



POSITIVE INCENTIVES COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Task 18 of the Biodiversity Plan “The Power of Voluntary Action”

Case Study (Mexico)

LOS BÓSCARES

Positive Incentive for Forest Conservation

Reforestamos Mexico
Los Bóscares



Organizers



LOS BÓSCARES (MEXICO)

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Summary

Reforestamos Mexico is a non-governmental organization founded in 2002. With 22 years of experience, its mission has been to secure more and better forests to promote sustainable development. Their vision is to make forests the primary allies in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and ensuring forest connectivity in Mexico.

Los Bóscares began in Mexico in 2018 and since 2021 the initiative has expanded to Central America, Colombia, and Peru to annually identify, analyze, and recognize the most outstanding projects supported voluntarily by companies to protect forest ecosystems in the countries where they operate.

Reforestamos Mexico is responsible for Los Bóscares, from its conception and methodology to ongoing updates and implementation.

Case Study

Los Bóscares

Los Bóscares recognizes the most integrative, innovative, and inspiring initiatives with positive impacts on forests of Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Peru. The goal is to acknowledge and encourage the disclosure of up-to-date public information by companies regarding the projects they support for forest ecosystems care.

While the private sector plays a crucial role in forest restoration and conservation, information about their involvement in this task is often less known and recognized. Hence, Los Bóscares were created to identify and analyze trends, approaches, and challenges faced by companies voluntarily engaged in forest-related projects. Los Bóscares began in Mexico in 2018 and since 2021 the initiative has expanded to Central America, Colombia, and Peru to annually identify, analyze, and recognize the most outstanding projects supported voluntarily by companies to protect forest ecosystems in the countries where they operate.

Reforestamos Mexico

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Main outcomes of Reforestamos labor

Reforestamos has worked in nearly 61,000 hectares through conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management; Collaborating with 58 ejidos (communal land units) and 19 communities across 22 states in Mexico; Reforestamos has assisted 14 municipalities in the country to obtain the designation of Tree Cities of the World; Over 11,200 students from 90 universities across Latin America have participated in the Young Forest Entrepreneur Contest.

Reforestamos Mexico fosters an entrepreneurial community that includes over 800 forest-related companies (most of them SMEs), aiming to strengthen the entrepreneurship and investment ecosystem for forests; Reforestamos Mexico collaborates with over 280 companies to take actions in favor of Mexico's forests; Reforestamos also has analyzed the actions of more than 900 companies supporting forests and awarded 75 companies in Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Peru through Los Boscares.

Reforestamos Mexico is responsible for Los Boscares, from its conception and methodology to ongoing updates and implementation. Los Boscares is implemented in partnership with local allies in each country to understand the national context and consolidate the initiative across the region.

Los Boscares Methodology

1. A wide list of companies is compiled for research in each country. This compilation is based on international rankings related to corporate social responsibility, directories of business chambers with environmental agendas, media coverage, and awards granted to companies for their environmental performance.
2. These lists are validated with local allies to identify companies that, due to reputational issues, are not eligible for recognition. Additionally, companies identified by allies that were not initially listed are included.
3. Publicly available information about the companies is researched through their official communication channels such as sustainability and annual reports, websites, and press releases. For countries where the initiative is well-established, an open call is made, inviting companies to submit their projects via an online form. Participation in Los Boscares is cost-free for companies.
4. The collected information is analyzed and research formats are fulfilled for each company that shows information related to forest care projects.
5. An initial evaluation is conducted by Reforestamos Mexico to select projects that meet criteria related to innovation, integrity, and inspiration. About 10 projects per country are preselected at this point.

6. A review committee is established in each country with the participation of experts in corporate social responsibility and forestry. They perform a second evaluation using a standardized format to guide project scoring. Each panel member has two weeks to cast their votes.
7. Scores are aggregated to determine the top projects to be recognized in each country. In case of ties, the review committee evaluate each case individually.
8. The chosen companies for recognition are contacted to notify them that their project may receive recognition. The process is explained, and their participation in the award ceremony is explored. Companies have the option to decline the recognition (this only apply to those companies that were researched without their knowledge).
9. A public event is held in collaboration with local allies for the award ceremony. Los Boscares presents a trophy engraved with the year, company name, and awarded project. The recognition does not include any money or grant to support the companies or the project.

Target Audience: Private sector and forest-related enterprises. Strategic stakeholders include governments, academia, international cooperation agencies, and civil society organizations.

