



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

ON

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL PATHWAY TO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND RESILIENCE IN AFRICA

CONCEPT NOTE

17TH – 28TH NOVEMBER 2025, VIA HOWSPACE
(9.00A.M-11.00 PM GMT / 10.00AM -12.00NOON CAT/
11.00AM-1.00PM SAST / 12.00 NOON - 2.00 P.M. EAT)

1. INTRODUCTION

The mounting recognition of the potential of Africa's forest and tree resources to contribute to the wellbeing of the people and build resilient economies across the continent, has been matched with increasing demands for effective governance and management practices that ensure sustainability in the multidimensional benefits of forests.

Approx. 624 million ha of forest cover represents 23% of Africa's land area and consists of diverse forest ecosystems of global significance. Africa is host to eight of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots, a quarter of the world's mammal species, one fifth of bird species and the mainland hosting about 40,000 to 60,000 plant species. Africa's forests—the Congo Basin's tropical rainforests, afro-montane forests, dry woodlands, peatlands and mangroves—are a global commodity, climate and biodiversity lifeline. These ecosystems supply a wide range of goods and services for food, energy, medicine, including for climate regulation, nutrient cycling, recreation and cultural preservation. Direct benefits are provided to 245 million people who live within a range of 5 km of a forest across the continent and significantly contribute to achieving the aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Notwithstanding these multi-dimensional benefits, the functionality and resilience of Africa's forest ecosystems face unprecedented threats from pressures of deforestation, land degradation, increased demand for forest and tree products and climate change, present significant risks in the continent's development pathway. Africa recorded annual net forest loss of about 3.9 million Ha between 2010-2020 threatening the sustainability of the ecosystems and the life forms they support. Safeguarding and ensuring healthy forest ecosystems that secure the flow of ecosystems goods and services and mitigate the impact of greenhouse gas emissions while sustaining livelihoods is today a critical challenge in derisking Africa's economic growth and development.

Responding to this challenge has seen the emergence of a myriad of global, regional and national governance frameworks and management options that recognize Sustainable Forest Management as a viable approach in providing transforming solutions for conservation and equity in sharing benefits from nature. Of importance is the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) which sets 4 global goals and targets to be attained by 2030 with sustainability in the use of forests and restoration of degraded ecosystems under Target 10, 11 and 3, as key transformational paradigms. To ensure a coordinated implementation across the continent of this global framework, to which African countries have committed, the African Head of States adopted the 2022-2030 African Union Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, aligned to the KMGBF. The recently adopted Gaborone Declaration for Biodiversity emphasizes the critical importance for support in the implementation of the KMGBF in Africa. Of further continent-wide relevance is the 2020-2030 African Union Sustainable Forest Management Framework which defines the key principles and goals to maintain forest ecosystem function and viability in the flow of forest ecosystem services. At national level, findings from a recent study by AFF on the interconnections of forest, biodiversity, climate change and land degradation highlights the emergence of revised NBSAPs aligned to the KMGBF as new generation broader policy tools that integrate conservation, SFM and restoration of degraded forest ecosystems as national priorities to address the interconnected crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation in achieving national development objectives.

Implementation efforts equally include a wide range of regional and national level initiatives for the preservation of endangered species, forest carbon storage and forest restoration to reverse forest loss, mitigate the impact of climate change and address land degradation. Through the AFR 100 and Great Green Wall Initiatives, Africa has committed to restoring approx. 100 million ha per initiative by 2030. Initiatives on sustainable forest and tree-based value chains such as NTFPs and ecotourism seek to support biodiversity conservation while contributing to the livelihoods of communities. Of great importance are initiatives on the integration of traditional and indigenous knowledge in forest and biodiversity management practices which seek to complement modern conservation methods and provide incentives for stewardship of traditional knowledge holders.

