

INVITATION TO THE SELVA MAYA TROPICAL TIMBER TRADE MISSION

NOVEMBER 17TH – 23RD, 2024

Would you like to explore tropical timber species and suppliers in Selva Maya in Mexico and Guatemala? Would it help you to know how community forests are managed and supported by local NGOs to allow responsible and ethical sourcing?

You will explore this and more during the multinational trade mission to the Selva Maya in November 2024. As part of the joint efforts between Rainforest Alliance, FSC, and Probos, the trade mission to the Selva Maya is organized to meet key actors in the Tropical Timber value chain. The objective of the trade mission is to develop new market opportunities for tropical timber that contribute to forest conservation and the economic resilience of forest communities in the Selva Maya.

ABOUT SELVA MAYA

The Selva Maya is named after the region that saw the birth and prosperity of the ancient Maya civilization, which spanned the north of Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and the southeast of Mexico. It is the second largest tropical rainforest in the Americas after the Amazon.

The Selva Maya is a mega-biodiverse ecosystem that provides a range of ecosystem services, from carbon sequestration to water conservation, and is home to a rich diversity of wildlife from jaguars, critically endangered Central American river turtles, to still undiscovered insects and plants. In addition to its environmental values, the Selva Maya is the basis for the livelihood and culture of thousands of local and indigenous communities and is home to some of the world's most recognized archaeological sites.

The Selva Maya is subject to many pressures that threaten its sustainability in the short and long term. Improving the business case for Sustainable Forest Management in the Selva Maya by diversifying the market of timber species and products helps to safeguard this precious ecosystem for future generations and preserve its incomparable biodiversity and cultural heritage.



Photo: Mark van Benthem, Probos

COMMUNITY-BASED FSC-CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

In both Guatemala and Mexico, community forest enterprises are stewards of the Selva Maya, managing their forests for timber, non-timber forest products, and ecosystem services. A significant part of the area is already FSC-certified, with the first certificates issued in the late 1990s. The total certified area is nearly 500,000 hectares, with more community forests in the process of FSC certification. This type of sustainable community forest management is an important defense against illegal logging, land conversion, and forest degradation, and is vital to rural economies. It has proven that with the right regulations and partners working together to create market-based solutions, the forests of Selva Maya can be conserved. It empowers local communities to manage and benefit from the land they have dedicated to preserve, creating sustainable livelihoods while conserving large areas of rainforest.

MAIN BARRIER: MARKET ACCESS

The jungle serves as the economic backbone of the rural communities, with timber playing a vital role in the Selva Maya economy. Promoting sustainable forest management and using timber from sustainably managed forests is critical to protect the Selva Maya ecosystem. To further sustain the community forest management in the Selva Maya and protect it from external pressures, there is an urgent need to diversify the market for timber species from FSC-certified community forests by commercializing new species and timber products. These products cover a wide range from roundwood and solid wood boards to decking and exterior



Photo: Mark van Benthem, Probos

and interior furniture. Well-known species that the local communities mostly harvest and export include big-leaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*). The potential of the rainforest is however much bigger as it contains dozens of other tree species that are lesser known to international markets but have [excellent technical specifications](#)¹. Developing markets for these unique species creates new opportunities that support biodiversity and economic resilience for forest-dependent communities.

¹ [Timber Species Catalog July 2023 Edition \(Spanish only\)](#)

The information below provides a glimpse at some of these timber species found in the Selva Maya.

Chicozapote²

Scientific name: *Manilkara zapota*. The species is closely related to Massaranduba (*Manilkara bidentata*), and with very similar applications.

Common applications: Marine constructions, tool handles, furniture, parquets, cabinets, turning work, musical instruments. Responds well to indoor and outdoor use.

Estimated annual harvest volumes in the area: 12,700 m³. Available in both Mexico and Guatemala, with the majority of the volume available in Mexico.

Tzalam³

Scientific name: *Lysiloma latisiliquum*; *L. bahamensis*

Common uses: Prefabricated parquet, sliced decorative veneers, sporting goods, door and window frames, interior and exterior construction, carpentry and fine furniture, molding products, flooring, handicrafts, and turned products.

Estimated annual harvest volumes in the area: 8,400 m³. Available in both Mexico and Guatemala, with the majority of the volume available in Mexico.

Pucté^{4,5}

Scientific name: *Terminalia buceras*, formerly *Bucida buceras*

Common applications: Heavy outdoor construction, posts, piles, bridges, railroad ties, vehicle platforms, ship parts, firewood, and coal. In addition, it can be effective for industrial and prefabricated flooring, parquet, stairs, table tops, knife handles, and drum sticks.

Estimated annual harvest volumes in the area: 3700 m³. Available in both Mexico and Guatemala, with the majority of the volume available in Guatemala.

