

CONCEPT NOTE:

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON SHARING OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES

ON

Challenges and opportunities of forest management for sustainable development in Africa in the context of climate change

28 March -1 April 2022

**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 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, economic and social development and protect the environment.

To this end, AFF, with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is implementing a project titled “*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*”. The project seeks to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that will provide inputs into policy options and capacity building efforts for improved forest management that will in turn better address climate change impacts, as well as contribute to poverty alleviation and environmental protection in Africa.

This project aims at (i) identifying and promoting opportunities for protecting and sustainably managing the forest resource base to enhance the supply of ecosystem goods and services and (ii) examining the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies, among others. To pursue these objectives, AFF has undertaken studies that target:

* Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems, with preservation of biodiversity, in eastern, central, southern and western Africa (focusing on current status of land management policies and practices in different forest types in Africa),
* Strengthening capacity of stakeholders in African forestry to contain loss of forest cover in different forest types (focussing on the dynamism of key drivers responsible for forest cover loss) in these four sub-regions,
* Assessment of forest planning and forest management processes and practices in different forest types in the four sub-regions,
* The potential of countries, in the four sub-regions, for production and use of liquid biofuels, and also use of the same as a strategy for developing green and circular economies.

With funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) AFF is also implementing a project titled “African forests, people and climate change”. The project seeks to create capacities of stakeholders to strengthen the role of Africa’s forests and trees to adapt to climate change and mitigate its adverse effects in various landscapes in ways that will enhance livelihoods, sustain biodiversity, and improve the quality of the environment.

Some of the specific objectives of the project are: (i) to strengthen 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; (ii) to enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry; (iii) to promote entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry, including those related to climate change, that enhance livelihoods, national incomes, and employment.

To pursue these objectives, AFF undertook several studies in different forest types in the different African sub-regions. These studies targeted:

* Strengthening capacity of forestry stakeholders, from selected African countries, to integrate and uptake climate change adaptation and mitigation options;
* Enhancing capacity for REDD+ implementation in selected sub-Sahara African countries;
* Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives in central, western, eastern and southern Africa;
* Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Zambia;
* Exploring the use of dryland resources and commodities to promote nature-based entrepreneurship opportunities that enhance livelihoods, national incomes, and employment; focusing on gums and resins, specifically assessing the status of its resource base, production, and trade in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger and Tanzania.

The outputs of these studies will contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the two projects, and more specifically in guiding the design and implementation of sustainable resources management policies and practices in Africa in the context of changing climate.

**2. Background**

Natural resources (including land, forests, trees, and water) are the mainstay of most people in Africa. Ensuring that they sustainably deliver the needed goods and services requires that the management and use practices, and the policies that guide them, are favourably adapted to their state and contexts. Appropriate policies to guide practices for resource management and use can only be designed when sound evidence /adequate knowledge is available on (i) the status of the resources and factors that influence it, (ii) the adequacy and effectiveness of existing policy, approaches and practices used for planning and management of the resources and, (iii) existing and potential opportunities for improving on the socio-economic value of the resources; so as to secure the sustainable availability of its goods and services. There is also need for stakeholders / actors in the sector to be equipped with appropriate skills and competencies to manage and use the resources in a sustainable way.

Many global institutions, through different means (policy decisions, guidelines, funding mechanisms, etc.) are supporting national governments to implement sustainable land and forest management in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of people in those countries as well as generate associated environmental and climate benefits. Among such institutions are the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In Africa the African Union Commission is implementing a Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa that guides countries and regional economic communities in their forestry related interventions. Also, at the African sub-regional level there are forestry initiatives and programmes, all targeting improving peoples’ livelihoods, national incomes and the environment.

The studies undertaken through these two Sida and SDC supported projects aim to adequately support African countries in their efforts in promoting and implementing sustainable land and forest management, particularly aligning their interventions in these areas with provisions arising from the recommendations and resolutions of discourses from the above mentioned global, regional and sub-regional institutions.

In its annual work plan of activities for 2022, AFF is organizing a regional workshop for selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa to share the findings and recommendations from these studies, as well as provide for exchange of information, knowledge and experiences among the African forestry stakeholders participating in this event. In other words, the workshop will:

1. provide a forum for dialogue to enhance collaboration and mechanisms of sharing experiences in the African continent on sustainable management of land, forest and tree resources;
2. provide an opportunity to deliberate on the findings from the studies, and in doing so strengthen the basis for policy formulation and implementation; this could eventually cultivate interest in, and better inform investors to the sector ;
3. provide a forum to promote and facilitate development of policy and institutional frameworks that hold potential to enhance sustainable management of forest and tree resources, in ways that improve socio-economic development and simultaneously addressing climate change issues (adaptation and mitigation) in Africa; and
4. fine-tune and consolidate the identified capacity building needs and related potential approaches for addressing the challenges of sustainable resources management.

**3. Expectations from the workshop**

1. Enhanced exchange of experiences and skills among stakeholders on challenges faced by those managing land, forest and trees resources, and opportunities these resources offer
2. Exchange of specific experiences related to, for example, responses to Paris agreement, REDD+ implementation, resilience of people (livelihoods) and national economies to climate change
3. Shared experiences on current governance and management of land, forest and tree resources and on required policies and institutional frameworks that could enhance the sustainable management of these resources t in the context of changing climate ;
4. Knowledge gaps and capacity building needs identified for implementing appropriate approaches for improving management of land, forest and tree resources ;

**4. Venue and duration**

A face-to-face workshop is planned in Mombasa (Kenya) for a duration of 5 days from 28 March to 1 April 2022. Arrangements will be made to allow remote participation.

**5. Participants**

The event will gather about 40 invited participants from selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In each country, 2-4 participants will be selected from either public forest administrations, non-governmental organizations, academia, private sector, as well as youth and women-based organizations.

Interested forestry related stakeholders within and outside target countries willing to attend the workshop are invited to register online before 20 March 2022 using the link below:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAofuirrTwuHdWPtBRZ4N1YBcF0ADAfHhnx>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information on how to participate in the workshop.