Investment:

- 2018-2020: Self-investment by Reforestamos Mexico.
- 2021-2022: French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement) in Mexico.
- 2023-2024: Salesforce Foundation and Solea (a company in Mexico).
- From 2024 onwards: Seeking sponsors, which can include cooperation agencies, funds, companies, foundations, etc.

Results:

Since 2018, a total of 1,748 companies have been researched and analyzed, out of which 75 companies have been recognized in Los Boscares.

Impact

- Systematize business cases to identify success factors and barriers related to corporate investment in forests care.
- Through inspiring cases, motivate other companies to take action and expand their business ambition for investing in forest care projects. Assess progress toward achieving Goal 15 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Be the only award focused on recognizing the positive relationships between forests and companies.

Strengths

- The methodology is dynamic and adaptable.
- Facilitates networking spaces that encourage synergies.

- Provides a positive channel of contact with companies.
- The name “Los Boscares” has charisma in the Spanish-speaking Latin American context.
- Operational costs can be reduced by hosting events digitally.

Weaknesses:

- Fundraising for the project can be challenging.
- Contacting all companies with forest care projects is not straightforward. Information may be biased due to incomplete or unpublished annual activity reports by companies.
- There’s a need for ongoing follow-up and support for recognized companies, requiring suitable spaces and materials to continue showcasing the recognized projects.

Future Perspective

- The initiative will continue if there are relevant and inspiring business cases to recognize, promoting greater investment and business commitment to forest conservation.
- Expanding the analysis to more countries will provide additional tools and information about corporate involvement in forest ecosystems, trends, lessons learned, challenges, and progress, enabling better decision-making.

Lessons Learned

1. Having appropriate public policies enables greater corporate action. For example, Colombia’s governmental reforestation goal for 2026 is 750,000 hectares. The National Development Plan also aims to reduce deforestation by 20%. Companies like Ecopetrol and Nestlé explicitly are aligned with this national objective. For example Nestlé has the commitment to plant 7.5 million of trees in Colombia and contributes also with their global goal to reach in 2030 200 million of trees planted. Ecopetrol has the goal to plating 12 million of trees in Colombia in this decade and it’s part of One Trillion Trees an international initiative with other 30 companies.
2. Corporate climate strategies (adaptation, mitigation, or neutrality) enable broader forest projects. Among the 23 awarded companies in 2023, 9 of them have clear climate action goals in which the forest projects support contributes to their decarbonization targets.
3. Global or central strategies with regional focus led to winning projects across multiple countries. Companies like Nestlé, Grupo Aje, and Microsoft achieved local impact with distinct approaches and allies, all contributing to a common goal.
4. Public-private collaborations involving cooperation agencies (e.g., GIZ in Mexico and USAID in Colombia) play a crucial role in the Latin American region. Technical and financial support, capacity-building, and community engagement enhance project outcomes.
5. Benchmarking—comparing initiatives—helps companies strengthen their forest care strategies. Learning from sector peers fosters ambition and innovative approaches.

6. Information about companies' forest conservation efforts can positively influence public perception.
7. Data Homogenization and Transparency:
 - Creating an standardized information format is essential for comparing different initiatives. However, not all companies maintain the same level of transparency, especially regarding sensitive data like financials.
 - The reliance on official communication channels means that the quality and consistency of data can vary. Some companies update their information regularly, while others may not.
8. Bias and Reporting Limitations:
 - The lack of constant updates can introduce bias into the analysis. Companies might not provide exhaustive details about individual projects in their sustainability or annual reports.
 - Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face resource constraints, which can affect their online presence (websites, social media, advertising) and hinder project visibility.
9. Verification Process:
 - While field visits aren't conducted, trust is placed in the information companies publicly share. Public disclosure implies a commitment to maintaining their reputation.
 - Collaborations with allies such as NGOs, local communities, international cooperation agencies, other companies, or governmental agencies add credibility to the data provided.
10. Expanding information through direct interviews:
 - Conducting one-on-one interviews with companies could enhance the available information. Personal interactions allow for deeper insights and clarification.

Future perspectives and lessons learned:

- Los Boscares depends on relevant and inspiring business cases. Expanding to more countries will provide valuable insights for decision-making.
- Lessons learned include the importance of public policies, corporate climate goals and strategies, regional approaches, public-private collaborations, benchmarking, and improving public perception.

Further information:

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