



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



African Forests, People and Climate Change Project (AFP-CCP)- Phase III

Project report (January 1st -December 31, 2020)

Submitted to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Project no.7F-06587.03



About AFF

Established in 2007 as a non-political, non-governmental, objective, independent and not for profit international organisation, 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 mobilises 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.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFF	African Forest Forum
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses

AUC	African Union Commission
AWAD	AFF Web Analytics Dashboard
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COMACO	Community Markets for Conservation
COMIFAC	Central African Forestry Commission
EAC	Eastern African Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFFN-UNFF	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network-United Nations Forum on Forests
HAFL	School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences
IAF	International Arrangements on Forests
ICRAF-CIFOR	World Agroforestry-Center for International Forestry Research
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry
MEAs	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGARA	Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PAMACC	Pan African Media Alliance for Climate Change
PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
RBM	Results Based Management
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TST	Technical Support Team to Raise the Profile of Forestry
UNFF 14	United Nations Forum on Forests, Session Fourteen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The AFF Secretariat appreciates the kind financial support from the Government of Switzerland through SDC to undertake various activities in this program on “African forests, people and climate change”. This demonstrates the interest of the people of Switzerland in addressing forestry related climate change issues in the world. The AFF Secretariat also acknowledges good guidance and collaboration from the Global Programme Climate Change at SDC as well as from the AFF Governing Council and its various committees that ensured effective planning, implementation and reporting on the approved activities. AFF Secretariat recognizes the various contributions from AFF members, and especially those who were assigned various tasks as experts to support implementation of the project activities as per approved work plan and budget for 2020. AFF wishes to thank all institutions and individuals who shared information that was required for the various tasks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

AFF is implementing, since November 2018, the third phase of a project entitled “**African Forests, People and Climate Change**,” guided by the following four specific objectives: (i) 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) 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) 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; and (iv) strengthen AFF’s institutional capacity in creation and sharing of relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making.

This report provides an overview of the achievements and progress made on various project activities for the period from January 1st to December 31, 2020.

These achievements are as follows:

- i) Adjusted the plan of work and budget for 2020 to align it with the lockdowns and other travel and gathering restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic to avert the spread of the virus. The adjustment mainly focused on postponing all activities that needed face to face meetings (workshops and training events) to 2021 with anticipation that the travel and gathering restrictions from different countries would be relaxed by then;
- ii) Developed terms of reference and advertised calls for recruitment of experts to undertake national studies that target the following project activities;
 - Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes;
 - Strengthening capacity of stakeholders in African forestry for developing bankable projects on enhancing resilience to climate change and on improvement of livelihoods;

- Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders for implementing REDD+ in Anglophone and Lusophone countries;
 - Resource assessment on distribution and production potential of gums and resins in selected sites of prioritized African countries;
- iii) Contracted twenty experts: one for the studies on REDD+ implementation in Anglophone and Lusophone countries; four for mapping resources on gums and resins in selected sites in Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Tanzania; five for the consultancy on “Strengthening capacity on tree-based adaptation and mitigation” and ten for the “Bankable project consultancy”.
- iv) Held virtual workshops to harmonise study approaches including methodologies, data collection tools and sampling proposed by experts to ensure replicability. The experts submitted inception reports describing the study context, the adjusted key results areas and the harmonised methodologies.
- v) Monitored the progress of the students under the AFF-HAFL Fellowship programme. All the four scholarship holders (from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda and Gabon) have successfully completed the required coursework modules (IMF), fieldwork and data collection, data analysis and thesis writing. For their MSc research thesis, they all selected topics on forest policy and management as related to climate change and livelihoods in their respective countries. The four students are back to the University since October 2020 for thesis writing and defence.
- vi) Upgraded the website through the development of an AFF Web Analytics Dashboard (AWAD) that allows users to visualise the web metrics with all statistical details; and revamped AFF intranet with a draft layout developed to provide a highly interactive platform that enhances engagement of AFF members through forums, online conferences, and Communities of Practice.
- vii) Recorded 390,453 visits to the website from 138,756 visitors and 152 countries worldwide with six African countries among the top ten countries that recorded the higher number of visitors.
- viii) Social media networks like Facebook, and Twitter have supported virtual interaction among AFF members and forestry stakeholders during the COVID-19 period, thus an increase in Facebook followers from 2,776 to 3,118 followers while Twitter is up from 921 in 2019 to 991 in the year 2020;
- ix) Reviewed a total of 46 knowledge products, including 10 technical reports, 10 manuscripts of journal articles, 10 policy briefs, 10 factsheets and 6 training compendiums; 65% of which were successfully revised by experts and are under the final stage of processing before publication in AFF platforms;

- x) Translated into French 4 corporate documents, 3 compendiums, one report and one book. The compendiums are from the list of 8 compendiums published in 2019 to facilitate their wider use in francophone countries of Africa:
- xi) During the reporting period, a total of 21,826 documents including 214 AFF knowledge products were downloaded from the website with 2,474,088 pages opened. One out of the top ten downloads on the website, is a training compendium on: “Basic science of climate change: A compendium for professional training on African forestry.” We are continuing to monitor the uptake of these knowledge products; their impact is likely to be realised much more visibly beyond the project implementation period;
- xii) Undertaken a knowledge management audit, developed an AFF Knowledge Management Strategy and a knowledge management action plan emphasizing for better quality standards and commensurate resources, accountability mechanisms, and buy-in from all stakeholders;
- xiii) Participated to different regional and international webinars, meetings and events to strengthen AFF's role in international forestry including:
 - Contribution to the Organisation of the XV World Forestry Congress 2021; AFF is represented on the Advisory Committee that assists FAO and the Government of South Korea in this;
 - participated in regional and international webinars organised through various partnership arrangements, including those with the African Union Commission, FAO, COMIFAC, the Swedish University of Agriculture, and others.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), through its Global Programme on Climate Change (GPCC) is supporting the African Forest Forum (AFF) in implementing a project entitled “**African Forests, People and Climate Change**”. The third phase of the project was launched in November 2018 for three years (SDC proposal no 7F06587-03.01, Contract no 81057703). For the implementation of the project activities, annual Plans of Work and Budget (POWB) are prepared by the AFF Secretariat, reviewed and endorsed by the Project Steering and Advisory committee (PSAC) and the Finance Committee and thereafter approved by the Executive Committee of the AFF Governing Council and the Governing Council itself for execution. Henceforth, after being reviewed and endorsed virtually by PSAC, the Plan of Work and Budget for the period January to December 2020 was approved by the Executive Committee during their 27th meeting held in November 2019.

The present report gives progress made on the implementation of the project activities for the period, from 01 January to 31 December 2020.

