



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



Communication and Knowledge Management at AFF: Achievements made in 2020

*A report prepared by the Knowledge Management and
Communications Unit (January – December 2020)*

About AFF

Established in 2007 as a non-political, non-governmental, objective, independent and not for profit international organization, the African Forest Forum (AFF) is an association of individuals with a commitment to the sustainable management, wise use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources for the socio-economic well-being of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

AFF exists to voice the concerns of African forestry stakeholders, and to use science, indigenous knowledge, and experience to advocate for the increasing relevance of forests and trees outside forests to peoples' livelihoods, national economies and the stability of the environment.

In this regard, AFF provides independent analysis and advice to national, regional and international institutions and actors on how economic, food security and environmental issues can be addressed through the sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests. Operationally, AFF mobilizes resources to address forestry and related issues that cut across countries and different African sub-regions with a view of enhancing the relevance and contribution of forests and trees outside forests to the livelihoods of the people of Africa and stability of their environment.

Vision

The leading forum that unites all stakeholders in African forestry

Mission

To contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people of Africa and the environment they live in through the sustainable management and use of tree and forest resources on the African continent.

Cover photos: Makungu Seedlings and Clonal Central Nursery owned by Green Resources Ltd- Mufindi District, Tanzania (credit: Prof. Reuben J.L Mwamakimbullah, President- Tanzania Association of Foresters); private commercial plantation in Somanya, a district in the Eastern region of Ghana (photo © African Forest Forum); women smallholder farmers in Kenya (credit: McKay Savage/Wikimedia Commons).

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COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AT AFF: ACHIEVEMENTS MADE IN 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

Forests and forestry continue to be very much profiled on the global agenda and their relevance to other sectors of national economies is increasingly being recognized. The processes that have precipitated these phenomena have involved considerable interaction among many stakeholders. The Knowledge Management and Communication Unit at AFF ensures that knowledge created, is communicated, shared and mainstreamed to benefit the many stakeholders in African forestry.

In this regard, the specific **communication activities** are to:

- (i) Update, and implement AFF Communication Strategy.
- (ii) Provide communication writing, reviewing and editorial assistance for AFF reports (annual and semi- annual), publications, and other documents.
- (iii) Identify high interest areas and prepare articles, blogs, newsletters, etc., from AFF's work and disseminate.
- (iv) Prepare AFF communication materials e.g brochures, banners, flyers, posters.
- (v) Generate content for website as well as for other social media and ensure impact goals are achieved.
- (vi) Coordinate the production, translation, printing and dissemination of various knowledge products; and
- (vii) Create and maintain media relations as well as prepare media materials and distribute the same through media outlets.

On the other hand, the specific **Knowledge Management (KM)** activities are to:

- i) Update, and implement the AFF Knowledge Management strategy.
- ii) Identify and/or create, strengthen and maintain forestry networks and databases.
- iii) Develop, organize, and maintain the AFF website, intranet and social media platforms.
- iv) Monitor, improve and maintain Knowledge Management practices, tools, policies, and sources.
- v) Develop and facilitate information creation/sourcing, organizing, archiving, retrieving and sharing practices in AFF.

2. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.1 Update and implement AFF communication strategy

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is currently causing significant adverse impact on the global economy. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), recent estimates indicate that the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 is likely to push 34.3 million more people into extreme poverty this year. As millions grapple with economic vulnerability and food insecurity, dependence on forests for basic subsistence needs will undoubtedly increase.

To stay ahead of it all, the African Forest Forum (AFF) has embraced comprehensive digital communication strategies to deliver timely, balanced and factual information in the war against COVID-19. These strategies have taken a two-pronged approach: using digital to enhance the work of the institution at an operational level; and using digital to provide a bridge between science-based knowledge and strong policies focusing on immediate action for the most vulnerable.

Despite the initial ICT challenges, remote working has become the norm for the AFF secretariat. The adjustment from the normal office environment to an environment where colleagues operate from separate locations has been made possible by ensuring staff have the appropriate technology infrastructure in place to enable seamless working wherever the location.

In particular; a local SIM card with prepaid data was provided to staff to access the internet remotely, optimize communication and enhance productivity; bi-weekly virtual staff meetings are held to manage change and retain the institution's workplace culture; an AFF WhatsApp group was set up to facilitate regular communication and exchange of practical information on how to mitigate and prevent further spread of the coronavirus, as well as any other forestry related studies; digital training sessions are organized to improve data access and analytics for decision makers.

At the strategic level, digital communication has been used to transform the work of AFF, its partners and stakeholders in African forestry. Participation at multi-sector, multi-discipline conferences and dialogues has enabled a digital conservation community of practice, research and policy. The concerted thinking and agenda-setting that flows from such interactions will help to ensure that digital technology maintains the momentum on the sustainable management of forests.

Furthermore, delivery of messages and information products in easily understandable formats and language has helped support capacity building in many areas central to the practice of forestry as well as on seemingly new and emerging areas in AFF's work. As a result, it is anticipated that despite the rise in the occurrences of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 in the future AFF's profile, reputation and membership will continue to gain visibility on local, regional and international news channels, digital sites and social media platforms.

2.2 Provide writing, reviewing and editorial assistance for AFF reports (annual and semi-annual), publications, and other documents

AFF produces a range of products that provide members and other stakeholders the latest information, based on research and similar studies, on African forestry and related areas, as well as on important events that have a bearing on national, regional and global forestry and related issues.



Figure 1: Selection of AFF knowledge products

The total number of information materials freely available on the website is 214. The range includes: Journal articles (50), policy briefs (20), factsheets (8), reports (36), publications under AFF Working Paper Series (55), training modules (2), newsletters (16), edited proceedings of meetings (1), books (5), compendium (9), and corporate documents (12). All this information is relevant to many African forestry stakeholders in decision making, policy formulation and implementation.

Figure 2 below shows the amount of content developed by AFF from the year 2018 to 2020. There has been an increase, specifically in the number of journal articles, reports and Publications under AFF Working Paper Series that have been published on the website over the past three years.

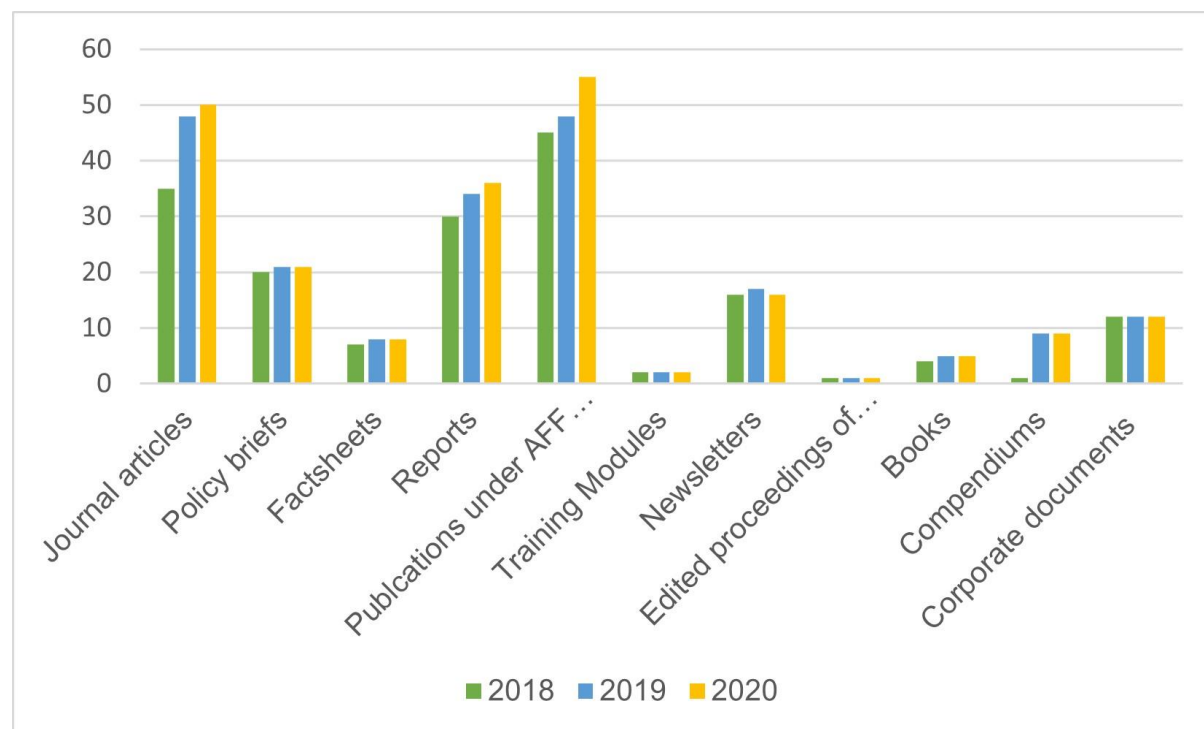


Figure 2: AFF range of knowledge products available on the website (2018-2020)

The most common topics or broad areas broached in these knowledge products include: tree improvement and seed management; forest law enforcement; good forest governance; managing forest tree pests and diseases; carbon markets; trade in forest products and services; public-private-partnerships in primary and secondary forestry production; climate change in forestry; effective engagement in multilateral environmental processes and agreements, among others. This information is relevant to many African forestry stakeholders and facilitates decision making on many issues and at various levels, as well as in policy formulation and implementation.

