been formed to support the restoration of the Atlantic rainforest biome. Members include federal environmental bodies the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) and the Forest Service (SFB), the public prosecutor's office, the Bahia state environmental body IMA, farmers and Bahia State University (UNEB). The group will quantify, coordinate and promote restoration activities within nine of the region's municipalities where the mosaics are located.

Benefits

By 2009, partner companies had brought more than 8,000 hectares of rainforest under protection. By 2011, they had restored 2,700 hectares on their land. This restoration has created corridors to connect isolated rainforest fragments and brought employment and income to local communities.

The initiative has developed a methodology and for integrated planning and monitoring of biodiversity, including protected areas and forest restoration. Databases from different areas have now been integrated into an interactive system to facilitate landscape-level planning.

A monitoring protocol for key ecological groups (birds, mammals and flora) has been created. This has fed into scientifically robust operation restrictions and guidelines for partner companies. Invasive species are also monitored, controlled and prevented.

Forest restoration guidelines and practices are being continually improved. Fibria supports nurseries and seed collecting associations, monitors existing restoration areas, and has established partnerships for developing forest restoration methodologies with the University of São Paulo and Brazilian environmental NGO IBio. Fibria and partners are also engaging with the Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact, which aims to restore 15 million hectares of the forest by 2050.

Next steps

The initiative aims to restore 2,000 hectares per year over the next three years.

A key step towards this is increasing the involvement of outgrowers (smallholders who supply larger forestry companies).

Other partners from the forestry, consumer products and retail industries are also welcome to join this effort to promote a new paradigm of production and conservation.

2,700

HECTARES RESTORED BY 2011