



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, 2021)

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
EAC	: Eastern African Community
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HAFL	: School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences
IAF	: International Arrangements on Forests
IUFRO	: International Union of Forest Research Organizations
KMC	: Knowledge Management and Communication
LoAs	: Letter of Agreement
LULUCF	: Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry
MEAs	: Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NDCs	: Nationally Determined Contributions
NGARA	: Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
PMER	: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PoWB	: Plan of Work and Budget
REDD+	: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SDC	: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
SLU	: Swedish University of Agriculture
ToR	: Terms of Reference
TST	: Technical Support Team to Raise the Profile of Forestry
UNFF 16	: 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 programme 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 plan of work and budget for 2021. AFF wishes to thank all institutions and individuals who shared information that was required for the various tasks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the achievements and progress made on various project activities for the period spanning from January 1st to December 31st, 2021. These achievements are as follows.

- (i) Adjusted the plan of work and budget (PoWB) for 2021, taking into account carried forward activities from the 2020 PoWB due to the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic such as lockdowns and other travel and gatherings restrictions. The adjustments considered practical approaches to implementing the project activities focusing on knowledge dissemination events to targeted audiences in selected countries, and finalization of on-going studies that are critical to the delivery of the project objectives. A Business Continuity Plan was also developed from the 2021 PoWB, presenting quarterly scheduled project activities, considering activities planned for both 2021 and those carried forward from 2020. A proposition for a no-cost extension and exit strategy from SDC institutional support was submitted and approved, hence the last phase which started in 2018 is now extended by an entire year i.e., until December 31st, 2022.
- (ii) Developed Terms of References (ToRs), advertised the calls for recruitment and contracted twenty-two regional and seven national experts as well as one post-doctoral fellow to undertake studies that target the following project outputs:

- Strengthened capacity of African forestry stakeholders to integrate and uptake adaptation and mitigation options in response to climate change: A call was advertised, and one regional expert was recruited to review, edit and strengthen knowledge products developed from studies undertaken on best practices of forest and tree-based activities integrating mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate change and variability in different African forest landscapes. The expert has successfully submitted his inception report and submitted the reviewed deliverables for inputs by the consultants contracted for the assignment in 2019.
- Strengthened capacity of African forestry stakeholders on addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels: A call was advertised, and twenty experts were recruited to review compendiums five each for technical, professional training and short courses on forests and climate change adaptation on one hand, and for short courses on forests and climate change mitigation on the other. The selected experts reviewed the compendiums and contributed to their validation through a regional validation webinar.

Another call was advertised, and one post-doctoral fellow recruited to synthesize the findings from all the knowledge products developed by AFF on the interaction between forests, people and climate change for wider sharing among African forestry stakeholders. The analysis is also expected to identify research gaps and guide on research needs to be considered for future AFF projects. The postdoc fellow has successfully submitted an inception report, a compiled database of knowledge products developed by AFF on the topic and the outline of the synthesis report.

- Strengthened capacity of African forestry stakeholders for implementing REDD+: For this output, seven national experts were recruited to facilitate data collection on the

status of REDD+ implementation in selected Anglophone and Lusophone countries, namely Angola, Gambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda. The experts were facilitated to undertake field visit in their respective countries and four of them have already submitted their deliverables while the three remaining ones are finalising their report. The national reports as well as associated data files are being shared with the regional expert for the development of the regional synthesis.

- *Under the objective 2 on “Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to Paris Agreement and related climate change discourses”*
- (iii) A call was advertised, and one regional expert was recruited to review, edit and strengthen knowledge products developed from studies undertaken on “*Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives for southern, eastern, central, western Africa and Sahel*”. The expert has submitted a revised revised and strengthened deliverables as well as the synthesis report which are under review at the Secretariat.
- (iv) Monitored progress with experts contracted in the last quarter of 2020 to undertake studies on the following project activities:
- *Enhanced operationalisation of the framework for integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change and variability in different African forestry landscapes.* This is being done through field appraisal for the integration of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation options in selected countries namely Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Zambia. The experts contracted for the studies are documenting best practices used for integrating forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation options in response to climate change and variability that will guide the contextualisation and facilitate upscaling of the framework developed by AFF in 2019. The experts from Kenya, Senegal and Sierra Leone have submitted their draft deliverables which are under review by the Secretariat staff.
 - *Strengthening capacities of African forestry stakeholders for the development of bankable projects on forest and tree-based climate change resilience and improvement of livelihood of forest dependent communities:* Stakeholders were mapped, and their training needs assessed in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Zambia. The stakeholders’ maps and their capacity gaps were successfully reported for Burkina Faso and Zambia, where appropriate training modules were developed to facilitate capacity building and skills development events that took place in Burkina Faso from 17th to the 20th October 2021 and in Zambia from the 1st to the 3rd December 2021.
 - *Resource assessment of selected sites to update information on distribution and production potential of gums and resins:* The data collection were completed in selected sites in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger and Tanzania and final revised reports were submitted for the first two countries. The regional synthesis on the status of

production, trade and resource assessment on gums and resins in Africa have been submitted and are under review at the Secretariat. Moreover, a training manual on “*African Commercial Gums and Gum-resins Production and Trade was developed*” updated from the “*Master Plan for training on commercial gums and resins*” prepared by FAO and NGARA in 2004. The manual was reviewed, updated based on identified capacity gaps and validated for finalization and wide sharing during the webinars held in August and September 2021 for Anglophone and Francophone African forestry stakeholders.

- (v) Monitored the progress of the students under the AFF-HAFL fellowship programme. All the four fellows (from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda and Gabon) successfully defended their Master of Sciences thesis on international forestry using a hybrid approach. Some members of jury, AFF staff and field supervisors from students’ home countries were virtually connected to the face-to-face defense hosted on the HALF Campus. The students have already graduated, and the final versions of their thesis submitted to AFF secretariat for wider sharing in various AFF platforms, media and networks.
- (vi) Co-organised, in Synergy with the Sida supported project, two information sharing subregional webinars and national training workshops:

The sub-regional webinars on “*sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement and the contribution of dryland forest resources in building climate resilient communities in Africa*”. The webinars connected 240 participants from Africa and beyond in six face-to-face in-country meetings in Francophone Africa, 2 virtual and 2 face-to-face in-country meetings for Anglophone Africa for 3-day webinars in line with COVID-19 protocols. The three-days meetings, scheduled from 30th August to 1st September for Francophone stakeholders and from 6th to 9th September 2021 for Anglophone, contributed to enhanced exchange of experiences and skills among stakeholders on governance issues related to forestry and climate change in international processes including NDCs, SDGs on the one hand, and on the other, they improved understanding and appreciation of the contribution of gums and resins and other priority Non Timber Forest products (NTFP) value chains in building local communities’ resilience to adverse impacts of climate change. The key findings shared during the webinars were generated from two expert studies, implemented in 2019. The first one on “Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives in 15 selected countries from southern, eastern, western and central Africa and Sahel”, and the second one on “Gums and resins value chains, assessment of training needs and policy gaps in Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Tanzania”. Key policy and institutional issues as well as capacity gaps identified from the studies and updated during the webinars will be addressed through policy dialogues to be facilitated with SDC support in the first quarter of 2022.