Effectiveness in the implementation of these policies and execution of initiatives to which the African countries have committed, provide opportunities to unlock the benefits Africa's wealth in forest ecosystem and species diversity offer for the continents development. To tap into these opportunities calls for a whole of government and whole of society approach with engagements across scales, sectors and disciplines. Equally building the capacity required to provide this response, calls for a strong community of forest practitioners and managers engaged in sharing experiences and lessons learnt. Experiences from diverse intervention actions in decision making cut across policy planning, financing, mainstreaming, programming, monitoring and reporting processes at national, sectoral and local levels. This includes field experiences in management interventions of forest biodiversity hotspots. Informed consideration of emerging technological and innovative finance solutions is of critical importance.

It is within this context that the African Forest Forum with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), under the project titled "*Transforming the African Forest Forum to enhance its capacity to improve livelihoods and environmental stability through better management of African forest and tree resources*", has set out to create an online Community of Practice (CoP) for experiential learning on the '*Sustainable Forest Management: The critical pathway for biodiversity conservation and resilience in Africa.*' The CoP will pool African stakeholders engaged in the application of various thematic solutions to shape forest policy and management practices for a sustainable future for Africa.

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is an association of individuals who share the pursuit and commitment to the sustainable management, wise use, and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the betterment of the socio-economic wellbeing of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy, and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, wise use, and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, protect the environment, and promote economic and social development.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Community of Practice (CoP) on Sustainable Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation seeks to provide a platform for sharing of knowledge, resources and best practices

amongst African forestry and biodiversity stakeholders, with a focus on the interlinkages between sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

Specifically, the platform will pool forestry and biodiversity stakeholders to discuss challenges and opportunities, and share best practices and useful resources required to:

- i. Amplify the role of forests and its linkages with biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.
- ii. Ensure a balance in achieving conservation outcomes and guaranteeing sustainability in socio economic benefits.
- iii. Build a forest biodiversity conservation science that integrates Traditional and Indigenous knowledge and ensures a strengthened policy interface.
- iv. Integrate forestry into national broader biodiversity and aligned climate and land degradation policies and ensure mainstreaming of aligned objectives in sectoral and decentralized/local development frameworks

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

As desired outcomes from the one-week pre-CoP engagement:

- i. An engaged team of African experts gain familiarity with the CoP goals, structure and the Howspace online Platform, and are fully prepared to participate in the launch and organization of the CoP Webinar.
- ii. Participants gain understanding on a wide range of topics to be discussed on the linkages of SFM, Biodiversity, climate change and land degradation in Africa
- iii. A shared repository of shared resources and country experiences is established and participants familiarized with accessing Platform resources
- iv. More than 10 renown experts on forest/biodiversity governance, management and research commit and are prepared to serve as Key Note speakers and presenters during the CoP
- v. Consensus of AFF Organisers and Moderator on a final structure, Agenda and roll out plan for the CoP

The one-week webinar will enable members of the forest and biodiversity community to:

- i. Increase understanding on the role of forestry in biodiversity conservation and their interlinkages
- ii. Gain knowledge and be capacitated to apply in their professional work, approaches for integrating forest priorities in biodiversity policy planning, monitoring and financing, and ensuring the mainstreaming of aligned goals in sectoral policies and forest management processes.
- iii. Be informed on key elements to sustain an interactive exchange and benefits of networking within the Community of Practice on sustainable forest management and Biodiversity conservation

4. METHODOLOGY

The organization of the Community of Practice (CoP) will unfold in two phases with a series of online discussions and webinars.

Phase 1: A Pre-CoP engagement

Objective: The objective of this phase is to mobilize potential participants and presenters and ensure their familiarization with the platform and preparedness as required for an effective and interactive exchange during the CoP Webinar to be subsequently organized.

