



RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

ON

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER RESPONSIVE RESILIENCE TO
CLIMATE CHANGE OF FOREST RELATED BIOPHYSICAL AND
SOCIOECONOMIC SYSTEMS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

NOVEMBER 2019

1.0 Introduction

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization 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 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, 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. Through all its programmes and activities, AFF seeks to promote the empowerment of all marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, whose representation, priorities and needs are seldom addressed in the forestry sector by facilitating specific activities that would enhance their equal participation and representation.

AFF has secured funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to implement the project entitled "*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*". The overall goal of the project is "to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that provide inputs into policy and decision-making options and capacity building, for improved forest management that better address poverty eradication and environmental protection in Africa". One of the key project objectives is to improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders so as to facilitate their response to adverse effects of climate change through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests.

2.0 Background

Climate change and variability positively or negatively affects all types of forests, tree-resources on farms and ecosystem services that directly and indirectly contribute to the social wellbeing of people and stability of their environment. Some of the negative effects of climate change on biophysical systems (like rain forests, mountain forests, mangroves, woodlands and savannas, and parklands of the Sahel) include frequent bush and forest fires that directly affect the forest composition, net primary production (NPP), migration of wildlife animals and other species of the forest ecosystem; and increased shifts and emergence of new pests and diseases affecting plants. The negative effects of climate change on socio-economic systems are attributed to shifts in rainfall patterns and temperature changes that can result into increased water scarcity and severe prolonged droughts that in turn directly affect agricultural production, food and nutritional security as well as markets and trade potential of forest dependent population. Overall, there is overwhelming evidence that Africa is most vulnerable continent to the adverse impacts of climate change and variability largely due to weak adaptative capacity. In this regard, climate change and variability continue to create serious challenges to the sustainability of biophysical and social-economic systems. The continued erosion of such systems is slowing down socio-economic development and jeopardizing the environmental stability of most of the African countries, especially in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa Agenda 2063, among other national and regional development aspirations.

It is also evident that among the African people, women, youth and marginalized groups who depend on fragile critical ecosystems for their livelihood are the most affected by the impacts of climate change and variability. This makes mandatory gender and other marginalized groups consideration critical in planning for as well as assessing responsiveness of the African countries to the impacts of climate change. African governments through their commitments to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are in line with Paris Agreement (PA) and other regional and national processes, have pledged to increase their focus on building resilience of biophysical and socio-economic systems as one of the means to strengthen adaptation capacity of people and plants to the adverse impacts of climate change. Some of the undergoing work on the African continent in this regard include restoration of degraded lands, reforestation and afforestation in different forest types and farmlands, promotion of non-timber forest products value chains, awareness creation, various types of trainings and skills development, among others. Much as these efforts have potential for ameliorating the impacts of climate change and variability and building coping mechanisms, they have to be gender-sensitive with a clear focus on women, youth and marginalized groups.

3.0 Rationale

The African Forest Forum is providing research fellowships for post graduate research that will address these issues, as well as contribute to capacity development and professional expertise in forestry among young professionals in Africa. The research will therefore advance our understanding of these issues and also inform forest and related policies and practices in Africa.

The research fellowships will provide grants to support a maximum of 6 postgraduate students to undertake in-depth studies in selected countries covering various forest types (including rain forests, mountain forests, mangroves, woodlands and savannas, and parklands of the Sahel). The generated information is expected to support development and/or strengthening sound gender sensitive adaptation policies and measures that could improve the resilience of the biophysical and social-economic systems to changing climate.

4.0 The Call

Fellowships will be awarded to undertake in-depth studies using appropriate methodology to assess, in selected countries, measures on how to increase the resilience of biophysical and social-economic systems, taking into account relevant gender and marginalized groups interests. The research tasks will be developed within the following context:

1. Gender-sensitive resilience and adaptation measures and/or strategies to adverse effects of climate change and variability on forests, trees outside forests and people who depend on them. The following are some key research questions to consider in this regard:
 - a. What kind of livelihoods, disaggregated by gender and marginalized groups, are obtained from different biophysical and socio-economic systems in the selected study sites?
 - b. How vulnerable are the sources (forests and trees outside forests) that supply the identified livelihood support identified in (a) to climate change and climate variability?
 - c. What are gender-sensitive resilience and adaptation measures and/or