1.1 The project components, objectives, and outcomes

The overall goal of this phase of the SDC support to the programmatic approach of AFF is to build capacities and skills of stakeholders to address adverse effects of climate change and take up associated opportunities through better management and use of Africa's forests and tree resources in various landscapes, in ways that will enhance livelihoods, national economies, sustain biodiversity, improve the quality of the environment and contribute to the global efforts to contain climate change. The project has four objectives, seven expected outcomes and twenty-one targeted outputs that are aligned to AFF's Programmatic Areas as follows:

Programme Area No. 3: Contribution of forests and trees to environmental health
Objective 1: 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
Outcome 1.1: African forestry stakeholders have better understanding on integration of adaptation and mitigation options addressing climate change challenges and opportunities on different forests, tree resources and social systems

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) improved uptake of integrated forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in addressing climate change and climate variability among African forestry stakeholders.
- b) strengthened capacity of African forestry stakeholders in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels; and
- c) strengthened capacity among African forestry stakeholders to support implementation of REDD+.

Programme Area No. 5: Policies and governance

Programme Area No. 3: Contribution of forests and trees to environmental health

Objective 2. 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

Outcome 2.1: African forest stakeholders have better understanding and coordination, in their national forestry sector, of NDCs, REDD+, IAF and relevant SDGs

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Areas of overlap and synergy, in the national forestry sector, between relevant global and regional climate change related policies and initiatives identified; and
- b) Knowledge and skills among relevant African stakeholders developed on mainstreaming and coordinating, in their national forestry sector, relevant global and regional climate change policies and initiatives.

Outcome 2.2. African forest stakeholders have better capacity to articulate adaptation mitigation and REDD+ in their NDCs

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Gaps in the development of national forest sector contribution to current NDCs identified.
- b) National forestry sector adaptation and mitigation activities clearly defined in NDCs.
- c) Role of REDD+ clearly defined in the national forestry sector contribution to NDCs.
- d) Representation of LULUCF in NDCs improved.
- e) Increased capacity for national forestry sector reporting to national, regional, and international constituencies; and
- f) African countries' capacity to develop contributions to their second NDC in 2020 enhanced.

Programme Area No. 2: Forests and trees in economic development and poverty eradication

Objective 3. 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.

Outcome 3.1. Actors in the gums and resins value chain better engaged, especially private sector, women and the youth, for improved wellbeing.

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Strengthened understanding on the state of production and trade in gums and resins in selected countries very sensitive to climate change.
- b) Strengthened capacity of entrepreneurs in gums and resins, including women and youth, to develop bankable projects; and
- c) Strengthened policies and/or plans that promote the production, value addition and trade in gums and resins in selected countries.

Programme Area No. 6: Capacity building and skills development; and

Programme Area No. 7: Information management and impact assessment

Objective 4: To strengthen AFF's institutional capacity in developing and sharing relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making

Outcome 4.1. Improved access to quality knowledge products and timely sharing of information with relevant stakeholders in a user-friendly manner

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Functional and effective systems for disseminating information enhanced.
- b) Knowledge products in forestry, climate change and other emerging issues produced and shared in a timely manner to all relevant stakeholders; and
- c) National platforms and networks established and/or strengthened to increase sharing of information to all stakeholders in forestry.

Outcome 4.2: Enhanced operationalisation of knowledge management services and membership engagement

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Strengthened AFF knowledge management strategy to more effectively engage AFF members and relevant stakeholders in forestry; and
- b) strengthened capacity of AFF staff in project management and provision of services.

Outcome 4.3: Strengthened M&E system for improved efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of AFF activities that create impact at all levels

The corresponding outputs are:

- a) Understanding and use of monitoring and evaluation tools by AFF members enhanced; and
- b) direct links with national governments strengthened.

This report provides key highlights on the progress made on implementing various activities from January 1st to December 31st , 2020 with respect to each of the specified outputs, amidst COVID-19 pandemic, as well as exploiting synergies with Sida funded project on “*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*”.

1.2 The project approach

The areas of focus outlined above aimed at improving the understanding of the relationship between climate change, forests and trees, in addition to acquisition of capacities and skills to manage climate change issues. These capacities and skills are crucial in exploiting the full potential of African forests and trees to contain and take advantage of climate change effects in the different ecosystems in ways that enhance livelihoods, sustain biodiversity and improve the quality of the environment. This will be achieved by strengthening 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 on biophysical and social systems in different landscapes (Objective 1), enhancing 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 (Objective 2), promoting 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 (Objective 3), and strengthening AFF’s institutional capacity in developing and sharing of relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making (Objective 4).

AFF uses a variety of strategies to achieve the outlined objectives including undertaking independent and objective analysis of related issues, promoting capacity building and advocacy, and offer advice on all relevant policy and technical issues in forests and climate change with the purpose to better understand how forests and trees and the people who depend on them in the various African landscapes, respond to climate change and variability. Throughout the project’s activities, AFF focus on strengthening the basis for policy and advocacy, capacity building and skills development; and learning, knowledge

generation and information management. The AFF main target groups for this project are national, regional and international policy- and decision makers, the research and education community, NGOs and interested individuals, farmers and rural communities, the private sectors; and with emphasis on marginalised groups like women and youth. AFF addresses gender as a cross cutting issue to its work and has made it a practice to mainstream gender into its activities and related analyses. In this regard, AFF has over the years built its capacity to mainstream gender into its work.

1.3 Synergies between the SDC and Sida supported projects

AFF has made a deliberate effort to create synergies between the SDC supported project and another project supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) entitled “*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*”. Both projects are running concurrently, and the synergies are aimed to achieve efficient coverage of the AFF programmatic areas as well as leveraging expertise and resources required for addressing themes/issues that have been prioritized by each of them, and for maximum impact.

For the 2020 POWB for both projects, some activities were identified to be implemented in coordinated manner with the purpose to strengthen implementation whilst promoting complementarity in securing the delivery of respective project outputs. These include:

- **For the objective 1 of the SDC support** on ‘strengthening 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’, both projects aim to improve the resilience of social and biophysical systems to the impacts of climate change. For the 2020 POWB, SDC supported activities focused on operationalizing the framework for integration of forest and tree based mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate, continuing support for improving African capacity in international forestry and climate change; facilitating capacity development through development of contextualized training compendiums on climate forest based climate change mitigation and adaptation; supporting resource mobilization for the implementation of REDD+. On the other hand, Sida support, in its Project Component 2 on ‘climate change and forest ecosystems’, is catalyzing research on the relationship between climate change and forests, and people, through eighteen postgraduate fellowships in partnership with fifteen universities in Africa. Further, good synergy was established for the implementation of the Activity 1.1.1.3 and 1.1.3.2 of the SDC support on ‘building stakeholders’ capacities for the development of bankable projects addressing climate change resilience’ (i.e., operationalization of the framework for integration of mitigation and adaptation and REDD+) and the Activities 2.2.2.1. and 2.2.2.3. of the Sida supported project activities on ‘building capacity and skills of the selected partners for resource mobilization for projects that address resilience to adverse effects of climate change

on forests, trees outside forests and people who depend on these resources'. The SDC support is being used to facilitate ten experts from five African countries to undertake training needs assessment and develop training modules for capacity building on development of bankable projects, while the Sida support will, once the training modules are ready, facilitate, jointly with SDC support, the training of trainers for development of projects that could mobilize global financial resources targeting sources such as GCF, GEF, GFFFN-UNFF. Selected experts are required to develop at least two projects that address climate change resilience, therefore achieving the outputs for both projects.