Priority actions: The General Questions during the moderated online discussions will include the following:

- Day 1 What motivated you to join this Community of Practice?
What does Sustainable Forest Management and biodiversity conservation look like in your context, and what key challenges do you face in implementing them
- Day 2 Which successful approaches or innovations from your country could benefit others working on forest restoration or biodiversity conservation?
- Day 3 How can collaboration among governments, research institutions, and local communities improve forest management outcomes?
What capacity gaps exist in your region, and what kind of support or knowledge-sharing would help address them?
- Day 4 How can we better integrate traditional and indigenous knowledge into forest management and conservation strategies?
- Day 5 What actions will you take from this pre-CoP to advance SFM and biodiversity conservation in your country or region?

Phase 2: Series of Phase 1 Webinars

Objective: The objective of Phase two is to Launch the CoP on SFM and facilitate expert discussions, experience sharing, and networking among forestry and biodiversity policy professionals and practitioners in Africa.

Priority Actions: As a key priority to achieve this objective, five daily webinars will be organised with presentations and discussions covering the following thematic areas

- Sustainable Forest Management and linkages with Biodiversity
- Balancing socioeconomic needs with conservation in forests and tree-based landscapes – What Innovative Policies and Practices?
- Integrating forestry in biodiversity governance frameworks- Emerging Outcomes and challenges for African countries
- Sustainable Forest Management, Indigenous Knowledge, and the Science–Policy Interface
- Carbon and Biodiversity Finance

5. TARGET GROUPS FOR THE ONLINE PREPARATORY DIALOGUE AND WEBINAR

The target audiences will include policy makers notable from Government and the Network of African Group of Negotiators for Biodiversity, research institutions/University Students, Networks of CBOs/NGOs, Managers/Stakeholders of forest hotspots, indigenous people, local

communities, extension agents, media, international community, Respondents and experts engaged in AFF research in Africa and other stakeholders in African forestry and biodiversity conservation. Special emphasis will be placed on engaging women, youth and marginalized groups to ensure an inclusive dialogue.

6. DATES AND TIMEFRAME

- Phase one of the Pre-Webinar Engagement is scheduled for November 17–21, 2025.
- Phase Two on the Series of Phase 1 Webinars from November 24–28, 2025.
- **TIME: 9.00a.m-11.00 pm GMT / 10.00am -12.00noon CAT / 11.00am-1.00pm SAST / 12.00 noon - 2.00 p.m. EAT**

All moderated sessions will be organized for a two-hour period daily from 12 Noon - 2 pm Nairobi time.

7. REGISTRATION GUIDE

If you are a **first-time user** of the Howspace platform, please follow the steps below:

1. Click on the registration link: <https://african-forestry-community.in.howspace.com/sfm-for-africa-s-biodiversity-and-resilience>
2. Enter your email address when prompted. A login link will be sent to your inbox.
3. Click the link and complete the mandatory fields in the registration form.
4. Respond “**Yes**” to the question: “*Would you like to join the ‘SFM for Africa’s Biodiversity and Resilience’ Community?*”
5. You will be redirected to the Community of Practice **Welcome Page**.
6. To participate in the CoP, scroll down to review the webinar schedule, then proceed to the **Engage** section to begin interacting with fellow community members.

If you have **already registered**, simply click the link above to log in and continue engaging.

AGENDA

A. PRE-WEBINAR ENGAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 17–21, 2025)

Date	Theme/Topic	Objectives & Key Activities	Expected Outcomes	Responsible
Day 1 Mon, Nov 17, 2025	Introduction and Onboarding of Participants	a) Welcome message and recognitions b) Presentation of Overview and objectives of the CoP expected outcomes, and agenda. – 10 mins c) Online networking session for introductions. d) KQ 1: What motivated you to join this Community of Practice? KQ 2: What does Sustainable Forest Management and biodiversity conservation look like in your context, and what key challenges do you face in implementing them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants familiarized with CoP goals, structure, and engagement tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galega Prudence • Daphine Gitonga.
Day 2 Tue, Nov 18, 2025	Africa's Forest Biodiversity: Status, Trends and Challenges Linking Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR)	a) Interactive discussion on biodiversity loss, deforestation trends, and restoration approaches b) Sharing of relevant background reading materials (NBSAPs, Biodiversity strategies, FAO 2024, CBD Africa Outlook, etc). c) KQ 2: Which successful approaches or innovations from your country could benefit others working on forest restoration or biodiversity conservation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants gain understanding on the linkages of SFM, Biodiversity loss and related crisis of climate change and land degradation. • Further gain baseline understanding of forest biodiversity issues in Africa, and innovative approaches for biodiversity conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galega Prudence • Daphine Gitonga.

