



CONCEPT NOTE

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON-LINE LEARNING FORUM: NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCs) UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT

OCTOBER 2021

1. 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 an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources.

The scope of AFF's work requires an interdisciplinary approach and an understanding of a wide range of economic, scientific and policy issues in order to provide evidence based information to support decision making at various levels and implementation of various activities in the forestry sector. In this regard, we note that experts and practitioners in different sectors often lack access to relevant information and knowledge-sharing platforms to exchange ideas, seek advice and focus their work efforts. As identified in the *AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025)*, Communities of Practice (CoPs) can serve as an efficient and easily accessible way for sharing information and learning.

AFF continues to encourage relevant and interested stakeholders to establish communities of practice focusing on a range of forestry-related topics or professional areas. One of these, which is the focus here, will be a CoP online discussion forum focusing on *forest related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement*.

2. BACKGROUND

The Paris Agreement sets an objective to limit the global temperature increase to “well below 2°C” and to pursue “efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”. **Nationally determined contributions** (NDCs) form the foundation of the Paris Agreement. The actions contained NDCs together add up to a collective global effort towards achieving the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.

Through Article 5 of the Paris Agreement, countries (referred to as Parties in the Agreement) are invited to include **forest- based solutions** to addressing negative effects of climate change in the formulation of their NDCs. These include conservation and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases (GHGs), including sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks in developing countries, more effective implementation of REDD+, and good practices of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) aimed at achieving long-term low carbon and climate resilient development.

Forestry and land use are a major source of emissions in Africa. Integrated forest and land-based solutions can therefore play a prominent role in African NDC mitigation contributions. African countries place significant emphasis on adaptation in their NDC given their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Sustainable forest and land management are a means to reducing emissions as well as playing a crucial role in lessening the impact of climate change on livelihoods, especially those of subsistence farmers and forest dependent communities.

All 54 African countries have signed the Paris Agreement and most have submitted ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹. Significant challenges still remain to refine these commitments, align them with national development agendas and explore and develop technical and financial capacity for effective and sustainable implementation.

AFF has a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry. In 2019, AFF commissioned studies into national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement (PA) and related global climate change policies and initiatives in fifteen countries in the Southern, Eastern, Western, Central African and Sahel regions. These studies highlighted the opportunity to build on lessons from the first forest based NDCs in Africa as the basis for updated commitments. Capacity building needs were identified amongst key forestry stakeholders, including to develop and implement forest-based mitigation and adaptation commitments as well as to ensure better alignment between these and national legislation, policies and programmes. Capacity to access international climate finance and knowledge and skills for measuring, reporting and verification of NDCs were also noted to be lacking amongst key stakeholders in the focal countries.

AFF recently facilitated two sub-regional webinars to share the findings of the sub-regional studies on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement and those of a parallel study into gums and resins value chains. The webinars, titled “Regional webinar on sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement and the contribution of dryland forest resources in building climate resilient communities in Africa” were held from 30 August–1 September (Francophone Africa) and 6-9 September (Anglophone Africa). Both were well attended and provided an opportunity for networking and sharing of information and experiences amongst African stakeholders. Webinar participants identified a number of key challenges and opportunities facing their countries in formulating and mainstreaming their forestry sector policies into their NDCs under the Paris Agreement in the lead up to COP 26 in Glasgow this year. This Community of Practice e-discussion platform will be organised around discussion topics generated by working groups during the Webinars.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS AND OUTPUTS

The aim of this on-line discussion forum is to provide a platform for sharing of knowledge, resources and best practices amongst African stakeholders, with a focus on forestry and land use in the NDCs. Specifically, the platform aims to provide a forum to share best practice and useful resources for:

- Developing and updating of forest based NDCs.
- Aligning national policies and institutional frameworks with mitigation and adaptation measures in forestry and land-use sectors
- Implementing forest related mitigation and adaptation measures and programmes
- Accessing international climate financing instruments for forest-based mitigation and adaptation contributions

¹ <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/africa-ndc-hub>

- Building skills and capacity for developing and reporting forest and land use contributions to NDCs, as well as for policy mainstreaming and implementation of forest-based mitigation and adaptation programmes

4. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE APPROACH

Communities of Practice are active on-line learning and communication networks whose members are interested in learning about the same topics. This CoP platform will draw on AFF's members and those involved in the recent AFF-hosted sub-regional webinars on national forest governance responses to Paris Agreement, with the aim of sharing knowledge, innovations, and the uptake of best practices to solve critical problems.

The community of practice platform will take place from 4 - 22 October, 2021. A program of daily discussion topics and resources will be shared amongst registered participants prior to the start of the launch of the e-discussion platform. The interactive portion of the programme will be scheduled for between 1 – 3 hours per day during weekdays, at a time best suited to the time zones of registered participants. Participants will be able to view daily summaries, discussion threads and access resources at any time during the three-week period that the platform is live

5. PARTICIPANTS

The Communities of Practice platform will engage all interested parties involved in the development and implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), specifically stakeholders involved in forestry and climate change policies and processes including national focal points for NDCs, UNFCCC, REDD+, UNFF as well as NGOs, public forestry and environmental administrators, and related private sector stakeholders in sub-Saharan Africa.

All interested actors are invited to register for the Communities of Practice (CoP) platform before 5 October 2021 using the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdIH-wEfi9x2tAEHouYcQpyUjLhnbOhom1TNAZgsMevR6v1g/viewform?usp=sf_link

After registering, participants will receive a link to the Communities of Practice (CoP) platform via e-mail to join the virtual group.