For the Objective 2 on 'forest governance', both Sida (through Project Component 4) and SDC support increasing focus on capacity building of African countries for mainstreaming MEAs in their national policies, plans and activities. During the reporting period the SDC support focused on assessing capacities of African forestry stakeholders for understanding and coordination of NDCs, REDD+, IAF and relevant SDGs in their national forestry sector, as well as articulating adaptation mitigation and REDD+ in their NDCs. Once these countries' experiences, best practices and capacity gaps are identified and documented, the Sida support, jointly with the SDC support, will facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity development, and support selected countries for national forestry sector reporting to national, regional, and international constituencies.

For the objective 3 on 'entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry', the Sida grant through its Project Component 1 on 'sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity', is supporting analyses that will identify and promote alternative livelihood options that are compatible with containing forest cover loss. Therefore, both projects are contributing to enhanced livelihoods, employment, national incomes, gender empowerment; and essentially contributing to enhanced peoples' wellbeing through improved management of forests, trees and ecosystems, including NTFPs.

For objective 4 on 'strengthening AFF's institutional capacity', both projects shared responsibilities for improved access to quality knowledge products and timely sharing of information with relevant stakeholders in a user-friendly manner. This eventually enhanced operational knowledge management services and membership engagement. Further, the projects strengthened M&E system for improved efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of AFF activities that create impact at all levels. These also include aspects related to resources management and overall governance of AFF as an institution.

1.4 The Covid-19 Context

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and restriction from March 2020, the AFF Secretariat prepared a business continuity plan for each project that provided for the effective implementation of the POWB, taking into account the health safety measures including partial and/or total lockdowns, restriction on in-country and international travels, and suspension of face-to-face gatherings. The adjusted POWB prioritized the activities that could proceed through desktop analysis and virtual platforms to be facilitated during the first half of 2020, while those needing field data collection and travels and face-to-face meetings were postponed to the second half of the year with anticipation that the travel and gathering restrictions in different countries would be relaxed. The adjusted plan of work is attached to this report (Annex 1).

In the second half of the year many countries in Africa lifted lockdowns thus permitting travel within countries, small gatherings and limited cross-border movements. Consequently, those activities that required field data collection, travel and face-to-face meetings at individual country level were facilitated. Equally, for activities that were planned to be implemented at regional level were restructured to be undertaken at national level in order to facilitate their implementation within the scheduled period. Large gatherings initially planned for 2020, including international workshops and training sessions, have been deferred to 2021 and will be factored into the 2021 Plan of Work and Budget.

With this approach, the Secretariat was able to make progress on the implementation of the 2020 POWB amidst the COVID-19 pandemic work environment. Under the guidance of the ICRAF-CIFOR Task Force on COVID 19, the Secretariat continues to monitor the evolving COVID 19 conditions in African countries and to gauge the evolving work environment that would be safe and secure for AFF staff, its contracted experts and other project implementing partners.

This report focuses on key highlights on progress realized in the implementation of the adjusted POWB in each of the project outcome intervention areas as planned in the 2020 POWB.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

2.1. Objective 1. 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

The objective one of the project is expected to achieve one outcome (Outcome 1.1) on ***African forestry stakeholders have better understanding on integration and adaptation and mitigation options addressing climate change challenges and opportunities on different forests, tree resources and social systems.***

The following subsections provide the progress made towards realisation of the three outputs related to this outcome.

2.1.1. Progress on improving uptake of integrated forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in addressing climate change and climate variability among African forestry stakeholders.

For 2020, the only activity planned under this output (1.1.1.2) was to monitor progress on the operationalisation of the framework for integrating adaptation and mitigation options in response to climate change including mapping out selected degraded forests and tree resources as well as social systems.

Under this activity, two main tasks were designed:

- i) Field appraisal of activities on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes and forest types;
- ii) Strengthening capacity of stakeholders in forestry for the development of bankable projects that will facilitate the implementation of the framework.

The progress made in implementing these two tasks are presented in the following section. As part of the activities undertaken during the year 2020, was the finalisation of the draft knowledge products developed by experts in 2019 and in line with this objective.

a) Development, advertisement of terms of reference and recruitment of experts

- (i) Developed terms of reference, advertised, and recruited five (5) national experts, one each from Zambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo to undertake, in line with the framework developed and validated in 2019, field appraisal of activities on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes and forest types (rain forest, mountains, mangroves, woodland and savanna, and parklands of the Sahel). This field appraisal is expected to generate knowledge that could guide stakeholders in African forestry to successfully implement activities that integrate mitigation and adaptation options using the developed framework for effective reporting in their NDCs and other national plans and programmes.

- (ii) Developed term of reference, advertised and recruited ten (10) national experts, two each for Zambia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone to strengthen capacity of stakeholders in forestry for the development of bankable projects that could enhance resilience to climate change and improve livelihoods of forest and trees' dependents communities. This assignment will specifically focus on imparting knowledge and skills to trainers of trainers (ToTs) in supporting their countries for mobilizing funds and other resources for (a) implementing the framework on the integration and uptake of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation (M&A) options in response to climate change (Activity 1.1.12.), but also on (b) enhancing REDD+ implementation (Activity 1.1.3.2); and (c) strengthening of gums, resins and other NTFPs value chains of relevance for women and youth groups (Act. 3.1.2.1). The training in selected countries is expected to lead to the development of at least two national bankable projects that could be submitted to relevant donors.

- (iii) The contractual processes for all selected experts have been concluded and all of them have received their fully signed contracts clarifying the specific tasks to be undertaken and associated deliverables and fees.

b) Virtual workshops to harmonise the methodologies for the consultancies

Held four virtual workshops with selected national experts to harmonise the methodologies to be used for the two assignments. The workshops were organised on the 19th and 23rd October for the assignment on field appraisal of activities on integration of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes and forest types; and on 22nd and 29th October for the consultancy on strengthening capacity of stakeholder for the development of bankable projects. The organisation of the virtual workshops in two sessions for each consultancy allowed the experts during the first session to share with others their proposed methodology, provide appropriate adjustments on key results areas and corresponding specific activities, then agree on a schedule to further brainstorm and agree on approaches

for sampling, information/data collection in each country targeted for the study before the next session. The second session of the workshop aimed to present the harmonised methodology as well as the outlines of the deliverables and timeline for their submission.