In 2020 (January-December), a total of **24,329** PDFs were downloaded from the website with **2,564,877** pages opened. The most downloaded document is the Call for Scholarships – 3rd Cohort of RSIF PhD Scholarships (Table 2). The second and third most popular documents are under the AFF Working Paper Series. Namely: *“Forest plantations and woodlots in Tanzania* and *“Forest plantations and woodlots in Ethiopia.”* These two publications continue to be a significant area of interest among forestry professionals over the past three years. AFF’s

flagship publication, “The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges,” English and French versions also feature in the top ten publications downloaded from the website.

One out of the top ten downloads on the website, is a training compendium launched on May 22nd: “Basic science of climate change: A compendium for professional training on African forestry.” It is part of eight compendiums launched on the same day as part of AFF’s anniversary celebrations.

Table 1: Top 10 downloads (January – December 2020)

No.	Publication
1.	Call for Scholarships – 3rd Cohort of RSIF PhD Scholarships (English)
2.	Ngaga, Y (2011). Forest plantations and woodlots in Tanzania. AFF Working Paper (16)1. Nairobi. African Forest Forum
3.	Bekele, M (2012). Forest plantations and woodlots in Ethiopia. AFF Working Paper (12)1. Nairobi. African Forest Forum
4.	AFF, 2019. The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. African Forest Forum, Nairobi Kenya. 186 pp
5.	Agustino, S., Mataya, B., Senelwa, K., and Achigan-Dako, G.E. 2011. Non-wood forest products and services for socio-economic development. A Compendium for Technical and Professional Forestry Education. The African Forest Forum, Nairobi, Kenya. 219 pp.
6.	African Forest Forum (2019). Basic science of climate change: A compendium for professional training on African forestry. 236 pp
7.	African Forest Forum (2019). The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges (French version)
8.	Abdo, M. 2014. Pratiques, techniques et technologies de restauration des paysages dégradés du Sahel. African Forest Forum. Working Paper Series, Vol. 2(3), 47 pp.
9.	Chidumayo, E., Okali, D., Kowero, G. and Larwanou, M. (eds.). 2011. Climate change and African forest and wildlife resources. African Forest Forum, Nairobi, Kenya.
10.	Nganje, M (2019). Positioning forestry as an entry point and pathway for green economy development in West Africa. AFF Working Paper. Nairobi. African Forest Forum.

Source: Google Analytics (2020).

The Knowledge Management and Communications Unit has provided writing, review and editorial assistance towards the development of publications under AFF Working Paper Series, technical reports, publications and other documents in the year 2021. Table 1 below shows a

list of knowledge products finalized and/or published on the AFF website in the relevant Publication and Resources section, as well as the Homepage.

Table 2: List of AFF knowledge products finalized and/or published on the AFF website (January - December 2020)

No	Author (s)	Year of publication	Title	Type of publication
1.	Assogbadjo, E.A and Vodouhe, G. F	2019	Review of land use, land use change and forest sector potential for green economy in Francophone West and Central African countries	Report
2.	Katsvanga, C. A. and Mudyiwa S. M	2019	Training needs analysis and forestry curricula evaluation in professional and technical institutions in sub-Sahara Anglophone countries	Working Paper
3.	Obiri, D. B., Oduro A. K., Nutakor. E., and Acquah	2019	Public and private sector development on forest products industry in Ghana	Working Paper
4.	Nganje, M	2019	Positioning forestry as an entry point and pathway for green economy development in West Africa	Working Paper
5.	Cheboiwo, K. J	2018	Potential for private sector development in Africa. A synthesis report for Eastern African countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia	Working Paper
6.	African Forest Forum (AFF)	2018	The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges (French version)	Book
7.	C. Wekesaa, B.K. Kirui, G.M. Muturi and M. Gathara	2018	Interactions between native tree species and environmental variables along forest edge-interior gradient in fragmented forest patches of Taita Hills, Kenya. Forest Ecology and Management 409 (2018) 789-798	Journal Article
8.	Berhanu Terefe & Dong-Gill Kim	2019	Shifting cultivation maintains but its conversion to mono-cropping decreases soil carbon and nitrogen stocks compared to natural forest in Western Ethiopia January 2019; Plant and Soil An International Journal on Plant-Soil Relationships; ISSN 0032-079X; Plant Soil	Journal Article

No	Author (s)	Year of publication	Title	Type of publication
			DOI 10.1007/s11104-019-03942	
9.	Africa Journal of Rural Development (AFJRD)	2019	Special issue of the Africa Journal of Rural Development (AFJRD) Vol 4 Issue 1 2019. Some key issues in Africa's Forestry	Journal Article
10.	Katsvanga, C. A. and Mudyiwa S. M.,	2019	Training needs analysis and forestry curricula evaluation in professional and technical institutions in sub-Sahara Anglophone countries	Working Paper
11.	Tieguhong J. C	2017	Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in the Forestry Sector in Central Africa.	Report
12.	Kyeyune, R	2018	Public-private-partnerships in the forest sector in Africa:	Report
13	Popoola	2019	Review of land use, land use change and forest sector potential for green economy in Anglophone West African countries:	Working Paper

2.3 Identify high interest areas and prepare articles, blogs, newsletters, etc., from AFF's work and disseminate

In 2020, a number of announcements of activities and high interest areas were shared with AFF members via info-mail and posted on the AFF website for the general public as well as on social media platforms (Table 4). These included several calls for consultancy services, job opportunities, newly released publications, events and related news from around the globe. Fifteen out of the forty-eight announcements were AFF consultancy opportunities. While information on the XV Forestry Congress and linkages between COVID-19 and Sustainable Forest Management featured prominently.

Table 3: List of AFF announcements and articles disseminated to AFF members and stakeholders in African forestry (January -November 2020)

No	Title of announcement / article
1.	<i>The call for contributions to the XV World Forestry Congress is now open!</i>
2.	<i>New global climate action report released</i>

No	Title of announcement / article
3.	<i>Call for experts for strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes</i>
4.	<i>Call for experts on development of bankable projects on enhancing resilience to climate change and improvement of livelihoods</i>
5.	<i>Save the date - XV World Forestry Congress Information Session - 14 July 2020</i>
6.	<i>Call for Expert on Great Green Wall (GGW) Non-timber Forest Product (NTFP) Value Chain Analysis</i>
7.	<i>Final Call: AFF Consultancy opportunity for efficiency and effectiveness training</i>
8.	<i>COVID-19 Forestry Webinar Week, 22-25 June 2020</i>
9.	<i>SW4SW Survey COVID-19 impacts on forest sector and response measures</i>
10.	<i>AFF Consultancy opportunity for efficiency and effectiveness training</i>
11.	<i>Celebration of World Food Safety Day - Theme: Food Safety, Everyone's business</i>
12.	<i>Call for Applications for PhD Scholarships in Forestry (20 Positions available)</i>
13.	<i>Apply to be an AAS Affiliate</i>
14.	<i>Facts on Africa's forests by Forestry Commission Zimbabwe</i>
15.	<i>'Living Earth Community: Multiple Ways of Being and Knowing'</i>
16.	<i>Survey on Potential Effect of COVID-19 on SFM</i>
17.	<i>Building resilience, mapping tree cover, and expanding forests</i>
18.	<i>International Week for Biological Diversity - WWF Toolkit</i>
19.	<i>Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals- details on volumes 4 and 12 available</i>
20.	<i>Call for Scholarships - 3rd Cohort of RSIF PhD Scholarships</i>
21.	<i>Job Opening - FSC Congo Basin Coordinator</i>
22.	<i>AFF Vacancy Announcement – Programme Officer</i>
23.	<i>Call for Applications: Consultancy opportunity available at AFF - re-advertised</i>
24.	<i>Call for Applications: Consultancy opportunities available at AFF</i>

No	Title of announcement / article
25.	<i>Integrated assessment of air quality and climate change in Africa 2020-2021</i>
26.	<i>A portal to track international capacity development support for forest monitoring</i>
27.	<i>Eco Health 2020: Working together for a health, just and sustainable planet</i>
28.	<i>Apply now for the Keeling Curve Prize</i>
29.	<i>Towards the XV World Forestry Congress - Information Session during COVID-19 Forestry Webinar Week, 22-25 June 2020</i>
30.	<i>Final Call: AFF Consultancy opportunity for efficiency and effectiveness training</i>
31.	<i>Call for Expert on Great Green Wall (GGW) Non-timber Forest Product (NTFP) Value Chain Analysis</i>
32.	<i>Save the date - XV World Forestry Congress Information Session - 14 July 2020</i>
33.	<i>AFF Call for experts on development of bankable projects on enhancing resilience to climate change and improvement of livelihoods</i>
34.	<i>AFF Call for experts on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes</i>
35.	<i>New global climate action report released</i>
36.	<i>The call for contributions to the XV World Forestry Congress is now open!</i>
37.	<i>FAO invites you to support global study and development on forest education</i>
38.	<i>XV World Forestry Congress Newsletter - Vol. 1 / July 2020</i>
39.	<i>RE-ADVERTISED: Consultancy on strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options</i>
40.	<i>Young African Foresters Initiative</i>
41.	<i>Calling for abstracts and side event proposals for the XV World Forestry Congress!</i>
42.	<i>Job Opportunity: AFF Senior Programme Officer</i>
43.	<i>UPDATE: Job Opportunity - AFF Senior Programme Officer</i>
44.	<i>International Scholarships available for the 2021 MSc Course in Tropical Forestry at TU Dresden, Germany</i>
45.	<i>XV World Forestry Congress Newsletter - Vol. 2 / September 2020</i>
46.	<i>New Publication Alert: Miombo Woodlands in a Changing Environment; Securing the Resilience and Sustainability of People and Woodlands</i>