Date	Theme/Topic	Objectives & Key Activities	Expected Outcomes	Responsible
Day 3 Wed, Nov 19, 2025	Shared repository of resources and country experiences Community of Practice Resource Sharing	a) Upload and exchange of key resources, policy briefs, and publications. -Participants share local case experiences, and collaborative approaches. b) KQ 3: How can collaboration among governments, research institutions, and local communities improve forest management outcomes? c) What capacity gaps exist in your region, and what kind of support or knowledge-sharing would help address them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants gain knowledge on collaboration and networking approaches, and knowledge support opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galega Prudence Daphine Gitonga.
Day 4 Thur, Nov 20, 2025	Engaging with IPLCs and integrating Traditional Knowledge systems	d) KQ 4: How can we better integrate traditional and indigenous knowledge into forest management and conservation strategies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants gain experience on innovative approaches for inclusive forest management and biodiversity conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galega Prudence Daphine Gitonga.
Day 5 Fri, Nov 21, 2025	Pre-Webinar Reflection and Engagement Summary	a) Summary of key pre-engagement discussions b) Preparation of background issues for the main webinars. -Identification of key themes for deeper exploration in the webinars. c) KQ 5: What actions will you take from this pre-CoP to advance SFM and biodiversity conservation in your country or region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants ready and informed for the main CoP sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galega Prudence = Daphine Gitonga.

B. WEBINAR SERIES (NOVEMBER 24–28, 2025)

Date	Theme/Topic	Expected Outcomes	Activity - Speakers / Responsible
<p>Day 1 – Mon, Nov 24, 2025</p>	<p>Opening Session: Sustainable Forest Management and Linkages with Biodiversity in Africa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared understanding of the strategic link between SFM, biodiversity, and climate resilience. • CoP officially launched. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Opening Remarks 10mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pr. Labode Popoola, Executive Secretary AFF ○ African Union Commission (AUC) • Presentation on Background of the project - 10 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Doris Mutta, Project Manager, AFF • Overview, objectives and Agenda of CoP – 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prudence Tangham Galega– Moderator, Ministry of Justice- Cameroon • Keynote Presentation: “SFM as a Cornerstone for Africa’s Biodiversity and Climate Resilience”. – 45mins and Interactions 15 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Luthando Dziba, Executive Secretary, The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Bonn - Germany • Status, Trends, Challenges and opportunities of biodiversity in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Peter Alele, Africa Regional Director - FSC - Uganda <p>Interactions– 25mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing/Wrap Up Day 1 - 5 mins Galega Prudence
<p>Day 2 – Tue, Nov 25, 2025</p>	<p>Balancing Socioeconomic Needs with Conservation in Forest and Tree-Based Landscapes – What innovative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons on community-based and ecosystem-based management integrated into discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome – CoP Objective, Expected Outcomes 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daphine Gitonga - AFF • Summary Day One and Agenda Day - 2– 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Galega Prudence