For the consultancy on *Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes*, the team of selected experts agreed that they shall:

- i. review/contextualize the findings of Key Result Areas in line with criteria and measures of the developed framework with a view of validating their applicability in different forest types and selected landscapes in the respective countries;
- ii. validate the criteria and measures developed in the framework for integrating forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options;
- iii. develop indicators for assessing effective reporting using the developed framework in different forest types and landscapes in the respective countries.
- iv. Identify mechanisms for domesticating the framework in the respective countries.

On the other hand, the team of experts for the consultancy on “*Strengthening capacity of stakeholders in African forestry for developing bankable projects on enhancing resilience to climate change and improvement of livelihoods*” agreed to address the following key result areas:

- i. Result area 1: Stakeholder analysis and training needs assessment, compiling and updating list of potential trainees;
- ii. Result area 2: List and analysis of potential donors for the targeted areas;
- iii. Result area 3: Training manual on resource mobilization; Curriculum design and materials;
- iv. Result area 4: Training programme and approach;
- v. Result area 5: Bankable project concept for resource mobilization;
- vi. Result area 6: Resource mobilization action plan/strategy.

For each of the key result areas, a harmonised and detailed methodology was presented and approved by all the experts involved.

The experts for each consultancy also agreed on deliverables on key results areas taking in account the outputs targeted for the assignment and set a chronological timeline for their submission. They also discussed the support to be provided by the AFF Secretariat team as they undertake their various tasks/responsibilities, including support in organizing workshops and data collection. Two WhatsApp groups were created, one for each team of consultants to serve as working and exchange platforms among experts and the AFF Secretariat during the implementation of the assignment.

c) Inception reports for the consultancies

After the virtual meetings for harmonising the methodologies for both consultancies, each expert was required to submit an inception workshop as the first deliverable for the assigned tasks.

Hence five inception reports, one each for Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia were prepared and submitted by the experts hired for the consultancy on *Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders on the implementation of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in different landscapes*. These reports elaborate on the status of the forest sector in selected countries and its contribution for enhancing resilience to climate change and improving livelihoods of dependent communities. The reports also analyse the terms of reference for the assignment, highlighting the main tasks and the detailed and harmonised methodological approaches and tools to collect data on key result areas; the selected forest types for the assignment in the targeted country as well as the key stakeholder categories to engage, the detailed outline for each deliverables and associated workplans. The site selected for field appraisal and the associated itinerary and budget were also provided. All these reports were reviewed by the AFF Secretariat staff and found acceptable as the first deliverables.

With respect to the consultancy on “*Strengthening capacity of stakeholders in African forestry for developing bankable projects on enhancing resilience to climate change and improvement of livelihoods*”, eight out of the ten expected inception reports were prepared by experts from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. These reports provide an overview of the REDD+ and forest-based value chains initiatives in selected countries, focusing on constraints and opportunities to access reliable funding resources for their effective implementation. They also elaborate on the background of the consultancy and the interpretation of the objectives and terms of references, focusing on key results areas as adjusted and agreed during the virtual workshops. They provide a description of the harmonised approaches, the steps and tools needed for addressing each of the key result areas including stakeholders’ analysis and assessment of training needs, profiling of the key donors and funding sources supporting REDD+, forest and tree based adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change as well as NTFPs and other forest products value chains. The outline of the training modules as well as the detailed programme of the training were also provided in the reports.

All these reports are under review at the Secretariat while the national experts are currently finalizing their fieldwork plans in readiness for the data collection exercise.

d) Review and finalisation of knowledge products developed by experts in 2019

The following knowledge products were reviewed and finalised for wider sharing among stakeholders in African forestry:

- (i) Two technical reports, one each for Anglophone and Francophone Africa on “*Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders to integrate and uptake adaptation and mitigation options in response to climate change*” to be published under AFF Working Papers Series.

- (ii) Two manuscripts, for publication in a journal of choice by experts in partnership with scientific staff at Secretariat, namely:
 - What are the drivers of successful implementation of forest and farm-based adaptation and mitigation activities, projects and or programmes in Anglophone and Lusophone countries of Africa?
 - Enhancing the uptake of integrated mitigation and adaptation approaches in forest and on farm tree-based interventions: case of Francophone African countries.

- (iii) Two policy briefs entitled:
 - Integrated mitigation and adaptation options in African forestry: enhancing their uptake in climate change and forestry policies and programs; and
 - Mitigation and adaptation to climate change using forest and farm tree-based interventions.

- (iv) Two fact sheets focusing on:
 - Forest and on farm tree-based mitigation and adaptation interventions in Africa: determinants, successes and enabling conditions; and
 - Where to with forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in Africa?

These deliverables are now ready for additional quality checks before publication for wider sharing in different AFF platforms.

2.1.2. Progress made on strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels

For the reporting period, progress made focused on the implementation of the AFF-HAFL Fellowship and exchange program with Berne University of Applied Sciences in Zollikofen, Switzerland (Activity 1.1.2.4) on the one hand and on the other hand on reviewing the training compendiums developed by experts in 2019.

The workshops initially planned for the validation of the training compendium developed by experts in 2019 and for short course trainings using the validated compendiums in Anglophone and francophone Africa could not be implemented due to restriction on international travels and gatherings imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic environment.

The following has been achieved:

a) On AFF-HALF fellows

The four (4) AFF-HALF fellows from Gabon, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe who joined Bern University in early 2019 have successfully completed the required coursework modules of the programme on *Major International Management of Forest Industries (IMF)*. The study programme is made of 13 coursework elements covering different aspects such as climate change, natural resources and international forestry management, policies and institutions, for a total of 62 ECTs. Some of the courses include Spatial Data Visualization and Analysis, Applied Research in Natural and Social Sciences, Policies and Institutions as Drivers for Development and Innovation, Integrated Natural Resources Management and Climate Change, current Topics in Agricultural and Forest Research, International Forestry, and International Management in Forestry. By successfully completing these courses, the grantees have acquired the needed skills that were complemented by the research fieldwork in their respective countries. They are therefore on the good track to become future champions in IMF.

For their fieldwork, the students selected their research topics, developed a research proposal under the guidance of a supervisor from HALF and a co-supervisor from their home country university. All the proposals were critically reviewed by a committee assigned by HALF before approvals for fieldwork in their respective countries. Table 1 below presents, for each grantee, the topic and the supervisors.

Table 1: MSc research topics for AFF-HALF fellowship programme 2019 – 2021.