No	Title of announcement / article
47.	<i>SLU-AFF Webinar on Sustainable business models for charcoal in Africa</i>
48.	<i>Vacancies Announcement – Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources</i>

2.4 Generate content for website as well as social media and ensure impact goals are achieved

Traffic is one of the most important indicators of general interest in the African Forest Forum. It is an important indicator of site reach and growth. By analyzing number of visits, an insight into overall site performance can be attained. The access statistics presented in table 4 below show how many times visitors accessed the website and includes unique visitors, number of visits, pages and hits. The analysis of these metrics provides insights into the frequency of use and overall appeal of the website.

2.4.1 Unique visitors

Table 4 below tracks unique visitors to measure the overall level of traffic to the AFF website.

Table 4: Unique visitors to the AFF website

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan 2020	9,438	24,106	87,705	132,747
Feb 2020	14,391	33,382	223,936	263,204
Mar 2020	13,892	43,269	147,437	185,091
Apr 2020	11,608	35,862	152,642	179,764
May 2020	12,905	37,433	163,333	189,379
Jun 2020	13,903	36,346	172,254	215,054
Jul 2020	12,183	34,947	157,924	185,126
Aug 2020	13,371	37,468	136,892	159,071
Sep 2020	13,501	42,210	198,778	222,550
Oct 2020	13,591	40,674	190,869	208,945
Nov 2020	15,993	41,085	208,614	240,706
Dec 2020	19,653	56,133	257,526	285,560
Total	164,429	462,915	2,097,910	2,467,197

Source: Google Analytics (2020)

In the reporting period, the website recorded **462,915 visits from 164,429 visitors from 152 countries worldwide**. The data implies that the web visitors made an average of 3 visits to the website. The data also shows that the level of interaction with web content is impressionable

through the viewing of **2,097,910 pages**- giving a clear picture of the site's performance and popularity on the web. The highest number of visits was witnessed in the months of **December** with 19,653 unique visitors interacting with the site.

The graph below builds on these findings by comparing data over a twelve-month period from 2015 and 2016. Each bar represents one month in the year, while the bar's height represents the monthly page view. A closer examination of the grid points towards a general upward trend in traffic from March to November over the two years. Given lockdown restrictions during COVID-19 era, AFF's use of digital innovations to improve data access and information for stakeholders could be the reason for the increase in people visiting the website.

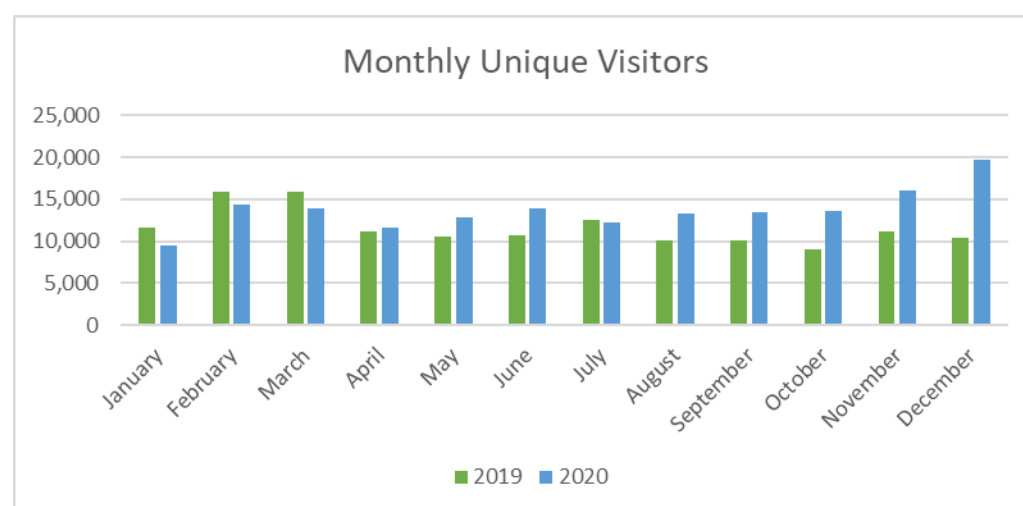


Figure 3: Monthly Unique Visitors (2019-2020)

2.4.2 Website hits

The website's total hits¹ in the year 2020 are **2,467,197** as compared to 2019, that recorded 1,852,184 hits – an **increase of 615,013 hits**. While an analysis of this type of data is hardly a true reflection of the site's performance, it shows that in 2020, there was an increase in the number and variety of files integrated within the web pages. As a result, the number of hits has increased over the period under reference.

2.4.3 Source of traffic

According to Google Analytics (2020), most visitors to the website came from direct traffic - visits with no referring website. This indicates a growing recognition of the AFF brand from visitors who enter the URL into their browser or find the site via a bookmark. The second source of traffic is from organic search - traffic originating from a search engine, such as Google or Bing. A key strategy for the new AFF website has been to improve its positioning in search results through use of key words in high ranking pages such publications section. Social

¹ Hits are also known as request and it is the total number of files loaded when a single page is requested from the web server. This includes photos, graphics, text etc.

media, referrals and e-mail are the third, fourth and fifth sources respectively. This demonstrates that AFF members, along with other stakeholders in African forestry, visit the website.

2.4.4 New versus returning visitors²

The AFF website's returning versus new visitors' ratio is 14.5%: 85.5% (Figure 4). This metric indicates that the website is dynamic and mobile friendly enabling access from a range of smart devices. The goal for 2021 will be to convert the new visitors into returning visitors with higher engagement — more pageviews per session.

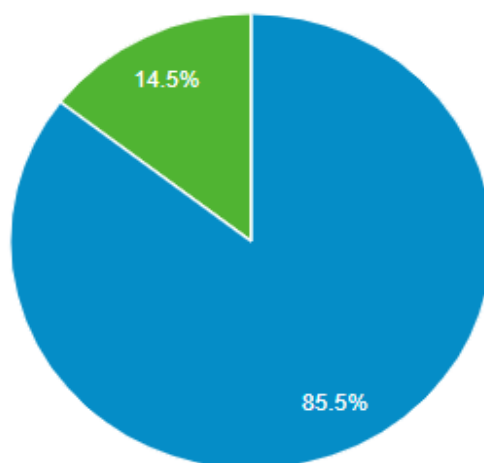


Figure 4: Returning vs new visitors to the AFF website

The high percentage of new visitors is impressive and also a good indicator that AFF's ongoing work as well as communication activities are making good progress and in line with its mandate as a knowledge brokerage Institution. The growth in numbers of new users per month can also be attributed to the ongoing improvement of both user experience and content quality. This metric indicates that the website is dynamic and mobile friendly enabling access from a range of smart devices. The goal for 2021 will be to convert the new visitors into returning visitors with higher engagement — more pageviews per session.

2.4.5 Landing and exit pages³

The website's most popular landing page is the African Forest Forum homepage page. As the digital face of the institution, the website's new homepage is designed to reflect AFF's corporate branding through items like the logo, tagline, colours, fonts and images. Other pages that have a high number of people visiting are: (i) our members (ii) publications, (iii) intranet (iv)

² Returning visitors refers to the percentage of visitors who have used the site more than once New users on the other hand are those navigating the site for the first time on a specific device.

³ Landing pages are the first pages visitors see when entering a website. Exit pages on the other hand are the pages visitors were on before they choose to leave the website

vacancies (v) our members-benefits of membership (viii) post-doctoral fellow-climate and policy (x) news and events. Table 5 below lists the top 10 exit pages from the website. From this table it can be inferred that users access the website to explore available information on job and training opportunities, as well as by a general interest to join AFF's growing membership, its publications, news and events.

Table 5: Top 10 exit pages from the AFF website

No	Page description
1.	/call-for-applications-for-phd-scholarships-in-forestry-20-positions-available/
2.	/vacancies/
3.	/our-members/
4.	/publications/
5.	/vacancy/consultancy-services-on-strengthening-capacity-among-african-forestry-stakeholders-for-implementing-redd-in-anglophone-and-lusophone-africa/
6.	/New-global-climate-action-report-released/
7.	/vacancy/AFF-vacancy-announcement-programme-officer/
8.	/vacancy/consultancy-services-on-the-potential-of-african-countries-for-the-production-and-use-of-liquid-biofuels-as-a-strategy-for-developing-green-and-circular-economies-in-southern-africa-2/
9.	/better-management-of-forests-and-trees-outside-forests/
10.	/about/

2.4.6 Geographical location

Geographical data is presented in Table 5 below. Countries with the highest traffic to the site are: United States, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, China, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Germany, Tanzania and United Kingdom.