Manchiche^{6,7}

Scientific name: *Lonchocarpus castilloi*

Common applications: The wood is highly valued in Mexico for its use in medium draft boats. Although veneer can be obtained from it, its properties are not suited for this use. It is also used for firewood, fence posts and pickets, general home use, flooring, parquet, furniture and cabinets, fine furniture, boards and veneers, decorative veneer, turning, pallets, packaging, light packaging, musical instruments, handicrafts as well as other uses.

Estimated annual harvest volumes in the area: 3,500 m³. Available in both Mexico and Guatemala, with the majority of the volume available in Guatemala.

² [Chicozapote | The Wood Database \(Hardwood\) \(wood-database.com\)](#)

³ [Tzalam | The Wood Database \(Hardwood\) \(wood-database.com\)](#)

⁴ [Pucté | The Wood Database \(Hardwood\) \(wood-database.com\)](#)

⁵ [Pucté | \(cirad.fr\)](#)

⁶ [Manchiche | The Wood Database \(wood-database.com\)](#)

⁷ [Manchiche | \(cirad.fr\)](#)

THE TRADE MISSION

Rainforest Alliance⁸ and FSC⁹, supported by the Probos Foundation¹⁰, jointly organize the Selva Maya Tropical Timber Trade mission in November 2024.

Participants in the trade mission will meet key actors in the Tropical Timber value chain, from a range of well-established to less mature community forest enterprises in conjunction with private sector and government bodies. The trade mission provides a unique opportunity to meet potential suppliers of tropical timber from community-managed forests and to learn more about the tropical timber species available in the region.



Photo: Mark van Benthem, Probos

A program has been designed that will give first-hand insight into the timber production chain from the Selva Maya in both Mexico and Guatemala. Participants will also learn how responsible and ethical sourcing impacts the Selva Maya and the livelihoods of its guardians. All the forest communities that will be visited during the business encounter are FSC-certified or in the process of becoming FSC-certified.

To register for the trade mission, please email Carlos Estrada at Rainforest Alliance (cestrada@ra.org). Costs for participants are limited to international travel, travel from Guatemala to Mexico, visa, meals, and lodging.

Please sign up for the trade mission as soon as possible! The number of participants is limited.

⁸ [Rainforest Alliance \(rainforest-alliance.org\)](http://rainforest-alliance.org)

⁹ [Forest Stewardship Council \(fsc.org\)](http://fsc.org)

¹⁰ [Probos \(probos.nl\)](http://probos.nl)

ITINERARY

Please do let us know if you are interested in taking place in the entire Trade Mission (Guatemala and Mexico), or only in one country only.

Participants are invited to arrive in Flores, Peten Guatemala on **Saturday 16th November** to take advantage of their stay in Guatemala and visit [Tikal National Park](#) on **Sunday 17th November**. Situated *in the heart of the jungle, surrounded by lush vegetation, lies one of the major sites of Mayan civilization, inhabited from the 6th century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. The ceremonial centre contains superb temples and palaces, and public squares accessed by means of ramps. Remains of dwellings are scattered throughout the surrounding countryside* (UNESCO, 2024).

Please be aware that there are very limited rooms available at the hotels that are inside the Tikal National Park.

Program Selva Maya Tropical Timber trade mission				
Date	Place of stay ¹¹	Place of activity	Activity	Participants
Saturday 16 th November	Jungle Lodge Tikal at Tikal National Park, depending on availability.	1. Arrival at hotel in Tikal National Park.	1. Proposed arrival day.	1. All interested in visiting Tikal National Park.
Sunday 17 th November	Hotel Villa Maya Flores, Petén, Guatemala , depending on availability.	1. Tikal National Park, Guatemala	1. Visit to Tikal National Park, Guatemala	1. All interested in visiting Tikal National Park.
Monday 18 th November	Hotel Villa Maya Flores, Petén, Guatemala , depending on availability.	1. At Hotel Villa Maya Flores, Petén, Guatemala .	1. Networking sessions. All day session.	1. Forest Community Enterprises from Guatemala and Mexico, Timber buyers, NGOs, Government Bodies, Timber Enterprises and other key stakeholders in the timber sector.
Tuesday 19 th November	Hotel Villa Maya Flores, Petén, Guatemala , depending on availability.	1. Uaxactun Forest Concession	2. Visit sawmill, workshop and Xate processing unit	1. Uaxactun community members, Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives and government representatives.
Wednesday 20 th November	Hotel Villa Maya Flores, Petén, Guatemala , depending on availability.	1. Árbol Verde, Ixtlú, Flores, Petén. 2. FORESCOM Processing Unit.	1. Sawmill and community forest enterprises. 2. Sawmill and community forest enterprises.	1. Árbol Verde community members, Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives and government representatives. 2. FORESCOM members, Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives and government representatives.
Thursday 21 st November	Hotel Tuparenda , Bacalar, Quintana Roo, depending on availability.	1. Road transfer to Bacalar, Quintana Roo in Mexico through Belize (6-8 hours)	---	1. Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives
Friday 22 nd November	Hotel Tuparenda , Bacalar, Quintana Roo, depending on availability.	1. Noh Bec Ejido, Quintana Roo. 2. Petcacab Ejido, Quintana Roo.	1. Sawmill visit. 2. Sawmill visit.	1. Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives and government representatives.
Saturday 23 rd	Hilton Garden Inn , Cancún, Quintana Roo	1. Ejido Caoba	1. Sawmill visit.	1. Mexico community enterprise representatives, timber buyers, NGOs representatives and government representatives.
Sunday 24th November	-	1. Cancún	1. Fly back home.	