Student	Title of MSc thesis	Supervisor(s) HAFL	Co-Supervisor
Melody Makumborenga	Effects of fuelwood extraction on savanna woodland in Chiota Communal Land, Zimbabwe	Prof. Jürgen Blaser, Oliver Gardi	Prof. Clemence Zimudzi (University of Zimbabwe)
Bhoke Masisi	Bamboo: A resilient strategy to climate change mitigation and adaptation in Tanzania	Prof. Jürgen Blaser, Dr. Astrid Zabel	Dr. Suzana Augustino (Sokoine University of Agriculture)

Student	Title of MSc thesis	Supervisor(s) HAFL	Co-Supervisor
Olivier Nkurunziza	Lessons learnt from pilot forest project (1968) and its implications for forest landscape restoration in Rwanda	Prof. Jürgen Blaser, Dr. Sajad Bukobero, Oliver Gardi	Prof. Jean Nduwamungu (University of Rwanda)
Isaac Youb	Comparison of two technologies for wildlife monitoring (bioacoustics and camera traps) in Precious Woods CEB in Gabon	Prof. Jürgen Blaser	Dr. Zuzana Burivalova (University of Wisconsin)

In spite of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak which had delayed fieldwork due to the suspension/restriction of travels between and within countries and had also prevented the supervisors from Berne University to supervise the the field assignments, the students progressed well with field work and collected relevant data for their MSc research theses. They resumed to the University in October 2020, where they undertook data analysis and wrote their theses in preparation for the defence scheduled for January 2021.

b) Review of training compendiums developed in 2019

Reviewed six (6) teaching and training compendiums, developed in a pedagogical manner, to guide capacity building on climate change mitigation among African forestry stakeholders (Table 2). The compendiums are now ready for external validation before sharing widely with stakeholders.

Table 2: Review status of training compendiums on the 31st December 2020

	Title of the compendium	Status
1.	Training compendium on forests and climate change mitigation for short courses in African forestry	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert and revised version available for external review and validation
2.	Training compendium on forests and climate change adaptation for professional training in	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert, the revised version from the expert is expected by the end of January 2021

	Title of the compendium	Status
	African forestry	for external review and validation
3.	Training compendium on forests and climate change adaptation for technical training in African forestry	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert, the revised version from the expert is expected by the end of January 2021 for external review and validation
4.	Training compendium on forests and climate change adaptation for short courses training in African forestry	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert, the revised version from the expert is expected by the end of January 2021 for external review and validation
5.	Training compendium on forests and climate change mitigation for professional training in African forestry	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert, the revised version from the expert is expected by the end of January 2021 for external review and validation
6.	Training compendium on forests and climate change mitigation for technical training in African forestry	Reviewed and feedback sent to expert, the revised version from the expert is expected by the end of January 2021 for external review and validation

c) Support African stakeholders in global discourses relevant to climate change and forestry

In collaboration with the African Union Commission and in synergy with Sida supported project, a preparatory meeting for African delegates attending the UNFF 15 meeting was planned to be held in Nairobi Kenya in April 2020. However, the meeting was cancelled after all logistic arrangement were made due to COVID 19 pandemic outbreak that emerged in early March 2020.

Meanwhile, AFF secretariat continued to engage African forestry delegates, members of the Governing Council and other African forestry stakeholders to participate and contribute to regional and international webinars and consultations relevant to forestry and climate change including the 2020 session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), UNFF webinars, meetings and consultations, FAO COVID 19 forestry week /COFO 25 webinar, among others.

2.1.3. Progress on strengthening capacity among African forestry stakeholders to enhance implementation of REDD+

For the reporting period, two main project activities were implemented under this output, with the aim of assessing and building capacity of African forestry stakeholders to move forward on the implementation of REDD+.

(a) Progress on assessing the level of implementation of REDD+ activities in Sub-Saharan Africa

During the reporting period, the following have been accomplished with regards to this activity:

- (a) Developed terms of reference and advertised the call for the recruitment of an expert to undertake the study in Anglophone and Lusophone Africa.
- (b) Competitively selected and contracted one expert from more than fifteen applicants.
- (c) Organised virtual workshop that facilitated:
 - (i) harmonisation of the study methodology developed by the expert with a previous one that was used to guide undertaking of a similar study in Francophone Africa; and
 - (ii) selection of countries for field visit to collect data, and this would strongly depend on the evolving COVID19 safety conditions. The countries selected by the expert are Gambia, Ghana, Namibia, Angola, Tanzania and Uganda.
- (d) Reviewed and provided feedback on the inception and the literature review reports developed by the expert. However due to the COVID-19 restrictions in the respective countries, the expert did not manage to start fieldwork as planned. As a result, an agreement was reached to recruit national experts in the study countries to assist with the field exercises. Terms of reference for the recruitment of the national experts were developed and some resources persons have been identified in selected countries to undertake the study. Communications have been initiated with the identified national experts for contractual processes to facilitate undertaking of the identified tasks.
- (e) Reviewed and provided feedback on the technical report, manuscript, factsheet, and policy brief submitted by the expert who has completed a similar study in Francophone Africa. The expert had so far submitted the revised version of technical report; however, he is still working on other deliverables such as manuscript of journal paper, policy brief and factsheet.

(b) Progress on building capacity of African forestry stakeholders to move forward on the implementation of REDD+

This project activity is to be undertaken by facilitating the implementation of ToTs on mobilizing funds and other resources through the development of REDD+ bankable projects in five selected countries namely Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

For more efficient use of resources and in order to expand the scope and impact of our projects, this activity was combined with the Activity 1.1.1.2 on mobilising resources for the operationalisation of the framework on integration of forest and tree based mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate change for which the progress achieved is reported in the section 2.1.1 above. This is done also in synergy with Sida supported project.

Ten (10) experts have been recruited to build stakeholders' capacity to develop bankable projects. The SDC support is focusing on the stakeholder's analysis and preparation of training modules while the Sida support will facilitate the organisation of training of trainers' workshops for various stakeholders including those involved in the implementation of REDD+ projects. The contracted experts are expected to develop, in partnership with relevant national stakeholders, about ten concept notes, with 50% of them focusing on REDD+ , that could be submitted to funding sources and initiatives such as GEF, GCF, etc.

2.2 Objective 2. 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

This project objective is expected to generate two main outcomes to be achieved through eight outputs. Activities that contribute to these outputs were combined in regional studies undertaken in 2019.

For the reporting period, the focus of activities to be undertaken were for the realisation of the outcome 2 as stated below.

2.2.1. Outcome 2.2: African forest stakeholders have better understanding and coordination, in their national forestry sector, of NDCs, REDD+, IAF and relevant SDGs

Activities to be undertaken in realising this outcome are highlighted as follows:

- a) Facilitate promotion of areas of synergy from global and regional climate change issues in national forest policies, plans and programmes in the context of NDCs and SDGs (Activity 2.1.1.4). This was to be implemented through an information sharing workshop to disseminate and validate key findings from the studies undertaken in 2019;
- b) Organise policy dialogues to support selected African countries in the development of forestry sector plans and strategies in the context of NDCs and SDGs;

- c) Review draft technical reports, manuscripts, policy briefs and factsheets developed by the experts for studies in undertaken 2019.