The data shows that the AFF communication strategy continues to be the right track as the primary audience is its members from across Africa. Six out of the top 10 countries are from Africa with Uganda, Ethiopia and Cameroon making a debut to the list. The United States of America continues to take interest in AFF's work, along with China, Germany and the United Kingdom. This demonstrates international and widespread appeal of the institution's mandate and activities. A close analysis of the top 50 countries visiting the website, indicate impressive visits from French speaking countries including, Benin, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo, Burkina Faso, Gabon, French Guinea among others. This finding could bear positive light on the ongoing AFF activities in West and Central Africa that may be driving traffic to the site.

Table 6: Geographical location of users to the AFF website (2020)

Country	Users	New Users	Sessions	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
1. United States	1155	1151	1189	3.20	48.28
2. Kenya	955	914	1785	3.37	230.14
3. Nigeria	479	456	738	2.06	137.30
4. Uganda	300	290	396	1.61	95.56
5. China	290	289	294	1.10	10.21
6. Ethiopia	230	216	341	2.28	138.23
7. Cameroon	225	205	333	2.33	157.38
8. Germany	197	192	216	9.82	151.81
9. Tanzania	188	177	263	2.01	127.89
10. United Kingdom	184	181	230	2.03	83.17

2.5 Coordinate the production, translation, printing and dissemination of various knowledge products

Table 7 below outlines a list of corporate documents and knowledge products that have been translated into French for ease of reference.

Table 7: List of AFF corporate documents and knowledge products translated into French

	Document title	Type
1.	Guidance for Preparing Inception Reports,	Corporate
2.	MoU template	Corporate
3.	Research Agreement	Corporate
4.	Grantee Reporting Form	Corporate
5.	<i>Basic science of climate change: a compendium for technical training in African forestry</i>	Compendium
6.	<i>Basic science of climate change: a compendium for professional training in African forestry</i>	Compendium
7.	<i>Basic science of climate change: a compendium for short courses in African forestry</i>	Compendium
8.	<i>Protocol for surveillance of forest and tree pests in West and Central Africa</i>	Report
9.	<i>The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges 2019</i>	Book

2.6 Create and maintain media relations, prepare media materials and distribute same to media outlets

The African Forest Forum (AFF) partnered with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Kenya and Ethiopia) to promote capacity building, research, development and information dissemination in Africa. This partnership involved production of a podcast intended to facilitate sharing of AFF research findings and intentional conversations on forest conservation and policy issues at the grassroots level. The podcast also aimed to talk about some best practices used in managing forest resources, including participatory forest management, in addition to addressing gender equity in African forestry. The podcast production was undertaken by Strathmore University and posted on an anchor account available via the following link: <https://anchor.fm/hanns-seidel-foundation/episodes/Forest-and-tree-resources-for-sustainable-development-in-Africa--the-challenges-and-opportunities-emarby>

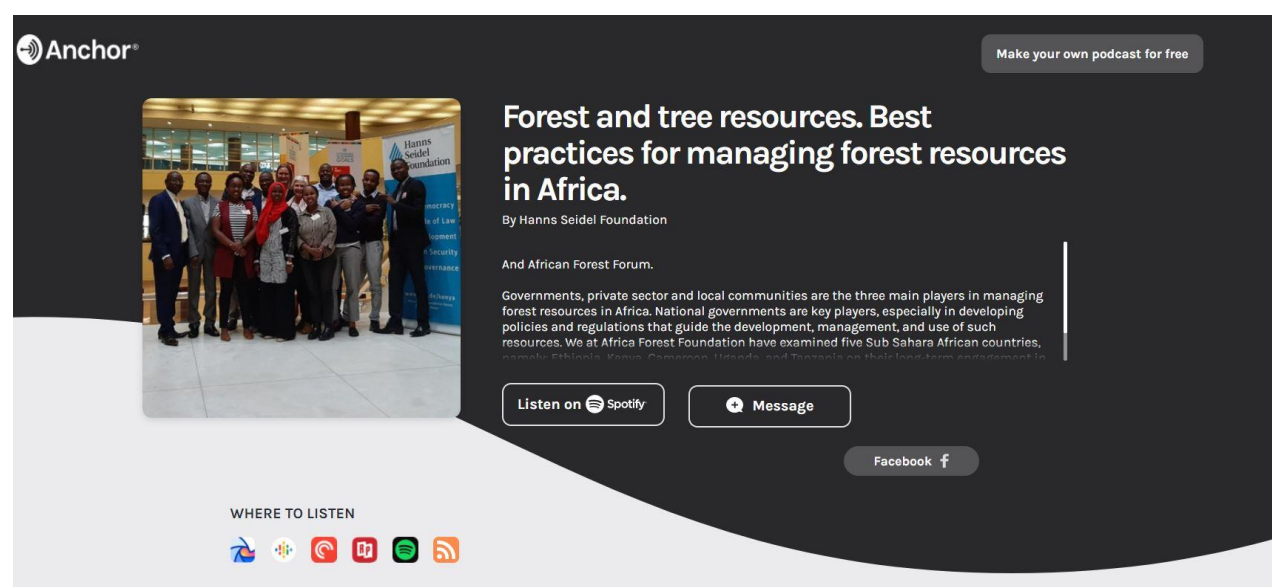


Figure 5: Podcast: Forest and tree resources - Best practices for managing forest resources in Africa

The podcast was shared with AFF members and communities organised through assistance of civil society organisations in Central Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Eastern Africa (Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania), Southern Africa (Namibia, South Africa) and West Africa (Ghana and Togo). The target group comprised of subsistence farmers, farmer group associations, teachers, entrepreneurs, artisans, extension officers, pastoralists, nomads and fisherfolks. In future, the audience will expand considerably as the podcast will be broadcasted on local and national radios, and with digital files sent to other organisations in Africa, published on AFF, Regional Sustainability Network and Hanns Seidel Foundation Kenya and Ethiopia webpages and disseminated to affiliated partner organizations.

3. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

3.1 Update, and implement the AFF knowledge management strategy

In November 2019, a consultant was engaged to focus on providing support to the further development of AFF as a knowledge brokerage institution, and in particular guide the development of capacities in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and systems for knowledge management at AFF. Keys tasks were to:

- Conduct a thorough assessment/audit through desk research and organisational review to determine the scope of knowledge management within AFF, and assess the requirements in terms of personnel skills, facilities or infrastructure, organizational processes/protocols and structure, in accordance with existing policies and ongoing project workplans;
- Consult with regional partners and other key entities to identify information needs and knowledge management implications;
- Advice on systems, processes, technology tools, change management, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) for building and creating new knowledge and training strategies by presenting comparative analyses of different options;
- Draw up the required KM process flow in AFF and, in collaboration with the Staff, update the KM strategy to suit the requirements of AFF;
- Build the institutional and personnel capacity of AFF, to enhance their capacities on KM and in developing KM-related systems and databases; and
- Conduct a training of stakeholders in African forestry on information and knowledge management at a workshop to be organized by AFF.

As a first step, a knowledge audit was undertaken to understand to guide the review and development of a robust organizational Knowledge Management System that will support AFFs organizational strategy and achievements of its mandate. A phased framework approach towards development of AFF's Knowledge Management System was adapted with four (4) phases namely: Preliminary Phase, Planning Phase, Knowledge Audit Phase and Knowledge Management System Development Phase.



Figure 6: Knowledge Management System Development Framework

In view of this, an extensive Organizational Knowledge Audit was undertaken through; desktop research, an inception workshop, in-depth meetings with AFF Executive Secretary, interview sessions with AFF Secretariat technical and support staff, Governing Council, Executive Committee, Experts, Members and Partners and bench making visits with likeminded institutions.

Key findings from the Knowledge Management Audit were clustered and presented according to the four key accelerators of the knowledge management process: people (human capital); processes; technology and infrastructure; and governance. The KM Audit findings and recommendations were then used to inform the development of the AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025).

The AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025). aims to strengthen AFF's position as a leading forestry knowledge brokerage institution; enhance coordination and integration of knowledge management at AFF; and institutionalize a knowledge management culture conducive to collaboration internally and externally with stakeholders and cohesive to the structure of the organization. It emphasizes better quality standards and commensurate resources, accountability mechanisms, and buy-in from all stakeholders. The proposed framework for knowledge management at AFF is anchored on the following strategic objectives:

- Strategic Objective 1: Generating, customizing and connecting knowledge
- Strategic Objective 2: Using knowledge for policy and action
- Strategic Objective 3: Leveraging knowledge through collaboration and partnerships
- Strategic Objective 4: Mobilizing resources and building capacities

The following activity schedule was recommended to be implemented in line with the AFF five-year strategic plan. It is proposed these actions should be implemented by a full time Knowledge Management Specialist based at the AFF Secretariat.