- strategies employed and/or could be employed to address the adverse effects of climate change on the forest and tree resources that women, youth and marginalized groups depend on in the selected study sites?
- d. What conditions enable or constrain the enhancement of adaptive capacity of women, men, youth and other marginalized groups who depend on forests and trees outside forests in the selected study sites?
2. Developing and/or strengthening existing capacity for implementing gender-sensitive resilience measures in selected biophysical and socio-economic systems. Key research questions could include the following:
 - a. What are the capacity needs in the study sites, disaggregated by gender, for co-designing, planning and implementation of measures and/or strategies to increase adaptation and resilience of women, youth and marginalized groups, to adverse effects of climate change on the forest and tree resources they depend on?
 - b. What is the level of engagement and institutional arrangement of different partners in the selected country, and more specifically in the study sites, in implementing relevant adaptation and resilience measures?
 - c. What are the benefits (to who?) and challenges associated with the engagement of identified partners in the implementation of the measures and/or strategies?
 - d. What are the promising forest-based resilience and adaptation measures for each gender groups in selected biophysical and socio-economic systems?
 3. What are the promising institutional frameworks to support effective implementation of gender-sensitive resilience and adaptation measures to adverse effects of climate change and variability that are also relevant to other marginalized groups.

Research fellowships will be provided to a total of 6 postgraduate students (4 PhD and 2 MSc), at least one for each forest type and from 6 countries who are based in African institutions as well as those working in relevant forestry-based research institutions to support their doctoral or master's studies at an African university.

5. Eligibility

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

5.1 General eligibility criteria

- a) Applicant must be a citizen of an African nation.
- b) Proposed fellowship project and activities must be clearly related to, and likely to advance people and forest adaptation to climate change in Africa within the thematic focus area selected.
- c) All application materials must be complete and received by the AFF Secretariat on or before the application deadline.
- d) All applicants must be supervised by a faculty member with expertise in the thematic focus of the fellowship.

5.2 Specific eligibility criteria

Prospective research fellows must:

- a) Have a master's degree for PhD studies or bachelor's degree for MSc studies, plus 2 or more years of professional experience related to forest management, climate change or environmental policy and planning.
- b) Be enrolled in a university as a graduate student and must have completed course work in a relevant field at the time of application.

The application package:

- a) An institutional support form or letter that confirms the applicant's university/college formal endorsement of his or her ability to participate in the research fellowship with the name of a potential main research supervisor indicating his/her willingness to supervise and guide the student research from inception to completion.
- b) A research proposal description with clearly defined research questions/objectives, methodology on the research area and targeted tasks that can be completed within the fellowship period and explaining how the supported research activities will contribute in achieving the overall study's outputs as well as how the results will support the resilience and adaptation capacity of different gender groups. Evidence must be provided that the proposal has been accepted for that level of study by the university/college.
- c) A budget estimate showing the approximate cost related to each research activity.

6.0 Grant Terms

Research fellows will be matched with an African host institution, where they will reside for at least part of their fellowship experience. Each PhD fellow will receive up to **USD 10,000** for research and **USD 2,000** for professional supervision; and each MSc fellow will receive up to **USD 7,500** for research and **USD 1,000** for professional supervision.

7.0 Application assessment and selection research fellows

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

- a) Quality of the research proposal with clearly stated objectives and methodology.
- b) Technical merit of the proposed work.
- c) Qualifications and capabilities of the applicant to undertake the proposed research work.
- d) Appropriateness of the proposed budget.
- e) Appropriateness of proposed host institution and supervisor's expertise.

8.0 How to apply

8.1 Applications must be submitted as follows:

- a) Complete the AFF Fellowship application form "Assessment of gender responsive resilience to climate Change of biophysical and socio-economic systems with

particular emphasis on gender responsiveness and marginalized groups depending on critical ecosystems for their livelihood”.

- b) Attach all the supporting documents and submit by email to: d.mutta@cgiar.org, h.bouda@cgiar.org and v.oeba@cgiar.org with a copy to exec.sec@afforum.org

8.2 Deadlines

- a) Applications must be received by the Secretariat before or by **06 December 2019**.
- b) Successful applicants will be informed by **13 December 2019**.
- c) Fellowship research activities should begin no later than **1 February 2020**

Should you have any questions, please contact the AFF Secretariat at the following address: d.mutta@cgiar.org, h.bouda@cgiar.org and v.oeba@cgiar.org with a copy to exec.sec@afforum.org