



**CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR PILOT PROJECTS**

**ON**

**DEVELOPMENT OF CLIMATE RESILIENT VALUE CHAINS OF  
BIODIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN AFRICA'S  
FOREST BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS**

**JULY 2025**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organisation with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the socio-economic well-being 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, use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality and economic and social development.

AFF has secured funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to implement the 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.

In contributing to fulfilling the overall project objective the project aims to "Improve management of forest biodiversity to secure supply of ecosystem goods and services and safeguard human well-being in selected biodiversity hotspots." Further, the project aims to improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders in managing forest landscapes and biodiversity more effectively for the sustained supply of ecosystem goods and services in the context of changing climate.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

Africa's forests cover more than 624 million hectares, representing 23% of the continent's landmass and 17% of the world's forests. The forested landscape ranging from the tropical moist forests in central and parts of west Africa, mangrove forests of the African coastline, montane forests in the Eastern African highlands, and dry forests and parklands of the Sahel and eastern, southern and northern Africa, is characterized by exceptional richness in biodiversity. These critical forest ecosystems play an essential role in climate and water regulation, nutrient cycling, habitat to plants and animal species, recreation, cultural heritage and pollination. In addition, they provide a range of valuable goods and services including food, wood, water, energy, medicine, fibre and secure livelihoods and economies.

There are growing efforts to transform the forest ecosystem goods and services through value chains that support rural livelihoods and socio-economic development. In Africa, about two thirds of its population derives both direct and indirect benefits from the forests, including the forest goods and services, that serve as a crucial source of income and sustenance for both urban and rural communities. The ability of forest adjacent communities to access and utilize forest products contributes to community well-being and sustainable forest management. Efforts to ensure the sustainable supply of the products are therefore critical for sustainable development.

Africa holds significant potential to derive greater value from its forests by contributing to environmental stability and socio-economic development, particularly through the promotion of socio-ecological resilience to climate change. Strengthening forest-based value chains—especially in biodiversity hotspots—offers a viable pathway to achieve these goals. Investment in sustainable value chain development, particularly for Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and ecosystem services, not only enhances income generation for rural communities but also incentivizes forest biodiversity conservation. The commercialization of forest products, when supported by inclusive and climate-resilient strategies, can create sustainable livelihoods while maintaining the ecological integrity of forest landscapes. To maximize local impact, there is an urgent need to support the development of viable, inclusive, and climate-resilient value chains in Africa's biodiversity-rich areas, which are

endowed with unique natural resources that can drive both conservation and economic development.

It is in this context that AFF plans to provide support to four pilot projects that are designed to support community-based enterprises focused on strengthening development of value chains for forest biodiversity products and services in Africa's forest biodiversity hotspots. To achieve sustainable forestry-based livelihoods, this call responds to the need to expand innovative projects that enhance community livelihoods, resilience to climate change and biodiversity conservation. The projects should also integrate measures that could secure the sustainable supply of raw materials for such products. In this regard, the enterprises should be based on sound investment strategies that consider the extent of feasible social inclusivity, economic viability and ecological sustainability.

For its annual plan of work for 2025, AFF plans to facilitate the implementation of four pilot projects that will:

- a) Capacitate stakeholders living adjacent to biodiversity hotspots to enhance the value of forest products and services.
- b) Enhance the capacity of community-based organizations to implement climate resilient value chains of timber and non-timber forest products and services
- c) Increase contribution of timber and/or non-timber forest products to socio economic development in biodiversity hotspots.

### **3. THE CALL**

Support will be provided to a total of four pilot projects in different forest biodiversity hotspots and different forest types in Africa for community-based organizations or national non-governmental organizations that are actively involved in activities related to forestry and climate change. Projects will be selected from the following biodiversity hotspots: Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands; Guinean Forests of West Africa; Eastern Afromontane; Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa; Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany and Horn of Africa. The duration of the support for the pilot projects is for two years, and concept notes should focus on the following outputs:

- Enhancement of the value of forest products and services from forest biodiversity hotspots through strengthened value chain processes that are socially inclusive, and support livelihood outcomes. The products could include but not limited to those that contribute to food security, health, industry, culture.
- Improvement of landscape management in forest biodiversity hotspots to support the sustainable supply of raw materials for the value chains, for enhanced socio-economic development. This could include but not limited to agroforestry and multifunctional landscape management initiatives.

Proposals must be highly feasible, technically and financially sound, and lead to verifiable and quantitatively measurable concrete results. They should incorporate a clear path to dissemination of knowledge. A successful pilot project should be accessible to all potential stakeholders and aim to encourage other stakeholders to use the innovative solutions, including technologies, techniques, and methods demonstrated in the project. Prior African Forest Forum supported pilot projects are eligible to submit an application for consideration.

### **4. ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must meet the general and the specific eligibility criteria outlined below.

#### **4.1 *General eligibility criteria***

- a) Applicant must be a legal entity, a community-based or non-governmental organisation registered in an African country.
- b) Applicants should be able to present an audit report for at least two years.

- c) Proposed pilot project and activities must be clearly related to, and able to contribute to development of socio-economic aspects of livelihoods, advance forest conservation, adaptation to climate change and build community resilience.
- d) All application materials must be complete and received by the AFF Secretariat on or before the application deadline.

