



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry

CONCEPT NOTE

ON

REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON FOREST AND TREE-BASED
CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION FOR AFRICAN FORESTRY
STAKEHOLDERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. 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 eradicate poverty, promote gender equality, and economic and social development.

AFF, in line with its mandate, is engaged in the development and implementation of projects in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders in African forestry. One area of focus is the relationship between forests, climate change and the people who depend on forest and tree resources. AFF and its stakeholders recognize that forest ecosystems play a key role in climate change mitigation and adaptation and particularly, providing goods and services that are also key assets for reducing vulnerability of the people to the adverse effects of climate change. Based on this premise, AFF advocates that there is a need for creating a platform to catalyze the African forestry stakeholders to understand, strengthen and develop the forest-climate nexus for effective integration in Africa's development at all levels.

Since 2011, AFF has been implementing a project on "*African forests, people and climate change*" that is in its third phase and contributing to the development of a Climate Change Program (AFF-CCP) in the institution. The overall objective of the AFF-CCP is to enhance the role of African forests in assisting people adapt to the effects of climate change in various landscapes in ways that will improve livelihoods, sustain biodiversity and secure the quality of the environment, as well as to strengthen the capacity of Africa's forests to adapt to climate change and to contribute to mitigation efforts. The importance of building capacity towards an effective approach to address issues related to climate change, as well as to improve the quality of knowledge transfer was recognized since the first phase of the project (2011 -2014) through two of its objectives namely: *building and improving the capacity to address forest related climate change issues*; and *ensuring that production, adaptation, mitigation and policy processes involving forests and trees are backed by sound and evidence-based scientific information*. These objectives were further strengthened during the second phase through the development of training modules and compendiums to guide the capacity building process.

One of the specific objectives of this third phase of the project is *to strengthen the capacity of African forestry stakeholders in adopting best practices that integrate both adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change and variability to biophysical and social systems in different landscapes*. This concept note is anchored on this specific objective with the expected key output being strengthened capacity of African forestry stakeholders in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels.

2. BACKGROUND

The vulnerability of rural households to climate change in Africa is attributed, not only, to exposure to climate variability and extreme weather events, but also, to a combination of social, economic, and environmental factors. There is growing evidence that climate change is affecting forest resources in Africa, and consequently the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. The effect on the forest resource is exacerbated by increased dependence of vulnerable communities on forest-based goods and services which are often overexploited. In operationalizing the Paris Agreement on climate change through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), many countries have indicated their forests as carbon sinks. There is consensus on the potential role of forests and trees in addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation; and the sector has, consequently, gathered pace and is being targeted by many funding mechanisms and institutions.

Despite most countries in Africa being the most vulnerable to climate change and variability, taking forest-based adaptation and mitigation to scale is challenged by the lack of sound evidence and good technical capacity on best practices specific to different forest ecosystem types. Moreover, national governments, civil society organizations, extension agents and local communities are the main stakeholders in the implementation of adaptation and mitigation activities implicit in many climate change strategies. Among the above listed stakeholders, civil society organizations and extension agents contribute to the wide dissemination of relevant research results to local communities who, in the majority, are and will be affected by the adverse effects of climate change. It is crucial that these categories of stakeholders are also aware of mechanisms to reduce poverty through their contributions to solving environmental problems. Therefore, training and updating their knowledge and skills is one of the logical approaches to achieve this important outcome.

As part of the efforts to contribute to capacity building for addressing the adverse effects of climate change, AFF, during the period 2011-2014, developed training modules for professional, technical and short courses (i.e., for extension agents, civil society and local communities) in Sub-Saharan African forestry, one of which was on forests and climate change mitigation. As a response to requests from African forestry stakeholders on the need to have the content for each module, and that is developed in a pedagogical manner, in order to improve the delivery of the information to different target groups. AFF has been engaged, since 2015, in the development of relevant training compendiums. The first batch of eight training compendiums were developed and launched during the celebration of the African Forest Forum's tenth anniversary in 2019 and are being widely distributed through different networks, platforms, media and fora.

During the current third phase of the project, AFF contracted an expert in 2019, to develop a contextualized teaching compendium, in a pedagogical manner, on *"Forests and climate change mitigation for short courses in African forestry"*. The draft compendium was reviewed and validated for wider use during a webinar organized between 29th September and 1st October 2021 which attracted 45 participants.

In line with its annual work plan for 2021, AFF, using the validated compendium, plans to organize a regional training workshop on forest and tree-based climate change mitigation, for African forestry stakeholders from civil society organizations, extension agents, private sector, policy makers and local communities.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

The overall objective of the training workshop is to strengthen the capacity of a critical mass of African forestry stakeholders from selected Anglophone countries who can link with local communities, with the aim being to enhance the contribution of forest and tree resources to climate change mitigation and exploit opportunities for supporting the implementation of forest-based mitigation policies, plans and actions. More specifically, the training workshop will focus on:

- basics of climate change mitigation;
- links between climate change mitigation and other related concepts such as adaptation and sustainable development;
- climate change mitigation measures across relevant sectors;
- basics of forest-based mitigation including practices, strategies, measures, and enabling conditions;
- existing forest-based mitigation initiatives at the international level and their implications for Africa; and
- non-forest climate change mitigation strategies.

3. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- (i) Participants have a good understanding of climate change mitigation concepts, practices, strategies and measures in forestry and allied sectors;
- (ii) Participants are able to apply as well as facilitate local communities on climate change mitigation measures in forestry and related sectors;
- (iii) Participants are able to assess existing forest-based climate change mitigation initiatives and access opportunities arising from them at the local, national and international levels

4. WORKSHOP APPROACH AND DURATION

The workshop will be conducted physically in Arusha, Tanzania over a duration of 5 days from the 6th to the 10th December 2021, including one day for field trip.

5. PARTICIPANTS

The event is expected to convene about 40 participants, from the following eight anglophone countries: **Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe**. For each country, five participants will be selected from **forest administration, management and extension actors, civil society organizations, private sectors, non-governmental organizations, media and community based organizations**.