The following were achieved:

- (a) Developed concept note for a workshop that was scheduled to be held in Douala Cameroon on 1-5 June 2020 to disseminate information generated from all the studies implemented in 2019. However, due to emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop was postponed to 2021 with expectation that there will be an improvement in the health and safety situations.
- (b) Developed terms of references for the call for national experts to facilitate policy dialogue in Zambia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Senegal. However, the call was not advertised because the implementation of this activity was to be based on the outcome and key recommendations from the knowledge sharing workshop postponed to 2021, Covid 19 pandemic permitting.
- (c) Reviewed draft technical report, manuscript, policy brief and factsheet on the study on “Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives in eastern and southern Africa”. The expert has submitted the revised and improved versions of the deliverables in readiness for final processing to external review before publishing them under AFF Working Paper Series, journal articles and share them widely to forestry stakeholders.
- (d) Reviewed technical report, two manuscripts journal papers, one policy brief and one factsheet developed by expert for the study on “Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives in Central and West Africa”. The expert is still incorporating the comments raised by the reviewers and is expected to submit the revised versions by the end of January for further processing and publishing in various AFF platforms.

2.3 Objective 3. 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

The achievement of the third objective of the project is expected to yield one outcome through four main outputs as presented below.

2.3.1. Outcome 3.1: Actors in the gums and resins value chain better engaged, especially, private sector, women and the youth, for improved wellbeing.

In the reporting period project activities to be implemented to realise this outcome are presented below.

- (a) Undertake resources assessment for gums and resins in selected sites in the four targeted countries, namely, Kenya, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Niger as a follow up study toward assessing the production potential for gums and resins species at national and regional level (Activity. 3.1.1.2);

Under this activity, progress achieved are summarized as follows:

- Developed terms of reference and advertised the call for the recruitment of national experts, one each for Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger and Tanzania, to undertake resources assessment and production potential for gums and resins in selected sites in targeted countries;
- Selected and contracted one expert per country to undertake the assignment;
- Four inception reports prepared by the 4 national experts describing for each country the site selected for the assignment and analyzing the terms of references and detailing the methodology and the workplan agreed for the implementation of the assignment. All experts agreed for an approach that combines remote sensing using satellite images and ground-truthing through field inventories.
- The Secretariat has facilitated field trips for the experts for Niger, Kenya and Tanzania. The experts are now working on their reports which are expected to be completed by the end of January 2021. The study is expected to generate information on the land cover change in the study area for the last 30 years as well as the main drivers, the potentials in gums and resins species and their evolution over time. Such results will inform management decision for the development of a sustainable value chain in the sector.

- (b) Sharing information among African gums and resins stakeholders on the status of production and trade in gums and resins in Africa. This activity was to be undertaken through a regional workshop involving main actors and policy makers in gums and resins producing countries with the aim to share findings from the studies and identify and promote best practices in its value chains development in Africa. The concept note for the workshop was elaborated. However, the organization process was halted, and the workshop postponed in 2021, COVID 19 pandemic permitting.

- (c) Training selected actors, mainly women and youth, on how to develop and implement bankable projects, including on growth and performance assessment as well as on establishment and operationalization of organized bodies and entities on business in gums and resins. This activity is being implemented in combination with the Activities 1.1.1.2 and 1.1.3.2 on resources mobilization and for which ten experts have been hired in 5 selected countries as reported in the sections 2.1.1. and 2.1.3. above.

(d) Reviewing of draft technical reports, manuscripts, policy briefs and factsheets generated from the studies undertaken in 2019 on *strengthening capacity for production and trade of gums and resins in selected countries in Africa*. The following have been achieved:

Reviewed 20 draft knowledge products, 16 on national studies and 4 on regional synthesis. These include 5 technical reports, 5 manuscripts of journal articles, 5 policy briefs and 5 factsheets. The experts have addressed many of the comments and submitted revised versions of the knowledge products for further processing and wide sharing with relevant stakeholder during information sharing workshop as well as in other AFF platforms. However, for Kenya and Tanzania, some gaps identified in the report required the experts to collect more data in the field, specifically on gums and resins trade in order to improve the quality and the scientific standard of the knowledge products. These experts have been facilitated to participate to the field trip on gums and resins resources assessment with the aim of collecting more data and finalize their deliverables.

2.4 Objective 4. To strengthen AFF's institutional capacity in developing and sharing relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making

The realization of this objective is expected to generate 3 outcomes namely: I) Outcome 4.1: improved access to quality knowledge products and timely sharing of information with relevant stakeholders in a user-friendly manner; ii) Outcome 4.2: Enhanced operationalization of knowledge management services and membership engagement and iii) Outcome 4.3: Strengthened M&E system for improved efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of AFF activities that create impact at all levels.

The following subsections provide key highlights on the progress achieved during the reporting period in realising each of the above outcomes.

A. Highlights on achievements of Outcome 4.1: improved access to quality knowledge products and timely sharing of information with relevant stakeholders in a user-friendly manner

The project outputs to be achieved in realising this outcome are: a) enhanced functional and effective systems for information dissemination; b) produced and shared knowledge products in forestry, climate change and other emerging issues in timely manner to all relevant stakeholders; c) established/strengthened national platforms and networks to increase sharing of information to all stakeholders in forestry

During the reporting period, the progress achieved are presented in the below section.

2.4.1. Highlights on “progress on enhancing functional and effective systems for information dissemination.”

- a) **Developed data collection tools to source feedback on use and impacts of AFF knowledge products.** For the reporting period, the AFF Secretariat continued to improve and update the tools developed since 2015 to establish the extent of uptake and use. A survey initiated by the AFF assessed relevance, quality, uptake and use of AFF knowledge products by individuals, institutions and countries, the impacts from the use of these products and identifies areas that stakeholders in forestry lack enough knowledge and therefore the need to increase focus on them. During the reporting period, a draft questionnaire was developed for a second survey and shared with AFF secretariat staff for inputs and comments. A follow up is being made and once the feedback is received, the online questionnaire will be launched and sent to members of AFF for their responses and opinions in early 2021.
- b) **Strengthened knowledge sharing platforms:** This activity was implemented through upgrading the AFF website and intranet, installation of an AFF WhatsApp web and expanding the AFF social media platforms.
- Upgraded AFF website and intranet. During this reporting period, AFF concluded, in collaboration with the webmaster, the development of the Web Analytics Dashboard (AWAD) that allows users to visualise the web metrics with all statistical details. The AWAD system provides different chart types and maps in one dashboard and serves as a powerful data visualisation combination. The system will facilitate the monitoring of the performance of the AFF’s online presence which was previously done by retrieval of web metrics manually, collating from multiple analytics tools. The new AFF AWAD system provides many advantages among which are the follows:
- 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.