#### **4.2 Specific eligibility criteria**

Prospective applicants must be a community-based organisation (CBO), or a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Africa with demonstrable capacity to undertake the above tasks at a community level and should meet the following minimum qualifications and skills:

- a) Be a legal and officially registered organisation with proven attainment in the sector of forestry in an African country.
- b) Proven experience in value chain development for biodiversity products or management of biodiversity rich landscapes.
- c) Have close and well documented working relationships with key forestry institutions and communities in their location and in the country.
- d) Have a good record and experience on securing and managing projects related to forestry at the community level, with special focus on value chain development, forest-based livelihoods, and climate change as well as gender considerations and capacity building.
- e) Proven experience of delivering projects on time and with the required quality.
- f) Demonstrate good networking and partnership capacity.

### **5. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The applicant shall submit the following:

- Cover letter stating how their organisation meets the above requirements.
- A profile of the organisation including mandate, registration certification and scope of activities covered.
- A profile of the people in the organisation including CVs of the people to participate in the implementation of the pilot project.
- Name of at least one potential local partner.
- A reference and support letter from at least one potential local partner indicating their organisations' willingness to partner from inception to completion.
- A concept pilot project proposal by completing the provided Application Form titled:  
*"APPLICATION FOR PILOT PROJECT PROPOSALS ON DEVELOPMENT OF CLIMATE RESILIENT VALUE CHAINS OF BIODIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN AFRICA'S BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS"*

### **6. GRANT TERMS AND BUDGET**

A modest grant of up to **USD 20,000** will be awarded to support the field activities of the pilot project over a duration of two years.

The funding should mainly be invested in field activities with potential to benefit local communities. The funding should not cover the salary of permanent staff of the organisation, however a maximum of 13% of the budget could cover administrative costs. The rest of the budget should cover all field activities and required input.

### **7. APPLICATION ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION**

All applications that meet the general and specific eligibility criteria will subsequently be evaluated against the following:

- a) Quality of the project proposal with clearly stated objectives, methodology and expected results.
- b) Technical merit of the proposed work.
- c) Qualifications and capabilities of the applicants to undertake the proposed work.
- d) Appropriateness of the proposed budget.
- e) Appropriateness of the organisation and partners.

### **Concepts development:**

The following key criteria will be used for evaluation of the concepts

1. Relevance of the action to the objective of the call: The concept note should clearly address how to enhance the value of forest products and services, the market value and economic potential, and existing opportunities for investment to support development of climate resilient value chains. It should be specific on the biodiversity products and services ( e.g timber and NTFPs for food, medicine, ecotourism, etc.) and their contribution to income, employment, wealth creation, capacity building, etc. for the communities adjacent to the specified biodiversity hotspot.
2. Link to national priorities and SDGs: The concept note should demonstrate that the proposed work and activities are aligned with the priorities of the country in which the organisation operates (by referring to specific provisions / orientations in forest and biodiversity related national policies and strategies). The project should clearly define how it will ensure social inclusion, economic viability and environmental sustainability.
3. Address local communities' needs: The concept should demonstrate that it addresses local communities' needs (e.g., referring to specific orientations or priorities in local development plans) or ideally based on credible information originating from consultations and engagement with stakeholders, involving the beneficiaries and target group at the community level and with emphasis on particular interest groups and gender considerations. The involvement of women and youth is critical. The concept note should show how the project stakeholders will be involved in implementing the pilot project.
4. Cost effectiveness and leverage co-funding: It is expected that the proposed project will meet cost effectiveness criteria as well as demonstrate ability to leverage co-funding, either in cash or in-kind from sources within and outside their countries. The pilot project could also target a missing component / aspect of an ongoing initiative; with potential to drive / strengthen the success of that initiative.
5. Sustainability of the action: The concept should show how sustainability will be secured after completion of the action. This can include aspects of necessary follow-up activities including potential for replication, built-in strategies, ownership etc. This can also be in the form of a clear business model sustaining itself after the pilot project has ended. A business plan and/or investment strategy could be included.
6. Theory of change: The pathway to achieving the desired change through the project intervention has to be clear in an iterative and incremental manner. This will be critical in giving clarity on the logical implementation design with inbuilt mechanism to lead to the desired change.
7. Organisational mandate: Evidence that the organisation is mandated legally and has basic capacity to support project implementation. An official registration certificate should be provided.

### **8.0 HOW TO APPLY**

Please submit your application quoting the number and title of this consultancy on the subject line as:

**"Consultancy no: 01-1.1.4.1 AFF Application for pilot project proposals - On Development of climate**

**resilient value chains of biodiversity products and services in Africa's forest biodiversity hotspots "**  
and email to the following address: [d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org), [f.babalola@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:f.babalola@cifor-icraf.org), [d.dali@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.dali@cifor-icraf.org) with a copy to [exec.sec@afforum.org](mailto:exec.sec@afforum.org).

**8.1 Application must include the following:**

- a) A completed AFF Proposal application form "Application for pilot project proposals - Development of climate resilient value chains of biodiversity products and services in Africa's forest biodiversity hotspots. The title should specify name of the Biodiversity Hotspot.
- b) All the supporting documents listed at point 5.0 above.

**8.2 Deadlines**

- a) Applications must be received by the AFF Secretariat before or by 15 August 2025.
- b) Successful applicants will be informed by 01 September 2025.
- c) Pilot project activities should begin no later than mid September 2025

**9. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The implementation of the pilot activities shall be for a period of 2-year duration from September **2025**. The applicant will be in close consultation with relevant staff at the AFF Secretariat while keeping to agreed delivery schedule. In case of any need for clarification please contact [d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org), [F.Babalola@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:F.Babalola@cifor-icraf.org), [d.dali@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.dali@cifor-icraf.org) with a copy to [exec.sec@afforum.org](mailto:exec.sec@afforum.org).