Two training workshops held in Burkina Faso and Zambia that contributed to build capacity of 35 African forestry stakeholders on development of bankable projects on forest and tree-based climate change resilience, REDD+, gums and resins and other NTFP value chains. The same will follow also in DRC, Sierra Leone, and Kenya in early 2022. The concept notes initiated during the trainings will be monitored for resource mobilization in 2022.

(vii) Organized a regional compendium validation webinar and a training workshop:

The validation webinar held from September 29 to October 1, attracted 45 African forestry stakeholders including ten resource persons and secretariat staff who contributed to improving the scientific content, pedagogic flow, diversifying and intensifying cases studies in the draft compendiums before recommending them for validation and wide use for capacity building of the targeted audience. Four training compendiums were validated including, three compendiums, one each for professional, technical training and short courses on forests and climate change adaptation and one compendium for short courses on forests and climate change mitigation. The validated compendiums have been submitted for final editing before their production and wide sharing.

The training workshop on “forests and tree-based climate change mitigation” for African forestry stakeholders” was hosted by the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Arusha Tanzania from 6 - 10 December 2021 and conveyed 58 participants from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Four resource persons were contracted to develop training materials based on the compendium for short courses on “Forests and climate change mitigation” validated in October 2021. The event contributed significantly to sharing experiences, best practices and existing opportunities among stakeholders from forestry administration, NGOs, civil society and community-based organizations on climate change mitigation in the African forestry context.

(viii) Organised two one-day virtual training for AFF staff, Governing Council members and partners and other forum's members:

The virtual training to strengthen the information and knowledge management capacity of Governing Council members and partners from Anglophone Africa was held on 17th November 2021. The training contributed to enhancement of the understanding of the individual roles of the participants on developing an internal culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration and effective participation in a Community of Practice (CoP) in sustainable forestry management.

The other training on “*Effective monitoring of activities and reporting to facilitate making decisions at all levels*” was conducted on 15 December 2021. The event was attended by 63 participants across anglophone African countries and contributed to strengthening their capacity on M&E systems and processes, M&E frameworks (logical frameworks and theory of change) as well as the importance of M&E in accountability and reporting.

(ix) From January to December 2021, the AFF website recorded 729,596 visits, from 299,085 visitors spread in 152 countries worldwide, indicating a growth in total audience size from previous year, with 40% more of total pages viewed compared to 2020. The top countries that recorded the higher number of visitors are United states of America, India, United Kingdom, Kenya, Nigeria, China, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Indonesia. The data also shows an impressionable level of interaction with a total of 3,486,334 pages viewed. The above AFF' website's performance is a direct reflection of AFF's continued improved ranking through site optimization, competitive keywords, consistent announcements and

- efforts in the sharing of information. It also shows engagement from the audience with the number and variety of files integrated within the web pages
- (x) Increased in followers on Facebook pages from 3,484 to 4,016, while followers on Twitter are up from 1,073 in 2020 to 1,091 in 2021. 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.
 - (xi) From January to December 31, there were 18,505 PDFs downloaded from the website with 3,486,334 pages opened. The most downloaded document was AFF's flagship publication, "*The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*". The concept note on the regional training workshop on "forest and tree-based climate change mitigation" held in Arusha Tanzania in early December was the fourth most downloaded document on the website in 2021, indicating significant attention generated by the event from stakeholders across the continent as well as the importance of the subject area. An increase in interest for AFF's knowledge products from Francophone countries was also observed during the reporting period, with four out of the ten most downloaded documents being in French. This may also indicate a greater need for translating more AFF knowledge products from English to French for our targeted audience from Francophone countries of Africa. AFF Secretariat continues to monitor the uptake of these knowledge products and their impact is likely to be realized much more visibly beyond the project implementation period.
 - (xii) In August and September 2021, AFF in collaboration with the Network for Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA) hosted media roundtable discussions on "*building climate resilient communities in African forests through the Paris Agreement*" as parallel events to the subregional webinars on "*Sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement and the contribution of dryland forest resources in building climate resilient communities in Africa*". The roundtable discussions were attended by 25 representatives from 27 media outlets and influential bloggers who generated 41 articles published in English, French and Kiswahili by 23 media houses with coverage spread across the East, West, South and Central Africa and beyond and for an Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) estimated at USD 19,757.50.
 - (xiii) Advertised a call and selected 3 service providers who are presently undertaking English to French translation services for five training compendiums on (i) carbon markets and trade (ii) climate modelling and scenario development and (iii) international dialogues and processes in climate change. These compendiums are part of the 8 compendiums published in 2019. Their translation will facilitate their wider use in Francophone countries, where there has been an impressive and increasing number of visits to the AFF website for the last decade.
 - (xiv) From 2019 to 2021, AFF admitted 382 new members bringing the total membership to 2596 from 83 countries worldwide, including 51 African countries, with 75% of men and 25% of women.
 - (xv) Strengthened and maintained online interaction of a wide range of stakeholders and groups involved in AFF's platforms and networks on the intranet, namely: (i) AFF Research Fellows; (ii) Alumni for AFF-HAFL fellowship programme; (iii) Public Private Partnerships in forestry in Africa (iv) Forest-based adaptation and mitigation options among African stakeholders (v) interested parties on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement (vi) and Gums and Resins actors.

During the reporting period, AFF hosted two virtual Community of Practice (CoP) sessions:

The first one on “*forest related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement*” from 6-22 October 2021. A total of 280 people registered to participate in the on-line forum on forest based NDCs which attracted considerable interest amongst stakeholders involved in forestry and climate change policies and processes including national focal points for NDCs, UNFCCC, REDD+, UNFF as well as NGOs, public forestry and environmental administrators, and related private sector in sub-Saharan Africa. Among them, 100 joined the web-based platform and between 34-44 joined daily zoom webinars. Participants showed a keen interest in all themes discussed and expressed appreciation of the information and resources shared.

The second Community of Practice on “*Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) Value Chains*” was conducted from 15th November to 3rd December 2021. The NTFP CoP gathered about 130 participants from a vast number of countries including Sweden, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, DRC, South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini. The main lesson learnt from the event is a need for a cohesive strategy in addressing cross-country challenges constraining the development of priority NTFPs in Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

The implementation of work at AFF is guided by a programmatic approach. This section highlights how project objectives, outcomes and outputs are aligned to AFF's Programmatic Areas:

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 in order 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 2021, implicit in each of the specified outputs, as well as exploiting synergies with Sida funded project on "*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*".

2. TECHNICAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND PROGRAMATIC SUPPORT

2.1 An overview

The focus of the project activities for the reporting period centred on:

- a) External review of the knowledge products on integration of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change and variability in different African forest landscapes;
- b) Monitoring progress on the operationalisation of the framework for integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate change and variability in different landscape in Africa, through field appraisals in selected countries;
- c) Building capacity of forestry stakeholders in selected African countries to mobilise resources for implementation of the framework;
- d) Maintaining online interaction on forest-based adaptation and mitigation among stakeholders in African forestry;
- e) Facilitating external review and validation of four compendiums on forests and climate change adaptation for professional and technical training, and short courses in African forestry on one hand, and forests and climate change mitigation for short courses on the other;
- f) Facilitating a regional training workshop on forest and tree-based climate change mitigation for African forestry stakeholders, held on 6 -10 December 2021 using the validated compendium for short course on forests and climate change mitigation in African forestry;
- g) Monitoring, with Bern University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland, the defence, graduation and submission of the final versions of the MSc thesis for the four AFF-HALF fellows from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda and Gabon;
- h) Facilitating the recruitment of a postdoctoral fellow at AFF to synthesise all knowledge products facilitated by AFF on the interaction between forests, people and climate change and tease out main gaps and future research needs;
- i) Monitoring progress on data collection and production of deliverables on the implementation of REDD+ in selected Anglophone and Lusophone countries;

- j) Facilitating capacity building of African forestry stakeholders to move forward on the implementation of REDD+ through development of bankable REDD+ projects in selected countries;
- k) Facilitating external review and updating the knowledge products from studies undertaken in 2019 on “Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to Paris Agreement and related climate change discourses in Southern, Eastern, Central and Western Africa countries”;
- l) Monitoring progress on data collection and reporting on resource assessment and production potential of gums and resins in selected sites in Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Tanzania;
- m) Facilitating, in Synergy with the Sida supported project, the organisation of two sub regional webinars with 8 national face-to-face meetings, virtually connected to 2 in-country virtual meetings, AFF staff at the Secretariat, regional experts and interested participants to disseminate the findings of the studies conducted since 2019 on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement on the one hand, and gums and resins value chains and resource assessment on the other.
- n) Enhancing dissemination of information on forestry and climate related issues through functional and effective information sharing systems, including strengthening knowledge sharing platforms.
- o) Improving the reach of AFF knowledge products on forestry, climate change and emerging issues by translating them into French for the benefit of the stakeholders from Francophone countries;
- p) Increasing information sharing to all forestry stakeholders by establishing and strengthening platforms and networks including online interactions platforms, WhatsApp groups, Communities of Practices among others;
- q) Processing production of relevant knowledge products for studies conducted with the SDC support;
- r) Strengthening knowledge management services and membership engagement by operationalising the AFF knowledge management strategy 2021 – 2025 and encouraging interactions among AFF members, including youth and women chapters. Under this output, AFF facilitated training on knowledge management held on the 17th November 2021 for AFF staff and anglophone members of the governing council;
- s) Enhancing understanding and use of monitoring and evaluation tools by AFF members by assessing training needs and building capacity of AFF staff and members from Anglophone countries on monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment and reporting projects’ activities.

The following processes and project activities were therefore implemented as guided by the objectives and AFF programmatic areas targeting the expected outputs and outcomes in this reporting period.

2.2 The project approach

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 offering 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 focuses 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.

During the reporting period, a PoWB for 2021 was developed, discussed and endorsed by the 7th and 8th meetings of the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC), the Finance Committee as well as the 29th meeting of the Executive Committee, and thereafter approved at the 16th meeting of the AFF Governing Council (GC). The approved PoWB clearly showed activities carried forward that could not be implemented in 2020 due to the challenges imposed by the covid 19 pandemic such as lockdowns and other travel and gatherings restrictions; on-going activities that could not be completed in 2020 and activities planned for 2021 as per the project' Masterplan.

The 2021 PoWB also considered practical approach to implementing the project activities amidst the COVID 19 pandemic with main focus on: i) knowledge dissemination events to targeted audiences in the countries using a hybrid approach to meetings and ii) facilitation of the studies that are critical to the delivery of the project outcome.

In order to closely follow up the implementation of the PoWB, a Business Continuity Plan that presents the quarterly scheduling of the project activities taking into account both activities planned for 2021 and those carried forward from 2020 was developed. The plan aimed to guide the Secretariat in tracking the impact of the pandemic on project activities and to inform any necessary adjustments at the beginning of every quarter to secure delivery on the project.

A proposition for no-cost extension and exit strategy to the SDC institutional support was developed, discussed between the Secretariat and selected members of PSAC before submission to SDC. The no-cost extension was recommended to better rationalise the

outstanding workload occasioned by the large number of activities that could not be implemented in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, it was important to prioritise activities that are critical for the achievement of the project's outcomes. The AFF exit strategy to the SDC institutional support focused mostly on on-going initiatives aiming to strengthen the sustainability of AFF beyond 2022. SDC approved a one year no-cost extension, appreciated the sustainability approach proposed and recommended bimonthly meetings to evaluate progress made and advance discussions on post-2022 engagements. So far, two such meetings have been held and resulted in fruitful discussions and clear guidance for smooth implementation of project activities and participatory planning of end of project evaluation and associated processes.

The AFF secretariat also adopted the hybrid approach to meetings that includes organising webinars that connect AFF staff and other stakeholders digitally to face-to-face meetings at the country level for planned meetings and workshops. This approach has been proved successful for AFF's engagement with FAO work on NTFP value chains on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative. The organization of the in-country meetings were done in compliance to COVID-19 protocols in the selected countries and were facilitated by in-country experts contracted to generate information and resource persons engaged by AFF to provide logistic support.

In order to comply with COVID -19 safety measures, the AFF Secretariat also adopted the recruitment of national experts for data collection to restrain movement at country level and minimize cross-borders travels by regional experts. This approach also allowed more accurate and in-depth data collection at country level. The previously hired regional experts were then assigned the task of supervising these activities, compiling reports and data from countries to prepare deliverables that will inform on regional status for each targeted project output.

The following sections provides key highlights on progress realised in the implementation of the approved 2021 PoWB for each of the project outcome.

2.3 Highlights on achievement of 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 following subsections summarises the progress made towards realisation of this outcome.

2.3.1 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.