¹¹ We have made some recommendations of places to stay in the different locations (table below). The reason why there is a change of hotels from Saturday 16th to Sunday 17th is because the location for the Trade Mission activities in Guatemala will take place in Flores, Petén starting from Monday 18th and finishing on Wednesday 20th (including the whole day of networking sessions on Monday 18th). On Thursday 21st, the transfer by road to Bacalar, Quintana Roo will begin in Flores, Petén.

KEY INFORMATION

1. Budget per person in euros (approximate costs), including international flights

The following table shows all expenses. **We ask participants to pay a deposit of 810 EUR upfront to cover for (1) accommodation and (2) half-board (breakfast and lunch), you will only be required to pay for your dinners and book your hotel in Cancun on the last night.** The deposit will help us to ensure last minute no shows which could jeopardize the Trade Mission.

Internal and regional transportation

All internal and regional transportation will be covered by the organizers.

Transport	Cost	Included in deposit
Return flight – Europe - Flores, GUATEMALA – Cancun, MEXICO – Europe. <i>NOT INCLUDED IN DEPOSIT, participants should book their own flights.</i>	800€	NO
Accommodation	Cost	
Flores, Peten, GUATEMALA - 16th November – 20th November (5 nights), 90 EUR per night	450€	YES
Bacalar, Quintana Roo, MEXICO – 20th November – 24th November (2 nights), 80 EUR per night.	160€	YES
Recommended hotel: Hilton Garden Inn , Cancun Airport – 1 night. <i>NOT INCLUDED IN DEPOSIT, please make your own booking.</i>	95€	NO
Meals ¹²		
Breakfasts and lunches for 8 days. Included in deposit.	200€	YES
Dinners for 8 days. <i>NOT INCLUDED IN DEPOSIT, participants should pay for their dinner.</i>	160€	NO
Total	1,865€	

¹² Please bear in mind some restaurants only take cash in both Mexico and Guatemala. It is recommended you carry some cash with you in case you are required to pay in cash.

Deposit

We ask participants to pay a deposit of 810 EUR upfront to cover for (1) accommodation and (2) half-board (breakfast and lunch). You will only be required to pay for your **dinners** and **book your hotel in Cancun** on the last night. The deposit will help us to ensure last minute no shows which could jeopardize the Trade Mission.

Your place on the Trade Mission will be confirmed once we have received your deposit with the following information:

Full name:

Company name:

Please reference your bank transfer with your name and Selva Maya Trade Mission.

Bank Details

If you have any enquiry regarding the bank transfer, please contact Mark van Benthem Mark van Benthem at mark.vanbenthem@probos.nl

Bank account

IBAN NL54 TRIO 0320 2419 47

BIC TRIONL2U

VAT number

NL002973200B01

Tax number

0029.73.200

TRAVEL INSURANCE

You should buy appropriate travel insurance before you travel. If you already have a travel insurance policy, check what cover it provides for coronavirus-related events, including medical treatment and travel disruption, and any planned activities such as adventure sports. If you are choosing a new policy, make sure you check how it covers these issues.

If you do not have appropriate insurance before you travel, you could be liable for emergency expenses, including medical treatment, which may cost thousands of dollars.

Please make sure you take your insurance policy details with you, including the policy number and your insurer's emergency assistance telephone number, we strongly recommend you share your policy details with us.

HEALTH MEASURES

Please review attached documents for detailed information on health risks in Mexico and Guatemala, including all the vaccines you should have before traveling to both countries. We recommend you visit your doctor before you travel.

FOOD AND WATER HYGIENE

Advice on avoiding food and water-borne diseases. See attached documents.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Carlos Estrada from Rainforest Alliance at cestrada@ra.org.

Some useful links with more information about the Selva Maya:

- [Selva Maya Archives | Rainforest Alliance \(rainforest-alliance.org\)](#)
- [The Selva Maya is aiming to broaden customer base - STTC \(europeansttc.com\)](#)
- [The Selva Maya: a Community Forest Management Offer for Responsible Markets \(episode 1\) | ATIBT](#)
- [The Selva Maya: a Community Forest Management Offer for Responsible Markets \(episode 2\) | ATIBT](#)