Date	Theme/Topic	Expected Outcomes	Activity - Speakers / Responsible
	Policies and Practices:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches to harmonize human livelihoods and biodiversity conservation - 1 hour and 30 min interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Laurent Some, WWF Director for Congo Basin – Central Africa Republic</i> • Kenya Study on National Governance of Forests, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr Chemuku Wekesa, Regional Director for coastal ecoregion research Programme – Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Kenya</i> • Cases of Biodiversity/wildlife and livelihood conflicts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Patience Gandiwa, Coordinator AGN CITES</i> ○ <i>Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority</i> • Interactive dialogue - 15mins • Wrap Up Day 2 - 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Galega Prudence</i>
Day 3 – Wednesday, Nov 26, 2025	Integrating Forestry in Biodiversity Governance Frameworks - Emerging Outcomes and challenges for African countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders identify opportunities for policy alignment and institutional collaboration. • African countries policy preparedness profile understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome - CoP Objective, Expected Outcomes – 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Daphine Gitonga</i> • Summary Day 2 and Agenda Day 3– 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Galega Prudence</i> • Integrating forestry in Africa’s common position for negotiations on biodiversity and the catalytic role of sustainable forest management in achieving the KMGBF 1 hour and Interaction 15 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kasses Ouseynou, Coordinator of African Group of Negotiators on biodiversity +221 77 539 4829 - Senegal</i> • UNFF study in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr Moussa Massaoudou - AFF</i>

Date	Theme/Topic	Expected Outcomes	Activity - Speakers / Responsible
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning forest policies and NBSAPs – Case Studies from Selected countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Sikeade Oluwakemi Egbuwalo, National Focal Point -CBD - Nigeria</i> ○ <i>Ms. Mphatso Martha Kalemba, Chief Environmental Officer for Biodiversity, Malawi</i> ○ <i>Ms. Mayiani Saino, Deputy Director MEA, State Department for Environment and Climate Change – Kenya</i> Case Studies from Regional Technical Support Centers – 20 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>M. Shonisani Munzhedzi, CEO South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)– South Africa</i> • Interactive dialogue - 10mins • Wrap Up Day 3 - 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Galega Prudence
<p>Day 4 – Thursday, Nov 27, 2025</p>	<p>Sustainable Forest Management, Indigenous Knowledge, and the Science–Policy Interface</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced recognition of community and indigenous roles in biodiversity management. • Improved understanding of integrating traditional knowledge in forest policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome / CoP Objective, Expected Outcomes, – 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Daphine Gitonga</i> • Summary Day 3 and Agenda Day 4– 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Galega Prudence</i> • Expert talks: “Bridging Indigenous Knowledge and Modern Conservation Science.” - 1 hr and Interaction 15mins • Presentation on Malawi Ecosystem Assessment: Women, Indigenous knowledge and transformative potential for forests and biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Alice Kammwamba, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources</i>

Date	Theme/Topic	Expected Outcomes	Activity - Speakers / Responsible
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>MAIMUNA UMARO, Focal Point Biodiversity for the Network of IPLCs for the sustainable management of forest ecosystem in Central Africa (REPALEAC)</i> ● Forest and biodiversity Data Management and Africa's competitiveness in emerging technological development and AI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Youth Expert</i> <p>Interactive dialogue - 10mins Wrap Up Day 4 - 5 mins - Galega Prudence</p>
<p>Day 5 – Friday, Nov 28, 2025</p>	<p>Carbon and Biodiversity Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of carbon and biodiversity finance tools. • Recommendations for integrating forests in carbon and biodiversity credit frameworks. • CoP wrap-up and next steps for post-CoP engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary Day 4 and Agenda Day 5– 5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Galega Prudence</i> ● Protected area management systems and innovative financing solutions to achieve biodiversity, climate and livelihood objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expert</i> ● Developing Methodologies for Forest Biodiversity and PES Valuation and Nature Accounting ● Financial and policy innovations to ensure forest biodiversity generates sustainable incomes to support conservation, livelihoods and economies in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Expert</i> <p>Case studies from voluntary carbon markets and biodiversity financing in Africa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Expert</i> ● Reflection and Way Forward. • Doris Mutta/Galega Prudence <p>Vote of thanks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pr. Labode Popoola, Executive Secretary AFF