The progress made in implementing activities under this output include: (i) recruitment of expert to review knowledge products; and (ii) follow ups on studies for field appraisal for best practices integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change in different forest landscapes:

The achievement realised are summarised as follows:

a) Expert recruitment for the review of knowledge products on best practices integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation

Terms of reference were developed, and a call was advertised for the recruitment of an expert to review and update knowledge products developed in 2019 on “integration of forest and tree-based adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change and variability in different African forest landscapes”. The expert has so far submitted a methodological note describing his approach for reviewing, strengthening, and updating the eight deliverables developed by the sub-regional consultants, as well as the outline of the regional synthesis report highlighting policy and technical issues related to the uptake and adoption of best practices on integration of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change and variability in different African landscapes. The reviewed deliverables are being discussed with the consultants who were involved in the studies for their inputs before their finalisation and submission.

b) Following up on progress made on two consultancies by experts recruited in 2020

Fifteen experts were recruited from seven countries namely Zambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Burkina Faso and the DRC to undertake the following consultancies:

- a) consultancy No 02-112 on field appraisal for the integration of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate change in different forest landscape
- b) consultancy No 02-111/113/312 on strengthening capacities of African forestry stakeholders for the development of bankable projects on forest and tree-based climate change resilience and improvement of livelihood of forest dependent communities.

All the experts were facilitated by AFF Secretariat to undertake field data collection in their respective countries and have so far completed data the collection phase. Experts from Kenya, Senegal and Sierra Leone have submitted draft deliverables for the consultancy No 02-112. Furthermore, experts from Burkina Faso and Zambia have completed national

trainings on development of bankable projects, while other countries are still in the planning stages.

For the studies on field appraisal, the preliminary findings from Sierra Leone and Senegal, have shown that environmental and forestry policies are outdated and majority of them are void of climate change concerns. Moreover, the existing environmental and forestry governance frameworks are weak in coordinating and integrating natural resources related mitigation and adaptation options. Many existing climate change policies' instruments including Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), the National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPA), the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCS&AP) and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), though adopted, are yet to be translated into operational and sectorial documents for appropriate implementation. Forest and tree-based projects, programmes and initiatives are implemented across various forest types contributing to reducing deforestation, combating desertification, conserving forest cover while generating timber and NTFP for communities' livelihood. However, their mitigation and adaptation potentials are poorly assessed and reported.

In Kenya, public institutions were the most (73%) engaged in the implementation of programmes and projects integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation options in different forest types and landscapes. These include projects designed for carbon credits in Mangroves (Vanga country), highlands (Kikuyu escarpments) and rain forests (Kakamega); REDD+ projects in Taita Taveta county and Rift valley. Financial resources generated from sell of carbon are being used to support community development through diversification of income generating activities, strengthening food production systems, water, health and construction of schools, provision of bursaries and employment creation. Some forest and on-farm tree-based projects with non-carbon credits were also identified to provide adaptation and mitigation benefits, though not consciously monitored, measured and reported. These included forest projects implemented by private companies as well as projects that are mainly conceptualized to support livelihoods, reduce pressure from forests, create employment among the youth, promote sustainable management practices, and provide alternative sources of construction materials. The study recommended, among others, the need to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptations to the Kenyans' county government level with adequate funding, technical backstopping, and human resources for implementing forest and on farm tree-based mitigation and adaptation actions in various landscapes.

The findings from Kenya, Senegal and Sierra Leone have identified some capacity gaps at institutional, policy and technical levels that need to be addressed for the operationalisation of the framework on the integration of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation options in response to climate change and variability in targeted landscapes.

The findings from DRC and Zambia will also contribute to expand the scope to rainforest and miombo woodlands in order to guide relevant and contextualised capacity building events, promoting adoption and uptake of best practices for integration of forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation to respond to climate change and variability in African landscapes.

For the consultancy No 02-111/113/312 on “*strengthening capacities of African forestry stakeholders for the development of bankable projects on forest and tree-based climate change resilience and improvement of communities’ livelihood*”, the recruited experts were facilitated by AFF Secretariat to collect data in Burkina Faso, DRC, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Based on the reports received from Burkina Faso and Zambia, various categories of forestry stakeholders were involved in implementing projects and programmes on climate change resilience. In Burkina Faso, for example, 40% of actors sampled were from community-based organisations and cooperatives implementing mostly NTFP-based projects and programmes, while 53% were from different directorates of the Ministry of Environment, including REDD+ Secretariat (17%), Climate Change and Green Economy (26%) and the National Agency for Great Green Wall (3%). Among these institutions, 81 % indicated that all their initiatives in resource mobilisation were not successful with more than 95% willing to attend training events on development of bankable projects. In both countries, the areas of capacity gaps included: identification of relevant technical and financial partners, tools and technique for resources mobilisation, budgeting and financial management, gender mainstreaming, management of project preparatory phase, setting up the project concept and designing the result framework. The modules to address these gaps were developed and used to build capacity of 32 stakeholders selected from the national REDD+ coordination Units, gums and resins business entities, NGOs involved in forest and tree-based climate change resilience activities. The training workshops were organised on 17- 20 October 2021 in Koudougou, Burkina Faso and 1- 3 December 2022 in Kitwe, Zambia using a hybrid approach with AFF secretariat digitally connected to the country face-to-face meetings. These training workshops are being conducted in synergy with the Sida supported project with the aim of facilitating access to existing international funding mechanisms through the development of about ten concept notes. This is being done in collaboration with selected national forestry stakeholders for submission to relevant donors such as Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) of the United Nations Forum on Forests. For Burkina Faso, seven draft concept notes were prepared by the trainees, among which three are on tree-based adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change. The draft concept notes have been assessed and graded by the facilitators, then submitted to AFF for review.

For the other countries i.e., Kenya, DRC, and Sierra Leone, the experts in liaison with the AFF secretariat are planning to hold the national training workshops as from January 2022.

2.3.2 Progress on strengthening capacity among African forestry stakeholders on addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels

For this output, progress was made on three main activities as follows:

a) External review of contextualized training compendiums

During the reporting period, the revised drafts of four contextualized training compendiums were submitted to the Secretariat to be externally reviewed and validated.

ToRs were developed and advertised for the recruitment of 20 external reviewers, five experts for each compendium as follows:

- compendium for short courses on forests and climate change mitigation in African forestry
- compendium for short courses on forests and climate change adaptation in African forestry
- compendium for technical training on forests and climate change adaptation in African forestry
- compendium for professional training on forests and climate change adaptation in African forestry

The compendiums on forests and climate change mitigation for professional and technical training in African forestry are still under revision by the team of consultants.

The reviewed compendiums were validated during a three-day virtual regional webinar held from 29th September to 1st October 2021. The validation webinar attracted 45 participants, including the 20 reviewers, 10 resource persons, the consultants contracted for the development of the compendiums, AFF staff and other interested African forestry stakeholders. The aim of the webinar was to consolidate all comments from reviewers and resource persons and guide the lead experts on the finalisation of the training compendiums. The validation for each compendium was recommended after a thorough review of comments and inputs proposed by all the reviewers. This was done in working groups, constituted of five reviewers, two resource persons, the lead expert, one AFF Secretariat staff and two participants selected from beneficiaries targeted by the compendium. From the assessment form filled by each group, all the four compendiums with the inputs from reviewers contained the most appropriate and current materials available. The compendiums were therefore found to meet the threshold for publication and were thus validated for proceeding to next steps. The revised validated compendiums are being submitted for external editing before production and wide sharing among African forestry stakeholders.

b) Short courses on forest and tree-based climate change mitigation and adaptation among African forestry stakeholders

A concept note was developed for a regional training workshop on “*forest and tree-based climate change mitigation for African forestry stakeholders*” that was conducted in Arusha, Tanzania on 6-10 December 2021. The interest for such training among AFF target audience was demonstrated by the high number of downloads of the concept note from AFF website.