Table 8: AFF Activity schedule

Recommended Actions
Action area 1: Generating, customizing and connecting knowledge
<p><i>Action 1a: Enhancing how knowledge is generated and captured.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop knowledge creation guidelines. ○ After-action reviews and evaluation learning events. ○ Engagements with sector thought leaders.
<p><i>Action 1b: Improving quality and timeliness of how knowledge is produced and customized</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review templates for uniform ‘look and feel.’ ○ Develop knowledge tracking dashboard. ○ Develop quality assurance/peer review guidelines.
<p><i>Action 1c: Enhancing how knowledge is shared and promoted for wider reach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain updated corporate database of global, regional, and thematic events and AFF engagements. ○ Develop updated dissemination and outreach plan for AFF knowledge products. ○ Develop a multilingual glossary of forestry terminology.
<p><i>Action 1d: Optimize functionalities for how knowledge is organized and made easily accessible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop permanent DOI and ORCID to promote author citations. ○ Track online use and impact of AFF publications with citation metrics using Altmetric. ○ Utilize open-source library automation software—Google Scholar, Research Gate and KOHA—to ensure listing of AFF publications.
Action area 2: Using knowledge for policy and action
<i>Action 2a: Position AFF as thought leader on sustainable forest management</i>

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish KM Working Group. ○ Develop a concept note for flagship products, “Results from the Field” series and “Country-driven policy series.
<p><i>Action 2b: Build AFF knowledge hub for sharing and uptake of knowledge.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up an interactive, user-friendly knowledge portal to host moderated online discussions forums. ○ Popularize use of OneDrive as a knowledge management tool.
<p><i>Action 2c: Using innovative solutions to support knowledge sharing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organize virtual meetings, such as webinars, on topical issues on forestry and related areas. ○ Expand diversification of knowledge formats in print, digital and multi-media formats, including podcasts, data visualizations, infographics and YouTube videos. ○ Adapt publications dissemination formats beyond PDFs, towards formats that are more reader friendly and can be easily downloaded and used by mobile devices, hand-held readers and tablets.
<p><i>Action 2d: Build portfolio of knowledge products for practitioners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to regularly develop toolkits and practitioner manuals, and policy briefs on a demand-driven basis.
Action Area 3: Leveraging knowledge through collaboration and partnerships
<p><i>Action 3a: enhance AFF role as a learning organization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Map forestry professionals and other stakeholders in forestry related sectors. ○ Develop profiles of AFF Knowledge Champions for publication on AFF website and online platforms. ○ Develop an expertise locator system, based on area of experts’ area of specialization.
<p><i>Action 3b: Enrich AFF membership base, and build strategic partnerships with like-minded sector institutions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undertake mapping of AFF’s existing and potential financial, technical and knowledge partnerships. ○ Develop strategy to identify co-authoring/co-publishing opportunities with strategic

Recommended Actions
<p>partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore and initiate knowledge partnership agreements with strategic partners.
<p><i>Action3c: Strengthen Community of Practice (CoP) to support knowledge development and use.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Develop and enhance intranet and social media tools supporting CoPs.</i>
Action area 4: Mobilizing resources and building capacities
<p><i>Action 4a: Institutionalize KM within AFF</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure KM is embedded in AFF strategic plans. ○ Ensure sustained top leadership support for resourcing and implementing the AFF KM strategy. ○ Establish KM working group to direct AFF's knowledge agenda. ○ Engage KM expert to take lead of KM function. ○ Ensure knowledge management is explicitly embedded in job descriptions, individual performance plans and staff evaluations.
<p><i>Action 4b: Build internal and external capacities for KM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and implement learning plans and opportunities to fill knowledge gaps within the AFF fraternity, including staff, members and partners. ○ Build internal skills through training and awareness workshops on: technical writing, report writing, writing for blogs, knowledge synthesis, social media tools, skills and techniques. ○ Explore incentives that offer greater recognition to staff efforts in promoting knowledge exchange, collaboration and learning activities. ○ Engage younger forestry professionals at universities and early career scientists through mentorship opportunities and groom to take up knowledge brokering roles.
<p><i>Action 4c: Optimize knowledge retention to enhance learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Document the story of “the 10-year AFF journey” both in terms of organizational growth, the knowledge story and lessons learnt. ○ Create internal opportunities to capture and share institutional knowledge, for example, through ‘Brown Bag Lunches’ or internal dialogues.

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optimize knowledge retention through introduction of exits interviews and 'learning from leavers' program.
<p><i>Action 4d: Monitor and track KM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undertake an AFF audience survey to track the use and impact of knowledge products, and to improve targeted knowledge sharing. ○ Track online knowledge use, uptake and impact using social media metrics. ○ Develop indicators for measuring KM and report periodically to AFF top leadership on KM performance and progress against selected indicators.

3.2 Identify and/or create, link with, strength and maintain forestry networks and databases

AFF joined the FAO Regional Forest Communicators Networks to help strengthen sustainable forest management in policy and practice. The networks currently comprise nearly 500 enthusiastic professionals from both government and private organizations within the forestry sector who come together to:

- Share best practices and tools to implement effective communication campaigns on a regional level,
- Promote learning among their members, generate new contacts and alliances, and
- Exchange up-to-date information on topical forest issues.

However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions on gatherings and physical movement activities have been either been halted or postponed to avert further spread of the disease.

3.3 Develop, organize, update and maintain the AFF website, intranet and social media platforms

3.3.1 AFF website upgrade

Monitoring the performance of the AFF's online presence is not only crucial to regular reporting, it is also key for analysis and decision making. Over the past few years, retrieval of web metrics is done manually, collating from multiple analytics tools (Google analytics, AWstats, Drupal log etc). However, this process required extensive web technical expertise which contributed to delays especially on occasions that a report was urgently needed. It is for this reason that, an AFF Web Analytics Dashboard (AWAD) that allows users to visualise the

web metrics with all statistical details has been developed in collaboration with the webmaster. The AWAD system provides different chart types and maps in one dashboard and serves as a powerful data visualisation combination. It has been built using customized code (Foundation framework and Highcharts for visualization) and will cover the following:

- Dashboard setup
- Maps
- Charts and graphs
- Meters
- Tables (for each map, chart and graph) item

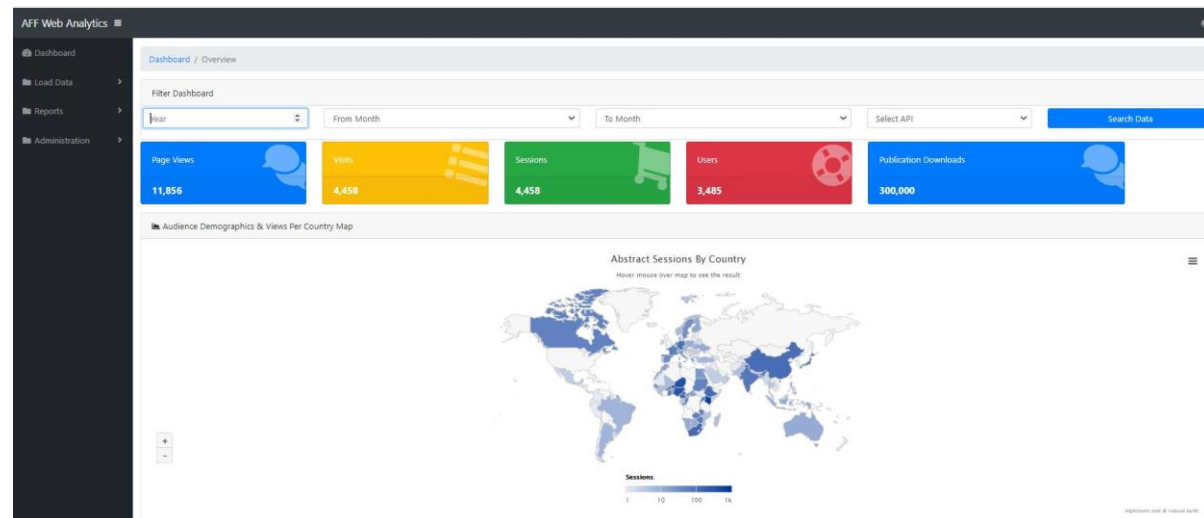


Figure 7: AFF Web Analytics Dashboard (AWAD)

