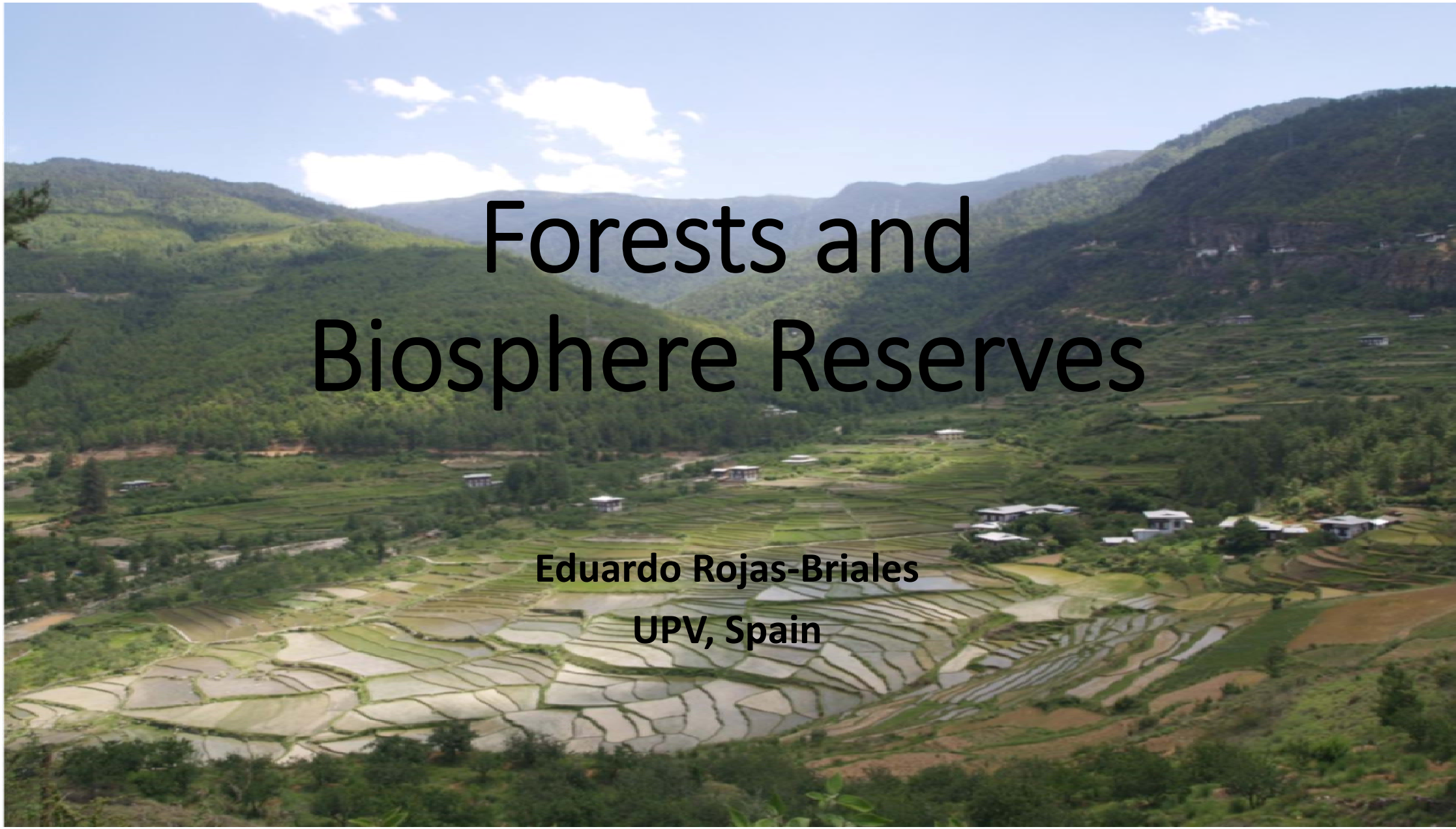


Forests and Biosphere Reserves

Eduardo Rojas-Briales

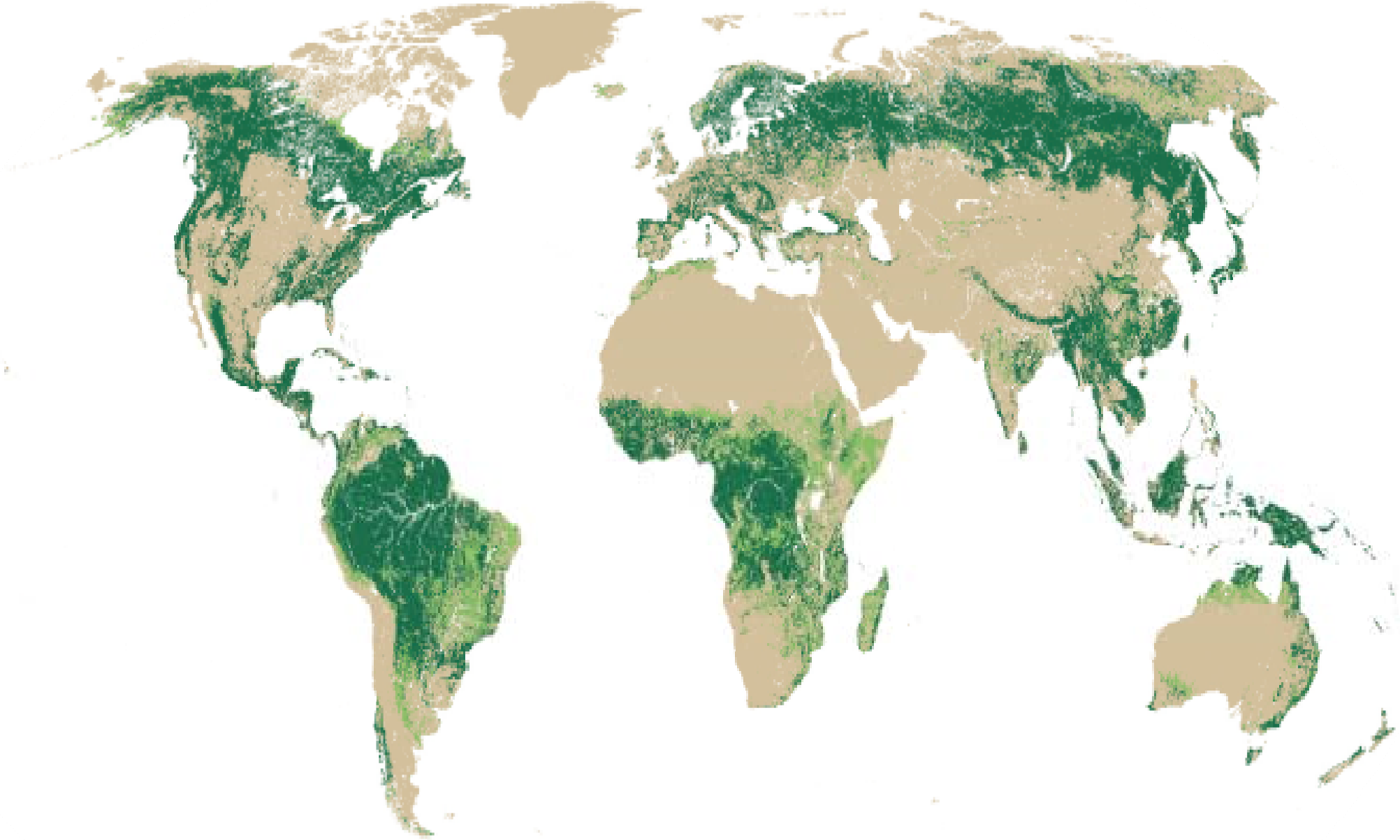
UPV, Spain

Uniqueness of BR

- Unique figure that integrates from its inception the environmental requirements, the cultural heritage and socioeconomic needs of the local population in the frame of a long term vision (1971!)
- Basic presumption: humankind and nature are not intrinsically antagonist
- Research has shown that:
  - smooth sustainable managed ecosystems host more biodiversity than set aside ones
  - set aside ones show higher social conflicts (fires)
- Conflict intensive managed forests (plantations: <2% global) vs. pristine forests (1/3) manicheistic