The workshop hosted by the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) attracted 58 participants from 10 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The participants were selected from forest administration, NGOs, Civil Society organisations, private sectors and media, including resource persons from Academia and research institutions. The workshop provided a great opportunity to share information, experiences and best practices on forest and tree-based mitigation initiatives, policies, and practices, as well as challenges to comply to donor’s requirements for accessing relevant funding opportunities. A WhatsApp group platform was created to continue networking and sharing existing opportunities after the training event.

c) AFF-HAFL fellowship and exchange program with Bern University of Applied Sciences in Zollikofen, Switzerland.

The four students under the fellowship successfully defended their MSc thesis in February 2021. So far, the program coordinator for Bern University has shared a final operational report on the third cohort of the AFF-HAFL fellowship programme. The MSc research topics were as follows:

1. **Melody Makumborenga:** Effects of fuelwood extraction on savanna woodland in Chiota Communal Land, Zimbabwe
2. **Bhoke Masisi:** Bamboo: A resilient strategy to climate change mitigation and adaptation in Tanzania.
3. **Olivier Nkurunziza:** Lessons learnt from pilot forest project (1968 -) and its implications for forest landscape restoration in Rwanda
4. **Isaac Youb:** Comparison of two technologies for wildlife monitoring (bioacoustics and camera traps) in Precious Woods CEB in Gabon

The defense was virtually attended by AFF staff and all the four students performed very well. The final versions of the theses were shared with the Secretariat from which key findings contributing to the relevant project output and outcomes will be distilled and shared in 2022.

A call for a postdoctoral internship was developed, advertised and one postdoctoral fellow recruited to support the AFF Secretariat in digesting and synthesizing all the findings generated through studies and research fellowships on the relation between forests, people

and climate change. The postdoc fellow has successively submitted an inception report, a detailed database of areas covered in the knowledge products as well as the outline of the synthesis report. The final deliverables are expected by the end of January 2022 to be shared on various AFF platforms, media and networks during 2022. The report will also identify knowledge gaps that will be further discussed with African forestry stakeholders and if approved they could be addressed in future AFF projects beyond 2022.

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

For this output, the following have been accomplished:

a) Assessing the level of implementation of REDD+ activities in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

The Secretariat successfully recruited and contracted national experts for Namibia, Uganda, Angola, Ghana, Tanzania, Gambia, and Mozambique to assess the implementation of REDD+ in their respective countries. The contracted experts were facilitated to collect data in their countries. Experts from Angola, Namibia, Uganda and Tanzania have concluded data collection and have submitted draft deliverables which have been reviewed by the Secretariat and the comments shared with them to facilitate finalisation. The revised versions of the reports as well as the data files will be used by the regional expert for analysis and preparation of regional synthesis on the status of implementation of REDD+ in Anglophone and Lusophone African countries.

b) Building capacity of African forestry stakeholders to move forward on the implementation of REDD+

This activity is also contributing to the output 1.1.1 on “*mobilising resources for the operationalisation of the framework on integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change and variability*” and also to output 3.1.2 on “*building capacity of selected actors in gums and resins value chains, mainly women and youth, on how to develop and implement bankable projects*”. As reported above (2.2.1), the ten contracted experts have taken in account REDD+ actors in their activities on stakeholders’ engagement and training needs assessment. Therefore, 67% of the stakeholders trained in Burkina Faso were involved in national REDD+ process and three out of the seven draft concept notes developed included REDD+ related activities. In Zambia, 10 of the 18 participants targeted for the training were also involved in the national REDD+ process. Moreover, in all countries targeted for this assignment, there was a recommendation that 30% of the proposed 10 concept notes to be developed for resource mobilisation should be for REDD+ implementation in order to better contribute both to this outcome and to the Sida project’ outcome 4.4. on “*facilitating access to global funding opportunities that are relevant to African forestry for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)*”.

2.4 Highlights on achievement of Outcome 2.1 and 2.2: African forest stakeholders have better understanding and coordination, in their national forestry sector, of NDCs, REDD+, IAF and relevant SDGs

During the reporting period, the revised draft deliverables for the study conducted on “*Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives*” in western and central Africa were submitted to the Secretariat.

The Secretariat developed and advertised ToRs and recruited an expert for external review, updating and strengthening of the nine deliverables developed for southern, eastern, western and Central Africa. So far, the expert has successfully submitted the inception report including the methodological notes describing his approach to implement the task. The reviewed deliverables, as well as the regional synthesis report, manuscript of scientific articles, policy briefs and factsheets were shared with the consultants for their inputs. The final revised and improved deliverables are under review by the Secretariat. These regional syntheses are expected to highlight key issues of relevance for African countries’ forest governance responses to Paris Agreement and related global climate change instruments.

2.5 Highlights on achievements of Outcome 3.1: Actors in the gums and resins value chain better engaged, especially, private sector, women and the youth, for improved wellbeing

The activities undertaken to contribute to realising this outcome focused on the following outputs:

2.5.1 Progress on strengthening understanding of the state of production and trade in gums and resins in selected countries very sensitive to climate change.

For the reporting period, the following were achieved for this output:

a) Monitoring progress for studies on production and trade of gums and resins in selected African countries

The national experts recruited in four countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Tanzania and Niger) to undertake studies on “*Strengthening capacity of African forestry stakeholders for production and trade of gums and resins in Africa*” under the supervision of NGARA,

completed their field work and submitted deliverables which were reviewed by the Secretariat. Final revised deliverables were received and approved for Burkina Faso and Niger, and we are still expecting them from the Kenyan and Tanzanian experts. The updated regional synthesis report, scientific article, policy brief and factsheet were also submitted by the regional expert and are under review by the Secretariat before their finalisation and wide sharing.

b) Following up progress on studies on resource assessment of selected sites to update information on distribution and production potential of gums and resins.

During the reporting period, all the national experts recruited to undertake gums and resins resources assessment submitted their reports which were reviewed by the Secretariat. The final revised version were received from Burkina Faso and Niger and are still expected from Kenya and Tanzania. After submission of all the revised and approved deliverables, ToRs will be developed to recruit an independent reviewer to strengthen their scientific quality before editing, formatting and wide sharing through different AFF media, platforms and networks.

c) Sharing information among African gums and resins stakeholders on the status of production and trade in gums and resins

This activity was implemented in synergy with the Sida supported project through the facilitation of two subregional webinars on “*Sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement and the contribution of dryland forest resources in building climate resilient communities in Africa*” that were held from the 31st August to the 1st September 2021 in six Francophone African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Niger) and from the 6th to the 9th of September in four anglophone countries (Botswana, Kenya, Gambia and Tanzania). A concept note was developed and widely advertised with more than 200 registrations for each of the webinar.