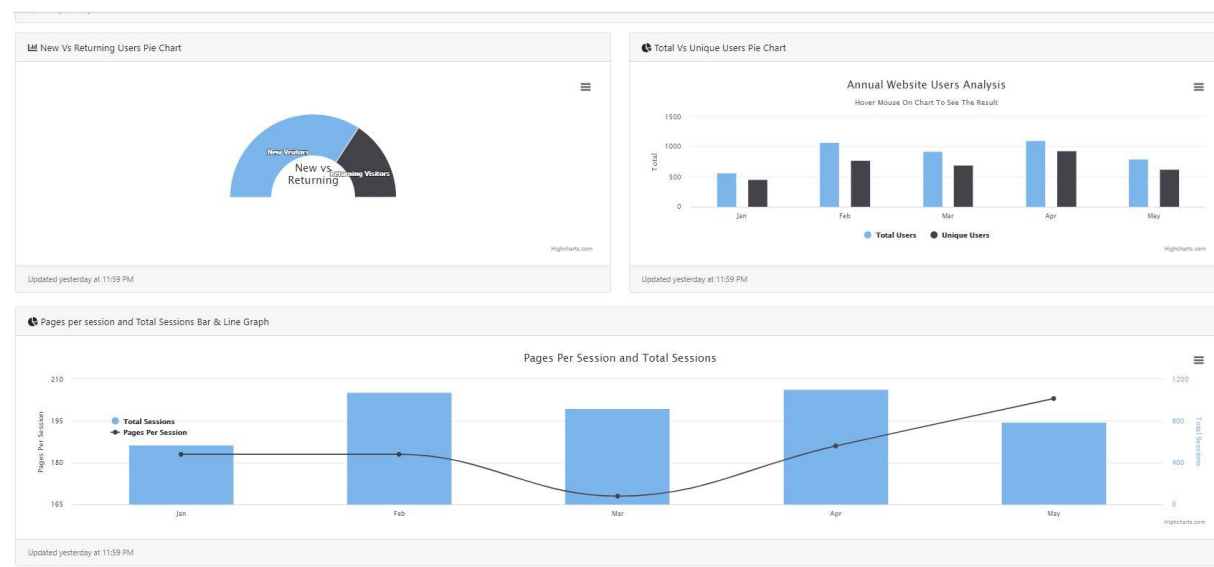


Figure 8: Sample web metrics displayed on the AFF Web Analytics Dashboard (AWAD)

The AFF AWAD system provides:

- A one-stop-shop page that displays all AFF's set web metrics with the ability to pick date ranges on both monthly and yearly basis.

- A visual dashboard that incorporates maps, charts, graphs, tables, meters and odometers to give a comprehensive analysis at a glance.
- Option to download and export these visual elements as image or PDF making it ideal for report compilation.
- An automated system that picks directly from these available tools, feeding the results directly to the dashboards.
- An easily usable tool that does not need extensive technical knowledge.
- A highly scalable platform that could be expanded on demand basis.

3.3.2 AFF Intranet upgrade

The AFF intranet serves over 2000 members presently with an average of 250 members enrolling each year. The platform experiences continual growth and with it, a myriad of challenges. Firstly, the technology used in 2013 to develop the system is outdated and subject to vulnerabilities as well as attacks. In addition, the registration process seems to be unfriendly by modern standards. Because of this, a consultant has been engaged to undertake the following tasks;

The major goal was to build a modern and interactive platform that promotes member engagement offering several features that can be utilized to communicate and inform. The following has been achieved:

- Developed a comprehensive site with these features:
 - **Dashboard:** Dynamic homepage that displays latest updates from the intranet and the website at a glance
 - **News feed:** Landing page for all latest news/blogs/article internally shared by members, the secretariat or harvested from the main site
 - **Profiles:** Dedicated section for searching and viewing member profile details
 - **Messages:** Inbox feature for managing internal messaging
 - **Events:** Landing page for the latest events internally shared by members, the secretariat or harvested from the main website
 - **Vacancies:** Landing page for all vacancies and opportunities shared by members, the secretariat or harvested from the main website
 - **Publications:** Hub for member authored publications
 - **Gallery:** Section to share and view images uploaded by members or secretariat
 - **Forum:** An interactive section for posting topics of discussion with the possibility for creating groups around areas of interest
 - **User management:** Comprehensive user registration, login and application features
- Migrated data from the existing intranet to the new version successfully
- Upgraded the coding system to reflect the latest web standards
- Ensured maximum security measures are applied to protect data and minimize breach

Next Steps

- Migrating the system to the live servers
- Gathering design feedback from secretariat
- Launching the intranet

- Access

- <http://affintranet.kensters.com/login>
- Email: dvdkimutai@gmail.com
- Password: affMember2020

3.3.3 AFF WhatsApp Web

WhatsApp is considered as the top messaging app all over the world and it is available on most of the different mobile platforms. It is supported in Java, iOS, Blackberry and Nokia. It has a record of having 750 million active users all around the world – still the highest number. In view of this, AFF has installed 'WhatsApp-for-web' on the AFF website, to enable users – such as public private partnership WhatsApp group' to share information directly to their mobile phones, PC, laptop or tablet.

In this way, it has enabled participants to continue their chats from their PCs or desktops or any other devices which have the ability to run a Chrome browser. It has also allowed members to chat with their phones and on their computers. In so doing, it provides and strengthens the ultimate user experience – albeit a on bigger screen.

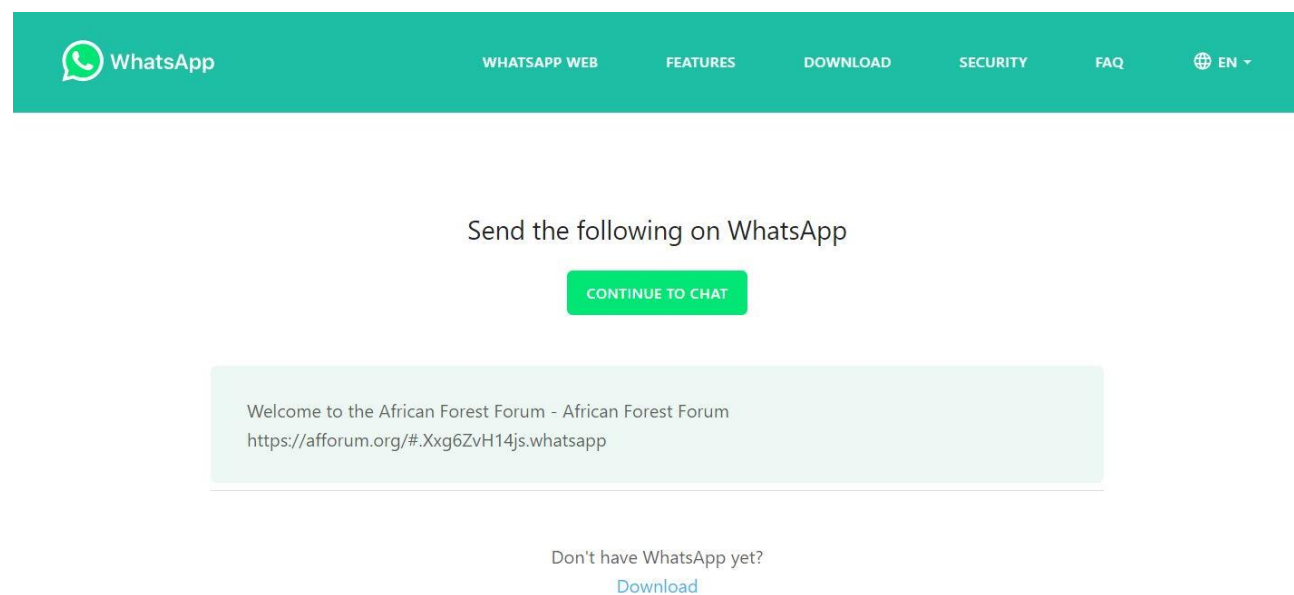


Figure 9: WhatsApp-for-web installed on the AFF website.

3.3.4 AFF Social media platforms

Social media networks like Facebook, and Twitter have supported virtual interaction among AFF members and forestry stakeholders during the COVID-19 period. Topics that dominated conversations on social media included COVID-19 and the forestry sector, Sustainable Forest Management and the interlinkages between forestry and climate change along with the XV World Forestry Congress. The most popular posts as demonstrated in figure 12 involve consultancy, job and scholarship opportunities. As a result, there has been an increase in Facebook followers from **2,776 to 3,484 followers** while Twitter is up **from 1,058 in 2019 to 1,040** in the year 2020.

3.3.5 AFF membership

AFF has a total of 2214 members, with 92% being ordinary members while the rest are associate members (mainly students). Since its establishment, AFF has progressively admitted members on an annual basis (table 6).

Table 9: Number of applications for AFF membership over the years (source: AFF Data/2019)

Year	Admission	Cumulative admissions
2007	242	242
2008	141	383
2009	64	447
2010	76	523
2011	66	589
2012	35	624
2013	33	657
2014	183	840
2015	271	1111
2016	410	1521
2017	335	1856
2018	200	2056
2019	158	2214

AFF members come from all over the world. They are drawn from academia, government ministries/departments, NGOs, the private sector, farmer organisations, among others concerned with the promotion of, support of, or research into forests, forest management and forest products, and trees outside forests. AFF uses these diverse backgrounds to work for the sustainable management and use of tree and forest resources in order to protect the environment and improve the lives of African people. AFF members interact and share experiences, insights and expertise on issues related to forestry.

AFF Members come from 83 countries worldwide; of these, 51 are African countries. Only 4-member states of the African Union, namely Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Sahrawi Republic and São Tomé and Príncipe are yet to be represented.

Membership from outside Africa, referred to as “Friends of African forestry”, is from 32 countries namely: Albania, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Denmark, Falkland Islands, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Slovakia (Slovak Republic), South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam. The region with the highest number of members is Western Africa (675), followed by Eastern Africa (502), Southern Africa (356), North Eastern Africa (343), Central Africa (213) and outside Africa (125).

