



#ForestPartnerships #EUGreenDeal #TeamEurope

# FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE

*Our future is in our hands and in our trees*

Interview with

## María Teresita Chinchilla Miranda

ACOFOP, Guatemala

### Why do forests matter to you?

Forests are part of the very existence of forest communities. Community forestry systems for ACOFOP are directly linked to the strengthening of human capital with a sense of ownership, it is about how communities live from the forest, how they identify with nature, their vision of development for the future of their children, the protection of nature and the Mayan cultural vestiges.

### What are the main challenges to forests in your area today?

Given that we operate on government land, the biggest challenge is to obtain long-term tenure in order to provide greater stability to the communities. Another challenge regards external interests to develop unsustainable programmes in these territories, that threaten the future of the forests.

### What is your idea of sustainable forest management?

For ACOFOP, sustainability is based on the fact that the concession model has been in development over four generations, so contributing to its strengthening. Integrated management of concession territory cannot be sustainable if it operates in a single forest production chain, it must be integrated in the management of natural resources and ecosystem services in order to achieve a balance. Generating income for the communities and securing resources will allow them to invest in forest conservation, control and surveillance actions, as well as fire prevention.

### How can sustainable forest management contribute to creating jobs and income?

Local communities make sustainable use of timber resources, non-timber resources and activities derived from ecosystem services such as REDD+ projects (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation), tourism, and others. This generates income in a diversified way, creating sources of

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## The Proust Questionnaire

*Freely inspired by a parlour game popularised by the French novelist Marcel Proust*

### Your chief characteristic?

Discipline.

### What do you appreciate most in people?

Attitude.

### Your idea of happiness?

Not to expect anything from anyone, just to give.

### Your greatest fear?

Not leaving results

### If not yourself, who would you like to be?

Just me.

### Your favourite tree?

The forest.





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employment for members and non-members. It also allows them to invest in social needs such as health and education, among others.

**How can the European Union better support your country's objective in relation to the forestry sector?**

In some countries of the European Union (EU) it has been shown that the forestry sector is an important engine for national development, based on the management of natural and semi-natural forests and plantations. As a whole, the EU is increasingly interested in the protection of forests in the world due to their high contribution to climate change, the protection of biodiversity and their economic contribution in developing countries. For some countries forest management is an important part of rural development and is managed by indigenous and peasant communities. For this reason, the relevant role that the EU can play in these developing countries is to support forestry agendas and policies, support forestry communities, capacity building , in the continuous improvement of production, with industrial technologies for the transformation and commercialisation of tropical species in the EU.

**What forest-related achievement do you admire most?**

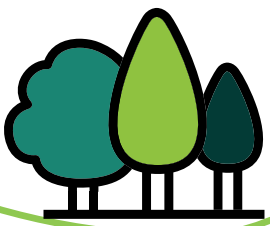
The link between conservation and development and being able to scale up production processes without losing sustainability or affecting biodiversity.

*María Teresita Chinchilla Miranda is the Advisor of the Strategic Management team within ACOFOP, the Association of Forest Communities of Petén in Guatemala, which manages the Maya Biosphere Reserve in a sustainable manner.*



**About ACOFOP**

The communal organizations that form ACOFOP protect the biodiversity and cultural heritage of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Along with conservation actions, the community forestry model allows the communities that inhabit and care for the forests to generate economic and social benefits.



**FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE FACILITY**

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