



## **SPIN Africa Regional Science-Policy Dialogue: Bridging Science and Policy for Forest Governance in Africa**

5<sup>th</sup> October 2026 at 09:00 – 16:00 EAT

ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), Info Center Room

### **Background and Rationale**

Forests and trees play a critical role in addressing some of Africa's most pressing policy priorities, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and economic development. Forest ecosystems also play a vital role in supporting the implementation of major continental and global frameworks, including the African Union Agenda 2063 and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100). As governments across the continent develop and implement policies related to forests, landscapes, and natural resources, the need for **timely, reliable, and policy-relevant scientific information** has become increasingly important. Addressing these challenges requires stronger science-policy interfaces capable of translating scientific knowledge into actionable policies and management strategies.

In response to this need, the **Regional Science-Policy Information Networks (SPIN)** initiative of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) was established to strengthen the interface between scientific knowledge and policymaking at regional level. SPIN aims to create trusted platforms where policymakers and scientists can engage in structured dialogue, exchange perspectives, and jointly identify priorities where scientific evidence can support decision-making.

The *SPIN Africa Regional Science-Policy Dialogue* will provide a **dedicated platform for policymakers to engage directly with scientists**, discuss emerging policy priorities, and identify areas where scientific knowledge can support decision-making. As a regional forum bringing together scientists and decision-makers for open science-policy exchange, the dialogue aims to strengthen trust, improve the relevance of scientific outputs for policy processes, and promote more effective collaboration between the scientific and policy communities.

The event will be hosted by the Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) and will be held at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in **Addis Ababa**, Ethiopia, a key hub for regional governance and the seat of the African Union, offering an excellent opportunity to engage both **national and regional decision-makers** in discussions on forest-related challenges and opportunities in Africa.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of the event is to **strengthen the integration of scientific knowledge into forest-related policymaking processes in Africa**.

Specific objectives include:

- Providing a platform for **high-level policymakers and scientists to engage in dialogue** on priority forest-related policy issues.
- Presenting **policy-relevant scientific insights** that can support decision-making in areas such as forest landscape restoration, climate finance, and biodiversity conservation.
- Identifying **priority policy questions and knowledge gaps** where scientific research can better support policymaking.
- Contribution to strengthening collaboration between **African governments, regional organizations, and research institutions**.
- Contributing to the development of **SPIN Africa as a long-term science-policy platform**.

### Key Policy Themes

The dialogue will address several priority topics relevant to forest science-policy exchange in Africa, the topics include:

- Forest landscape restoration and sustainable land management
- Climate finance and investment for forests and nature-based solutions
- Forest biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services
- The role of forests in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies
- Strengthening the science-policy interface for evidence-based policymaking

These topics will be introduced through **short scientific interventions** followed by **interactive dialogue with policymakers**, ensuring that discussions remain focused on policy relevance and practical implications.

### Format

The event will be organized as a **one-day high-level science-policy dialogue in a hybrid format**, structured to encourage active exchange between policymakers and the scientific community.

### Provisional Agenda

#### Moderation

Chabi Adéyèmi Marc Sylvestre Djagoun, *Faculty of Agronomic Sciences, University of Abomey Calavi*

#### Welcome and Opening Session

Opening remarks and welcome: *High-level intervention by a political decision-maker outlining key policy priorities and highlighting the importance of science in supporting evidence-based policymaking*

## Scientific Perspectives on Topical Issues

Scientific perspectives on policy-relevant insights on selected key policy themes with discussion:  
*Focus on current and emerging issues of high relevance to policymakers*

## Swift Action Mechanism (SAM) Priorities and Science-Policy Interface

Co-designing the Swift Action Mechanism (SAM): *A rapid-response tool for producing short, focused, and policy-relevant outputs on selected key policy themes in Africa.*

## Interactive Dialogue

Open discussion between participants to reflect on key issues raised throughout the day