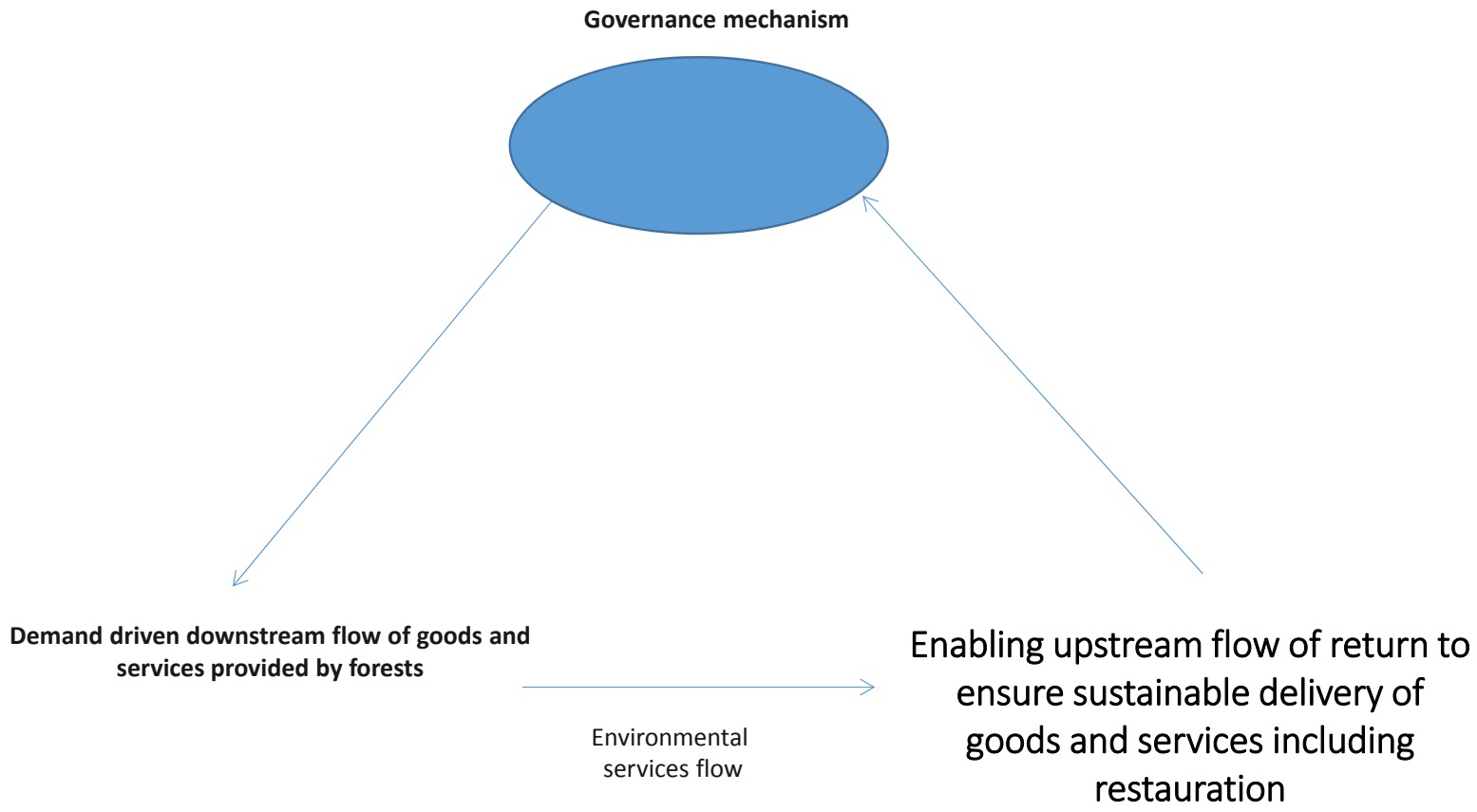
2050 perspective

- 9 Bio people + increasing middle class
- Important increase of demand for 5Fs (food, fodder, fuel, fibber and forest/environmental services)
- Specialized functional division of land not suitable due to:
  - lack of land
  - high economic and social transaction costs (tenure, migration)
  - burden of preservation of biodiversity on the weakest part of society
- Wood and bamboo are crucial for green economies/low carbon/bioeconomy
- Environmental policy designed for negative environmental effects not adjusted to the provision of positive environmental services due to its (territorial) inequality (penalizes the just)
- SDG approach overcomes isolation of 3 pillars of sustainable development
- Huge experience in sustainable multifunctional forest management