Both webinars, organised using a hybrid approach, attracted a total of 240 forestry stakeholders and contributed to strengthening capacity and sharing experiences on national forest governance responses to international climate change discourses including NDCs, SDGs on the one hand, and improved understanding on the status of production, trade and resources potential of gums and resins and other priority NTFPs in selected African countries. The webinars contributed in achieving the outcome 3.1. of the SDC supported project while at the same time contributing to the Outcome 4.2 on “*African stakeholders have better understanding of new and emerging issues related to forestry*” for the Sida supported project.

2.5.2 Progress on Strengthening capacity of entrepreneurs in gums and resins, including women and youth, to develop bankable projects

For this project output, progress achieved during the reporting period focused on the following activity:

Training selected actors, mainly women and youth, on how to develop and implement bankable projects

As reported above (section 2.2.1), this activity is also contributing to the outputs 1.1.1. 1.1.3., and the output 3.1.2. on “*strengthened capacity of entrepreneurs in gums and resins, including women and youth, to develop bankable projects*”. Therefore, the contracted experts (10) have considered gums and resins as well as other priority NTFPs’ value chains actors in their activities on stakeholders’ engagement and training needs assessment. In Burkina Faso, 11 out of the 18 trained forestry stakeholders were involved in NTFP value chains with 50% of them producing and trading gums and resins products. Moreover, all the seven concept notes developed were on NTFPs, with 2 of them on Arabic gums. For Zambia, 30% of forestry stakeholders engaged for the training were involved in NTFP value chains, with one of them producing and trading resins from pine’ species. Recommendation was also made during the inception phase, that 30% of the proposed ten (10) concept notes to be developed for resource mobilisation should be oriented on the implementation of NTFP related projects to better contribute to the targeted SDC outcome (3.1).

2.6 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 following subsections provide key highlights on the progress made by the AFF Knowledge Management and Communication (KMCOMM) Unit as well as the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit during the reporting period from January to November 2021.

2.6.1 Progress on enhancing functional and effective systems for information dissemination

For this output, the following progress were accomplished:

a) Develop tool kits for collecting data on use and impacts of AFF knowledge products

During the reporting period, the existing data collection tool for capturing information on uptake of AFF knowledge products was reviewed and updated. The updated tools will be

used for assessment, on a regular basis, and documentation of the impact of knowledge generated through various studies to yield the different project outcomes.

b) Strengthen knowledge sharing platforms

During the reporting period, progress achieved under this activity focused on developing, editing and laying out appropriate articles for printing and electronic media, the upgrading of the AFF website and intranet, tracking and reporting issues taken by social media and holding of media events.

Development of appropriate articles for printing and electronic media: From January to December 2021, the KMCOMM Unit has provided writing, review and editorial assistance towards the development of 11 publications namely: AFF Working Paper Series, technical reports, publications and other documents, amongst which one was on forestry and climate change related issues, especially on “*Aboveground and belowground tree biomass and carbon stocks in the miombo woodlands of the Copperbelt in Zambia.*”

The current total number of information materials freely available on the website is 229, organised as follows: Journal articles (56), policy briefs (20), factsheets (8), reports (41), publications under AFF Working Paper Series (58), training modules (2), newsletters (17), edited proceedings of meetings (1), books (5), compendium (9), and corporate documents (12). There were 18,505 PDFs downloaded from the website with 3,486,334 pages opened. The AFF’s flagship publication, “*The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*” has continued to attract high interest among African forestry stakeholders as the most downloaded document. Four out of the ten most downloaded documents are on forestry and climate change related issues namely:

- Concept note on “*AFF regional training workshop on forest and tree-based climate change mitigation for African forestry stakeholders*” (fourth of the ten);
- Fobissie, K., Chia, E. and Enongene, K. 2017. *Mise en œuvre de la REDD+, du MDP et de la CDN du secteur AFAT en Afrique francophone* (fifth out of ten);
- African Forest Forum 2019. *Modules de formation sur les changements climatiques et les forêts: adaptation, atténuation, marché du carbone et paiements des services environnementaux pour les professionnels, les techniciens et les groupes informels des pays Francophones de l’Afrique subsaharienne* (Eighth out of ten) ;
- Milimo, P.B. 2014. *Forest and climate change policies, strategies and programmes in the EAC and IGAD sub-regions*. African Forest Forum, Working Paper Series 2(18), 49 pp (ninth out of ten).

Moreover, 40% of the most downloaded publications are in French demonstrating increased interest in AFF’s knowledge products from Francophone countries.

Upgrade website for increased access in a more user-friendly manner: The emergence of the internet as a dominant, reliable, cost-effective and widespread medium for accessing and transmitting information has facilitated acquisition and sharing of knowledge. There

have been progressive initiatives to improve AFF's website and intranet to increase interaction, provide ready access to AFF's knowledge products and ensure the institution's profile is visible in the online space.

In line with the recommendations of the AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025), the digital platforms were to be further restructured from an information centre to a knowledge hub. Hence, AFF is in the process of initiating a tendering process, facilitated by ICRAF procurement unit, to upgrade the site's interoperability, introducing standardized library systems, applying advanced metrics tools, widening AFF's knowledge base and increasing AFF's online authority. Through these interventions, it is anticipated that the institution's profile is raised to becoming a key player in the continent's forestry mandate.

Holding media events covering different AFF activities:

1. AFF and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Kenya and Ethiopia) with support from Strathmore University of Kenya are in the process of organizing a joint podcast entitled, '*Youth in African Forestry*', to provide a platform for youth to engage with researchers and practitioners in addressing critical issues about the forestry sector and exploring whether sustainable forest management is, or could be, a possible option for them in today's global society. The podcast will feature pre-recorded views on three main topics namely:
 - i.* **Why are forests and trees important? How can they be sustained? (20 min):** The podcast shall include three panelists from (a) the dry forest zone in the Sahel region of western and north-central Africa (b) tropical rainforests (c) independent youth;
 - ii.* **What are the threats to forest resources? What is the future of forests? (20min):** The podcast shall include three panelists as highlighted above.
 - iii.* **What are the benefits of forests? Give some examples of how you have gained from forestry activities (20-30min):** This will be a virtual discussion among five (5) youths working in different areas of forestry including; nature-based enterprises, eco-tourism, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) value chains (production, harvesting and processing), among others.

The speakers have been already identified and the recording is scheduled for 2022.