As for the upgrading of the AFF intranet, a consultant was engaged during the reporting period to build a modern and interactive platform that promotes member engagement offering several features that can be utilized to communicate and inform. This was done to minimize the vulnerability and the risks of attacks in this dynamic platform that serves over 2000 members presently with an average of 250 members enrolling each year. With the

support of the consultant, AFF was able to develop a comprehensive site with the following features: Dashboard, News feeds, Profile, Events, Vacancies, Messages, Gallery, Publications, Forum, User Management. Data were also successfully migrated from the previous one to the new system and coding was upgraded to reflect the latest web standard, with maximum security measures to secure data and minimize breach. Before launching the upgraded intranet, AFF intends to migrate the system to the live servers, gather design feedback from Secretariat staff for further improvement.

- AFF WhatsApp Web: With a record of more than 750 million active users all around the world, WhatsApp is considered as the top messaging app available on most of the different mobile platforms. In view of this, AFF has installed 'WhatsApp-for-web' on its website, to enable users – such as 'public private partnership WhatsApp group' to share information directly to their mobile phones, PC, laptop or tablet. It has enabled participants to continue their chats from any device which has the ability to run a Chrome browser therefore, providing and strengthening the ultimate user experience.
- AFF social media platforms: During the reporting period, social media networks like Facebook, and Twitter have been very powerful communication tools in supporting virtual interaction among AFF members and forestry stakeholders during the COVID-19 period. As a result, there has been an increase in Facebook followers **from 2,776 to 3,378 followers** while Twitter is up **from 921 in 2019 to 1,040 in the year 2020**. Among topics that dominated conversations on social media was the interlinkages between forestry and climate change along with the XV World Forestry Congress.
- Use of AFF website: During the reporting period, the website recorded:
 - 390,453 visits from 138,756 visitors from 152 countries;
 - A total of **1,748,818 pages** viewed;
 - **2,074,676 hits** representing the number of files requests made in the AFF website by all visitors.
 - A total of 2,474,088 pages opened and 21,826 documents including 214 AFF knowledge products were downloaded from the website by all visitors to the web site.
 - 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.
 - Geographical data indicates that six out of the top 10 countries with the highest traffic on the site 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. An impressive visit was observed 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.

2.4.2. Highlights on progress in producing and sharing of knowledge products in forestry, climate change and other emerging issues in timely manner to all relevant stakeholders

This output was to be achieved through two main activities namely: i) Develop and share AFF knowledge products covering different areas in forestry and climate change, and ii) Review and report on uptake of AFF knowledge products among different African forestry stakeholders.

For the reporting period, progress accomplished on the implementation of these activities are presented as follows:

a) Progress on ‘developing and sharing AFF knowledge products covering different areas in forestry and climate change’

During the reporting period, the AFF Communication and Knowledge Management Unit continued and maintained its momentum in producing, translating and sharing knowledge products developed through the two ongoing projects and through other partnership activities involving the AFF Secretariat.

- As far as the SDC supported project is concerned, during this reporting period, a total of forty-six knowledge products, including ten technical reports, eleven manuscripts of journal article, ten policy briefs, ten factsheets and six training compendiums were internally reviewed by the Secretariat staff and feedback sent to the experts. The list and status of reviewed deliverables is provided in Annexure 3. Among these reviewed deliverables, twenty-eight were successfully revised while seventeen were still under revision by the experts. The Secretariat will continue to closely monitor progress. The revised deliverables are expected to be validated during the information sharing/validation workshops scheduled in 2021, then sent for external review for quality assurance and final versions will be shared widely on various AFF platforms in 2021.
- Translated from English to French 3 out of the 8 compendiums launched in 2019. The translated compendiums included:
 - Les sciences de base du Changement climatique: Un compendium pour la formation professionnelle en foresterie Africaine;
 - Les sciences de base du Changement climatique: Un compendium pour la formation technique en foresterie Africaine; et
 - Les sciences de base du Changement climatique: Un compendium pour la formation de courte durée en foresterie Africaine.

The translation is an on-going process, and the remaining published compendiums will follow. Together, these compendiums (French and English versions) as well as those under

development for the present phase of the project will revolutionise the way education and training are being conducted by African universities, colleges and technical institutions as regards to climate change in forestry. The compendiums for short courses will be key to rapid capacity building on climate change in forestry for relevant NGOs and extension agents as well as for in-service training of staff in education and research establishments that have not been systematically exposed to these issues.

Other document translated by the Communication and Knowledge Management Unit included:

- corporate documents (Guidance for Preparing Inception Reports, MoU template, Research Agreement, Grantee Reporting Form) and
- two knowledge products of great relevance for the overall forestry sector namely:
- Protocol for surveillance of forest and tree pests in West and Central Africa
- The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges

The translation of these corporate documents will ease communication and engagement procedures with the African forestry stakeholders from the French speaking community.

By the end of this reporting period, the total number of information materials developed by AFF and freely available on the AFF 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.

b) Progress on 'reviewing and reporting on uptake of AFF knowledge products among different African forestry stakeholders'

Among the most common topics or broad areas broached in the knowledge products available on AFF website "Carbon market" and "Climate change and forestry" were highlighted, indicating these two main aspects of the work done with the SDC support are continuing to gain interest from the African forestry stakeholders.

In 2020 (Jan-November), a total of 21,826 PDFs was downloaded from the website with 2,474,088 pages opened. 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 developed with the SDC support and launched on the same day as part of AFF’s anniversary celebrations.

2.4.3. Highlights on progress in establishing/strengthening national platforms and networks to increase sharing of information to all stakeholders in forestry

The establishment of platforms is a continuous activity, guided by the Communication and Knowledge Management Unit. The following is the current status of AFF related platforms as per the reporting period:

- (a) AFF joined, since 2019, the FAO Regional Forest Communicators, a network currently comprising 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 at 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 scaled down, halted or postponed to averting further spread of the disease.
- (b) In addition, during this reporting period, virtual groups have been created under the section titled ‘forum’ on AFF intranet to enhance interactions among AFF members and other forestry stakeholders and to engage on different forestry issues. These platforms are expected to take up information that will emerge from the studies currently under implementation and other related work in Africa by AFF partners in order to inform better decision making in respective constituencies. Once these platforms are fully operational, the PMER Unit will undertake an assessment of the level and nature of engagements, their effectiveness and recommend how they can be improved further to meet the objectives of both the platforms and AFF.
- (c) Microsoft Teams has proven itself to be an effective and useful software tool that allows teams to collaborate more efficiently at work. AFF is in the process of setting up teams surrounding different projects and outcomes within the institution. Dedicated sections within the Teams platform will be available to keep conversations organized by specific topics, projects, disciplines while files will be shared in channels (on the Files tab) that are stored in SharePoint and OneDrive. The Team channels will provide virtual places where everyone on the platform will be able to openly have conversations. Already, AFF Secretariat staff biweekly meetings are conducted via Microsoft teams and it is anticipated that in the year 2021 the tool will be fully utilized for collaborative working. A training for all staff on Microsoft OneDrive will be held virtually in the Month of March 2021 to

facilitate information creation/sourcing, organizing, archiving, retrieving and sharing practices at AFF.