Potential of BR

- Unique potential to show a different path that overcomes the Cartesian approach to nature protection in which the needs of local people go first. If they feel recognized and protagonists they will become the most efficient defenders of their natural heritage
- There is a huge potential for synergies (research) in order to combine wood, NWFP, environmental, social and cultural services) without ex ante exclusions
- Aichi target 11 (17% terrestrial ecosystems) does not exclude softly managed protected areas
- Instead of biodiversity loss as a threat better biodiversity custodians as an acknowledgement
- Important progress in reducing deforestation but the last push needs to convince that preserving the forests does not necessarily be linked to huge economic and social costs
- Local population needs to be empowered (tenure and management)

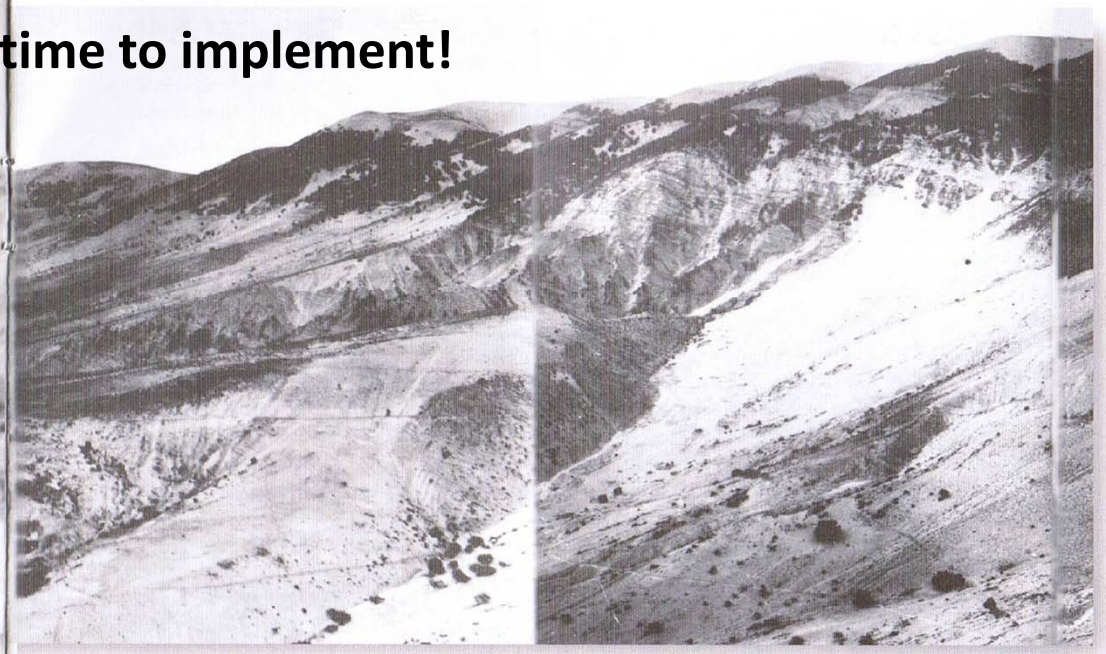

Governance mechanism
Demand driven downstream flow of goods and services provided by forests
Environmental services flow
Enabling upstream flow of return to ensure sustainable delivery of goods and services including restauration

Unlock the potential of BR

- Its original approach was 40 years advanced to that of Rio+20 (2012)
- BR need to help to upscale their approach (benchmarking)
- Avoid fragmentation of related initiatives:
  - need to integrated related approaches like Satoyama, GIAHS, etc.
  - in the forest area, UNESCO should become an active member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests that coordinates the UN/International organizations in the International Arrangement on Forests as well as bilaterally (FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, CGIAR)

We have the framework, it is the time to implement!

Le Mont Ventoux au début du siècle...



... et aujourd'hui