2. AFF in collaboration with NGARA organised media roundtable discussions with 25 representatives of African media and selected experts on 30-31 August 2021 (Francophone Africa) and 06-07 September 2021 (Anglophone Africa). The roundtable discussions were conducted as parallel events to the subregional webinars on "*Building climate resilient communities in African forests through the Paris Agreement*". The roundtables were found to be informative, stimulating, rich in content and an eye opener to English and French speaking African journalists whose understanding of forestry, climate change nexus was improved. The journalists were exposed to new insights on the state of forests in Africa and appreciated the critical

role of this ecosystem to livelihoods of local/ indigenous communities. They then committed to being part of national debates geared towards raising the visibility of forests in economic development, climate action, gender parity and food security.

The media and outreach activities during the webinars generated a favourable return on investment, with AFF members, African forestry stakeholders, and the general public impacted. Forty-one articles (32 English, 2 French, 7 Kiswahili) were published by 23 media houses with coverage spread across the East, West, South and Central Africa, as well as with the wider international community. The estimated cost of buying space taken up by the media articles, of which AFF did not pay for Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) was estimated at USD 19,757.50.

Tracking and reporting traffic on the website and issues taken by social media: The performance of the AFF website during the reporting period could be summarized as follows:

- A total of 729,596 visits from 299,085 visitors in 152 countries worldwide, with United states of America, India, United Kingdom, Kenya, Nigeria, China, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Indonesia recording the highest traffic;
- 4,077,608 website hits with 3,486,334 pages viewed;
- 40% increase in new visitors which could indicate ongoing improvement of both user experience and content quality as well as increased interest in AFF's work by the general public;
- Increased from 3,484 to 4,016 (13%) followers while Twitter is up from 1,073 in 2020 to 1,091 (2%).
- 726 members find value in the information shared by AFF via info-mail, with an open rate of 38% of a total of 54 info-mails shared. Countries with the highest number of members opening the AFF info-mails are Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon and USA.

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 to be held in May 2022 in South Korea. The most popular posts included calls for consultancy, job and scholarship opportunities.

2.6.2 Progress on Producing knowledge products in forestry, climate change and other emerging issues and sharing in timely manner to all relevant stakeholders

In order to support the increasing interest for contextualised knowledge products among African forestry stakeholders in Francophone Africa, and facilitate their capacity and skills development on climate change issues related to forestry, AFF has recruited 3 consultants to provide English to French translation services for five out of the eight training compendiums available in English on the website on (i) carbon markets and trade (ii) climate modelling and scenario development and (iii) international dialogues and processes in climate change.

During the reporting period, AFF also initiated external review and finalisation of various knowledge products developed through expert studies since 2019. When finalised, these products will be produced and shared widely on AFF media platforms and networks during the year 2022.

2.6.3 Progress on strengthening/establishing national platforms and networks to increase sharing of information to all stakeholders in forestry

Progress achieved during the reporting period for this output focused on maintaining online interactions for various forestry databases comprising AFF experts, students and individuals involved in forestry issues across the continent. The databases are: (a) database of Alumni for AFF-HAFL Fellowship Programme; (b) database of experts and actors in private sector forestry; (c) database of LULUCF Research Fellowship Awardees; (d) database of interested parties on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and (e) database of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) Value Chains.

Moreover, AFF recently launched 2 Communities of Practice (CoPs) to enable sharing of information and experience amongst stakeholders in African forestry. CoPs are active on-line learning and communication networks whose members are interested in learning about the same topics.

AFF hosted its first virtual CoPs on forest related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement on 6-22 October 2021. The on-line CoP provides a platform for sharing of knowledge, resources and best practices amongst African stakeholders, with a focus on forestry and land use in the NDCs. The platform recorded a total of 280 registrations from stakeholders involved in forestry and climate change policies and processes including national focal points for NDCs, UNFCCC, REDD+, UNFF as well as NGOs, public forestry and environmental administrators, and related stakeholders in private sectors in sub-Saharan Africa. Live interactions took place using a web-based platform specifically set up for the purpose. In the final week, the web-based platform was augmented by daily webinars using a video communications platform (Zoom). An estimate of 100 participants joined the web-based platform and between 34-44 joined daily zoom webinars with a dozen of resources were shared among members.

The second virtual CoP focused on NTFP value chains and took place from 15 November to 3 December 2021. The NTFP CoP gathered 129 participants from Sweden, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, DRC, South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini and many more. For this second experience, live interactions took place on the first 3 days of each week providing updated information on three main topics namely: NTFP of nutritional, medicinal and cosmetic significance on the African continent (week1); gums and resins value chains (week 2); Wood-based NTFPs of significance for the African continent (week 3). For the two remaining days (Thursday and Friday of each week)

discussions were conducted using the dedicated NTFP web-based platform. The NTFP' CoP was also enriched by presentations from AFFs' PhD fellows (from Cameroon and Burkina Faso), as well as partners including NGARA and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) on our collaborative work on NTFPs. Key messages and way forward were drawn from each presentation and a summary was prepared for each thematic area. Many useful resources were also shared among members of the community including all presentations made and associated supporting documents.

2.7 Highlights on achievements of outcome 4.2.

Operationalization of knowledge management services and membership engagement enhanced

The project activities that were undertaken in order to realize this outcome are: (i) strengthening knowledge management strategy to engage AFF members and relevant stakeholders in forestry; (ii) strengthening capacity of members in knowledge management and scientific writing; (iii) enhancing capacity of AFF staff in project management and provision of services.

During the reporting period, progress achieved focused on strengthening capacity of AFF members and staff on knowledge management. Therefore, based on capacity gaps, AFF advertised and recruited a knowledge management consultant to strengthen capacity of the AFF Governing Council members and partners from Anglophone Africa on information and knowledge management through a one-day virtual workshop. The workshop, scheduled on 17 November 2021 contributed to equip participants to better understand and play more active roles in knowledge management.

2.8 Highlights on achievements of outcome 4.3:

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

The projects activities contributing to the achievement of this outcome are: (i) enhancing the understanding and use of monitoring and evaluation tools by AFF members; (ii) strengthening direct linkage with national governments.

During the reporting period, the PMER Unit developed and launched a training needs assessment tool for the identification of M&E gaps among the AFF members and staff. A total of 706 (31.7% of those invited) had opened the invitation email out of which, 80

(11.3%) responded to the survey. The assessment revealed that 51.2% of the respondents had received formal training in M&E at different levels. The following challenges and knowledge gaps were identified by the members to hinder effective implementation of M&E activities: difficulties in developing data collection tools and smart indicators; inadequate knowledge and skills to identify and track project outputs and outcomes; lack of skills to design M&E frameworks; poor timing for data collection; lack of training in monitoring and evaluation. The identified capacity gaps were used for the development of ToRs and recruitment of an expert to train AFF members and staff on M&E systems and process, M&E frameworks (logical frameworks and theory of change) and the importance of M&E in accountability and reporting. The training was conducted on the 15 December 2021 and attracted 63 participants.