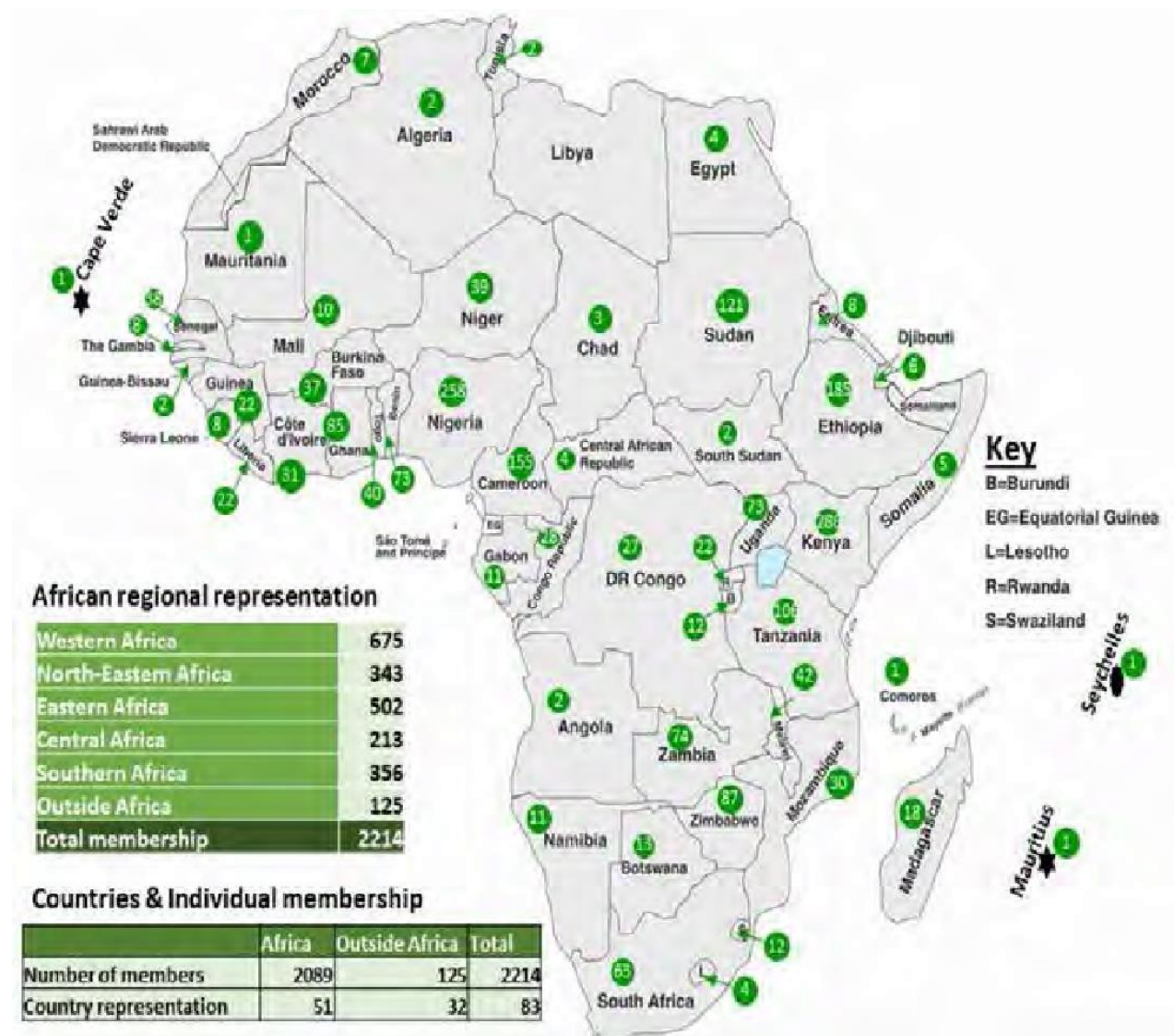


Figure 10: Geographical distribution of AFF members
 Source: AFF data (2019)

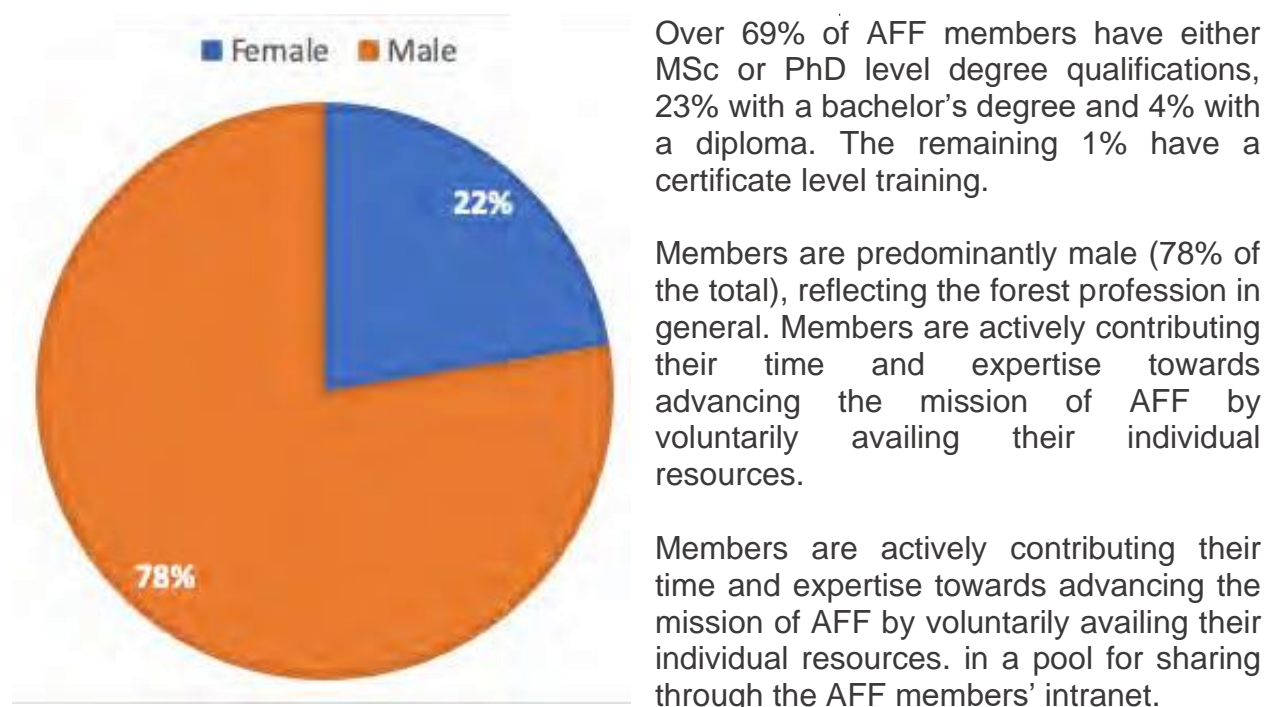


Figure 11: Gender distribution of AFF membership.

3.3.6 AFF Membership applications (2019-2020)

A total of applicants 382 applications (table 10) have been received for consideration for membership for the period 2019-2020. Western Africa has the highest number of applicants *157) while Friends of AFF (outside Africa) has the least with 5 applicants. Out of the total number of applications, 96 are female (25%), while 286 are male (75%). In addition, applicant's level of education are as follows: Master's Degree (171), Bachelor's Degree (129), PhD (55), Diploma (17), Certificate (5), Post-Doctoral (4), other (1).

Table 10: AFF applicants for AFF membership by region

Region	Applicants
Western Africa	157
Eastern Africa	99
Central Africa	49
North Eastern Africa	30
Southern Africa	42
Outside Africa	5
Total applicants	382