## Wrap-Up and Closing

Summary of key messages and reflections from the dialogue: *Identification of next steps for strengthening science–policy collaboration under SPIN Africa*

| Time          | Session                                                                                                                                   | Format                                                            | Speakers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Arrival: Registration with coffee and snacks                                                                                              |                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 09:00 – 10:00 | <b>Opening Session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome remarks</li><li>• High-level keynote (policy priorities)</li></ul> | Plenary, 3 minutes for opening and 10 minutes per keynote speaker | Wubalem Tadesse and Daniela Kleinschmit, <i>IUFRO (opening and introduction)</i><br><br>Moses Vilakati, <i>African Union Commission (AUC) (tbc)</i><br><br>Juliette Biao, <i>United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat</i><br><br>Kebede Yimam <i>Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD)</i> |
|               | <b>Scene-Setting: SPIN Africa framing</b><br>Why Science–Policy Matters Now                                                               | Plenary                                                           | Daniela Kleinschmit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | <b>Session 1: Rapid Inputs to Policy</b><br>Topics: Restoration, Climate Finance,                                                         | 7 minutes per presentation, allowing time for discussion          | Peter Minang, <i>Center for International Forestry Research and the International</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                      |                                                                                                                    |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | Biodiversity, Climate Adaptation                                                                                   |                                                                           | <p><i>Centre for Research on Agroforestry (CIFOR ICRAF)</i></p> <p>Godwin Kowero,<br/><i>Former Executive Secretary African Forest Forum (AFF)</i></p> <p>Brice Sinsin,<br/><i>University of Abomey Calavi, Benin</i></p> |
| <b>10:30 – 10:45</b> | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>10:45-12:00</b>   | <b>Session 1: Rapid Inputs to Policy</b><br>Topics: Restoration, Climate Finance, Biodiversity, Climate Adaptation | Discussion – taking questions and providing questions for decision-makers | Scientists plus decision-makers                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>12:00 – 13:00</b> | <b>Lunch Break</b>                                                                                                 |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>13:00 – 15:00</b> | <b>Session 2: Co-Designing the Swift Action Mechanism (SAM) for Africa (Breakouts)</b>                             | Small groups (3 parallel groups) 60 min                                   | Facilitators:<br>Ernest Foli,<br><i>Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG)</i><br><br>Nellie Oduor,<br><i>Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI)</i><br><br>Doris Mutta,<br><i>African Forest Forum (AFF)</i>      |
|                      |                                                                                                                    | Share key insights from breakouts; compare priorities 60 min              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>15:00 – 15:15</b> | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>15:15 – 15:30</b> | <b>Session 3: IUFRO World Congress</b>                                                                             | Plenary                                                                   | Jane Njuguna,<br><i>Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI)</i>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>15:30 – 16:00</b> | <b>Closing Session and reflections: What Happens Next?”</b>                                                        | Plenary                                                                   | Wubalem Tadesse and Daniela Kleinschmit                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key messages summary</li> <li>• Closing remarks</li> </ul>                |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Expected Outcomes

The dialogue is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Strengthened engagement between **African policymakers, regional organizations, and the scientific community.**
- Increased awareness among policymakers of **policy-relevant scientific knowledge on forests and landscapes.**
- Identification of **priority areas where science can support policy development and implementation.**
- Contributions to the development of **SPIN Africa as a regional science-policy platform.**

## Participants

The event will bring together approximately **50 in-person participants**, including:

- High-level policymakers from African governments (e.g., ministers, parliament representatives, senior government officials)
- Representatives of regional organizations, including the **African Union**
- Scientists and experts from African forest research institutions
- Representatives from international organizations and research networks
- IUFRO Board Members from other regions
- Members of the SPIN Africa Core Group
- Other stakeholders involved in forest-related policy

## Organizers

The event will be organized under the **IUFRO Regional Science-Policy Information Networks (SPIN)** initiative, in collaboration with members of the SPIN Africa Core Group, IUFRO Headquarters, and regional partners.