2.9 Strengthening AFF's role in international forestry

1. During the reporting period, AFF staff participated to the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forest Forum (UNFF16) held on 26-30 April 2021. Emerging Issues discussed during the session included: (i) Impacts of COVID-19 on forests and the forest sector; (ii) Implementation of United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF); (iii) Means of implementation for UNSPF; (iv) Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting of UNSPF and (v) the Forum's Trust Fund.
2. AFF Secretariat also contributed in compiling and sharing information on new and emerging issues through presentations during two virtual UNFF 16 side events on the following topics:
 - *Promoting forests as the force in a green and resilient recovery: Building momentum for the XV World Forestry Congress*, hosted by the Congress Secretariat of the Korea Forest Service and FAO;
 - *Forests, Trees and Eradication of Poverty: An expanded policy brief for Africa* hosted by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).
3. AFF co-organized with the University of Freiburg a science Policy Forum for Africa and Europe on “*Forest-based Bioeconomy for All: Opportunities and Challenges*” as a contribution to the IUFRO world Day celebrated on 28-29 September 2021. The webinar was co-moderated by the Executive Secretary of AFF, Professor Godwin Kowero and Daniela Kleinschmit of the University of Freiburg alongside the following panellists: Dr Elvis Paul Nfor Tangem, Coordinator, Great Green Wall Initiative of the African Union Commission; Professor Marie Louise Avana-Tientcheu, Senior Programme Officer at the African Forest Forum; Dr Julius Chupezi TIEGUHONG, Chief Forestry Officer of the African Development Bank ; Prof. Daniel Ofori, Director of FORIG/CSIR; Dr. Eva Müller, Director General for Forests, Sustainability and Renewable Resources of the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture (BMEL, Germany); Dr Helga Pülzl, Assistant

Director for Policy Support at the European Forest Institute (EFI) and IUFRO Working Party Coordinator and Dr Carsten Smith-Hall, Professor at the Department of Food and Resource Economics at the University of Copenhagen and Deputy coordinator of the IURO Task Force “Unlocking the Bioeconomy and Non-Timber Forest Products”. The panel discussion significantly contributed to the overall success of the IUFRO World Day that displayed 79 live sessions, more than 50 contributions of static content, and counted over 3000 registered participants from more than 100 countries.

4. A key note presentation entitled “*Strengthening the African private sector in forestry in the context of industrialization and regional integration in Africa*” during the CCARDESSA, SADC Forestry Symposium on the theme: “*Achieving sustainable forest management through research and development in SADC*”, held on the 17th November 2021.
5. The same presentation *i.e.*, “*Strengthening the African private sector in forestry in the context of industrialisation and regional integration in Africa*” was made as keynote address during the Africa Development Bank webinar on “*Forest products for industrialization and regional integration in Africa*”, on the 18 November 2021.
6. A presentation titled “*Forests and tree-based livelihoods in Africa: some COVID-19 effects and the role of SFM*” was done during the UNFF validation workshop on “*Guidelines to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFM in Africa*”, on 20 December 2021.

2.10 AFF sustainability strategy

AFF for the reporting period has been working on diversifying its funding sources.

The following initiatives were undertaken:

- i. *International Climate Initiative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety in Germany*: AFF submitted, in early March 2021, a project titled “REsilient LIvelihoods, Economies and landscapes from climate-smart Non-Timber Forest Products value chains management in Africa (RELIEF)” as a lead institution in a consortium involving the University of Bonn and Martin Luther King University in Germany as well as 6 African partners from five African countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia). The six-year project, with a budget of Euro 13,223,259 was not selected for funding. However, the project is being considered to target other funding opportunities.
- ii. *African Climate Change Fund of the African Development Bank (AfDB)*. AFF as a lead partner, in collaboration with the African Natural Resources Centre (ANRC) of the AfDB and “*Réseau des Femmes Africaines pour la Gestion Communautaire des*

Forêts” (REFACOF) also submitted to AfDB a project titled “*Women and youth led non timber forest products-based enterprises for improved livelihoods and climate change resilience*”. The proposed 3-years project, with a budget of USD 1,000,000, aimed to kick-start viable NTFPs-based enterprises for women and youth in Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Niger through tailor made capacity building and investment activities. Unfortunately, the concept note did not pass the first evaluation, but the idea is being considered for other funding opportunities.

- iii. AFF, in collaboration with UNESCO, also submitted a concept note to Global EbA Fund, on “*Ecosystem based adaptation approaches and public-private partnership (PPP) for managing biosphere reserves to improve climate resilience and socio-economic development (EbA&PPP-BR)*”: The project, with a budget of USD 499,206, is still under evaluation.
- iv. *Other initiatives*: Some other funding initiatives are under consideration through the Task Force for Resources Mobilization which is one of the committees of the AFF Governing Council responsible for guiding the institution on how to raise funds for its activities. This committee is guided by a Resource Mobilisation Strategy that is regularly updated as global conditions evolve.
- v. *Building the capacity of African forestry stakeholders in addressing issues related to forest and climate change*. This is being done by working with stakeholders to develop bankable projects and mobilize resources to implement best practices that improve resilience to climate change, including REDD+, and enhance livelihoods in climate sensitive areas of Africa. If such projects are funded, then AFF’s interventions would be sustainable after AFF has exited working on these issues in the countries.

3. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNT

Over the past two years, the project experienced challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic which restricted travel within and between countries and large gatherings. This affected studies that required experts to travel to multiple countries and large regional stakeholders’ meetings and training workshops. In response, the AFF Secretariat prepared COVID-19 Business Continuity Plans (BCP) which identified strategies to deliver on the project objectives and outcomes.

The AFF's BCP included the following measures:

- Increased use of digital technology to execute project activities. Virtual communication platforms were used to gather experts and partners from distant parts of the continent to deliberate on details of commissioned studies such as discussing and harmonizing methodologies. Subsequently desk-based studies were successfully completed. Meetings of staff and committees of the Governing Council were also done virtually to allow timely decision-making on execution of AFF's programmes. Improved stakeholders' access to AFF's knowledge products and services, which is a core function of the institution, was also sustained through virtual means. This way, progress could be made on the project deliverables.
- AFF adopted a hybrid approach to meetings where AFF staff and experts around the continent are digitally connected to face-to-face meetings organized concomitantly in different countries. This is appropriate for countries where face-to-face gatherings are permitted. Opportunity is also given to interested stakeholders outside countries of the face-to-face meetings, to attend the events virtually, therefore allowing greater reach of AFF information. Where applicable, regional face-to-face meetings were also held.
- For planned regional studies, national experts were engaged to conduct field research, collect and analysis country level data. While the additional engagement has enlarged the administrative and supervisory requirement than originally envisaged, this approach has enabled the project to make progress in generating empirical data on targeted countries therefore contributing to the achievement of the project outputs and outcomes.



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



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