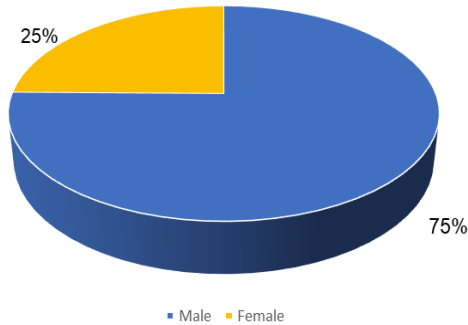


Figure 12: AFF membership applicants by gender

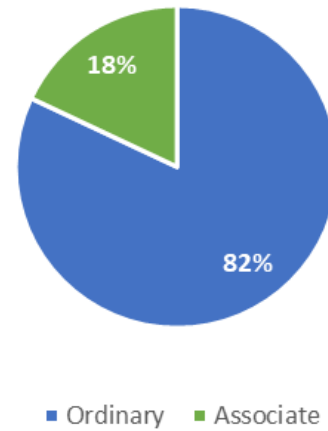


Figure 13: AFF membership applicants by category

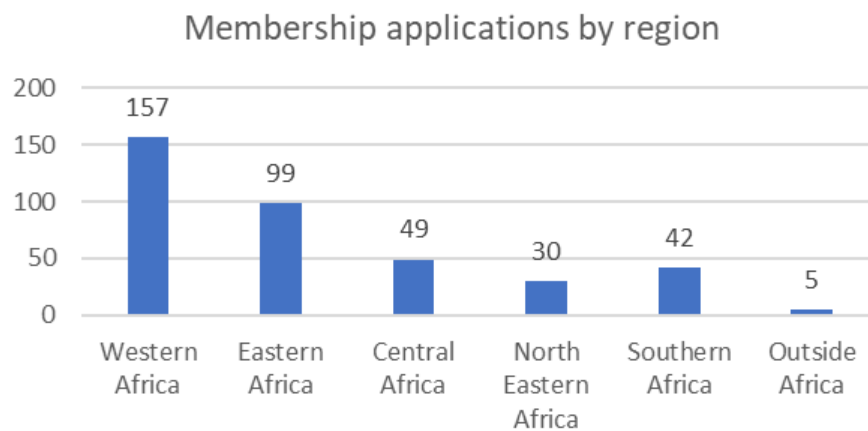


Figure 14: AFF membership applicants by region

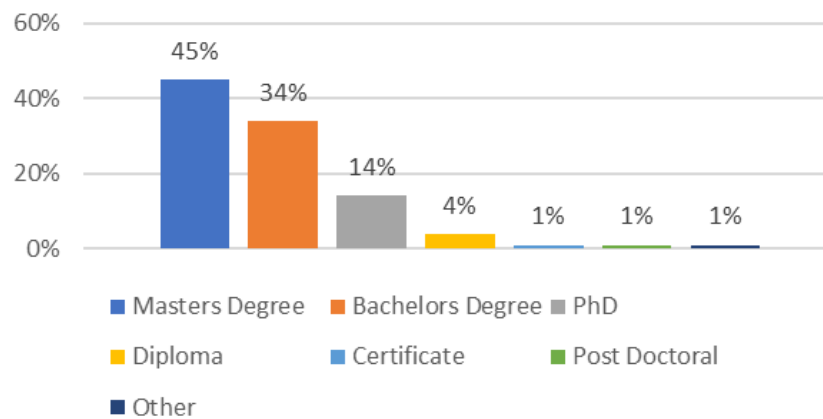


Figure 15: AFF membership applicants by level of education

3.3.6 AFF info-mail to members

An average open rate is a measure of how many email recipients open an email as compared to the total number of emails delivered within a campaign.

In 2020, AFF recorded an open rate of **32.8% out of a total of 41 info-mails** shared with its members (figure 16). According to Mailchimp (2020), 90.9% accessed their e-mails via desktop, while 9.1% used their mobile phones. From the members using their desktop computers, 49.2% were on Gmail, 34.9% Yahoo Mail, 1.5% Apple Mail, 1.5% Outlook 2016 and 1.1% Yahoo. Out of the mobile phone users, 4.6% used Android webview, 3.1% iPhone, 1.1% Chrome Mobile, 0.2% Windows Phone and 0.1% BlackBerry (Table 11).

The statistics indicate that on average, 726 members find value in the information shared by AFF via info-mail and are professionals as top devices used are computers. Countries with the highest number of members opening the AFF info-mails are: Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Cameroon (Table 12).







Figure 16: AFF info-mail average open rate

Table 11: AFF Info-mail top devices

Desktop	90.9%	Mobile	9.1%
Gmail	49.2%	Android webview	4.6%
Yahoo Mail	34.9%	iPhone	3.1%
Apple Mail	4.2%	Chrome Mobile	1.1%
Outlook 2016	1.5%	Windows Phone	0.2%
Yahoo	1.1%		0.1%

Table 12: Countries with highest number of members opening AFF info-mail

	Kenya	8.8%
	Nigeria	8.7%
	Ethiopia	5.9%
	Cameroon	4.2%

3.4 Monitor, improve and maintain knowledge management practices, tools, polices, and sources

Released in 2017 as an alternative to other platforms like Skype, Microsoft Teams has proven itself to be an effective and useful software tool that allows teams to collaborate more efficiently at work. It is for this reason that a training was conducted virtually, using the platform to help secretariat staff: Communicate more effectively: ensuring all staff are on the same page with group chat, online meetings, calling, and web conferencing. Work better together: ease of collaboration on files with built-in Office 365 apps like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and SharePoint. Customize their workspace: providing tailor made workspace to include content and capabilities for staff needs every day. Keep secure: access to enterprise-level security and compliance features you expect from Office 365; Microsoft Teams is a unified communications platform that encompasses chats, online meetings, file sharing and collaboration, and applications integration. The service integrates with the ICRAF's Office 365 subscription office productivity suite.

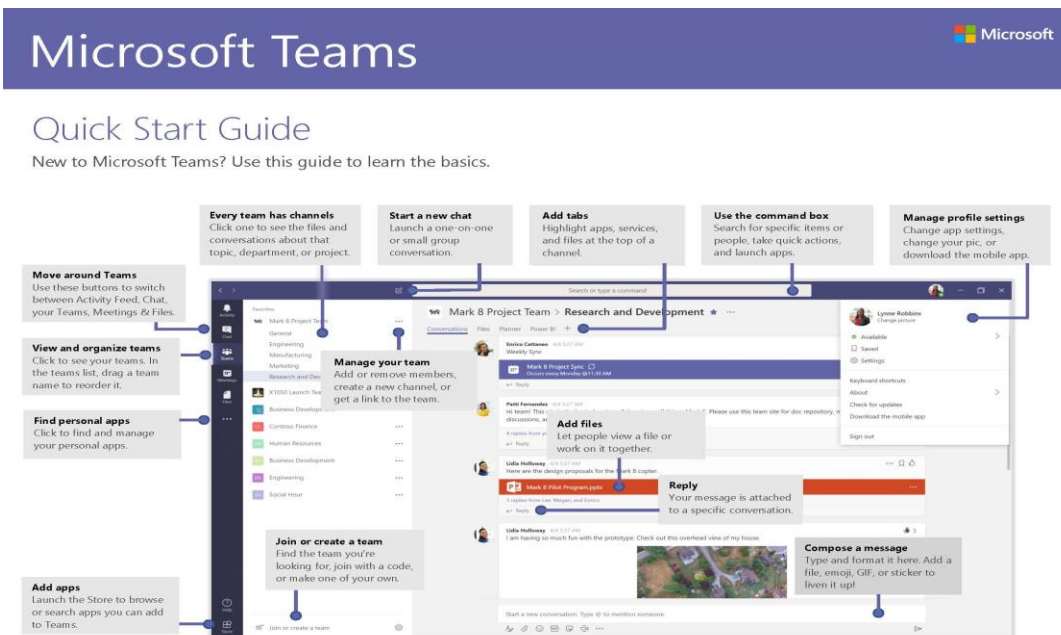


Figure 17: Overview of Microsoft Teams presentation made to AFF secretariat

Already, AFF biweekly team meetings are conducted via Microsoft teams and it is anticipated that by the end of the year 2020 the tool will be fully utilized for collaborative working. Further a training for all staff on Microsoft OneDrive was held virtually to facilitate information creation/sourcing, organizing, archiving, retrieving and sharing practices at AFF.

ANNEX 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF 2020 COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN

COMMUNICATIONS TOOL	BASELINE (2019)	TARGET (DEC 2020)	ACHIEVEMENT (JAN-DEC 2020)	SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION	FREQUENCY OF MONITORING	PERSON RESPONSIBLE (2020) ²
WEBSITE⁴						
Page views per year	1,379,672	1,500,000	2,097,910	Google Analytics	Monthly	DG
Number of visits	405,104	420,000	462,915	Google Analytics	Monthly	DG
Number of unique visitors	129,161	164,429	138,756	Google Analytics	Monthly	DG
Number of website hits	1,852,184	2,000,000	2,467,197	AFF records	Monthly	DG
PUBLICATIONS						
Number of knowledge products	201	220	214	AFF records	Semi-Annually	DG
Number of opened pages	1,379,672	1,500,000	2,564,877	Google Analytics	Semi-Annually	DG
Number of impact stories	40	10	0	Survey	Annually	PMER
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL						
Number of information packages distributed	400	0	0	AFF's own records	Per event	DG/BO
Number of info-mails circulated	50	50	48	AFF records	Per event	DG
SOCIAL MEDIA						
Number of Twitter followers	927	1000	1,058	Twitter	Monthly	DG
Number of Facebook	2,325	2,500	3,484	Facebook	Monthly	DG
MEDIA						
Number of press kits distributed	20	0	0	AFF press office	Monthly	DG
Number of journalists in media database	80	100	80	AFF press office	Monthly	DG
Number of journalists who are AFF members	60	80	60	AFF database	Annually	DG
Number of AFF media articles	31	5	0	Google Alerts	Monthly	DG
Number of audio or visual files	2	10	1	Google Alerts	Monthly	DG
Communication Partnerships	2	3	2	AFF own records	Annually	DG
AFF MEMBERSHIP						
Membership applications per year	186	200	300	AFF intranet	Monthly	DG

Persons responsible for implementation of the 2020 Communications Action Plan are: Daphine Gitonga (DG), Communications Specialist; and Barbara Owuor (BO) Senior



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



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