



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry

NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE

STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRATION OF FORESTRY INTO NATIONAL GOVERNANCE INSTRUMENTS ON BIODIVERSITY, AND RELATED PROCESSES FOR IMPROVED FOREST BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

CONCEPT NOTE

15-17 September 2025, Abuja, Nigeria

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. Its purpose is to provide a platform and an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy, and advice on relevant policy and technical issues related to the sustainable management, use, and conservation of forest and tree resources in Africa. These efforts are undertaken in the broader context of poverty reduction, gender equality, and socio-economic development. AFF is implementing a Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) supported project entitled: *"Transforming the African Forest Forum to enhance its capacity to improve livelihoods and environmental stability through better management of African forest and tree resources."* The project seeks to generate and share knowledge that enhances sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests, in the context of climate change for improved human well-being and environmental protection in Africa. One of its key objectives is to improve management of forest biodiversity to secure the supply of ecosystem services and safeguard human well-being.

To fulfil this objective, in 2024 AFF launched a series of studies focused on Africa's forest biodiversity hotspots to generate knowledge for improved management of forested landscapes to enhance social and climate resilience in Africa. Specifically, the studies aimed to improve stakeholders understanding on a) how policy instruments on biodiversity, desertification, and climate change impact on forestry management, and how they could be better coordinated to improve forest protection and conservation; b) opportunities and interventions for improvement of climate resilient value chains of biodiversity products and services to promote socio-economic development; c) traditional and indigenous knowledge applied in the utilisation and management of forest and tree-based food species to support measures for sustaining the supply of forest and tree-based food products; and d) value chains of various renewable biomass energy options that are efficient, environmentally friendly and socially inclusive. National experts have been engaged to conduct these studies in six biodiversity hotspots, namely: Madagascar and the Indian Ocean islands, the Guinean forests of West Africa, the Eastern Afromontane, the Coastal forests of Eastern Africa, the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany, and the Horn of Africa.

Through these studies, AFF seeks to facilitate governmental and non-governmental organisations, individual stakeholders, private sector, local communities including women and youth to take actions that lead to improved management of forested landscapes for sustainable development in Africa, through a functional science-policy-management interface. To this end, AFF capitalises on using African context-specific knowledge and information co-generated with experts and stakeholders to facilitate strengthening or creation of enabling policy and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable governance and management of forest and tree resources on the continent. In this regard, a strengthened environmental governance that is informed by a critical analysis and articulation of issues that accounts for forest biodiversity values and opportunities will be key to improve management of forest biodiversity for the sustainable supply of ecosystem goods and services for socio-economic development and human well-being.

Proper management of biodiversity is anchored on global, regional and national policy frameworks. The growing threats of biodiversity loss exacerbated by climate change and land degradation necessitated discussions leading to the development of frameworks, such as the Rio Conventions, designed to address these challenges. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Nagoya and Cartagena protocols were adopted to ensure biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of components of biodiversity and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding. Furthermore, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nations Convention

to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) address the threats of climate change and land degradation respectively. The interlinkages between these conventions contribute to environmental stability and sustainable development.

Accordingly, the Convention on Biological Diversity is pivotal, as it plays a key role in safeguarding the ecosystems health, sustaining all forms of life and strengthening resilience of the climate and land systems against global warming and degradation. Forests are the repository of much of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Constituting about 31 percent of the total global land surface, forests contain more than two-thirds of the diversity in the world but are under threats. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), under CBD, was developed to address the biodiversity loss crisis in the world. At the regional level, Africa Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP) 2023-2030 is aimed at coordinating efforts of African countries in protecting and conserving the diverse ecosystems. Within the frameworks of these commitments, countries have developed national instruments including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for effective implementation of biodiversity management and governance.

2. THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE PROCESS

In line with focus to strengthen science-policy-management interface in forestry, AFF in partnership with Convention on Biological Diversity Desk in the Federal Ministry of Environment Nigeria, are organising a national policy dialogue in Nigeria to support the national government policy processes to strengthen the mainstreaming of forest biodiversity into environmental governance frameworks, in particular the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) with the view to improving governance and management of forest resources. The policy dialogue will adopt a two-step approach. First, analysis of biodiversity governance frameworks to identify opportunities for mainstreaming forest biodiversity across various sectors and governance tiers. Secondly, convene a national consultative workshop to provide a platform for stakeholders in key sectors to dialogue on how to leverage the existing opportunities that can shape policy and institutional reforms to support forestry in the broader biodiversity context. Subsequently, the deliberations will inform the design of a road map for more effective integration of forest biodiversity for the country.

Analysis of governance frameworks on biodiversity will be conducted at global, regional and national levels to identify and leverage opportunities for mainstreaming forest biodiversity across various sectors and governance tiers at central and sub-national levels. The analysis will particularly focus on the coherence, complementarity, and gaps in the existing policy instruments, with special attention to their contribution to improve forest biodiversity management in Nigeria. Key reference documents will include National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), biodiversity policies, regulations, and institutional arrangements, among others. Based on this analysis, a national policy dialogue will be held in Nigeria to sensitise policy makers on biodiversity issues related to forestry, informed by scientific evidence generated through the analytical studies commissioned by the African Forest Forum on Africa's biodiversity hotspots.