- (c) During the reporting period, some progress was achieved towards operationalization of the online interaction platforms created in 2019 namely: (i) AFF Research Fellows; (ii) Forest-based adaptation and mitigation options among African stakeholders; (iii) Gums and resins actors; (iv) Alumni for AFF-HAFL Fellows; (v) Interested parties on NDCs, and (vi) public private partnership in forestry. The progress focused on developing initial draft of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for each of the groups that will be reviewed by AFF technical team to guide identification of suitable participants/experts to join the groups as well as moderators that can guide discussions.

B. Highlights on achievements of Outcome 4.2: Operationalisation of knowledge management services and membership engagement enhanced

The project outputs to be achieved in realizing this outcome are: a) Strengthened knowledge management strategy to engage AFF members and relevant stakeholders in forestry; b) Strengthened capacity of members in knowledge management and scientific writing skills; c) Enhanced capacity of AFF staff in project management and provision of services.

During the reporting period, a knowledge management specialist was contracted to support 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. To achieve the expected goal, the consultant adopted a four-phased framework approach towards development of AFF's Knowledge Management System including an auditing of the existing knowledge management system that will guide the development of a robust organizational Knowledge Management System. The KM Audit findings and recommendations were then used to inform the development of the AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025). The proposed Knowledge Management System 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. The AFF Knowledge Management Strategy is anchored on 4 strategic objectives which are listed as follows:

- 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

A framework /plan for operationalizing the strategy was also proposed which describes strategic interventions for each of the key accelerators of a knowledge management system namely: people (human capital); processes; technology and infrastructure; and governance. Further, a training session on best practices in knowledge management was conducted for AFF Secretariat staff to equip them with knowledge skills for the effective operationalization of the Knowledge Management Strategy. It is expected that this capacity building initiative on knowledge management will be further strengthened and expanded to AFF governance bodies and members during the year 2021 for wider operationalization of the strategy at all levels.

2.5 Strengthening AFF's role in international forestry

During the reporting period, AFF participated in the following events to achieve this output:

a) **FAO workshop on capacity development and programming with project formulation team at Kumasi, Ghana, 10th-14th February 2020:**

FAO and Great Green Wall (GGW) are developing a multi-country project titled "*Scaling Up Resilience in Great Green Wall Africa*" that is intended to be submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The African Forest Forum in December 2019 signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with FAO to support the development of Component 2 of the project on "*Promoting and developing sustainable, low emissions, equitable commodity value chains contributing to forest conservation and sustainable management and to reducing emissions driven by land-use change*". It is in this line that AFF scientific staff attended a workshop organized by the FAO Regional Office for Africa, in partnership with Great Green Wall (GGW) of the Sahara and Sahel Initiative. This workshop involved FAO' partners and teams involved in the project formulation as well as FAO experts. The workshop was an opportunity for the AFF experts to meet and discuss with the national enumerators identified in each of the country to assist in data collection, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Nigeria Mali and Senegal. The AFF team also gained in strengthening their capacity on the methodologies and tools to be employed for data collection in the field such as the FAO developed "Ex-ante Carbon Balance Tool", and to also contribute to the development of the project's theory of change, climate rationale, components, institutional arrangements, investment criteria, and preliminary logical framework/Monitoring & Evaluation.

b) **Contribution to the Organisation of the XV World Forestry Congress 2021**

AFF is on the Advisory Committee that is working closely with FAO in Rome and the Government of the Republic of South Korea in making preparations for the upcoming XV World Forestry Congress to be held May 24-28, 2020 in Seoul, South Korea (<http://wfc2021korea.org/sub01/advisoryCommittees.html>).

The programme has been developed and shared, as well as a Call for those wishing to make presentations on chosen topics guided by the themes for the Congress, as well as for fielding side events. AFF submitted a proposition for a side event on "***Strengthening forest management for enhanced livelihoods and resilience in a changing environment in***

Africa". The side event was approved and will be organized in partnership with 1) African Women's Network for Community management of Forests (REFACOF); 2) Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG); 3) Network for Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA) and 4) Andean Forests Programme (ANFOR, PBA-Helvetas-Peru).

c) AFF participation to regional and international Webinars and events

During the reporting period, the AFF Secretariat participated in several regional and international webinars organised through partnership initiatives as follows:

- An AFF presentation entitled ***Forests and tree-based livelihoods in Africa: some COVID-19 effects*** was delivered during the regional webinar on "*COVID-19 and forestry sector: Challenges, opportunities and strategies for better resilience in Africa*"

The webinar was organized on July 24 2020 by the African Union Commission in partnership with AFF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Central African Forestry Commission (COMIFAC)

- Five presentations were made during the SLU-Global, AFF webinar on "**Sustainable Business Models for Charcoal in Africa: Challenges, opportunities and strategies for better resilience in Africa**" on the following themes:
 - Perspectives on charcoal business in Africa;
 - Charcoal value chain business model and livelihoods;
 - Charcoal ban in Kenya;
 - Charcoal trade in Niger
 - African Forest Forum initiatives on NTFPs value chains in Africa: Opportunities for gender-inclusive and climate-resilient livelihood systems

(d) Webinar: Building back better: COVID-19 pandemic recovery contributions from the forest sector, 22- 25 June 2020

(e) AFF also actively participated to the COVID-19 Forestry Webinar Week organized by FAO in close collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and which featured a series of virtual sessions in the week in which COFO25 and the World Forest Week were originally scheduled. The sessions comprised high-level events as well as technical thematic sessions. The COVID-19 Forestry Webinar Week aimed to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and forests; identify and discuss possible responses that help mitigate impacts on people and forests and help address the situation in the short term while at the same time contributing to building a more resilient and sustainable future; propose follow-up steps, including policy dialogue and mobilisation of resources and action

that better enables the forest sector to help rebuild sustainable and resilient societies - building back better.

Annex 1. Status and achievements in each of activities planned for implementation within reporting period and plan of work and budget for 2021

Annex 2. COVID-19 Adjusted Plan of Work 2020 for the SDC supported project

Annex 3. Status of deliverables revision on the 31st December 2020

(to be submitted separately)



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



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