Policy dialogues have been described generally as a form of consensus building, a process of communicating and negotiating priorities and values among different stakeholders to agree on a common programme of action. The AFF has been facilitating such policy dialogues aiming at synchronizing National Forest Governance responses with the evolving international environmental discourses. The present intervention is focused on the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is in this context that AFF in partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity Desk in the Federal Ministry of Environment Nigeria is organizing a national policy dialogue. The aim of the policy dialogue is to explore how the NBSAP addresses forestry and assess the future of forestry in biodiversity conservation. The discussions aim to look at how various biodiversity policies integrate forestry

issues including *inter alia*, climate resilient value chains of biodiversity products and services, utilisation of traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge and practices, and sustainable utilization of tree-based energy options. In addition, the dialogue is expected to strengthen integration of forest biodiversity across relevant key sectors for better coordination among sustainable development strategies and policies. The dialogue is further expected to strengthen collaboration and facilitate sharing of good practices and lessons learned among decision-makers, including those from outside the forestry sector, such as Ministries of Finance, Science and Technology, Agriculture, Marine and Blue Economy, and Planning and Economic Development.

3. THE RATIONALE

Nigeria harbours a wide variety of plant and animal species, many of which are endemic (Luiselli *et al.* 2019). In particular, Nigeria hosts an endemic flora of 91 species belonging to 44 families (Anwadike, 2020). Additionally, the country has diverse ecosystems including coastal creeks of the Niger Delta, the rainforests of the Cross River basin, mountains ecosystem, savannah, and marine and freshwater ecosystems. These ecosystems provide a range of ecosystem services and support livelihoods. One of the barriers to achieving better conservation outcomes is the weak integration or conflicting conservation policies hence inability to provide supportive framework for conservation (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, 2015). Concerted effort towards the implementation and ratification of treaties and conventions on biodiversity is, therefore, crucial (Anwadike, 2020). Nigeria has developed the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030 aiming to halt biodiversity loss. Therefore, successful implementation of this plan will require building synergies and co-ordination with broader conservation related policies.

To ensure the sustainable and effective management of forest areas with high biodiversity, it is essential to:

- Strengthen coherence and synergy among sectoral policy and legal instruments (environment, forestry, land, climate among others).
- Integrate forest conservation into national and regional biodiversity strategies.
- Strengthen inter-institutional coordination mechanisms involving ministries, civil society, the private sector, and local communities.
- Enhance sustainable financing, particularly through international mechanisms (GEF, GCF, GBFF etc.).
- Develop multi-sectoral monitoring and evaluation systems to measure impacts and improve policy responsiveness.

4. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective on the national policy dialogue is to strengthen the integration of forestry into the biodiversity national governance and management frameworks, and processes with a view to improving the coordination of public policies related to forest biodiversity.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- Present the findings of the national study conducted by AFF on the analysis of biodiversity policy instruments related to global, regional and national biodiversity processes, as well as on the integration of the forestry sector in the processes.
- Identify and inform stakeholders about the institutional opportunities and challenges related to forestry integration and policy coordination in biodiversity national policy processes.
- Facilitate an inclusive dialogue among key sectors, forestry, environment, planning, finance, land, science and technology etc. to reach a consensus on overcoming barriers and leveraging opportunities for improved forestry integration and effective coordination in biodiversity policies and management interventions and initiatives

- Develop a national roadmap that outlines roles, responsibilities, and an implementation timeline for all stakeholders, based on agreed recommendations, to capitalize on identified opportunities and address constraints.

5. PARTICIPANTS

The national policy dialogue will bring together about 30 in-person participants, primarily stakeholders involved in the development of public policies on biodiversity, including those in the forestry, environmental, and agricultural sectors, as well as representatives from the private sector, civil society, local communities, and Indigenous peoples. Participants will include representatives from government Ministries, Department and Agencies, NGOs, research institutes, representatives from biodiversity hotspots in Nigeria, and other relevant organizations across the country's geopolitical zones. Cognate youth groups and gender representation (especially women led organisations) will also be represented.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

The following results are expected at the conclusion of the policy dialogue:

- A validated national report presenting the results of the analysis of policy instruments related to biodiversity, as well as their integration of forestry.
- Key stakeholders informed about institutional opportunities and challenges for enhanced forestry integration and strengthened coordination of sectoral policies in forest biodiversity.
- Consensus among relevant sectors (forestry, environment, planning, finance, land, etc.) on priority actions to improve governance of forests.
- A shared inter-sectoral roadmap developed, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, timelines, and actions to be undertaken by each stakeholder for implementing the recommendations from the policy dialogue.
- An established framework for inter-institutional collaboration, fostering synergies among forestry, biodiversity, and related policies.

7. WORKSHOP APPROACH

Under the facilitation of the National Focal Point for Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nigeria, a policy dialogue is being organized. The workshop includes:

- A detailed presentation of national instruments related to biodiversity such as desertification, climate change in Nigeria, with a focus on the policy-governance-resources framework and forestry integration.
- Presentations on key findings from the policy analysis, including proposals regarding:
 - *Major opportunities for integrating forestry and coordinating hotspot management across key sectors.*
 - *Barriers and constraints hindering the effective use of these opportunities.*
- Group work sessions followed by plenary discussions to review:
 - *Identified opportunities and approaches to capitalize on them.*
 - *Current challenges and possible solutions to overcome them.*

8. VENUE, DATES AND DURATION

- **Venue:** Abuja, Nigeria
- **Date:** 15-17 September 2025

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